

History of the 464th Bombardment Group (H) From Activation-Until VE-Day, in Rhyme

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Organization and Training

On July the first
Nineteen forty-three
A new bomb group entered
The U.S. Army.

The 464th Heavy
It was to be known
It was destined to be great
And win renown.

At Gowan Field, Idaho,
Was assigned first personnel
From there on out
They trained like hell.

First at AAFSAT
In Florida's heat.
Then to Pocatello
Where they were to meet.

The cadre of crews
And ground personnel
Things were organized quickly
And started off well.

Ground school and flying
Became daily routine
With rumors as usual
Direct from the latrine.

Thru November, December
Nineteen forty-three

It got colder and colder
Believe you me.

January ended
Everyone in a furor
It wouldn't be long
Till we went to war.

Ground Movement Overseas

On the 9th of February
In the snow and slush
We boarded troop trains
Without confusion or fuss

It was cold, oh so cold
Across the states
The men all longed
For female bunk mates.

At Camp Patrick Henry
In the sunny south ???
We spent several days
Getting fitted out.

The first to leave
For foreign duty
Was headquarters detachment
And were they snooty.

The 778th Squadron
Came along too
There were many mixed feelings
When the boat's whistle blew.

February twenty second
Washington's birthday
We boarded a Liberty
And sailed away.

Other squadrons
Mostly ground crews
Followed at intervals
Of a week or two.

Those Liberty Ships
Were very slow
A good many men
Had to stay below.

Poker and reading
And eating Corned Willie
When the waves rolled high
Some of us felt - silly.

After seventeen days
Of nothing but water
Out of the mists
Loomed the Rock Of Gibraltar.

Quickly in order
Came Oran and Algiers
Then Sicily and Brendisi
There were many cheers.

It seemed so good
To get back on land
No rocking--no swaying
Oh boy it was grand.

Then into G.I. trucks
For our unknown destination
All in all it was
Quite a sensation.

We craned our necks
To look at the towns
And at every stop
The kids made the rounds.

Cigar-etto Joe ?
Chocko-Lat Pliz ?
Little scrawny kids
Hardly up to your knees.

We drove and drove
Roads dusty and rough
It's a darn good thing
That our fannies were tough.

On 20th March
In late afternoon
We arrived at our hill
All ready to swoon.

Making Camp

The hill was pretty
All covered with trees
Not a tent in sight
With an ice cold breeze.

Tents were pitched hurriedly
Both yon and hither
We jumped into our cots
And continued to shiver.

Work was started at once
To make us a camp
But with rain and snow
It was cold and damp.

Mess tent was set up
So we could eat
Standing up with our mess kit
In the company street.

Latrines were dug
Tents moved again

Camp had to be ready
When the planes came in.

The 465th Group
Beat us to the punch
They got a hill with buildings
All grouped in a bunch.

Barns and sheds
They quickly converted
Into office and quarters
While we reverted

Back to nature.
But it wasn't too bad
No hot water for shaving
Or baths to be had

Slit trenches for latrines
On the edge of the camp
With rain and snow
It was kinda damp.

We had snow that was black
Believe it or not
Illusions of 'sunny Italy'
Had gone on to pot.

Camp was laid out
Headquarters set up
Work went on
Without a let up.

Work went on
And progress was steady
By the end of April
The camp was ready

Movement of Air Echelon

After the ground crews
Left Pocatello, Idaho,
It continued cold
With plenty of snow.

On February 21st
The planes took to air
To Lincoln Army Air Base
Leaving Pocatello so fair.

After staging, inspection
And getting new clothes
Their stay in the states
Drew to a close.

By single crews
They left one by one
For Morrison Field
In the land of the sun.

To Puerto Rico
And Natal, Brazil
Stopped at British New Guinea
Their gas tanks to fill.

In the Brazilian jungle
Two ships were lost
Five men were killed
T'was a disheartening loss.

One pilot bailed his crew
And not withstanding
The hazards of a crash
Made a good belly landing.

They ran out of gas
And the weather was bad
To lose these good men

Was indeed very sad.

Navigators started sweating
As they approached Natal
For the South Atlantic
Was no Erie Canal.

