

**Unit Histories Of The
Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot (461st Army
Air Forces Base Unit)
Hammer Field, Fresno, California**

1 January – 30 April 1944

Narrative Histories Only



Source: US Air Force Historical Research Agency

Declassified IAW EO 12958

R E S T R I C T E D

FOURTH AIR FORCE REPLACEMENT DEPOT HISTORY

Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot
Hammer Field, Fresno, California

1 January 1944 to 29 February 1944

Submitted 1 May 1944

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FOURTH AIR FORCE REPLACEMENT DEPOT HISTORY

Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot
Hammer Field, Fresno, California

Chronological Historical Data

Date	EVENT	Reference
1-44	Hq FAF Manning Table 1-104-22 effective 0001	Stat 0
1-44	Squadrons T-40 to T-45, S and G activated	FAFRD GO #2 31 Dec 43
1-44	Capt John R. Finch relieved from assignment and duties as Personnel Officer; Lt Irving W. Haberle relieved from assignment and command of Mt. Owens Rifle Range.	FAFRD SO #1 1 Jan 44
1-44	77 officers assigned duties with FAFRD (all previous duty assignments rescinded)	FAFRD SO #318 31 Dec 43
1-44	Lt John Y. Klandrud relieved from assignment and duties as Training Officer	M/R 4 Jan 44
6-44	Weekly "Personal Conference and Complaint Hour" established at Office of Air Inspector	FAFRD Memo #1 6 Jan 44
7-44	Col N. G. Brophy, FAF IGD, on POR inspection	Adj
8-44	Lt Herman N. Dieter relieved from assignment and duties as assistant Personnel Officer	M/R 8 Jan 44
11-44	Lt Robert P. Crawford relieved from assignment and duties as Training Officer	M/R 11 Jan 44
16-44	Col J. J. Morrow, H.Q.T.C., and Lt Col L. J. Alexander AFTRC IGD on inspection of training of air crew personnel	Adj
18-44	Four hour Malaria Control School for enlisted	Hq Sq
19-44	men of Headquarters Squadron	
20-44	Lt Harry Bennett assigned to FAFRD as assistant Personnel Officer	M/R 20 Jan 44
21-44	Capt Adam A. Kindar relieved from assignment and duties as Medical Officer	M/R 21 Jan 44

Date	EVENT	Reference
6-44	S Sgt David Thatcher, crew member with Capt Ted Lawson over Tokyo, arrived at FAFRD for processing	Adj
6-44	First FAFRD award "For Merit" bestowed upon Squadron T-44 at Retreat parade	Air Insp
8-44	Col James Bossidy, FAF, and Capt George A. Kimmel, Hq WTTC, on inspection of training of aerial gunners on Base and at Mt. Owens	Adj Mt. Owens
9-44	FAFRD Staff Meeting; announcement of tentative plans to move organization to Lemoore Army Air Field, Lemoore, Calif., to take place some time after 15 May 1944	Adj

FOURTH AIR FORCE REPLACEMENT DEPOT
Hammer Field, Fresno, California

Monthly History¹

1 January 1944 through 29 February 1944

The months of January and February 1944 were a period of readjustment resulting from sweeping organizational changes in the Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot. Yet they were, in so far as successful performance of mission were concerned, normal months. Strength remained stable near the five thousand figure (see Table II, page 9), although an influx of air crew personnel, both officer and enlisted, had some effect upon the kind of processing required. All phases of processing and training were operating upon efficient formulae that made it possible to look upon virtually all activities of the two month period as routine.

Almost without interruption of routine activities, two historic events transpired during the second month of this period. The first, on 8 February, was an informal visit by Maj Gen William E. Lynd, Commanding General of Fourth Air Force. The visit was not in the nature of a formal inspection, and no report is on record. The second historic event passed completely unobserved. It was the first

1. The first two units of the 1944 series of monthly histories are combined herewith for editorial expediency.

anniversary of the activation of the FAFRD on 15 February. Since the Depot had been functioning within the 50th Army Air Base for nearly half a year before its activation as a separate unit, the date of activation held little historic interest for officers and men who were part of the organization in earlier days.

On 1 January 1944 a new Table of Organization, Fourth Air Force Manning Table 1-104-22, dated 16 December 1943, which went into effect at 0001 on the first day of the new year, replaced the original 1943 table. A complete reorganization of the Depot accompanied the change. The reorganization was accomplished without interruption in processing or training. It was made, officially, with the publication of FAFRD General Order 6² of 31 December 1943, and details were worked out along lines prescribed in FAFRD Memorandum 23.³

Headquarters Squadron, alone, came through the reorganization unchanged. Thirteen other provisional squadrons were consolidated into six larger units, serially designated as Squadrons T-40 through T-45. Three former school squadrons were consolidated to activate Squadron S, and a new unit, Squadron G, was designated to receive all air crew personnel received in the future for processing at FAFRD.

For the first time in FAFRD history, each provisional squadron (except Squadrons S and G) was assigned an adjutant

2. Hq FAFRD GO #6, 31 Dec 43. See FAFRD History for 1943.
3. Hq FAFRD Memo #23, 31 Dec 43. See Appendix B-1

as well as a commanding officer. Larger enlisted staffs were also assigned the squadrons, the average cadre including thirteen men. A typical squadron organization involved acting first sergeant, chief clerk, two assistant clerks, supply sergeant and assistant, five drill or duty non commissioned officers, and two mail clerks.

TABLE I
 REORGANIZATION OF PROVISIONAL SQUADRONS
 (As of 0001 1 January 1944)

<u>Squadron and Location</u>	<u>Commanding Officer</u>	<u>Adjutant</u>	<u>First Sergeant</u>
<u>Sq 40 (Cld)</u> <u>Colored</u> <u>Section</u>	1st Lt Robert M. Lomax	1st Lt R.E. Johnson; 2d Lt R.D. Kierman	T Sgt John L. Spencer
<u>Sq 41</u> <u>Tent Area</u>	1st Lt Robert D. Pape	2d Lt Arthur G. Guertin	T Sgt Anthony L. Poli
<u>Sq 42</u> <u>Tent Area</u>	1st Lt Jack B. Ferguson	2d Lt Thomas J. Heard	T Sgt Joe D. White
<u>Sq 43</u> 163 to 167 21, 31	1st Lt Willis T. Miree	1st Lt Vincent P. Quinlan	S Sgt John E. McCue
<u>Sq 44</u> 143 to 147 153, 154	1st Lt John W. Gates	1st Lt Robert J. Vopacke	S Sgt John Booke
<u>Sq 45</u> 106 to 109 100, 101, 43	1st Lt John E. Hills	2d Lt John J. Metro	T Sgt Charles T. Powers
<u>Sqs S & G</u> <u>Hqs, Bks 35</u>	1st Lt Charles E. Mower		S Sgt Jesse D. Martin

The organization of a more stable squadron system left with the casual squadrons an increased responsibility for the efficiency of FAFRD processing, training and discipline. The office of the Air Inspector encouraged the fullest cooperation in the assumption of such responsibility by establishing a



STAFF OF THE FOURTH AIR FORCE REPLACEMENT DEPOT AIR INSPECTOR'S OFFICE

(Left to Right, Seated) Capt Jose L. Hernandez, Air Inspector, S Sgt Samuel G. Ellsworth, S Sgt Jack Stubblefield, S Sgt Alvin A. Morris, Lt Sidney Ravine, Assistant Air Inspector, (Seated) Pvt Richard I. Wilson, Sgt Donald J. [Name obscured]

monthly "Award for Excellence" for the provisional squadrons. New standard inspection check sheets developed by the Air Inspector provide an objective comparative rating of the monthly achievement of the squadrons. The first ribbon awarded "For



Col Louis L. Roberts, FAFRD Commanding Officer, fixing "For Merit" ribbon to the standard of Squadron 44, Capt Carl T. Simons, S-3 Officer, Lt John W. Gates, squadron commander, and Sgt James Butler (left to right)

"Merit" was attached to the Guidon of Squadron 44, commanded by Lt John W. Gates, at the 26 February retreat ceremony. Col Louis L. Roberts, Commanding Officer of FAFRD, made the award.⁴

In addition to the reorganization of the squadrons, the adoption of the new Table of Organization necessitated minor revisions of the Depot officer personnel. These were

