The 320th Bomb Group broke all past records this month for combat activity and results obtained, since its participation in the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations. It also culminated the first 2-26 night mission flown in this theatre in outstanding fashion.

During January 1944 the 320th Bombardment Group:

a. Engaged in 22 combat missions
b. Flew 616 combat sorties
c. Flew 16 weather sorties
d. Dropped 857.67 tons of bombs on targets located in Italy

2. Lost 11 c/2s; 5 due to flak, 4 due to E/A, and 2 for other reasons
3. Destroyed 11 E/A in the air and on the ground, probably destroyed 2 E/A and disabled 2 E/A
4. Lost 7 crews due to flak and fighters

Attached to this outline is a sketch drawn by Col. B. F. Heckscher, of Group 3-L, also known as the "Wildcat," which vividly portrays the 320th Bombardment Group's history since its activation up to February 1, 1944. Chronologically the following scenes are shown - activation, alligator, crocodile and man, Florida - Troop train to 100 - Rich and Ghrist, air raid shelter, England - Boat activities, England to Africa - Oran, La Senia, Tafouli, Meliana and conditions pertaining thereto - Party at La Senia - work with B-17 outfit - C-38's representative, escort - Berricoude, Lesculliot, Al Lethan and Bloiside - night mission at Decimo, present base, former target - Figure 320 is visible in the sketch.
1. The strength of the 320th Bombardment Group comprising Group Headquarters and 4 Squadrons, as of this date, numbered 334 Officers and Flight Officers and 1184 Enlisted Men. This figure was reduced during the course of the month as a number of Officers and Enlisted Men, who completed their tours of duty, departed for the States for further orders.

2. Bombing activities were inaugurated today for 1944 by the Group with its first mission of the year. A 27 plane formation dropped 1000 lb. bombs on the 29 Bridges at Ventimiglia, Italy. An excellent pattern of bombs bracketed both bridges and at least 2 spans of the first bridge were reported demolished. Neither Flak nor fighters were encountered and all our a/c returned safely to this base.

3. A Group formation of 28 B-26's took off this morning to bomb the Roccaessa Highway Bridge, Italy. 500 lb. bombs were dropped on the target and heavy accurate Flak was encountered. 3 a/c landed at Naples/Pozzigliano A/D, 2 seriously damaged by Flak and the other acting as escort.

   The remainder of our a/c returned safely to the base though quite a few were damaged by Flak.

4. Old man weather said no mission today. This time Capt. Devoe was right because the 17th and 319th did get to their targets but returned with their bombs because of 10/10 cloud cover.

5. Siena L/Y, Italy, was today's target. The Group formation was over the target but no bombs were dropped because of weather. One of our a/c, on returning, crash landed and was destroyed. The crew is safe.

6. A Group formation of 36 B-26's had a repeater for today and dropped 55.5 tons of 1000 lb. bombs on the Roccaessa Road Bridge. There was an excellent concentration of bombs in the target area and all our a/c returned safely, a number of them damaged by Flak. Landing of the a/c was momentarily delayed then a 1000 lb. bomb, which having hung up, was being returned to this base, fell thru the bombay doors.
Major John C. Montgomery reported to Group today to assume his post as Group Surgeon replacing Major Koos who has been transferred to the 15th Air Force.

Today's target was the L/Y at Siena, Italy. 28 B-26's dropped 500 lb. demolition bombs on Grosseto L/Y instead because the primary target was totally obscured by clouds. The formation was unescorted and after bracketing the l/Y with an excellent pattern of bombs our s/c returned safely.

Today's Group mission was unique for it marked the first time a B-26 night mission was flown in the Theatre of Operations. At 2000 hours 3 B-26's, unescorted, took off to bomb Volosino Iron and Steel Works, Italy. They dropped 24 x 500 lb. demolition bombs on the target at 2143 hours from 8500' and returned safely at 2258 hours. All the bombs landed in the target area with direct hits scored on the blast furnace and iron and steel works building. On the breakaway, a large explosion ignited up the target area and it was all nice as the formation left the Italian coast.