They were on the ball
All during this flight
They all hit Africa
The very same night.

Everyone made it
On this long hop
They were tired and happy
As they rolled to a stop.

Then on to Oudna
Army Air Base
There were greetings and shouts
It had been a close race.

Soon boots blossomed out
On the feet of the crews
The Arabs and merchants
Soon got the good news.

The 464th
Had finally arrived
Their business picked up
And really thrived.

The first plane landed
On the ninth of March
Training started again
And it was harsh.

Large formations
And over the sea

High altitude bombing
It was no pink tea.

One crew was lost
On a training flight
They went into a spin
T'was not a nice sight.

On April the 20th
They headed to sea
For the Army Air Base
At Gioia-Italy.

Planes were stripped down
And guns overhauled
The Germans didn't know
They were soon to be mauled.

On 30th of April
Nineteen forty-four
Our planes took off
With a mighty roar.

To bomb the enemy
At Castel Maggoire
That he started the war
He soon would be sorry.

This first mission of ours
Wasn't so hot
But by God we've started
And that means a lot.

We had lots to learn
As we soon found
But we would do better
In the second round.

May 1944

Eighteen missions
In May forty four
For a green new group
Who could ask more?

We dropped 1,016 tons
Of TNT
That's a lot of bombs
Believe you me.

Oil refineries
Supply and troop concentrations
A/C factories and M/Y
Of the Axis Nations.

The Luftwaffe stuck out
Its hairy chin
Our gunners let go
And knocked it back in.

Thirteen destroyed
And probables ten
Five more damaged
By our good men

On our second mission
We lost our Deputy C.O.
In an air collision
With the enemy below.

Lt. Colonel
Sylvan D. Hand
Is a prisoner of war
In enemy land.

Two aircraft accidents
Cost us ships and men
Two aircraft were lost
Men killed totaled ten.

115 men missing on
Combat crews
For a brand new group
That was very bad news.

Lt. Colonel McKenna
New Deputy C.O.
Was a darn good flyer
And nice to know.

From Gioia to Pantenella
We moved in a hurry
At the end of the month
Without fuss or flurry.

At last, long last
The Group was together
Morale went up
And conditions were better.

June 1944

In the month of June
We had thirteen missions
Devoted time to training
To become better technicians.

729 tons
We dropped on Fritz
On most all of our targets
We got good hits.

Our gunners again
Made a nice score
Enemy aircraft went down
When our guns started to roar.

Fifteen destroyed
And four probably down

Seven damaged by gosh
Our boys went to town.

Three accidents marred
Our record for June
No injured or killed
Which was a great boon.

Eighty-six men
Were missing in action
Eight more were killed
But we had the satisfaction

Of seventeen men
Returned to the base
To fight Hitler again
And his super race.

On June 26th
On a mission very rough
Over Vienna
A target that's rough

We lost Colonel Bonner
Our original Group C.O.
He went down fighting
That much we do know.

Another good man
Was lost that day
Major Thomas Carter
We're sorry to say.

The loss of these men
Was a serious blow
Both were real officers
And a pleasure to know.

On 30th of June

Colonel A. L. Schroeder
Moved out to our Group
And promptly took over.

He was quiet at first
Till he got the lay of the land
Then things started to snap
To beat the band.

Enlisted men's clubs
Were beginning to rise
Also the officers
They were all the same size.

Up came morale
Venereal Disease went down
Men stayed on the base
And kept out of town.

We got our share
Of medals galore
But watch us next month
We'll get lots more.

Thirty-Seven Purple Hearts
And four D.F.C.s,
409 Air Medals
One Silver Star, if you please.

Two months of combat
Are now under our belt
From now on out
Our weight will be felt.

The Axis Powers
Are on the down grade
We'll help them along
With many a raid.

July 1944

Rumania, Hungary
Germany and France
Italy and Austria
All got hit in the pants.

Eighteen missions
1,307 tons
Of fire and fury
We dropped on the Huns.

Oil, communications
Airdromes and such
Targets Herr Hitler boasted
We never could touch.

A field day was had
By our gunners and crews
Adolphe felt bad
When he heard the news.