4. Hq FAFRD Daily Bulletin 58, par 1, 27 Feb 44. See Appendix B-2. See also Appendix A-1, BOMBAY, 1 Mar 44.

JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1944, FOURTH AIR FORCE REPLACEMENT DEPOT STRENGTH

(Officer and Enlisted, Casual and Assigned Strength for Dates Indicated)

	1 JAN	15 JAN	31 JAN	1 FEB	29 FEB
TOTAL OFFICERS	225	251	331	86	647
TOTAL ENLISTED MEN	5431	5345	5623	4695	4881
Assigned Officers	78	73	71	72	73
Casual Officers	157	178	260	14	574
Enlisted Men Assigned	519	532	531	530	545
Casual Enlisted Men					
Gunnery					
Negro Personnel	777	718	922	798	1135
Other Casuals	4135	948	430	288	200
Total Casuals	4912	3147	3740	3079	3001
		4813	5092	4165	4336

Data from 461st AAFBU Statistical Office

FOURTH AIR FORCE
REPLACEMENT DEPOT
HISTORY
Fourth Air Force
Replacement Depot
Hammer Field, Calif
1 January 1944
to 29 February 1944

TABLE II

accomplished by the reassignment of all officers per Headquarters FAFRD Special Order 318, paragraph 12, dated 31 December 1943, which rescinded all previous duty assignments. No changes in the assignment of staff officers were made by this Special Order. Col Louis L. Roberts continued in command, and Maj Thomas J. White retained the post of executive officer to head the list of seventy-seven officers on the order.

Two noteworthy changes in officer personnel that accompanied the reorganization on 1 January were the transfer of Capt John R. Finch,⁵ Personnel Officer, and Lt Irving W. Haberle,⁵ Camp Commander at Mt. Owens Rifle Range. Vacancies left by their release were filled by Lt Donald W. Fridell and Capt Robert W. Wilcox, respectively. Lt Fridell was subsequently returned to his previous status as assistant Personnel Officer when relieved by Capt George A. Curran as head of the department. Capt Wilcox, a veteran of service in the Asiatic-Pacific Theater and a former Infantry Replacement Training Center officer, had been de-facto commander of the range camp since 20 December 1943. Prior to that date, he had been a casual squadron group commander with FAFRD at Hammer Field.

Other officers relieved of their assignments with FAFRD during January and February were Capt Adam A. Kindar,⁵ Medical Officer, Lt Aubrey J. Beale,⁵ assistant Supply Officer, Lt Harold McCloud,⁵ Physical Training Officer, and Second Lieutenants H. N. Dieter, Robert P. Crawford, J.E. Lawhon, and Angello Melilli.

5. See Biographical Appendix

Foremost among other changes affecting the FAFRD officer personnel were promotions won by four First Lieutenants and two Second Lieutenants in January. The Headquarters Squadron Morning Report dated 1 February carried the following officers, listed in new grades (temporary):⁶

Capt Hedges, Alton J.	0565607 AUS-AC
Capt Hernandez, Jose L.	0565632 AUS-AC
Capt Molnar, Simon J.	0563861 AUS-AC
Capt Mower, Charles E.	0569507 AUS-AC
1st Lt Guertin, Arthur J.	0571883 AUS-AC
1st Lt Metro, Joseph T.	01634138 AUS-Sig C.

Personalities of enlisted men also enrich the record of FAFRD History for January and February. Most colorful of all is the vivid recollection of Cpl Layne "Shotgun" Britton that was revived among members of Headquarters Squadron by an article in "Life."^{6a} Text and photographs describing Britton's appearance on a popular New York radio show were typical of the likeable Texan, who is on detached service from Headquarters Squadron, serving as make-up artist with the Army Air Force musical show, "Winged Victory."

Special mention is due eight other Headquarters Squadron men. They were selected for Army Air Force Administration Officer Candidate School on 29 January and 24 February.⁷

Arrivals of historically noteworthy casualties are an every day occurrence as veterans of heroic service pass through

6. BOMBAY, Hammer Field, Calif., 9 Feb 44. See Appendix B-3.

6a. Life, 17 Jan 44, pp 88-92, "Life Goes on a Blind Date."

7. HQ FAFRD SO 22, 22 Jan 1944 (Sgt James R. Martin, Sgt Reginald D. Greig, S Sgt Charles B. Williams, and Cpl Duane Zamzow); SO 55, 24 Feb 1944 (Sgt Alvin A. Mays, Sgt Paul A. Koppe, Sgt Ross K. Oliver and Cpl Eugene A. Billett).

FAFRD for re-processing and reassignment. A more than ordinary arrival was S Sgt David Thatcher, who was a member of Capt Ted Lawson's crew on the historic first mission over Tokyo. Thatcher arrived at Hammer Field on 26 February, and from FAFRD he was assigned to Fourth Air Force headquarters.

Routine Depot activities of processing and training were not interrupted by the sweeping organizational changes that accompanied the 1 January adoption of a new Manning Table. A determined effort was made throughout the months of January and February to increase the efficiency of the processing line. Results as measured in acceleration of processing were favorable.⁸ Obviously, considerable overcrowding of FAFRD facilities would have resulted had the average retention for processing continued at eleven to sixteen days more per man. The problem was remedied, but not solved. At a staff meeting held 22 February, the Commanding Officer stressed the need for faster processing. The Classification Section inaugurated a system of daily processing progress checks on each squadron. A solution was still wanting on the problem of reducing to the absolute

8.

FOURTH AIR FORCE REPLACEMENT DEPOT
Processing Rate
 (Days average stay in Depot for EM
 transferred in months indicated)

<u>Month</u>	<u>Days (Average)</u>
November 1943	49
December 1943	44
January 1944	26
February 1944	23

Data from 461st AAF BU Statistical Office

minimum consistent with efficient treatment the number of days casuals are held for medical and dental processing.

During the months of January and February, personnel of Headquarters Squadron themselves received some essential processing. There were three phases: Malaria Control School,



Headquarters Squadron cartoonist Daniel A. Danglo's conception of the problem of speeding up the processing line

overseas physical examination, and personal affairs processing. Malaria Control School, conducted in compliance with War Department Circular 223, 21 September 1943, was a four hour session completed on 18 and 19 January. The physical examinations were administered by the FAFRD Medical Section on 11 and 12 February. War Department Circular 293, 11 November 1943, and subsequent directives on the subject of overseas assignment of physically qualified enlisted men prompted the examination. Upon completion of clinical investigations and

required reclassifications were completed, thirty four per cent of the personnel in the squadron were found to be in "Zone of Interior" status.⁹ The third phase of Headquarters Squadron processing was accomplished through individual interviews scheduled during the last week of February for every man in the organization. The interview was a complete personal affairs check up, covering government insurance, war bonds, allotments, and legal and similar matters.

The only major complication arising to disturb the processing routine during the first two months of 1944 was the increasing number of casuals, officer and enlisted, received for processing and assignment to Fourth Bomber Command Replacement Training Units.¹⁰ With the cooperation of Lt Robert S. Williams, Liaison Officer attached from Fourth Bomber Command Headquarters late in December,¹¹ the nucleus of a revised processing system for air crew enlisted men and of an entirely new processing plan for air crew officers began to evolve. On 28 February, the training program for air crew enlisted men was inspected by Col James Bossidy, Headquarters Fourth Air Force, and Capt George A. Kimmel, Western Technical Training Command. Suggestions made went into plans for a revised air crew training program to supplement the revisions made in processing.

The training activities of FAFRD were conducted through January and February without major changes. Until 28 January,

Hq Sq FAFRD AAF Forms 127a & 127b, Table VI, 29 Feb 44.
See Table II, page 9, Lines "Casual Officers" and "Casual
Gunsners."
Hq & Hq Sq, IV BC, SO 268, 21 Dec 43.

direction of the training program was nominally in the hands of Maj Donald G. Herring, but actually, since the S-3 Officer was on detached service, Capt Kenneth G. Stitt, assistant S-3, carried the responsibility. On 28 January Capt Carl T. Simons was assigned to FAFRD for duty as acting S-3.

