

444th SUB DEPOT, CLASS I SPECIAL



MISSION

LINEAGE

444th Sub Depot

STATIONS

RAF Molesworth, England

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Maj Benjamin B. Ramsey

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The magnificent accomplishments of the 303rd Group would never have been possible without the assistance and close co-operation of the hard-working officers and men of the 444th Sub Depot. Given the job of making repairs to Forts with major battle damage, the hangar crews have consistently turned out badly damaged planes in record time.

Very few of these jobs have been easy. With nearly every mission to some heavily defended Nazi target, the hangars have filled up to overflowing with Forts needing new engines, wing sections, tails, fuselage repairs or sheet metal work. This meant working under pressure when the group needed all the planes as soon as possible to keep up their formation strength. Sometimes the hangar crews were working around the clock and more than once all passes were cancelled until the big job was completed.

T /Sgt. Walter Nieman and his crew outdid themselves by almost rebuilding one Fort, involved in a perimeter crash and classified "Salvage," in only 21 days. This job required putting on a new tail section from the tail wheel well, and rebuilding the trailing edge of the left wing. In between times, they also did a major repair job to another Fort.

Repairs to aircraft is not the only job done by the sub depot. The air corps supply section is responsible for seeing that no Fort stays on the ground long for need of a new part, and furnishes the thousands of gallons of aviation fuel and oil needed by the bombers. The transportation section provides the rest of the organization with everything but roller skates and pogo sticks for transportation of supplies and personnel where they are needed. The headquarters section coordinates the efforts of all the other departments.

Although personnel of the sub-depot haven't had much of an opportunity to meet the enemy in combat, they have managed to win a few decorations. The Soldier's Medal for heroism was awarded to T /Sgt. Lewis A. Maresh and Sgt. Orvel O. Burnett after they they extinguished a gasoline fire in the hangar that might well have reduced the hangar and all the planes in it to a mass of burned wreckage. Major Melvin T. McCoy received the Bronze Star medal for development of maintenance devices and exceptional effort in connection with the repair of airplanes after a mission on which the group suffered very heavy battle damage. M/Sgt. Victor A. Dietz received the Certificate of Merit for developing various maintenance devices and for an excellent job of repairing a crash-landed Fortress. Personnel of the sub-depot first arrived in England in October, 1942, as the 328th Service Squadron. A year later the 444th was formed under the command of Lt. Col. Horace G. Cotton, now returned to the United States. It is now commanded by Major Benjamin B. Ramsey, former Group S-4 officer. Work of this service

organization began with the group's first mission in November, 1942, and has progressed at an increasing pace ever since.

It is almost impossible to estimate the total work done by men in the organization, but here is a short summary of output during a recent six-month period: Crews repaired 569 battle damaged Fortresses, set up 298 engines, accomplished 1871 work orders and packed 5,000 parachutes. The air corps supply section issued 15,000 serviceable items, shipped 8,426 repairable items to depots, issued 283 engines, returned 308 old engines to depots and issued more than 200 airplane fuel and oil tanks.

Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources

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