Twenty-six destroyed
And five were damaged
Twenty probables
Adolphes air force was ravaged.

180 men missing
Our losses were high
Eighteen aircraft gone
In the month of July.

27 men previously missing
Returned to this group
About escape and evasion
Air Force got some good poop.

Major Harold E. Blehm
777th C.O.

Went down over Ploesti
He will be missed we all know.

We were lucky this month
On airplane crashes
No one was hurt
But we had two smashes.

Venereal Disease
Went down once more
The medics were happy
And the girls were sore.

Morale was good
In spite of the losses
From the P.F.C.s
To the highest bosses.

We passed out medals
By the score
In view of the number
It was quite a chore.

Twenty-Four Purple Hearts
488 clusters
212 air medals
For dropping block busters.

One Silver Star
Fifteen D.F.C.s
Some have enough medals
To reach down to their knees.

A small thin boy
Whose name is Drake
Was the first in the group
Fifty missions to make.

Captain Raymond W.

(Herkey) Drake is his name
By his fine record
Received much acclaim.

We had some visitors
Out at this base
Generals Eaker and Spaatz
Looked over our place.

Six clubs were opened
For officers and enlisted men
It's no exaggerated statement
We'll all enjoy them.

The Chaplain decided
To build a real church
Cause the briefing tent
Did sway and lurch.

The tent had holes
And made it leak
And you couldn't hear
The Chaplain speak.

He figured twelve hundred
Dollars would do
To build a church
For me and you.

He asked for the funds
On the pay day line
The results? You guessed it.
They were really fine.

Twenty-eight hundred dollars
Was the final take
What a nice church
That much would make.

At last, long last
In response to our tears
The briefing room was started
By the engineers.

Ten million maps
And target charts
Operating in tents
Just broke our hearts.

Dust, sweat and tears
Will be a thing of the past
If they hurry and build it
And do it real fast.

Trips to rest camps
And also to Rome
Pleased everybody
And fits into this poem.

Tufa block houses
Started to rise
We'll be here all winter
We all surmise.

Special Services put out
The weekly "Bomb Blast"
The four hundred copies
Were sold out fast.

July was successful
We accomplished our aim
Knock the hell out of Hitler
He'll get more of the same.

August 1944

595 sorties
On twenty-one missions

1,371 tons
Bring on the statisticians.

Enemy airdromes
And oil installations
Brought from wing and Air Force
Very nice congratulations.

Gun emplacements
On the coast of France
We hit old man Hitler
In the seat of the pants.

Gave air support
To our troops that landed
On the coast of France
Resistance disbanded.

On "D" day we flew
Hit the Donziere Bridge
That offered new problems
For Hitler's "Radio Midge."

Our gunners again
Made a good score
The Jerry pilots
Dislike us more and more.

Nineteen destroyed
And probables five
Two were damaged
Lucky to be alive.

On the ground we hit 'em
While they were trying to park
Destroyed seven-damaged five
It was quite a lark.

Our losses were high

As our targets were tough
The flak and the fighters
Were definitely rough.

Nine men gave their lives
In this all out fight
Eighteen were wounded
For a cause that is right.

109 combat crew members
Are missing in action
Forty-seven came back
That's some satisfaction.

Rumania surrendered
And that was just great
Including Ploesti
A target we hate.

Major Blehm
A squadron C.O.
Along with other men
We all know

Got out of prison
Where they were held by jerry
They left for the States
In one hell of a hurry.

164 air medals, 45 Purple Hearts
339 clusters
To our young upstarts.

79 D.F.C.s
Fourteen Silver Stars
One Bronze Star medal
To go with their bars.

We had six accidents

Two men were killed
Including an explosion
From our beds we were spilled.

A plane caught on fire
It went up with a bang
The bombs all exploded
And our whole hill rang.

By valiant work
By the ground crews
No one was injured
When this ship blew.

Venereal Disease reached
A new all time low
Only four new cases
We would have you know.

203 men
Finished their mission
Back to the States
For some real good fishin'.

Thirty-four new crews
Came into the Group
The Group ground school
Gave them the poop.

