

HEADQUARTERS TWENTIETH AIR FORCE
APO 234, c/o Postmaster
San Francisco, California

GENERAL ORDERS)
:
NO. . . . 124)

10 December 1945

SECTION V

DISTINGUISHED UNIT CITATION As authorized by Executive Order 9396 (Sec I, WD Bul 22, 1943), superseding Executive Order 9075 (Sec III, WD Bul 11, 1942), and under the provisions of paragraph 2d(1), Section IV, Circular No 333 WD 1943, and letter, Headquarters United States Army Strategic Air Force, file AG 200.6, subject: "Distinguished Unit Badge," dated 11 October 1945, the following units are cited for outstanding performance of duty in action against the enemy:

The 39th Bombardment Group (VE) is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy. In preparation for a maximum effort bombing mission against the highly important Otake oil refinery and storage area on the Japanese home island of Honshu, the ground personnel worked with untiring vigor and exceptional technical ability to bring their B-29 aircraft to peak operating efficiency. On 10 May 1945 twenty-nine very heavy bombers of the 39th Bombardment Group (VE), assigned to lead the entire wing on this vital strike, took off from their base on Guam. Over more than 1500 miles of open sea, undaunted by the dangers of the flight and the attack against a heavily-defended priority target in the hearth of the enemy mainland, they pressed on to the initial point. On the bomb run, approximately forty-three aggressive fighters attacks were made on the bombers, which were flying without benefit of friendly escort. Gallantly fighting off this fierce resistance, the gunners destroyed or damaged ten of the attacking planes. Hostile ground installations hurled intense and accurate heavy caliber anti-aircraft fire at the B-29's throughout the bomb run and well into the breakaway. Fifty vessels of the Japanese fleet, anchored in the Inland Sea near the target, added a shattering concentration of flak to the savage fire of the ground batteries. Despite this fanatical defence, which cripple aircraft throughout the formation, the determined crews of the 39th Bombardment Group (VE) pressed on unswervingly to the objective. From an average altitude of 15,400 feet they cascaded high explosives on the oil refinery with extreme accuracy. Every squadron hammered the target with direct hits, achieving devastating results. On this bombardment one of the most successful precision attacks of the Pacific air war, a vital source of high octane gasoline for the Japanese war machine was rendered completely inoperative. The exceptional resolution and courage exhibited by the combat crews on this highly important strike against the enemy and the technical skill and devotion to duty of the ground personnel combined to form a brilliant chapter in the history of the armed services of the United States. Their actions reflect highest credit on the 39th Bombardment Group (VE) and the Army Air Forces.

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BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL PARKER:

OFFICIAL:

/s/ Gustav A Neuberg
/t/ GUSTAV A NEUBERG
Lt Col, AGD
Adjutant General

R K TAYLOR
Brigadier General, USA
Chief of Staff

A TRUE COPY:

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12/15/45