

# **493<sup>rd</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP, HEAVY**

## **MISSION**

## **LINEAGE**

493<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Group (Heavy) constituted, 14 Sep 1943

Activated, 1 Nov 1943

Inactivated, 28 Aug 1945

## **STATIONS**

McCook AAFld, NE, 1 Nov 1943

Elveden Hall, England, 1 Jan 1944

Debach, England, Apr 1944-6 Aug 1945

Sioux Falls AAFld, SD, 12-28 Aug 1945

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

## **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

B-24H

B-24J

B-17G, Sep 1944

## **COMMANDERS**

Col Elbert Helton, 1 Nov 1943

Col Robert B. Landry, 16 Feb 1945

LTC Shepler W. Fitzgerald, Jr., 5 Jun-28 Aug 1945

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

### **Campaign Streamers**

Air Offensive, Europe

Normandy

Northern France  
Rhineland  
Ardennes-Alsace  
Central Europe

## **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

### **EMBLEM**

### **MOTTO**

### **NICKNAME**

Helton's Hellcats

### **OPERATIONS**

On 1 Jan 1944 transferred, less the air echelon and without personnel and equipment, to England where personnel were assigned. Joined by the air echelon in May 1944.

Owing to confusion in orders original personnel assembled at both McCook and Davis-Monthan AAFd, AZ, the latter transferring to McCook in mid-Jan 1944. Owing to diversion of personnel to B-29 units Group transferred less air echelon and without personnel and equipment to UK as of 1 Jan 1944. Ground echelon raised with personnel from 3BD groups in UK and moved to Debach Apr 1944. Small ground contingent from US left McCook 2 May 1944 and sailed Boston on USS Brazil, 12 May 44 arriving Liverpool 26 May 1944. Air echelon left McCook 1 May 1944 for overseas movement, flying northern ferry route to UK.

Served in combat with Eighth AF, May 1944-Apr 1945, using B-24s until they were replaced with B-17s in Sep 1944. Operated chiefly against industrial and military installations in Germany, attacking an ordnance depot at Magdeburg, marshalling yards at Cologne, synthetic oil plants at Merseburg, a railroad tunnel at Ahrweiler, bridges at Irlich, factories at Frankfurt, and other strategic objectives. Additional operations included striking airfields, bridges, and gun batteries prior to and during the invasion of Normandy in Jun 1944; hitting enemy positions to assist ground forces south of Caen and at St Lo in Jul 1944; bombing German fortifications to cover the airborne attack on Holland in Sep 1944; attacking enemy communications during the Battle of the Bulge, Dec 1944-Jan 1945; and assisting the airborne assault across the Rhine in Mar 1945. Flew last combat mission, an attack on marshalling yards at Naucn, on 20 Apr 1945.

First Mission: 6 Jun 1944

Last Mission: 20 Apr 1945

Total Missions: 158 (47 B-24)

Total Credit Sorties: 4,871

Total Bomb Tonnage: 11,733.5 tons (3.8 tons leaflets, etc.)

Aircraft missing in action: 41  
Other Operational losses: 31  
Enemy aircraft claims: 11-6-3  
6 food missions May 45 dropping 451.2 tons

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Air Force Order of Battle  
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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.  
The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.