Morale was excellent
It says here
The clubs had started
To serve wine and beer.

The new Group chapel's
Progress was steady
It won't be long
Until it is ready.

Thirty movies were shown
There's a new dark room club
Athletic competition was hot
Hdq. Team flubbed their dub.

Joe Lewis was here
Four issues of "Bomb Blast"
All the clubs were opened
Houses were going up fast.

Colonel A. L. Schroeder,
The Group C.O.,
Invited us in
So we would know

What a nice house
He had built on the crest
And of course he thought
His house was the best.

The briefing room
Is coming along slow
We hope it gets done
Before the first snow.

All in all August
Was a record breaker
We've showed the Hun
That we can take 'er.

We'll pile it on
And hit him hard
And drop our bombs
In his own back yard.

September 1944

Thirteen missions
September forty four

Ten were cancelled
Or we would have had more.

Yugo, Hungary
Italy and Greece
Austria, Germany and Poland
That's quite a piece.

Hungary got hit
On six different times
In support of the Russians
And besides it rhymes.

Four marshalling yards
Two oil installations
Two war materiel plants
Were given bad sensations.

Four R.R. bridges
We knocked all to hell
Also sunk a submarine
That sure was swell.

373 sorties
Dropped 841 tons
Of high powered bombs
On the Hitler sons.

Two deaths in the Group
Nine wounded by flak
Four cases of frostbite
We'll pay 'em back.

Two crews down
And missing in action
Twelve men were returned
That's some satisfaction.

Our medal department

Worked with vim and vigor
The medals awarded
Came to quite a figure.

Four hundred thirteen
Air medals and clusters
Purple Hearts sixty-five
To our brave cloud busters.

We can't forget
The boys on the ground
162 good conducts
Were passed around.

We had two hundred
Distinguished Flying Crosses
Ten Silver Stars
Were pinned on by the bosses.

Three aircraft accidents
With three injuries minor
We are trying our best
To make a record that's finer.

Two A/C major damage
One a complete wreck
Much better the plane
Than some poor G.I.'s neck.

The girls got busy
In all the towns
And gave out V.D.
When the men made the rounds.

Twenty-four new cases
We had in the group
Poor Major (Doc) Moon
Was knocked for a loop.

On the other side
Of the ledger, it states
We gave 289 units
Of blood to our mates.

Seventy-eight men
Finished their flying
And soon in the States
Steaks and milk they'll be buying.

Fourteen new crews
Arrived at our base
We shuffled our tents
And made them a place.

Morale was good
Tufa houses went up
Our many dogs here
Proceeded to pup.

Our chaplain, John Eastwood
Worked hard on the devil
He had his best month
And that's on the level.

His attendance at church
Showed a big increase
His letters of sympathy
Showed a big decrease.

He baptized two men
And buried two others
It's a heart-breaking job
To write to their mothers.

Work on the chapel
Went along fine
A new bell in the belfry
Was a mighty good sign.

The church is about ready
It won't be long now
We can go in and worship
And our heads we will bow

In remembrance and reverence
To those brave men of ours
Who lost their lives
Against the Axis Powers.

Special Services
Had a good month we know
Thirty movies were shown
And a U.S.O. show

Took in 1,700 dollars
For AAF Aid Society
For those in our Air Force
It will help mightily.

Three issues of the
Weekly "Bomb Blast"
The available copies
Went out very fast.

At last-long last
headquarters building was done
We all moved in
On a dead run.

Several changes occurred
Among the brass
Appointments were made
And made damn fast.

The Deputy C.O.
Went home to the States
For Lt. Colonel McKenna
A good rest awaits.

Lt. Colonel Goodyear
Took over his place
He's from Oregon state
With a nice smile on his face.

Major James H. Gilson
Named 779th C.O.
Quiet and efficient
He'll make things go.

100 missions
Are nearly in sight
Old jerry knows
We're still in the fight.

October 1944

October came in
Like a roaring lion
The wind blew hard
And tents went aflyin.

The circus tent
And post office too
Tufa houses blew in
As well as S-2.

Captain Bradford
Who was the O.D.
Was running around
Like a busy bee.

