

GENERAL ORDERS,
NO.63

WAR DEPARTMENT,
WASHINGTON 25, D. C., 5 August 1944

Section
V

BATTLE HONORS-Citations of units -----

V-BATTLE HONORS.- 2. As authorized by Executive Order No. 9396 (sec. I, Bull. 22, WD, 1943), superseding Executive Order No. 9075 (sec. III, Bull. 11, WD, 1942), citation of the following unit in General Orders, No. 78, Headquarters Thirteenth Air Force, 27 June 1944, as approved by the Commanding General, United States Army forces in the South Pacific Area, is confirmed under the provisions of section IV, Circular No. 333, War Department, 1943, in the name of the President of the United States as public evidence of deserved honor and distinction. The citation reads as follows:

The *307 Bombardment Group (H)* is cited for outstanding performance of duty in action against the enemy on 29 March 1944, when it conducted the highly successful bombing of Truk, one of the most strongly fortified and heavily defended enemy bases in the South Pacific, and the key to the Japanese inner-defense circle. This mission was in support of and coordinated with a Naval task force operating in that proximity and had as its immediate objective the neutralization of Truk during our Naval action against the enemy. It involved difficulties and hazards greater than in any other single mission previously undertaken by units of the Thirteenth Air Force. To accomplish the assigned task, it was necessary that a flight of approximately 1,700 miles be made entirely over water, without any fighter support, and requiring 13 hours and 30 minutes for its completion. En route to the target two severe weather fronts were successfully penetrated. From a navigational standpoint the flight represented a peak in achievement. Two squadrons with 20 airplanes delivered a devastating attack against Eten airfield, the key airdrome in the Truk Islands, destroying 49 enemy airplanes on the ground and destroying or severely damaging 21 hangars, shop buildings, and warehouses, and scoring 37 direct hits on the concrete runway, making it unserviceable. Immediately following this strike the formation was attacked by an estimated 75 enemy fighters and for 43 minutes there ensued one of the bitterest aerial combats ever experienced in the South Pacific area, during which 31 enemy fighters were shot down, 12 probably destroyed, and 10 damaged. The brilliantly successful attack by the *307th Bombardment Group (H)* demonstrated the vulnerability of Truk to our land-based bombers. The success of this mission which struck such a devastating blow to the enemy, exemplifies the highest type of leadership, teamwork, and flying skill and is in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service of the United States.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:
G. C. MARSHALL,
Chief of Staff

OFFICIAL:
J. A. ULIO,
*Major General,
The Adjutant General*