

R E S T R I C T E DHEADQUARTERS FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE  
APO 520 US ARMY

c-UPD/smb

GENERAL ORDERS )

7 May 1945

NUMBER 3086 )

CITATION OF UNIT

Under the provisions of Circular No. 333, War Department, 1943, and Circular No. 89, NATOUSA, 10 July 1944, the following unit is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy:

2641st SPECIAL GROUP (PROVISIONAL). For outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy. Undertaking the hazardous task of supplying Allied Agents and Resistance Groups behind the enemy lines with arms, ammunition and vital stores by night dropping operation, twenty six (26) Aircraft of the 2641st Special Group (Provisional) took off on the night of 17 February 1945 to fly individual and unescorted missions to ten secret targets in Northern Italy. In this operation the Group achieved the unprecedented success of a perfect completion of every sortie. One hundred fifty three thousand (153,000) pounds of arms were placed directly in the hands of the Resistance Groups. Two (2) agents were dispatched to take their active and heroic part in the destruction of enemy communications lines and military installations within his inner defenses. Six hundred twenty five thousand (625,000) leaflets were dropped on industrial centers, alerting the population to rise against the oppressor. In the complete darkness of the hours after the moonset on this night, despite adverse weather enroute, the intrepid airmen of the 2641st Group flew fearlessly at low altitude over concentrations of enemy anti-aircraft fire and airfields where swarms of enemy fighters were known to be stationed, to their clandestine targets. To assure the certainty of a perfect drop, descents were made among mountain peaks to perilously low elevations above the reception signals. Airspeeds were reduced to a minimum that barely sustained flight in order to safeguard the containers against damage from the opening of the cargo parachutes. The trained airmen returned to the targets again, and again, dispatching only part of their loads at a time so that all would be concentrated within the easy reach of the men on the ground. Withering machine gun fire and intense medium flack reaching the aircraft at these low sweeps did not deter the gallant crews from persisting in their efforts until every load had been accurately dropped. Through the tireless efforts and expert maintenance of the Group's ground personnel each, scheduled aircraft in the two Squadrons comprising the Group was able to take off and complete its mission without an instance of mechanical failure. The loading crews worked without rest to place the heavy loads of over 6,000 pounds in the bombay and waist of each plane for this maximum effort. Personnel of the entire Group operated with a high degree of energy and efficiency to achieve the outstanding success of this important undertaking. By supplying the Resistance Forces so abundantly with arms, this mission was of incalculable strategic value in defeating the enemy behind his own lines. The extraordinary success of the operation is a tribute to the fearless courage and masterly airmanship of the aircrews that took part in it and the technical skill and devotion to duty of the ground personnel that maintained the planes in flight. The results, unexcelled as they are in air supply at night, reflect great credit upon the 2641st Group and the Armed Forces of the United States.

BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL TWINING:

R. K. TAYLOR,  
Colonel, GSC,  
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

/s/ J. M. IVINS,  
/t/ J. M. IVINS,  
Colonel, AGD,  
Adjutant General.A TRUE COPY  
NORMAN V. KINSEY, JR.  
Captain, Air Corps  
Adjutant, 885th Bomb Sq.