



89TH ATTACK SQUADRON

APRIL 1944

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SECTION I

HISTORICAL
INTRODUCTION

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

The following introduction is a brief summation of the history of the 89th Bombardment Squadron (L) from its activation in 1941 until the end of March, 1944. Sources of information used in compiling it include the Squadron Diary and official documents of the 3rd Bombardment Group (L).

The 89th Bombardment Squadron (Light) was formed at Savannah, Georgia, on 15 January, 1941. When activated, it was known as the 10th Reconnaissance Squadron (L); since that time its official name has been changed to 89th Bombardment Squadron (Dive), to 89th Attack Squadron, and to the name it now bears.

During the summer of 1941 trained and untrained personnel were added to the original cadre, and A-20A ("Boston") type aircraft were assigned to the Squadron. Training continued throughout the autumn, but because the Squadron was understrength, it did not go on maneuvers with the other squadrons of the 3rd Bombardment Group.

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the unit was alerted, and on 31 January, 1942 sailed, in convoy, for Brisbane. Immediately after landing there 25 days later, the Squadron was separated from the 3rd Group, and sent to Townsville, where the personnel aided the Royal Australian Air Force who were flying missions against enemy positions on New Guinea.

Type A-20A aircraft were assigned to the Squadron in May, and it was planes of that type that the unit took to Port Moresby when it moved there in August. During the next nine months the Squadron was based at Kila Drome, known as "3 Mile". Close ground support was given to Australian Imperial Forces fighting in the Kokoda area, and Lae, Salamaua, Sanananda, Buna, and Dona were among the other targets hit. It was during this period that the first parachute-fragmentation bombs were dropped, and their use proved very effective.

On 3 March, 1943 the Squadron had its first assignment against an important convoy. In cooperation with B-17s, B-24s, B-25s, and RAAF Beau- fighters, planes of the Squadron struck a 22-ship convoy, consisting of transports, cargo vessels, and naval escort, which was headed for the Lae-Salamaua area with combat troops. The Squadron scored 12 hits on seven ships, and joined the other light aerial units in strafing wreckage.

In May the Squadron was moved to Dobodura, and Finschhafen and targets on New Britain were brought within range. Missions continued to be flown in the Lae area, and in September planes of the Squadron supported, by laying smoke screens, the landing of parachute troops at Nadzab in the Markham-Ramu Valley. Later in the same month, the Squadron was the last allied force to strike Lae before it fell to Allied ground troops. Later still, the Squadron covered the Finschhafen landings, and then joined with other units in the bombardment of Sattelberg. After the reduction of that stronghold, we were directed to targets at Cape Gloucester, Arawe, and Gasmata. The

Historical Introduction, cont'd.

twenty-two missions flown by the Squadron in December were largely concerned with preparing the way for Allied landings on New Britain and in the vicinity of Saidor.

Early in 1944 the area of Bogadjim-Alexishaven was attacked with increasing frequency, and following the Squadron's move to Nadzab in February, enemy positions in the vicinity of Hansa Bay and along the coast as far north as Dagua came within our range.

During the month of February the big mission flown by the Squadron was a twelve-plane strike against the Jap positions at Kavieng, New Ireland. Hits were scored on shore installations and on shipping, and all planes returned safely.

During the next few months, Wewak, Boram, But, and Dagua, all were bombed and strafed repeatedly. A mission flown on 19 March against a convoy off Wewak, resulted in the Squadron getting a souvenir. Following the attack, one of the planes was found to have caught in the engine cowling a page of the ship's register, which gave in English the name and tonnage of the vessel.

CHRONOLOGICAL NARRATIVE

COMBAT OPERATIONS

CHRONOLOGICAL NARRATIVE
COMBAT OPERATIONS
APRIL 1944

During the month of April, 1944, the 89th Bombardment Squadron (L) flew 143 sorties, during which 177,345 rounds of .50 calibre ammunition were expended, and 110.7 tons of bombs were dropped. This is a decrease from the month of March, of 4,455 rounds of ammunition and 22.7 tons of bombs.