Lt. Col. Fletcher was Flight Commander and the other Headquarters personnel participating were Capt. Aver, Capt. Cook, Capt. Jallbury, Lt. Pahres, Lt. Fargo, Lt. Fields, and Capt. Lupac.

The Headquarters enlisted men's Club had its gala opening tonight. "Oasis" stood true to its name and the evening was a howling success. It will serve as an excellent source of relaxation and diversion for the men in their spare hours. Officers of Group Headquarters and Base and 11th Group personnel were guests of the Club and a grand time was had by all.

Several Officers assigned to the A-2 section of the 9th Air Force in England, visited Group today. They were particularly interested in gathering information regarding the mobility of our unit, for they were extremely well impressed with the efficiency of our Operations and with the
L-26’s took off this morning to bomb Orvieto and bridge, South. They were unescorted and bracketed the bridge with an excellent pattern of 1000 lb. demolition bombs, scoring probable hits on the bridge and one approach. Flak was intense and accurate and though 16 of our a/c were damaged, all returned safely to this base.

Lt. J. R. Edwards of Group 1-1 was promoted to the rank of Captain today.

Auto Y and 1st Bridge, Italy, was today’s target. A formation of 27 B-26’s dropped a good concentration of 1000 lb. bombs in the Y but missed the bridge. Flak was heavy, intense and accurate and several B-109’s attacked the rear of this formation. The lead ship, piloted by Lt. Green, with Major McCready as Flight Commander, was hit by Flak 20 seconds before bombs away and caught on fire. The pilot continued his bomb run, dropped his bombs and then fell below the formation and 7/a charges were seen to open.

Lt. Speller’s a/c after fighter attacks was seen with both engines smoking and headed south in the vicinity of Lake Vico at 4,000’ apparently under control. 1 L-109 was probably destroyed and 1 had-109 was damaged. Our Group lost 2 L-26’s, 14 crew missing, and 5 men were killed and injured.
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<td>17.</td>
<td>Once again Orte RR Bridge, Italy, was the Group target. A Group formation of 28 B-26's dropped 1000 lb. demolition bombs on the target with an excellent concentration across the approaches and several hits scored in the north portion of the L/Y. Flak was moderate and accurate and 20 B-26's were damaged and 6 crew members were injured therefrom. Lt. Col. Fletcher, Group Commanding Officer and Flight Commander on the mission received a head injury due to flak over the target.</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>27 B-26's of the 320th Group took off to bomb Piombino L/Y, Italy. 1000 lb. demos and 500 lb. demos with 6 to 24 hour delay fuses were dropped on the target in an excellent pattern. Large explosions were observed and a good number of rolling stock were destroyed. All our a/c returned safely after encountering moderate accurate flak which injured 1 crew member and damaged 7 a/c.</td>
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<td>Captain Duncan reported for duty today with Group S-2 in the capacity of Army Liaison Officer. His outfit is the Glasgow Highlanders, a British unit and he has a broad background regarding ground troops.</td>
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<td>Lt. J. E. Kenzie who was on detached service at Group Headquarters, setting up the Group mass returned to his Squadron.</td>
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<td>Lt. John C. Edwards was appointed as Acting Commanding Officer of the 444th Squadron, replacing Major McCrory who is missing in Action.</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>Viterbo A/D, Italy, was the Group target for today. 36 B-26's took off and dropped 500 lb. demos in a good concentration across the A/D. Slight flak was encountered and all our a/c returned safely.</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>A Group formation of 36 B-26's hit the Viterbo L/Y today. An excellent concentration of bombs covered the yards and large explosions were visible for several minutes after the formation left the target. About 25 RR cars were destroyed and a number of buildings hit.</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>A familiar target was the mission for today. 36 B-26's hit the RR Bridges north and south of Orvieto, Italy. Both bridges were well bracketed.</td>
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with bombs but very accurate flak at the South bridge took a heavy toll. When the final count was taken it showed, 2 B-26's lost; 1 B-26 missing; 11 B-26's damaged and 8 crew members injured by flak. This was the roughest day the Group has had in about 6 months.