Two comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures were prepared by the S-3 staff during January and February. Both were issued on 23 February as unnumbered FAFRD memoranda, entitled "Parade Procedure" and "Defense Plan."¹²

Another accomplishment of the Training Section, in cooperation with the Special Service and Physical Training Office, was the coordination of the training and physical fitness programs. The participation of all squadrons, including Headquarters Squadron, in a one hour period of exercise and games daily was effective 21 January. The period was conducted according to a physical training schedule published by the S-3 office on 18 January.¹³

The officer in charge of the FAFRD Physical Training Department when the new physical training schedule was adopted was Lt Harold McCloud. He was relieved of his duties to attend a Special Service School on 7 February. The energetic promotion of the physical fitness program was continued by his successor, Lt Prince H. Beebe.

¹². See appendices B-3 and B-4.

¹³. Hq FAFRD Physical Training Schedule, 18 Jan 44; See Appendix B-5.

A beautiful two foot mahogany and bronze trophy awarded Headquarters Squadron on 2 January is one fitting tribute to the work Lt McCloud accomplished at FAFRD. The



Pfc Kenneth Thonnsberry (left) and Pfc William Harding of FAFRD Physical Training Department hold trophy for victory in Hammer Field intramural point system competition.

trophy was awarded for FAFRD teams which rolled up an aggregate of 228 points in intramural competitions between October and December 1943 to lead athletes of all other organizations on Hammer Field. Headquarters Squadron has permanent possession of the award.

Another tribute to the FAFRD Physical Training Director was the 1944 San Joaquin Valley Basketball League championship. Although Lt McCloud, a former professional basketball

player, was the spark that set off the championship fire in the Depot quintet, the actual victory was won only after a hard battle to come up from behind, tie for the lead at the end of the season, and finally defeat the Fresno Air Service Command Training Center in two straight games in the play-off series.¹⁴ The last four weeks of the season were played without the sharpshooting and coaching of Lt McCloud, who, up to the date of his departure, was the squad's high point man.

Another basketball championship that fell before the onslaught's of FAFRD cagers early in 1944 was snared by the Negro quintet representing Squadron T-40, FAFRD colored squadron.



Squadron T-40's Base Basketball Champions.
(Left to Right, Kneeling) Pvt Walter Stevenson, T Sgt John Spencer, Pvt Jack Gilliam;
(Standing) Pvt Joseph Alston, Pvt Louis Morgan, Pfc Elmer Bryant, Pvt Earl Johnson.

It was the second straight Base championship for the Negro squad, sparked by T Sgt John Spencer, the T-40 First Sergeant.

¹⁴. Fresno, Calif., BEE, 1 Mar 44. See Appendix A-5.

In other special service and morale building activities, the Depot Headquarters Squadron took the lead. The squadron Morale Committee, with Cpl Samuel M. Nadisch as its part-time chairman, prepared two entertainment events during January and February. Both were enlisted men's parties, with



The men behind the juicy steaks at the Hq Sq Stag Barbecue (left to right) S Sgt Clement T. Mertens, Cpl Daniel Schultz, M Sgt Vernon Lakey, Cpl William Case, S Sgt Joe Fabbri, and S Sgt Wilbur Sheddrick.

the Headquarters Squadron Commanding Officer, Lt James B. McCallum, acting as host for his men. The first party held at Speedway Park, Fresno, on Sunday afternoon, 16 January, was a stag affair advertised as the "Stag Barbecue."¹⁵ No dinner was served at the Headquarters Mess on that day, and Depot Mess personnel prepared the barbecue. An architect and painter

¹⁵ Fresno, Calif., BEE, 14 Jan 44. See Appendix A-1.

from Fresno clubs provided professional entertainment to complete an outstandingly successful venture in morale work.

The second Headquarters Squadron party was held on 12 February at the Hotel Californian in Fresno.¹⁶ The theme "Valentine Dance" was carried out when individual valentines were passed to every one of the five hundred and fifteen men, wives and guests present. Inclosed with ten of the valentines were tickets entitling the recipients to one of the door prizes that were offered. Another feature of the dance was a jitterbug contest won by S Sgt and Mrs Harry DuBois, with Headquarters Squadron First Sergeant Arthur Robinson and wife close seconds.

The closing event of the January-February social calendar was the swank buffet dinner-dance of 15 February. Also



FAFRD Mess Personnel Dinner Dance. Among guests, Col Louis L. Roberts, FAFRD Commanding Officer (left) and Capt Joseph Healy, S-1 Officer (center foreground).

held at the Hotel Californian, the party was exclusively for the men assigned to the various sections of the Depot Mess.

16. Fresno, Calif., BEE, 10 Jan 44. See Appendix A-2.



FAFRD Mess Personnel Buffet Dinner-Dance.
Cpl S. M. Nadisch serving Col and Mrs. Louis
L. Roberts

Robert B. Biggin, FAFRD Mess Officer, planned and promoted the party. Guests of Honor were Col Louis L. Roberts, Commanding



Guests at Buffet Dinner-Dance,
(left to right) Lt J. B. McCallum, Headquarters Squadron Commanding Officer, Headquarters Squadron First Sergeant and Mrs. A. G. Robinson, Cpl. S. M. Nadisch, and Capt Jose L. Hernandez, FAFRD Air Inspector.

of the Depot, and Mrs. Roberts, as well as a number of other high ranking FAFRD officers and their wives.

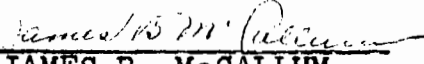
R E S T R I C T E D


FOURTH AIR FORCE REPLACEMENT DEPOT HISTORY

Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot
Hammer Field, Fresno, California

1 March 1944
to
31 March 1944

Submitted 10 April 1944


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Approved 

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Colonel, Air Corps
Commanding

FOURTH AIR FORCE REPLACEMENT DEPOT HISTORY
Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot
Hammer Field, Fresno, California

1 March 1944 t o 31 March 1944

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FOURTH AIR FORCE REPLACEMENT DEPOT HISTORY
 Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot
 Hammer Field, Fresno, California

Chronological Historical Data

Date	EVENT	Reference
3-4-44	Completion of Headquarters Squadron personal affairs check-up, including government insurance and war bond campaign	Hq Sq
3-5-44	Job analysis of all individual jobs performed in FAFRD undertaken	Classif.
3-7-44	Provisional Squadron G-1 (Flying Officers) formally organized. Maj William J. Morgan commanding.	Hq Sq
3-10-44	Pfc Morris Levich, Provisional Squadron 42, purchases \$10,000 worth of War Bonds	BOMBAY 15 Mar 1944
3-11-44	Lt Col Frank A. Flynn attached for duty in organizing training program for Air Crew personnel, Hq Tonopah AAFld SO 67.	M/R 11 Mar 1944
3-13-44	FAFRD Guard Squadron activated, including 25 EM, for special duty as base guard and instruction in Military Police duties	Hq Sq
3-15-44	Cpl Michael A. Guerriero and Cpl Harold A. Steifman, Hq Sq, transferred to Army Air Force Administration Officer Candidate School	Par 4, SO 77
3-15-44	Last of 850 individual Income Tax returns prepared for men of FAFRD and submitted by Legal Office	Legal Office
3-15-44	Processing program and training schedule for Air Crew officers and enlisted men initiated	Ltr Hq IV BC 353, "Reception and Administrative Processing of Air Crew Personnel" 4 Mar 1944. Sq G-1; S-3

3-18-44	Conference at Headquarters, Fourth Air Force, San Francisco, attended by Maj Thomas J. White, Capt Joseph Healy, Capt Alton J. Hedges, and Lt Richard M. Gruen. Subject: Manning Table.	Adj
3-20-44	New policy of administering Physical Achievement Test on day enlisted man reports for shipping inaugurated.	Shpg-Recvg
3-21-44	Col Louis L. Roberts, Maj Thomas J. White and Lt Richard A. Gruen visit Lemoore Army Air Field to gather data necessary for new Station Manning Table.	Adj
3-21-44	Conference at Headquarters Fourth Air Force attended by Col Louis L. Roberts	Adj
3-22-44	Classification and assignment procedures inspected by Lt Col Giddings and Capt Hartley, Headquarters, War Department.	Classif Adj
3-23-44	FAFRD Departments relieved of duties for one half hour to attend Red Skelton performance	
3-24-44	Party for personnel of FAFRD Supply Section	S-4
3-27-44	Guard Squadron personnel transferred to Detachment A, Provost Marshall Section, AAB, Hammer Field, Calif., for special duty.	Par 4, SO 86
3-28-44	Party for personnel of FAFRD Transportation Section	S-4
3-29-44	Army Air Force Aid Society Membership Drive begun	Adj
3-29-44	Cabaret style buffet supper dance for personnel of FAFRD Medical Section at Hotel Californian Ballroom, Fresno, 2030.	Hq Sq
3-30-44	Squadron 41 cited for March award "For Excellence."	Par 2, DB 90
3-30-44	Received Headquarters Fourth Air Force General Order #48, 28 March 1944, ordering disbandment and inactivation of FAFRD, for reorganization as 461st Army Air Force Base Unit, effective 2400 31 March 1944	Adj

3-30-44	Headquarters Squadron Training Program (30 week) initiated by S-3.	Hq Sq S-3
3-31-44	2400 FAFRD inactivated. Final rosters submitted	Hq FAF GO 48 28 Mar 1944 Par 10, SO 91

FOURTH AIR FORCE REPLACEMENT DEPOT
 Hammer Field, Fresno, California

Monthly History

1 March 1944 through 31 March 1944

(In Two Parts: I. General.
 II. Inactivation and Change of Station.)