Sixteen type A-20C-20s were assigned to the Squadron on 1 April, and 12 of the same type were in commission at the end of the month.

Four missions were flown to the Hollandia area between 3 April and 16 April. These were the longest strikes ever carried out by A-20s in the SWPA up to this time. The other missions were flown against targets in the Newak, Hansa Bay, Tadj, and Sepik River districts.

The first strike of the month was a twelve-plane mission to bomb and strafe airplanes and dispersal area at Hollandia Drome. The planes staged out of Gusap and hit the target just before noon on 3 April. One pass was made at the target, following attacks by B-24s and B-25s. Excellent cover was provided by two squadrons of P-38s, and, except for one half-hearted pass by a Nip fighter, there was no interception of the Squadron's planes. Photographs showed that the combined strike was a highly successful one. Three of the Squadron's planes were holed by the intense medium and light Ack-ack fire, with the death of a photographer resulting. (1)

On April 5 twelve planes were sent to bomb and strafe stores along the road from Pim Village to Lake Sentani. While results were generally unobserved due to the nature of the terrain, ground troops moving through the area later in the month reported very great destruction of stores, fuel, and ammunition. (2)

The mission of 8 April, to Vanimo, was turned back by weather when south of But Drome. (3)

On 9 April nine A-20s attacked barges and shore installations on Cape Moem and Boram and on Newak Point. Bombs were seen to burst on the targets, but damage generally was unassessed. (4)

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- (1) FFC / 94, 310 Bomb Sq (L).
 - (2) FFC / 96, 310 Bomb Sq (L).
 - (3) FFC / 97, 310 Bomb Sq (L).
 - (4) FFC / 100, 310 Bomb Sq (L).



Three-hundred and forty Jap aircraft were found wrecked on the Hollandia Dromes, when Allied ground forces moved in. This photograph was made by the 89th Squadron during its first Hollandia raid, that of 3 April, 1944.

The mission of 11 April was directed against ack-ack positions in the Newak area. Nine A-20s flew through the most intense ack-ack ever encountered in the area up to that time, although only one plane was seriously damaged. It crash-landed at base, with its crew safe. (1)

The 12 April mission was directed against shipping in Humboldt Bay area. An unidentified freighter and two medium-sized coastal vessels were found and attacked, with explosions and fires seen to result from our hits. None of the ships was seen to sink, however. A direct hit on an oil dump on shore sent up fire and smoke to 1000'. (2)

On 15 April a mission was flown against coastal installations in the Tadji area. This was a twelve-plane mission, resulting in 47 500-lb. demolition bombs being dropped in the target area. In spite of accurate bombing and thorough strafing, little damage was seen to result. (3)

On 16 April nine A-20s of the Squadron were sent on a mission against the Tanahmerah Bay area. A fuel fire was started, but other damage could not be observed owing to the hilly terrain. Severe storms were encountered on return, and only three planes landed at Nadzab that night. One plane landed at Dumpu and five landed at Gusap. (4)

The mission of 21 April was directed against Plantations in the Tadji area. The installations were seen to be well beaten-up, but damage resulting from this strike could not be assessed. (5)

On 22 April Wom Point was attacked, with 38 500-lb. bombs in the target area. Except for a small fire, damage was unobserved due to dense foliage. (6)

On the 23rd the Squadron was sent after shipping at Hansa Bay. As none was seen there, positions along the shore were attacked, with two small fires resulting. (7)

Hansa Bay was again attacked on the 24th, with numerous small fires resulting. (8)

Trails and villages south of Newak were attacked on 26 April, with one motor-truck of undetermined size and type, and a few well-kept native gardens the only sightings. Any native buildings that could house a few Japs were bombed and strafed, but no damage to the Japanese war effort is known to have resulted. (9)

Villages in the Sepik River area were attacked on 29 April, but in spite of the 136 100-lb. bombs that were dropped, with bombing reported as excellent, no activity was seen. (10)

(1) FFC # 102, 310 Bomb Ag (1).

(2) FFC # 103, 310 Bomb Ag (2).

(3) FFC # 106, 310 Bomb Ag (3).

