

GENERAL ORDER

No. 1073

EXTRACT

Unit Citation

HEADQUARTERS

FAR EAST AIR FORCES

APO 925 -Z June 1945

By the direction of the President, under the provisions of Executive Order No. 9396 (Section I, Bulletin 22, WD, 1943) superseding Executive Order No. 9075 (Section III, Bulletin 2, WD 1942) and of Section IV, Circular No. 333, WD 1943, the following units are cited by the Commanding General, Far East Air Forces:

380th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

For outstanding performance of duty in a series of devastating strikes at the heavily defended Japanese oil refinery area at Balikpapan, Borneo, on 13, 15, and 17 August 1943. To reach this target, the B-24s of the 380th Bombardment Group (H), taking off from Fenton Field, near Darwin, Australia, had to make a round trip of 2700 miles, the longest distance of any strike previously attempted in the Southwest Pacific. The bombers had to fly over hundreds of miles of open sea, past heavily defended island of Timor and the Makassar area of the Netherlands East Indies, and past listening and observation posts for enemy fighter strips. Each of these raids involved 16 hours of flying; 10 at night through hazardous overcasts and 6 during the daylight hours. On 13 Aug, twelve B-24s of this group, in the face of accurate and intense anti-aircraft fire, bombed vessels in the harbor at night from mast-head height; then proceeded at a low altitude to bomb and strafe oil refineries and shore installations. So effective were these attacks, that both refinery areas were set on fire and 7 large oil tanks exploded. Two B-24s were sent on 15 August to photograph the damage inflicted by the first strike. On the basis of photographs obtained from this reconnaissance, nine B-24s were ordered on a raid against shipping and dock facilities on 17 August, and again flew through accurate and intense anti-aircraft fire. During the mission, many of the bombers were damaged by shell fragments and enemy fighters, although a number of the interceptors were destroyed or probably destroyed. Some of the B-24s were flown the entire distance back to their base on three engines. In this series of strikes, more than 40,000 tons of shipping were lost to the Japanese, serious damage was caused to the refinery installations, and the flow of oil and gasoline directly to the enemy tactical bases was disrupted. These achievements reflect great credit on the courage and skill of the airmen who performed these long and hazardous missions, and on the technical ability and devotion to duty of the ground personnel who readied the airplanes for flight. The 380th Bombardment Group (H) has upheld the finest traditions of the Armed Forces of the United States.

/s/ George C. Kenney
/t/ GEORGE C. KENNEY
General, United States Army
Commanding

CERTIFIED TRUE EXTRACT COPY:

Franklin C. Mason
FRANKLIN C. MASON
Capt., Air Corps