I. GENERAL

There were 5,256 enlisted men and 683 officers in the Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot on 1 March 1944 (assigned and casual strength included). In mid-March, total enlisted strength increased to 5,359, while officer strength declined to 534. Final rosters of the organization upon inactivation at 2400 31 March carried 5,098 enlisted men and 844 officers, 739 of whom were Air-Crew officers.¹

<u>Note 1: FOURTH AIR FORCE REPLACEMENT DEPOT</u>			
<u>Hammer Field, Fresno, California</u>			
<u>Officer and Enlisted Strength, 1, 15 and 31 March 1944.*</u>			
	<u>1 March</u>	<u>15 March</u>	<u>31 March</u>
TOTAL OFFICERS	683	534	844
Attached unassigned			
Air Crew personnel	595	403	739
Other Officers	15	50	16
Total	610	453	755
Assigned	73	81	89
TOTAL ENLISTED MEN	5256	5359	5098
Attached unassigned			
Air Crew Personnel	1338	1248	1565
Non Air Crew	3373	3551	2967
Total	4711	4799	4532
Assigned	545	560	566

* Data supplied by Statistical Office, 461st AAF Base Unit.

Demand for the most sweeping change in FAFRD operating procedure in March arose from the high percentage of air crew personnel, both officer and enlisted, in Depot strength figures. Acting upon the request of the IV Bomber Command,² the Depot outlined a comprehensive fourteen day processing and training program for flying officers and air crew enlisted personnel. Inauguration of the program was scheduled for 15 March, as outlined in a FAFRD indorsement of the IV Bomber Command letter.³ On 11 March, Lt Col Frank A. Flynn, executive officer of Tonopah Army Air Field, arrived⁴ for special duty at Hammer Field in connection with the new processing.

The Air Crew Officers Section, which acquired status of a provisional squadron (Squadron G-1) on 7 March when its personnel were transferred from the Headquarters Squadron Morning Report, was expanded to occupy twice the space previously assigned to it in Building 102. A six step processing schedule is completed there on the first day of the two week officer training schedule.⁵ Air crew enlisted personnel are processed by the ~~by the~~ FAFRD Personnel Office through Squadron G.⁵ Upon completion of the processing, training responsibility devolves upon S-3. The schedule includes six days training at Hammer Field and seven days at Mt. Owens Rifle Range.⁶ Shipping orders are prepared when training has been

Note 2: Hq IV Bomber Comd, 4BCAT-2, ltr 353, "Reception and Administrative Processing of Combat Personnel," 19 Feb 1944.

Note 3: Ibid., 2d Ind, Hq FAFRD, 10 Mar 1944.

Note 4: Hq Tonopah AAFld, Tonopah, Nev., SO 67, 7 Mar 1944.

Note 5: FAFRD Air Crew Personnel Processing Forms AC-1, AC-2, AC-50 inclosed. Appendix B-1, B-2, B-3.

Note 6: Training Schedules inclosed. Appendix B-4, B-5.

completed. Close coordination of the training, assignment and shipping sections makes it possible to ship a man within three days of completion of training.

No major changes altered the routine of non air crew training in the Depot during March. With appropriate ceremonies at the 30 March Retreat parade, Squadron 41, under the



Col Louis L. Roberts bestowing March award "For Merit" upon Guidon of Squadron 41. Left to right: Col Roberts, Capt Carl T. Simons, S-3, Lt Robert D. Pape, Sgt Charles Aydelotte.

command of Lt Robert D. Pape, received the March Air Inspector award "For Excellence" among the provisional squadrons.⁷

Also on 30 March, the first session, an orientation lecture, in a thirty week training course for Headquarters

Note 7: FAFRD Daily Bulletin #90, par 2, 30 Mar 1944; See Appendix B-6.

Squadron enlisted personnel was held. The training course is administered by S-3.

Earlier in March, Headquarters Squadron completed a thorough check-up on the status of personal affairs of enlisted men of the organization. The personnel office contributed the services of interviewer Pfc Charles A. Carr for a one week period. When interviews were completed on 4 March, Pfc Carr had written a total of \$257,000 worth of government insurance, increased from 2.9 per cent to 4.9 per cent the portion of the total squadron monthly base pay allotted for War Bonds, and assisted in the preparation of numerous wills, powers of attorney, and other legal matters.⁸

Note 8: BOMBAY, Hammer Field, Calif., 8 Mar 1944. Appendix A-1.



"Supersalesman" Charlie Carr (rt) interviewing Pfc Robert R. Price, Headquarters Squadron, regarding personal affairs, insurance and bonds.

Though hailed as a significant achievement, the results of the entire Headquarters Squadron bond campaign were dwarfed a week later by a single purchase made by a casual in



Pfc Morris Levich, squadron 42, purchases \$10,000 worth of War Bonds from Lt William L. Mitchell. Witnessing are Lt Jack B. Fererson, squadron C.O., and T Sgt Joe D. White, squadron first sergeant.

Provisional Squadron 42. Pfc Morris Levich made a cash purchase of \$10,000 worth of War Bonds on 10 March 1944.

Such an occurrence may well be interpreted as an indication of exceptionally high morale among enlisted men of the Depot. To some extent this may be attributed to continuous

and conscientious effort to maintain a high morale on the part of permanent personnel. Three departmental parties in March contributed to the achievement of that goal. The major social event occurred on 29 March, when personnel of the Medical Department held a cabaret style buffet luncheon dance at Fresno's Hotel Californian. Two smaller parties held on the Base were sponsored by S-4 for Supply and Transportation personnel, respectively, on 24 and 28 March.

For the whole Depot, the entertainment spotlight for the month focused upon Thursday, 23 March. On that afternoon, departmental activities were closed down to a minimum for one half hour while personnel assembled on the parade grounds to be entertained by comedian Red Skelton and company.

Among the miscellaneous activities during the month was work on more than 850 individual income tax returns completed for Depot personnel by the FAFRD Legal Office before midnight 15 March. Miscellany worthy of note might also include the transfer of two Headquarters Squadron enlisted men, Cpl Michael A. Guerriero and Cpl Harold A. Steifman, both of New York, to the Army Air Force Administration Officer Candidate School.⁹ Orders received with the quota directed the men to report to Miami Beach, Florida, but were amended by receipt of a telegram announcing the opening of a school at San Antonio, Texas, and directing the men to report there.¹⁰

Note 9: Hq FAFRD SO 77, Par 4, 15 Mar 1944.

Note 10: TWX CG FAF San Francisco, Calif., GR 198, 20 Mar 1944.

II. INACTIVATION AND CHANGE OF STATION

Commended on the eve of its disbandment by Maj Gen William E. Lynd for satisfactory performance of its mission¹ during the nineteen months it served the Fourth Air Force, the Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot prepared to disband as the month of March drew to a close. Headquarters Fourth Air Force General Order Number 48, dated 28 March 1944, ordering disbandment and inactivation, was received on 30 March. Inactivation was accomplished at 2400 31 March.²

At 0001 1 April, all personnel of the FAFRD were transferred in grade to the 461st Army Air Force Base Unit, activated under Section III of General Order 48. The fact that Hammer Field was designated only as the temporary location of the 461st brought into sharp focus months of discussion concerning the transfer of the FAFRD to a new base.