(4) FFC # 107, 310 Bomb Ag (4).

(5) FFC # 112, 310 Bomb Ag (5).

(6) FFC # 113.

(7) FFC # 114.

(8) FFC # 115.

(9) FFC # 117.

(10) FFC # 120.



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TANNEMERAH BAY

CHRONOLOGICAL NARRATIVE

ADMINISTRATIVE

CHRONOLOGICAL NARRATIVE
ADMINISTRATION
APRIL 1944

The 69th Bombardment Squadron (L) was stationed at APO 713 Unit 1 during the month of April. The squadron consisted of 41 officers and 256 enlisted men.

While on a mission the 3rd of April S/Sgt Fred J. Smith, Gunner was killed in action. 1st Lieut Homer Vorel, Engineering Officer, was promoted Captain the 3rd of this month. (1)

Leaves were granted on the 5th of April to 1st Lieuts Cas M. Hatten and Jack C. Bean, Executive and Armament Officer respectively. The place was Sydney. Pvt Frank G. Farina was assigned to the squadron from 91st Replacement Bn. on the 5th of April. (2, (3)

On the 7th of this month furloughs to Mackay for ten days were granted to S/Sgt Michael Giroux, Intelligence Clerk, and Sergeant Louis M. Rosenfield, Crew Chief. (4)

Corporal Wayne H. Page appointed Sergeant; T/5th Grade Paul A. Hoffke, Privates First Class Orville Llewellyn, Glen J. Beardall and Pete Leager appointed Corporals. (5)

Second Lieuts Albert Burke, Richard Loftus and George A. Maki, all Pilots, traded their gold bars for silver bars this month. Furloughs were granted to sergeants Henry Bosch, Personnel Clerk, D. W. Smith, Mechanic, David C. Williams, Mechanic, and Corporal Thomas Skelton, Switchboard Operator. The boys left here on the 9th for Mackay. (6) (7)

Corporal William Irvin was granted a furlough of seven days to Brisbane, to visit his wife and child. Thomas L. White was promoted 1st Lieut from 2nd Lieut this month. (8) (9)

The squadron received some replacements on the 12th. The lucky boys were Privates First Class Feler, Hughes, Lee, Reichner and Wolfe. (10)

S/Sgt Harry Blackburn, Gunner, was transferred to 200th Replacement Company for return to the U.S. (11)

Pvt 1cl Loya and Pvt Carpentieri were assigned to the squadron the 15th of April. (12)

(1) SO 74, 5th Air Force
(2) SO 39, 3d Bomb Gp
(3) SO 95, 91st Repl Bn
(4) SO 36, 3d Bomb Gp
(5) SO 39, 3d Bomb Gp
(6) SO 40, 3d Bomb Gp

(7) SO 40, 3d Bomb Gp
(8) SO 41, 3d Bomb Gp
(9) SO 99, 5th Air Force
(10) SO 43, 3d Bomb Gp
(11) SO 103, 5th Air Force
(12) SO 44, 3d Bomb Gp

Sergeant Kenneth A. Gartwait, Corporals John C. Heffernan and Peter P. Wilshire were granted furloughs to Mackay the 19th. (1)

S/Sgt G. L. Johnson, S/Sgt John H. Simon and S/Sgt Paul Willock, all gunners, were granted seven days furloughs to Sydney the 21st of April. Sergeants Clements, Costello, Lorton, Phillips, Sarkisian and Sonnabend, all gunners, were promoted to Staff Sergeants the 21st of April. (2) (3)

Staff Sergeants Sonnabend and M. W. Taylor, gunners, are on DS with the 91st Reconnaissance Group.

The Squadron Commander, Captain Robert N. Dow, departed this station on the 24th for TD at Sydney.

1st Lieuts H. W. Marshall, Gilliam and Naki, Pilots, were granted leaves of seven days to Sydney on the 27th of April. (4)

Pvt Zattelmeyer, Charles E. was assigned to the Medical Department of this squadron from the 13th Bomb Squadron on the 29th. Furloughs were granted to Staff Sergeants Forman, Lettsome and Meadows, gunners, on the 29th. All headed for King Cross. (5)

The personnel strength during the month of April:

Officers.