There was a Group meeting tenite of all Officers of the various Squadrons. Excitement ran high as Col. Austin of the 42nd Wing told about the new Allied landings to be made at dawn tomorrow south of Rome. Capt. Duncan in interesting fashion covered the ground situation pertaining to the landings and Col. Austin stating he was pinch hitting for Lt. Col., Fletcher, very instructively discussed the part the Air Corps would play in the Operation.

Capt. E. H. Brewer, Asst. Group Operations Officer, was appointed Commanding Officer of the 444th Squadron to fill the vacancy of Lt. J. G. Edwards, who is missing in action.

Today's target was aimed at isolating the new bridgehead and prevent the enemy from pouring in reinforcements. 34 B-26's dropped 500 lb. bombs on the Road Junction at Vellicri, Italy, weaving an excellent pattern over the target. 1 B-26 crashed on take-off and was destroyed; crew is safe, one man suffered a broken arm and leg. All our a/c returned safely from the mission.

A Group formation of 33 B-26's took off to bomb the Road between Carsoli and Togliacozzi, Italy. After reaching the target area they returned to this base with their bombs because the target was totally obscured by clouds.

Major Hacia, Group Executive Officer, who was on leave to the States after completing a combat tour of duty, returned today.
25. Terni L/Y, Italy was the Group target but due to cloud cover Rieti L/Y was bombed. An excellent concentration of bombs bracketed the center of the L/Y, cutting the entire width of the yard, destroying upwards of 20 RR cars in addition to the RR station and warehouses which received direct hits. Some of the a/c were not in a position to drop and all our a/c returned safely.

26. Lt. W. T. Rucker of the 443rd Squadron has taken over his new duties as Asst. Group Operations Officer, replacing Capt. Brewor who is now 444th Squadron CO.

Group Headquarters opened its new mess hall today. It is well constructed of brick and has 3 sections; the Officers Mess, the Enlisted Men's Mess, and the Kitchen, and the new setup will afford greater comfort in messing, especially in inclement weather. It would be opportune to mention that Major O'Toole, Adjutant, has an uncanny way of keeping it most Secret within Group Headquarters, whenever steak is on deck, which is not often, so as to avoid a sudden flow of visitors, all most welcome, be assured, but that would tax the limited facilities of the mess. On very rare occasions somehow the news does leak out.

27. A Group formation of 34 B-26's hit Terni L/Y, Italy, today. An excellent concentration covered the yards and considerable rolling stock was destroyed. One Ary of bombs landed directly on the Iron Works. Slight flak was encountered and all our a/c returned safely.

28. 28 B-26's took off this morning to bomb Orvieto RR Bridge North, Italy. They were unescorted and dropped 1000 lb. demo's on the target. It was really a bang up job. 100' of the Bridge was wiped out and a Troop Train of 10/50 cars received direct hits, destroying 10 cars, derailing 3 and the remainder buckled up in an arch. All our a/c returned safely.

The following message was received from the Commanding General of the 12th Air Force: "Very many congratulations to you and the 320th Bombardment
Group on splendid attack today on Orvieto Bridge. Photographic Reconnaissance Unit confirms bridge completely out in 2 places and 2 fires burning at 1400 hours."

Today's target was the Lanziana RR Bridge, Italy. 35 B-26's were over the target and an excellent concentration bracketed the target with 1000 lb. demolition bombs, with several direct hits on the bridge and on the approaches. 3 B-26's and 2 crews were lost due to flak and 10/12 IL-109's which attacked the rear of the formation. A/c #39 piloted by Lt. Conrad, was badly shot up but thru skillful piloting he reached Corsica, where the crew bailed out and the ship crashed in the mountains. A/c #41 hit the water off Ledispoli and 7 chutes were seen to open. A/c #68 was seen to explode enroute to Corsica and no chutes were seen. 2 IL-109's were destroyed and 1 IL-109 was probably destroyed.

As the month came to an end the combat strength of the Group was as follows:

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<tr>
<th>SQUADRON</th>
<th>NO. OF GUNS</th>
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<tr>
<td>441st</td>
<td>17</td>
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Total: 71