The proposal to transfer the organization to Lemoore Army Air Field, Lemoore, California, became a possibility upon the transfer of that base from the Army Air Force Western Fighter Training Command to Fourth Air Force,³ effective at a date to be determined by the respective commanding officers. The possibility of transfer to that base advanced sufficiently during March to justify two newspaper releases to announce

Note 1: Hq FAF Ltr 330 "Commendation" 31 March 1944; See Appendix A-2.

Note 2: FAFRD SO 91, par 10, 31 Mar 1944.

Note 3: WD Circular 103, Sec I, 11 Mar 1944.

that Col Louis L. Roberts, FAFRD commanding officer, would in the near future take command of the Lemoore installation.⁴

A first step toward the establishment of a separate Base for the FAFRD was seen in the organization of a Guard Squadron of twenty-five men, headed by T Sgt Thomas P. Dale, on 13 March. The squadron was organized primarily for the purpose of training the men in Military Police duties, and to assist the Hammer Field Base guards and Fresno Military Police. On 27 March, the squadron was transferred as attached for special duty with Detachment A, Provost Marshall Section, Army Air Base, Hammer Field.⁵

The first of two conferences during March on the subject of the transfer and the new Station Manning Table transpired on 18 March at Fourth Air Force Headquarters. The conference was attended by Maj Thomas J. White, Executive Officer, Capt Joseph Healy, S-1, and Capt Alton J. Hedges, S-4, and Lt Richard M. Gruen, Statistical Officer. A second conference was held at Lemoore on 21 March, attended by Col Roberts, Maj White, and Lt Gruen.

Note 4: Fresno BEE, Fresno, Calif., 31 March 1944; Fresno GUIDE, Fresno, Calif., 6 April 1944.

Note 5: FAFRD SO 86, Par 4, 27 March 1944.

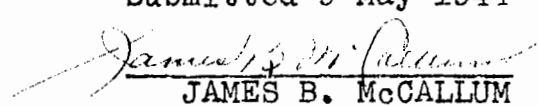
R E S T R I C T E D

461ST ARMY AIR FORCE BASE UNIT HISTORY

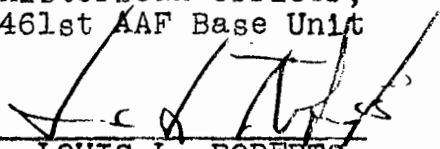
461st Army Air Force Base Unit
Hammer Field, Fresno, California

1 April 1944 to 30 April 1944

Submitted 9 May 1944


JAMES B. McCALLUM
1st Lt, Air Corps,
Historical Officer,
461st AAF Base Unit

Approved


LOUIS L. ROBERTS
Colonel, Air Corps
Commanding

461ST ARMY AIR FORCE BASE UNIT HISTORY

461st Army Air Force Base Unit
Hammer Field, Fresno, California

1 April 1944 to 30 April 1944

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461ST A RMY AIR FORCE BASE UNIT HISTORY

461st Army Air Force Base Unit
Hammer Field, Fresno, California

1 April 1944 to 30 April 1944

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461ST ARMY AIR FORCE BASE UNIT HISTORY

461st Army Air Force Base Unit
Hammer Field, Fresno, California

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORICAL DATA

Date	EVENT	Reference
1 Apr 44	461st Army Air Force Base Unit activated at 0001 at Hammer Field, Calif. (temporary location); Col Louis L. Roberts, Commanding	FAF GO #48, 28 Mar 44; 461st AAF BU M/R 1 Apr 44; 461st AAF BU GO #1, 1 Apr 44
1 Apr 44	Orientation Program: "A Fighting Man" series of Signal Corps Motion Pictures	S-2
1 Apr 44	Eighty-nine officers assigned principle duties with 461st AAF Base Unit, under Fourth Air Force Directorate plan	461st AAF BU SO #1, par 6, 1 Apr 44
2 Apr 44	Advance copy of AAF Manual 35-1 received by Classification Section	Classif.
3 Apr 44	Flt O Harlan G. Chase assigned to 461st AAF BU as assistant Shipping Officer	461st AAF BU Sq A M/R
3 Apr 44	Maj Donald G. Herring relieved from assignment, transferred to attached to 461st AAF BU	Sq A M/R
3 Apr 44	Lt Charles W. Comer relieved from assignment and duties as Medical Officer	Sq A M/R
3 Apr 44	Lt Theodore B. Common assigned to 461st AAF BU as assistant Mess Officer	Sq A M/R
3 Apr 44	Lecture and field work series (four week) for enlisted men of Squadron A begun by Capt Kenneth G. Stitt. Subject: camouflage discipline.	S-3
8 Mar 44	Last class graduated from School for Classification Specialists.	Classif.; VO FAF Classif Off.

Date	EVENT	Reference
8 Apr 44	Orientation Program: "Pride in Your Outfit" lecture by Lt John E. Hills	S-2
8 Apr 44	Squadron C activated of colored personnel (permanent party) formerly in Squadron A	461st AAF BU GO #3, 8 Mar 44
9 Apr 44	Special Easter Chapel services held at Camp Mt. Owens and in Base Chapel	Chaplain
9 Apr 44	Lt Melvin L. Reimer relieved from assignment and duties as assistant Classification Officer	461st AAF BU Sq A M/R
10 Apr 44	Largest officer shipment ever made up by this unit (438 officers) transferred via all first-class troop train to Lincoln, Nebr.	Ship-Recv
12 Apr 44	Squadron A enlisted men's dance at Hotel Californian, Fresno, 2030	Sq A
13 Apr 44	Banquet for personnel assigned to Squadron C at Hughes Hotel, Fresno, 1830	Sq C
13 Apr 44	Draft of new Manning Table submitted to Fourth Air Force for approval	Stat.Off.
13 Apr 44	Work of Chaplaincy in Colored Section of 461st AAF BU turned over to Chaplains of 450th AAF BU, to permit greater attention to work at Mt. Owens Rifle Range	Chaplain
13 Apr 44	Report on Army Air Force Aid Society membership campaign	Adj
13 Apr 44	Survey of Morale of permanent party enlisted men (Squadron A) completed	Air Insp
14 Apr 44	Maj Hugh B. Knight assigned to 461st AAF BU for duty as Director of Operations and Training; vice Capt Carl T. Simons relieved, appointed Training Officer	461st AAF BU M/R, Sq A
14 Apr 44	Building 103, office of the Air Inspector and print shop, damaged by fire of undetermined origin at 1743	Air Insp
15 Apr 44	Orientation Program: "What the Soldier Thinks," symposium directed by Lt John W. Gates	S-2

Date	EVENT	Reference
16 Apr 44	Provisional Squadron organization revised	461st AAF ^F BU GO #4, 16 Apr 44
16 Apr 44	Lt Col Morris Bush, Hq AAF, present on POR Inspection	Adj
17 Apr 44	Lt Kenneth H. Duff relieved from assignment and duties as assistant Supply Officer; Lt Theodore B. Common relieved from assignment and duties as assistant Mess Officer	461st AAF BU Sq A M/R
18 Apr 44	Lt Alfred F. Robinson relieved from assignment and duties as Training Officer	461st AAF BU Sq A M/R
19 Apr 44	Annual Inspection begun	Adj
20 Apr 44	Lt Francis J. Lewis assigned to 461st AAF BU as assistant Supply Officer; Lt James A. Lynch assigned to 461st AAF BU as Training Officer; Lt Thomas L. Craig assigned to 461st AAF BU as assistant Air Inspector	461st AAF BU Sq A M/R
20 Apr 44	First 461st Talent Night presented for 500 enlisted men (casuals) at Service Club	Spec Serv
21 Apr 44	Revision of Job Analysis begun	Classif.
22 Apr 44	Orientation Program: Lecture on current events delivered by Lt James A. Lynch	S-2
24 Apr 44	Chemical Warfare Service and S-3 instructors occupy Building T-212, 461st AAF BU School Building	S-3
24 Apr 44	Increase in Malatia Control and Sex Hygiene instruction incorporated in training program for air crew personnel	S-3
24 Apr 44	One week series of Sex Hygiene lectures for Squadron A personnel begun	Medics
24 Apr 44	461st AAF BU Classification Bulletin #6	Classif
25 Apr 44	Hq 461st AAF BU Ltr 201.6/53 directed to Commanding General, Army Air Forces, at-	Classif

