

819 BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON, HEAVY



MISSION

LINEAGE

39 Bombardment Squadron (Medium) constituted, 20 Nov 1940
Activated, 15 Jan 1941
Redesignated 3 Antisubmarine Squadron (Heavy), 29 Nov 1942
Redesignated 819 Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), 22 Sep 1943
Redesignated 819 Bombardment Squadron, Heavy
Inactivated, 30 Nov 1945

STATIONS

Langley Field, VA, 15 Jan 1941
Orlando, FL, 6 Jun 1941 (detachment operated from Savannah, GA, 8-14 Dec 1941)
Westover Field, MA, 20 Jan 1942
Dover, DE, 19 Jul 1942
Ft Dix, NJ, 28 Feb 1943
March Field, CA, 22 Sep-4 Oct 1943
Barking Sands, TH, 22 Oct 1943
Wheeler Field, TH, 12 Nov 1943-9 Jul 1944
Saipan, 25 Jul 1944
Wheeler Field, TH, 17 Mar 1945
Kahuku, TH, 26 Sep-30 Nov 1945

ASSIGNMENTS

13 Bombardment Group, 15 Jan 1941
25 Antisubmarine Wing, 30 Nov 1942
30 Bombardment Group, 11 Oct 1943-30 Nov 1945

WEAPON SYSTEMS

B-18, 1941-1942

B-25, 1941-1943

A-29, 1942

B-24, 1943-1945

COMMANDERS

Capt William W. Kimbrell

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Antisubmarine, American Theater

Air Offensive, Japan

Eastern Mandates

Western Pacific

Air Combat, Asiatic-Pacific Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM



On and over a yellow disc with a black border a black bat, outlined in red, wings displayed, flying over a mass of red flames issuing from the lower border of the disc. (Approved, 17 Feb 1942)

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Antisubmarine alert at Savannah, 8-14 Dec 1941; antisubmarine patrols, Jan 1942-Jul 1943. Supplied the 30 Bombardment Group with replacement crews and planes, Nov 1943-May 1944. Sea search from Hawaii, Nov 1943-May 1944. Combat in Western Pacific, 10 Aug 1944-19 Feb 1945.

As soon as fighting moved away from pre-selected areas on Saipan, Tinian and Guam, airfields were enlarged or begun. As these airfields became operational it was possible for the Seventh to bring its heavy bombers forward to the Marianas from Kwajalein, where they had been busy raiding Truk. The 30th Bomb Group came up first and moved onto Isely Field, Saipan on 4 August. Already waiting for it at Isely was its 819th Bomb Squadron which had departed the Hawaiian Islands and come to Saipan on 12 July, though it did not go operational until 10 August. The 11th Bomb Group would move up to the Marianas in October.

On 24 September 1944, the 30th Group's 819th Bomb Squadron sent ten B-24s out to hit at a convoy heading for Chichi Jima. The planes were unable to locate the convoy, and nine bombed shipping facilities at Chichi through heavy clouds. The pilot of the tenth plane, Lt. Winton E. Newcomb, determined to bomb visually, and he took aircraft 532 down to the deck, 30 to 50 feet off the water, to bomb warehouses in the dock area. While the bomb run was made and the bombs laid right on target, the gunners strafed everything in sight and 532 came under concentrated fire from 40 mm AA guns on ships and shore.

The plane suffered considerable damage in the aft section including two crewmen wounded, one rudder cable and one elevator trim tab shot away and the rudder servo unit knocked out so that only the elevator controls, though damaged, were working. The pilot managed to leave the target and climb the plane to 10,000 feet whereupon the Engineer, Assistant Engineer and Tail Gunner managed to repair the rudder cables by splicing machine gun cleaning rods into them. Aircraft 532 was then headed safely home when the elevator cables snapped.

The plane immediately went into a dive and the pilot, although he used all his strength, could not pull it out. The Copilot quickly added his weight but to no avail. Finally, both braced their feet against the instrument panel and with the Navigator and Radio Operator pulling with them managed to bring the nose up and 532 came out of its dive at 3,000 feet. The plane stayed level then and the Engineer did an emergency job with chisel and pliers on the elevator controls. It took nearly twenty minutes to splice them together, and when the pilot tried them they held.

Eight hundred miles later, during which the crew had to fly through some bad storms, bouncing and rolling and putting almost too much strain on the repaired cables, the plane reached Saipan. There Lt. Newcomb tried a simulated landing at 10,000 feet and when all went well brought 532 down for a try at the real thing rather than have the crew parachute out and lose the plane.

"The plane circled once," reported 532's crew chief who stood with the rest of the men of the Squadron lining the runway to watch the landing effort. "It came in level. All of us had our fingers crossed for those patched cables to hold. The wheels touched the runway and the plane

settled. She wheeled straight and true along the strip and stopped. None of us realized it at the time, but we were yelling our heads off."

By late 1943 and early 1944, B-24s of both the 11th and 30th Bomb Groups had an aircraft number painted on either side of the nose in yellow, the number being the last three digits of the serial. Also, the B-24s of both groups began carrying squadron symbols on their outer vertical tails. In the 11th Group, these were a triangle, three horizontal stripes and three vertical stripes, in white on the OD finished aircraft then being operated. In the 30th Group, squadron tail symbols were a vertical bar, a disk and an inverted triangle, in white. For a time the 27th and 38th Squadrons repeated their symbols on the upper right wing of some of their aircraft, also in white.

When NMF B-24s began to arrive, the markings were continued by both groups but were painted in black. The 30th Group upper wing markings, were discontinued. In July 1944, the 30th Group's 819th BS went into action for the first time, its NMF B-24s having a horizontal black band across the outer tails as the squadron symbol. In September 1944, the 11th Group's 42nd BS rejoined its parent group for combat, its NMF B-24s having a black square on their outer tails as the squadron symbol.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency, U.S. Air Force, Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.

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