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PRESS RELEASE

Exhibit #2-May 1944

MONTH-END SUMMARY

Bridges and railway centers, vital communications links in Germany's western European fortress, and airfields and coastal defence installations along the invasion shores of the continent took a better than 14,500-ton bomb pounding during the month of May, according to today's operational summary revealing activities of Ninth Air Force bombers during the 31-day period.

Behind them, in battered France and Belgium, the Ninth's Marauder B-26 medium and Havoc A-20 light bombers left destruction the like of which has not been equalled during the history of the Ninth in the European Theatre. It was a record month in more ways than one.

Of 13 bridges attacked-- 12 were destroyed and one was badly damaged.

Of 12 airfields attacked-- 10 were successfully bombed, 8 hangars being destroyed or badly damaged and 34 aircraft shelters destroyed.

Of 15 other important military installations attacked-- 12 were destroyed or badly damaged.

In addition to these, the interior port installations of the Dieppe Port area, France, were severely pounded with measureable damage, and an important naval headquarters was hit and severely damaged.

These were specific results of a month of activity in which during 24 days of operational flying the Ninth bombers flew 38 missions involving a total of more than 8300 attacks on enemy positions. Heaviest previous month for the Marauders and Havocs was April when bomb tonnage was up to 9,999 tons, and when the number of missions and individual attacks was much less.

While bare figures indicate the weight of numbers and bombs, the real results of the 31-day blasting lie in the extent and momentum of the pre-invasion softening-up program which has been maintained at the tempo unprecedented in the history of the Ninth Bomber Command. Relentless pounding of the highway and railway bridges, the rail centers and traffic arteries upon which the Nazis must depend for defence of their "West Wall", and upon the airfields and associated military installations on which they depend for air protection--these have been the major objectives in this big pre-invasion month of May. Not only have bombing results been more than good, but attacks have ranged along the entire coast and throughout the northwestern France and Belgium areas.

Day after day the Marauders and Havocs have appeared over the Nazi fortress to dump their explosive loads. Spot reconnaissance following these attacks indicates that Hitler's occupational forces have been hard-pressed as a result of damage to rail lines and roads feeding from the interior to the critical coastal front positions along the channel.

Intensity of the assault on key German defences is revealed in the most recent activities of Marauders which for the past ten days have concentrated on important rail and highway bridges and upon airfields and other military objectives in the Seine River valley between Paris and Rouen. From the air today the valley discloses a string of broken bridges whose mason-work and structural members have been wrecked and tangled by the heaviest bomb smashing this section has ever seen. More than 4,000 tons of high explosives were rained on these targets during the month, mostly in the last ten days, a tonnage that is nearly half the total bomb tonnage of the previous month of April.

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Figurewise, this creditable performance was not without its cost, for during the month 44 Marauders and Havocs were lost over enemy territory--32 Marauders and 12 Havocs--as compared with April losses of 19 Marauders and five Havocs.

But more significant was the fact that these May operations were carried out with such outstanding success in the face of the heaviest flak defenses yet encountered. The tenacity and battleworthiness of these bombers and their crews is definitely shown in their ability to take the extremely heavy blasting from ground-guns and still go on to deliver a series of highly effective results.

The score in the air was not altogether one-sided, for while the repeated sorties of the Ninth bombers failed to flush the Luftwaffe in numbers there were various accounts of enemy encounters and the medium and light bombers are credited with downing three enemy fighters and damaging one other. These figures do not include the potential damage done to numerous enemy aircraft on the ground and in shelters on the airfields attacked.

No bombers were lost to Luftwaffe fighters during the last month.

Three of the big Seine river bridges to fall under blows of the Marauders during late May were the Maisons la Fite and Poissy rail bridges and the Conflans highway span, all on the western edge of the metropolitan area of Paris. Evidence of the destruction done to these important units was definitely revealed in reconnaissance photographs and follow-in observation made shortly after the bombings.

Typical of the destruction wrought on Seine Valley bridges is that which Marauders leveled upon the Mantes-Gassicourt highway bridge, 20 miles west of Paris and the Meulan highway span, 10 miles west of Paris on May 30.

A reconnaissance sortie ten minutes after the bombers left their targets reveals the Mantes-Gassicourt structure was demolished and the north span of the Meulan bridge was knocked into the river. The Athis Mons and the Orival rail bridges, both over the Seine between Paris and Rouen, were administered a similar pounding by the mediums. In the same week the Liege Val Benoit bridge near Liege, Belgium, was dealt a destructive blow.

Striking at these slender bridge targets, which appear no wider than a lead pencil through the bombardier's sights, the Marauders' accomplishment for the month is doubly-emphasized and experienced observers sum it up as a month of "difficult targets, tough enemy opposition, and excellent results".

As expressed in an official commendation to group commanders and officers and men of the Ninth Bomber Command, "These results represent a magnificent contribution to the allied cause--your attacks have most seriously hampered the feverish preparations being made by the Germans to repel the expected invasion."

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