Date	EVENT	Reference
	tention Assistant Chief of Air Staff, Personnel, requesting authority to administer tests.	
26 Apr 44	Birthday and anniversary celebration in honor of Col Louis L. Roberts and Mrs Roberts; surprise party in Blue Room, Hotel Californian, at 2030	Adj
26 Apr 44	Lt Robert A. Vopacke relieved from assignment and duties as assistant Personnel Officer	461st AAF BU Sq A M/R
26 Apr 44	Lt Col Raeman, Fourth Bomber Command Plans & Training Officer, Fourth Bomber Command, orders higher priority on pistol qualification in training of air crew personnel	Off Sect
27 Apr 44	Check from Custodian Fourth Air Force Special Fund in the amount of \$1375.50, payable to Custodian 461st AAF BU Fund (allotted at rate of \$1.50 per enlisted person, according to proposed Manning Table	Adj
27 Apr 44	461st Special Service Show "Black Out" presented at Service Club	Spec Serv
29 Apr 44	Monthly Squadron Efficiency Rating award won by Squadron T-42	DB 28, par 5 28 Apr 44
29 Apr 44	Orientation Program: "Ramrod to Emden," Confidential War Department film; talk on current events by Pfc Guy C. Mitchell	S-2
29 Apr 44	Maj Hugh B. Knight, Director of Operations, conferred with Capt Louis J. Fuller, Fourth Air Force, on weapons and prospective firing ranges at Lemoore Field	S-3

461ST ARMY AIR FORCE BASE UNIT HISTORY

461st Army Air Force Base Unit
Hammer Field, Fresno, California

1 April 1944 to 30 April 1944

The 461st Army Air Force Base Unit, activated and organized in accordance with the "streamlined" plan for operation of the Fourth Air Force, was activated at 0001 1 April 1944, upon authority contained in Fourth Air Force General Order 48, Section III, 28 March 1944. Command of the organization was assumed through 461st AAF Base Unit General Order 1, 1 April 1944, by Col Louis L. Roberts, formerly Commanding Officer of the Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot.¹ General Order 2,² issued by the 461st AAF Base Unit on the same date, outlined the simple conversion of former FAFRD provisional units to the organizational requirements of the new outfit. The generic connection between the 461st AAF Base Unit and the FAFRD can be verified in comparison of the final and initial rosters submitted by the two units. All personnel of the former organization were transferred in grade to the latter.

No units that had not existed under the FAFRD were created. The change was one of designation only. Headquarters Squadron became Squadron A. Squadrons G-1 (Officers), G (Air Crew enlisted men) and S were redesignated Squadrons

1. Inactivated 2500 31 Mar 44; FAF GO #40, Sec I, 28 Mar 44.
2. 461st AAF BU GO #2, 1 Apr 44; See Appendix B-1.

T-1, T-11, and T-46, respectively. One week later, on 8 April, a more functional change was effected in the activation of Squadron C for the nine Negro permanent party enlisted men formerly assigned to Squadron A. The activation was ordered in 461st AAF Base Unit General Order 3, 8 April 1944, and was made in accordance with Fourth Air Force directives governing the organization of units.³

A more comprehensive change in the provisional squadrons was effected by 461st AAF Base Unit General Order 4, issued 16 April.⁴ Necessitated by the declining proportion of non air-crew casualties and the steadily increasing number of casualties earmarked for Replacement Training Units of the Fourth Bomber Command,⁵ the change involved inactivation of two of the "T-" Squadrons, T-44 and T-45. Simultaneously, Squadron T-12 was activated under the command of Lt John W. Gates to supplement Squadron T-11 in accommodations for the air crew enlisted men. Lt John W. Gates, formerly commanding officer of non air crew provisional units, described the difference between the two types of processing as "mostly a matter of the kind of training given,"⁶ which, with minor differences in other phases of processing, encouraged the complete separation of air crew and non air crew personnel through all stages of the processing, and the organization of separate provisional units.

3. FAF Memo 20-5, 28 Mar 44.

4. 461st AAF BU GO #4, 16 April 1944. See Appendix B-2.

5. See Table I, "461st AAF BU Strength," page 7.

6. Gates, John W., 1st Lt, AC, interviewed 4 May 1944.

TABLE I
 APRIL, 1944, 461ST ARMY AIR FORCE BASE UNIT
 OFFICER AND ENLISTED STRENGTH

	1 April	15 April	30 April
TOTAL OFFICERS	828	606	571
TOTAL ENLISTED MEN	5098	4590	3569
Assigned Officers	89	89	88
Casual Officers (Air Crew)	723	450	435
Casual Officers (Non Air Crew)	16	67	48
Assigned Enlisted Men	566	563	542
Casual Enlisted Men			
Gunners	1565	1813	1550
Negro Personnel	138	72	42
Other Casuals	2829	2142	1435
Total Casuals	4532	4027	3027

Data from 461st AAFBU Statistical Office

Assignment of former FAFRD officers to the 461st AAF Base Unit⁷ was a more complex task than the conversion of the provisional units. Again, the apparently revolutionary changes required for compliance with Fourth Air Force Memorandum 20-5 were organizational rather than functional. In other words, most officers continued to perform the same duties as had been theirs within the FAFRD, although some held new titles consistent with the Directorate System of organization established throughout the Fourth Air Force. Three Directorates in the 461st AAF Base Unit were that of Administration and Services, assigned to Capt Joseph C. Healy, former FAFRD

7. 461st AAF BU SO 1, 1 Apr 44; See Appendix B-3.

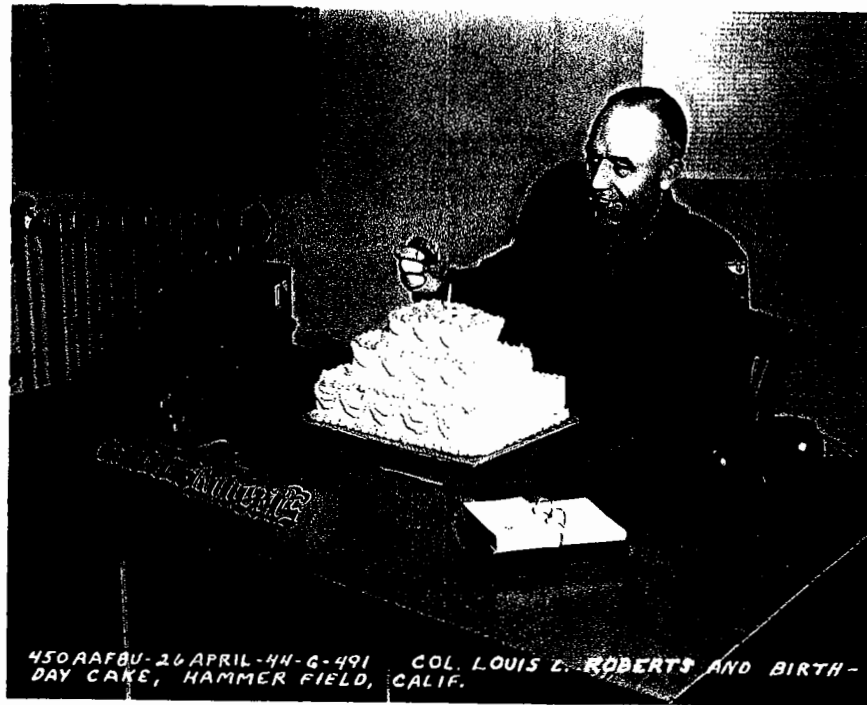
S-1 Officer, the Director of Operations and Training, former acting S-3 Officer Capt Carl T. Simons, and Director of Supply and Maintenance, Capt Alton J. Hedges, former FAFRD S-4 Officer. An entirely new post, that of Troop Commander, was assigned Lt James B. McCallum, who retained his former duties in commanding Squadron A, and subsequently Squadron C, as well.

Because he was currently on temporary duty as Air-Wac Recruiting Officer at Fourth Air Force Headquarters, one of the veteran FAFRD officers was omitted from the 461st AAF Base Unit assignments. He was Maj Donald G. Herring, former S-3 Officer. When relieved of assignment on 3 April, he retained the status of attached to the organization. Other officers relieved of assignment during April included Lt Robert A. Vopacke,⁸ assistant Personnel Officer, and Second Lieutenants Charles W. Comer, Melvin L. Reimer, Kenneth H. Duff, Theodore B. Common, and Alfred F. Robinson. One other important change in officer personnel was the arrival of Maj Hugh B. Knight, who assumed the duties of Director of Operations. Capt Simons, relieved of that post, was reassigned as a Training Officer.