Our missions flown
Hit an all-time low.
Fifteen times
We got ready to go.

Old man weather
Knocked us for a loop

Only eight combat missions
Were flown by this Group.

283 sorties
That's not enough
Only 608 tons of bombs
That's really tough.

If November clears up
And we hope it will
We'll drop more on Jerry
And give him his fill.

Italy and Germany
Got their share
In Austria and Hungary
We helped the Russian bear.

Four marshalling yards
Two war plants got hit
One oil and one stores depot
Also got their bit.

We lost our lead crew
Spiller, Cato and Burton
They will be hard to replace
Of that we are certain.

Fifteen men made
The supreme sacrifice
For each man lost
We'll make Jerry pay twice.

Wounded we had
Total twenty-three
This war is no snap
As you can see.

Three cases of frostbite

Occurred in the air
It got so cold
It was hard to bear.

102 men were listed
As M.I.A.
Twenty-nine came back
We are glad to say.

Again with our medals
We went to town
Some of the boys
Are sure weighted down.

682 medals
In combat were won
112 Good Conducts
That's a big month's run.

Thirty-four men
This month finished up
On good home cooking
They soon will sup.

We got in forty
New combat crews
Gave em the works
There's no time to lose.

V.D. came down
From 24 to 9
Doc Moon rubs his hands
And thinks that is fine.

No accidents marred
Our record this time
Had a hell of a struggle
To make this rhyme.

Chaplain Eastwood was busy
Saving souls and such
Services and letters
Of time it took much.

The new Group chapel
Was officially dedicated
It's a very fine structure
And can't be overrated.

3,424 attendance
Our record to date
It begins to look like
The Chaplain does rate.

Fourteen services were held
For those men who were killed
They gave their all
Their voices are stilled.

Movies each night
Three U.S.O. shows
It's cold on our hill
And the wind it blows.

Hdq. Officers Club
Is nearly done
We are anxious to know
If the hot water will run.

Our new group theater
Of tufa and steel
Is coming along fine
And begins to look real.

The Bomb Trainer building
Is about ready
Practice makes perfect
And hands good and steady.

The starters on quarters
Are building in haste
Not a single tufa block
Is going to waste.

Stoves of all kinds
Both little and big
Some awful contraptions
The men did rig.

A committee was formed
To plan a party for those
Poor kids in this country
With food and some clothes.

Christmas for kids
The committee was known.
Old man gloom on Christmas
For a loss will be thrown.

More next month
About this worthy cause
The 464th Group
Will play Santa Claus.

100 missions
Is our November goal
Give us some weather
And watch us roll.

November 1944

In the month of November
We went to town
Six hundred eight tons
Went crashing down.

Fifteen missions flown
And cancelled thirteen

329 sorties
No enemy aircraft were seen.

Weather was bad
We went just the same
Eight P.F.F. missions
Is a record we claim.

Oil and marshalling yards
And troop concentrations
Airdromes and bridges
To cut communications.

Linz and Munich
Felt our wrath
Three times each
They got in our path.

Austria was bombed
Raids totaled eight
Their oil and rail targets
Felt our hate.

After 6-1/2 months
In combat overseas
Flying tough missions
It hasn't been a breeze.

On the 16th of November
To Munich west M/Y
We reached a goal
For which we had strived so hard.

Our 100th mission
We flew on that day
A job well done
To our crews we did say.

Two deaths in the Group

Four cases of frostbite
Twenty-seven were wounded
For a cause that is right.

Missing in action
We had thirty-three
Fifteen men returned
Not too bad as you can see.

No aircraft accidents
Two months in a row
That's a record for us
We'd have you know.

Sixty-five men finished
Their tour overseas
For a short time at home
They can do as they please.

Ten new crews
Joined our Group
They went to ground school
And got all the poop.

329 medals
For combat were passed out
Everybody's got something
Or just about.

Forty-Five Good Conduct
Medals were given
To the men who tried
To earn an honest livin'.

Ten cases of V.D.
But one shouldn't count
He got it in Yugo
On his way out.

General health was good
Winterizing goes on
With tufa and stoves
Dampness is nearly gone.