	<u>Flying</u>	<u>Ground</u>
(a) At beginning of period	28	13
(b) Net increase during period	1	1
(c) Net decrease during period		
(d) At end of period	29	14

Enlisted Men.

(a) At beginning of period	38	218
(b) Net increase during period		13
(c) Net decrease during period		
(d) At end of period	38	231

(1) SO 46, 3d Bomb Gp
(2) SO 48, 3d Bomb Gp
(3) SO 47, 3d Bomb Gp

(4) SO 51, 3d Bomb Gp
(5) SO 51, 3d Bomb Gp

SECTION II

LOCAL INTEREST

LOCAL INTEREST

On 3 April, during the Squadron's first raid on Hollandia, S/Sgt. Paul M. Willock distinguished himself by the coolest kind of courage and skill. Lieutenant Horace B. Monroe's plane was on its run over the target when Sergeant Willock felt something jar it. He slid down from his seat in the turret to investigate. When he looked through the small hole in the bomb bay, the sight which met his eyes would have struck fear into the heart of any man. One of the 100-pound, four-to-five-second delay fused para-demolition bombs was hanging two-thirds out of the bomb bay, being held by a cord of the parachute which was caught around the bomb bay door actuating arm. Sergeant Willock saw at a glance that the arming wire was pulled and the spinner was missing; and that the bomb was completely armed thereby. The bomb was swinging around and hitting on the bottom edges of the bomb bay. This gunner, realizing that at any moment the bomb might, by hitting the sides of the bomb bay, jar itself enough to detonate, thought very quickly and called the pilot to close the bomb bay doors on the bomb, thus holding it from swinging. He then calmly told the pilot that he was into the bomb bay and cut the parachute cord loose. To do this, he took his machete and hacked a hole in the rear of the bomb bay, and wiggled through it. Then, with no parachute, with the bomb bay doors half open, fully aware that the slightest mis-step or violent movement of the plane would throw him to his death, he courageously and with complete disregard for his own safety, crawled into the bomb bay and pulled himself along to the forward end. By hanging onto the bomb bay shackles, he was able to cut the cord which held the bomb. He then returned over the edges of the bomb bay doors, and called the pilot, who opened the doors and released the bomb. The bomb was seen to burst only a few seconds after it hit the ground. This outstanding performance has resulted in Sergeant Willock's being recommended for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross.

AWARDS AND
DECORATIONS

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

On 1 April, the Purple Heart was awarded to Lieutenants Rade Vukelic and John Soloc, and to Staff Sergeants Caesar F. Bocchino and Paul E. Willock. (1)

The Order of the Legion of Merit was awarded on 3 April to Master Sergeants Louis F. Sevcik and Garvin D. Jenn, for their exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of duty. (2)

Lieutenant Raymond Miller was awarded the Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal on 4 April, for 25 combat missions. (3)

Staff Sergeant Harold I. Pelo was awarded the Air Medal on 7 April, for 25 combat missions. (4)

On 10 April Lieutenant Thomas R. Waddell was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for 50 combat missions. On the same order, Lieutenant George F. O'Neal was awarded the Air Medal for 25 combat missions, and Lieutenant Miller was awarded the second Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal, for 100 combat hours. (5)

Lieutenant O'Neal was awarded the Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal on 15 April, for 100 combat hours. (6)

On 29 April, Technical Sergeant Harry P. Blackburn, and Staff Sergeant Milton B. Meadows, were each awarded an Air Medal for 25 Missions, while on the same date Staff Sergeants Glenn E. Johnson, Willock, Adolphus T. Clements, Mark W. Taylor, and John H. Simon were each awarded the Air Medal for 100 combat hours. (7)

(1) GO 17, V Bom Com.
(2) GO 24, Hq USAPFB.
(3) GO 198, Hq 5 AF.

(4) GO 203, Hq 5 AF.
(5) GO 212, Hq 5 AF.
(6) GO 221, Hq 5 AF.

(7) GO 265, Hq 5 AF.

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