The major social event for 461st AAF Base Unit officers in April hinged upon the birthday of the Commanding Officer, Col Louis L. Roberts on 26 April, and the twenty-fourth anniversary celebrated by Col and Mrs Roberts on 27 April. All assigned officers participated in the birthday

8. Biographical sketch omitted upon the advice of the Office of the Director of Administration that officer will be returning to the 461st AAF BU in the near future.

celebration, sharing the huge birthday cake baked for the Commanding Officer by cooks assigned to the organization mess.



Birthday Surprise for the 461st AAF Base
Unit Commander, Col Louis L. Roberts.

Observance of the Anniversary was as much of a surprise as the afternoon birthday party. The Anniversary party, held in the Blue Room of the Hotel Californian, Fresno, was attended by approximately twenty-five officers and wives. It was held in the evening of 26 April.

From the never ebbing flow of colorful enlisted personalities through processing lines and provisional squadrons of the 461st AAF Base Unit, it is difficult to pick one or two as historic, allowing all the rest to remain in oblivion. It would, nevertheless, be equally difficult to find excuse for

omission of the two accounts that follow from the historical record for April.

The first is the dramatic story of S Sgt Robert Geshay, Racine, Wisconsin, casual assigned to Squadron T-45 while awaiting reassignment to active duty. The Hammer Field newspaper, BOMBAY⁹ reported that Geshay, during his thirteen months of combat service with the Seventh Air Force, was credited with single-handedly sinking a Japanese ship. The munitions carried on the vessel exploded when strafed by the machine guns Geshay manned in a B-24 Liberator bomber.

The exploits of another casual, Sgt Nicholas Marcello, took place in the Orderly Room of Squadron T-45. There was little heroism, but an amazingly kind heart behind the act that gave life to four young jackrabbits, offspring of an animal killed by a stray dog in the squadron area. Experienced veterinarians would probably have called the operation an extremely difficult one. Marcello promptly surveyed the problem and decided that the Boy Scout knife he carried would have to do the trick. S Sgt John Quinones, another casual was drafted

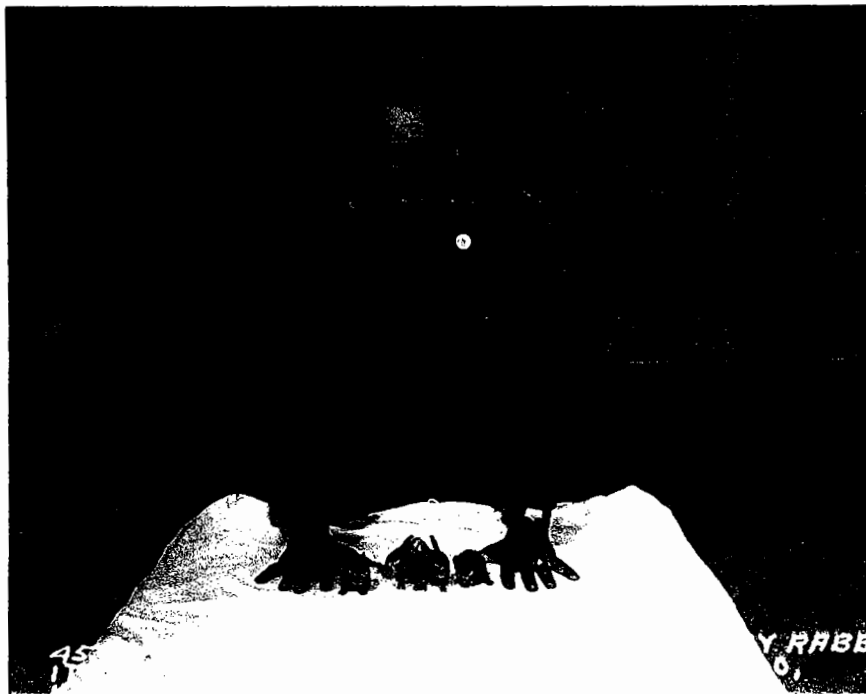
9. BOMBAY, Hammer Field, Calif., 19 Apr 44; See Appendix A-1



HANDS ON HIPS, S/Sgt. Robert Geshay of Squadron 45, 461st base unit, looks pretty determined here, even in this informal pose at his Racine, Wis., home. That he is determined was proved when he strafed a Jap ship to pieces not too long ago.

BOMBAY, 19 Apr 44

as Marcello's assistant, and the unusual operation was begun. Although two of the babies died, the operation was considered



Sgt Nicholas Marcello and four baby rabbits that survived the amateur Cesarean

amazingly successful by virtue of the survival of four of the young ones. They made themselves at home in the Orderly Room.¹⁰

The conversions, consolidations and reassignments involved in activation of the new unit were scarcely settled when the seven officers and warrant officers comprising the Fourth Air Force Inspector General's staff for the annual inspection arrived. Begun on 19 April and completed on 22 April, the inspection opened all phases of 461st AAF Base Unit activity to the scrutiny of Lt Col L. A. Braun, Majors L. V. Bruno, R. B. Gard, G. R. Patten, and West, and Warrant Officers F. R. Hultgren and IO. BOMBAY, Hammer Field, Calif, 19 Apr 44; See Appendix A-2.

E. S. Samens. An informal report on the inspection received on 24 April was favorable in virtually all respects, and all inconsistencies noted were immediately brought to the attention of the department heads concerned.

Although the 461st AAF Base Unit was activated at Hammer Field, that location was specifically designated as temporary. Plans for the transfer of the unit to Lemoore Army Air Field, Lemoore, California, evolved smoothly through April, toward an unspecified moving date between 20 May and 1 June. A draft copy of the Manning Table proposed for the new station was submitted for approval to Fourth Air Force on 13 April. The process of revising the draft continued through the month.

Also affected by the proposed transfer was the 461st AAF Base Unit Job Analysis, the first draft of which was submitted early in April. On 21 April, it was returned to the Classification section for revision to suit outlined requirements for the new Base, as prepared by the Executive Officer. The first draft, when returned to the Classification Section men who submitted it, bore a note of commendation from the Commanding Officer. Preparation of the Job Analysis was largely the work of Pfc Virden H. Bimm, assisted by Pfc Claire Tattton and Cpl Wilmer Brewster, all of the Classification Section.

Cpl Brewster became available for work on the Job Analysis only after the graduation of the last class of the Fourth Air Force School for Classification Specialists on

8 April. The school, which had been conducted under the supervision of S Sgt Raymond T. Ayer since December 1942, had accomplished its mission of training an adequate reserve of classification men for the Fourth Air Force. Its closing was authorized by the Fourth Air Force Classification Officer.

Another April accomplishment of the Classification Section was the thorough study of new Army Air Force directives on "Military Personnel Classification and Duty Assignment" embodied in Army Air Force Manual 35-1, 3 April 1944. On 24 April, a digest of the complex manual, as it affects classification procedures within the 461st AAF Base Unit, was prepared and issued as a guide for personnel assigned to the section.¹¹

Farther along the 461st AAF Base Unit processing line, the Training Section under the Director of Operations was also busy through April. Training air crew personnel, both officer and enlisted, continued a primary concern. The entire month was spent in drafting revisions to the training schedules previously established.¹² One decision reached during the month was that increased emphasis was to be placed upon Malaria Control and Sex Hygiene instruction. This was achieved with the cooperation of the Medical Section. Another question raised in regard to training air crew personnel developed when Col Raeman, Plans and Training Section, Fourth Bomber Command, ordered, in a telephone conversation with Squadron T-1, a higher

11. ~~461st AAF BU Classification Bulletin #6~~, 24 Apr 44; See Appendix B-4.

12. See FAFRD History 1 Mar 44-31 Mar 44, Appendices B-4 & 5.

priority on pistol qualification. Compliance was brought within the realm of possibility when a hundred pieces were secured through Quartermaster. The future aspects of the problem-problem, after the transfer to Lemoore Field, were considered by Maj Hugh B. Knight, Director of Operations, in conferences with Capt L. J. Fuller, Fourth Air Force. The two officers met on 29 April to consider availability of weapons and potential range facilities at the prospective new base.