The chapel was popular
Attendance was swell
1,206 came
When they heard the church bell.

Letters of sympathy
As well as other type
Were written home
To mother, father and wife.

A gospel team
Came into being
Small isolated united
They soon will be seeing.

A new Group paper
Its name is "The Tower"
Gets bigger and better
By the hour.

Weekly concerts are held
Noted musicians appear
The chapel is filled
From the front to the rear.

Twenty-eight movies
Were shown this time
Some outside, some in
Attendance was fine.

Our basketball team
Won six games straight
In the 55th Wing league
They sure do rate.

War weary crews
To Cairo were sent
After months of combat
They were pleasure bent.

S-2 had a fire
It burned nice and hot
General Acheson was here
We were put on the spot.

We lost our flak
And some of our stuff
We stayed open for business
But it sure was tough.

Major Ray A. Morgan
Went home to the States
After twenty seven months
A rest he sure rates.

Hdq. Club building
Is just about done
To the showers and bar
We will all run.

A new Group Exec.
Lt. Colonel Orlie H. Price
From what we have seen
He appears to be nice.

Captain Elmer Vernon
New Group bombardier
Was kept very busy
Going there and here.

Our first Unit Citation
Won last July
Over flak covered Vienna
By our men who fly.

Was presented to us
While we stood at "parade rest."
General Twining admitted
We were one of the best.

We passed in review
A snappy "eyes right."
No drill for a year
But the ranks they were tight.

Thanksgiving dinner
We had turkey and such
As usual this day
We all ate too much.

We got to thinking
Of the kids in this land
A "Merry Christmas"
They don't understand.

We have so much
Let's spread some cheer.
A committee was formed
To collect food and lira.

A box was set up
In the P.X. line
Money and candy
Started coming in fine.

We'll surprise those kids
On Christmas Eve
When our gifts
They will receive.

We struck several blows
At "Hitler the Hun"
Surely very soon now
He'll start to run.

Another month gone
And closer to home.
If we ever get back
No more will we roam.

December 1944 to V-E Day

We'll skip a few months
and save some space
Lots of bombs were dropped
By planes from this base.

We lost two good men
On the very same day.
Lt. Colonels Reddell and McKenna
We are sorry to say.

They went down together
Was a tough loss for us
Such are the fortunes of war
And carry on, we must.

Colonel Cornett
Was the next to go
A nice quiet chap
A good fellow to know.

All three missing in action
We're sorry to say
That they turn up safe
We all do pray.

Colonel Schroeder
Got sick with the flu
Back to the States
With combat he's through.

Colonel A.J. Bird
The new C.O.

He's the real McCoy
We'll lay our dough.

He knows everyone
And they know him
He does his job
With vigor and vim.

Colonel Zoller
New Deputy Commander
Pitched right in
He was no grandstander.

Washington got him
He left us quick
To leave such a Group
I'll bet he was sick.

Lt. Colonel
Edgar S. Davis
Promptly took over
And promised to save us.

We lost Major Johns
Our Group S-1
He'll beat us home
The son of a gun.

Major Barad
Of Rest Camp Rame
They put him to work
It's quite a shame.

Lt. Colonel Goodyear
Group S-3
Finished up and went home
Across the sea.

Major R.G. Loughry

Who took it over
Is six feet tall
And big all over.

Lt. Colonel Gilson
Is missed by us all
It was heart breaking
To watch his plane fall.

The war is over
For us over here
We've lost many men
And friends who were dear.

We took all their blows
And gave them back more
They just couldn't take it
And gosh they were sore.

We ran out of targets
Then bridges we hit.
They couldn't take it
And had to quit.

We're glad it's all over
It was a hard fight
Again proving justice
Triumphs over might.

This Group came over
Inexperienced and green.
War, with its problems
None of us had seen.

187 missions
We flew in a year
Over all the territory
Herr Hitler held dear.

10,922 tons
Of bombs went down
In this one year
The 464th went to town

One hundred thirty
Of our planes were lost.
For victory always
Has its cost.

A salute to the men
Who gave their all
That our country and ideals
Would not fall.

To the 464th Group
And all its personnel
God speed and good luck
We wish you well.