During the month of April, the Training Section supervised 3,623 attempts at qualification in arms at the Mt. Owens Rifle Range. Weapons available for qualification were the M1911 A1 calibre .45 US Pistol, the Model A1 Thompson sub-machine gun, and the Carbine.¹³ In addition to the range work, the Training Section saw 1,710 casualties through the Mt. Owens infiltration course.

12. See Table II for Qualifications.

TABLE II			
APRIL, 1944, QUALIFICATIONS IN ARMS			
461st Army Air Force Base Unit			
	M1911 A1 Cal.45 US Pistol	Carbine	Model A1 Thompson submachine gun
Total Men Fired	1577	391	1655
Percent Qualified	48.7%	93.3%	98.2%
Expert	41	138	1208
Sharpshooter	87	110	331
Marksmen	645	117	86
UnQualified	814	26	30

Data from 461st AAF BU Statistical Office

In addition to its routine activities, the Training Section devoted two hours daily through the month of April to the training program for personnel of Squadron A. The first three weeks were devoted to lecture and field work in camouflage discipline, supervised by Capt Kenneth G. Stitt. The fourth week of lectures, delivered by members of the Medical staff, were on Sex Hygiene, and included motion pictures supplied by the Training Section.

The last week of lectures to Squadron A men was delivered in the new 461st AAF Base Unit School Building, occupied jointly after 24 April by the Chemical Warfare Section and the Training Section projectionists and instructors. The quarters are in newly constructed Building T-212.

At the farthest extreme of the 461st AAF Base Unit processing line, the Shipping Section noted two extraordinary events during the month of April. The first, on 10 April, was the transfer of the largest single officer shipment ever made up at this unit (four hundred and thirty-eight officers). The transfer involved preparation of an all first-class troop train, the first of its kind to move on orders issued from the Section. The second event, a culmination of all the processing activities in the organization, was the transfer of the first complete unit designated for overseas replacement. Processing of this unit was begun on 3 April. The unit, of one hundred and forty-six enlisted men, one warrant officer, and

four officers, was ready to move on 18 April, after the Preparation for Overseas Replacement Inspection by Lt Col Morris Bush on 16 April.¹⁴

One of the most dramatic incidents to take place in April was the destruction of the 461st AAF Base Unit Air Inspector's Office and the adjacent print shop and publications office. Fire of an undetermined origin gutted Building 103 at 1743 Friday, 14 April, destroying some equipment and most of the forms and publications stored there. Records of the Inspector were not seriously damaged. New quarters for the Inspector's staff were found in Building 66, and the print shop was moved to an abandoned hospital mess hall in Building 93, to resume normal operations.

Unhindered by the losses resulting from the fire, the Air Inspector completed its monthly inspection contest to determine the most efficient provisional squadron. Squadron T-42, under the command of Lt Jack B. Ferguson, was proclaimed the April winner on 28 April.¹⁵ The unit did not take possession of its "For Merit" banner because of inclement weather on the day scheduled for the Retreat and award ceremony.

Another unique project of the Air Inspector in April was a survey of the morale of permanent party enlisted men in Squadron A.¹⁶ The survey was in the form of a simple

14. 450th AAF BU SO 94, 16 Apr 44.

15. 461st AAF BU Daily Bulletin #28, 28 Apr 44; See Appendix B-5.

16. See Appendix A-4.

questionnaire, results of which constituted a sample of approximately twenty-five percent of the Squadron. Findings when tabulated were:¹⁷

"...eighty five percent are satisfied with present job assignment; fifteen per cent often find fault with the food in the mess hall; ninety per cent take pride in their organization; eighty per cent feel that ratings have not been given to men who deserve them; seventy-five percent have a high esteem for the officers under whom they serve; fifty per cent feel that their officers have a personal interest in their welfare; forty-five per cent worry about their future in the Army; seventy-five per cent worry about their future after the war upon being discharged; eighty percent feel that their officers explain everything they need to know in order to do properly what they want done; eighty per cent do not want overseas duty."

From the refreshing note of candor that marked all the replies, it can be further concluded that the simple opportunity to express opinions in this fashion was a boost for an already high morale.

During April, serious consideration of the morale of the casual personnel of the 461st AAF Base Unit, as well as of the permanent party, was indicated in the inauguration of a carefully conceived series of weekly orientation programs presented through the Director of Security and Public Relations. On the first Saturday in the April series, a motion picture topic, "A Fighting Man," was shown. Next was a stimulating lecture by provisional squadron commander Lt John E. Hills, on "Pride in Your Outfit." The third week's program was a symposium on "What the Soldier Thinks," directed by Lt John W. Gates, also a squadron commander. On 22 April, 17. Ltr 461st AAF BU (H-1-4), 333 "Report of Activities of the Air Inspector for April," 1 May 1944, par 4.

Training Officer Lt James A. Lynch delivered an illuminating lecture on current events. The fifth Saturday in April was devoted to presentation of a confidential War Department Film entitled "Ramrod to Emden," and a current events summary by Pfc Guy C. Mitchell, one of the permanent party men.

In lighter vein, two parties during April helped sustain the morale of the permanent party of the 461st AAF Base Unit. The first, a dance at the Hotel Californian in Fresno for Squadron A men, was promoted by Cpl Samuel M. Nadisch and a group of volunteers from the squadron. It was presented at no cost to the Squadron Fund, which was temporarily frozen in anticipation of the transfer of the organization to Lemoore. The dance was held on 12 April. On the next night, another permanent party entertainment presented exclusively for colored personnel of Squadron C was a dinner at the Hughes Hotel, Fresno. Col Louis L. Roberts, Commanding Officer of the Base Unit, Lt James B. McCallum, Commanding Officer of Squadron C, and Lt Robert M. Lomax and Lt Robert B. Biggin were guests of honor at the dinner.

The Special Service Section of the 461st AAF Base Unit in April began a weekly venture in entertainment for casual personnel of the organization. It was conceived as a Talent Night to be presented every Thursday in the Base Service Club. The first of the series of programs was presented before 500 enlisted men on 20 April, under the direction of Special Service Officer Lt Prince H. Beebe. A second

and even more successful program, entitled "Black Out," was presented 27 April. In addition to the soldier talent volunteered for the performance, coeds from Fresno State Teachers College and the Hammer Field Bombasies contributed to the entertainment. Most popular among the features of the show were a Baseball quiz and "Truth or Consequences. Master of Ceremonies was Fresno USO Director Ed Hennesy. The featured individual performer, who drew even more attention than the dancing coeds, was eleven year old Freddie Oliver, Fresno, a singing Cowboy Troubador.

Credit for the program, according to Lt Beebe's report, is due Pvt Morey Samuel, a casual, who kept enough acts together for a show, despite the fact that key men of four of the acts were shipped from the organization in the eleventh hour on Thursday morning.

Inevitably coming into mind in connection with the morale of the personnel, and particularly during the Easter



Easter Chapel at Mt.Owens Rifle Range

season, the work of the unit Chaplains comes into consideration. Easter Sunday was a colorful climax in the work of the 461st AAF Base Unit Chaplains. Personnel of the organization



Capt David H. Peeples (Center), 461st
AAF BU Chaplain with 400th Base Unit
Chaplains who conducted Base Easter Services

at Hammer Field attended the superbly beautiful service held in the Base Chapel, where 461st AAF Base Unit Chaplain David H. Peeples participated in the ministry. Even more striking,



Easter Services Held in Base Chapel

however, was the simple ceremony at Camp Mt. Owens.¹⁸ Music was furnished by the 572nd Army Air Force Band, which travelled to the camp for the occasion. Services were conducted by 461st AAF Base Unit Chaplain Huntley C. Lewis.

It may have been the motivation of the Easter Spirit or the recognition of a truly worthy cause that prompted the enthusiastic support given by the 461st AAF Base Unit to the first month's membership campaign for the Army Air Force Aid Society. Fourteen hundred memberships were accounted for when total contributions of nearly two thousand dollars were turned in on 10 April.¹⁹

Another worthy cause that received substantial, though unsolicited, support in the 461st AAF Base Unit was the American Red Cross. Contributions from a single squadron, T-11, totalled nearly twenty percent of all the donations of all organizations at Hammer Field.²⁰

18. See Appendix A-5 for Mt. Owens Easter Chapel Program.

19. 461st AAF BU Daily Bulletin #13, par 1, 13 Apr 1944;

See Appendix B-6.

20. BOMBAY, Hammer Field, Calif., 12 Apr 44; See Appendix A-3.