

**GENERAL ORDERS**  
**No. 126**

**WAR DEPARTMENT**  
**WASHINGTON 25, D.C. 24 October 1946**

**V. BATTLE HONORS-** As authorized by Executive Order 9396 (Sec. I, WD Bul. 22, 1943), superseding Executive Order 9075 (Sec. III, WD Bul. 11, 1942), citation of the following unit in the general orders indicated is confirmed under the provisions of Section IV, WD Circular 333, 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 452d Bombardment Group (H) is cited for outstanding performance of duty in action against the enemy by accurately bombing the tactically important airfield at Kalttenkirchen, Germany, on 7 April 1945. A successful attack on this installation would ground a sizeable force of the enemy's jet-propelled fighters and reduce the effectiveness of his aerial efforts to harass Allied ground forces at a crucial time. Although under considerable pressure after having serviced 23 combat missions during the preceding 30-day period, the ground crews worked diligently and enthusiastically all night to insure mechanical perfection of their aircraft and the success of this tactically important mission. On the morning of the attack, thirty-eight B-17 type aircraft carrying ninety-five and one-half tons of general-purpose bombs took off on this mission, involving a round trip of one thousand and one miles and of approximately seven and three-quarters hours duration. En-route to the target, harassing antiaircraft fire was encountered at Lauenburg, Germany. At 1242 hours in the Steinhuder Lake area, the group was subjected to sharp enemy fighter attacks. Approximately 40-50 mixed ME. 109's, F.W. 190's and ME 262's taking full advantage of cloud cover, contrails, and sun position, initiated a series of continuous, aggressive, and fanatical attacks upon the bombers. Desperation on the part of the enemy was evidenced by the closeness and utter abandon with which they pressed their attacks through a veritable wall of steel poured forth from the bomber formation. Enemy tactics were thrown to the wind and attacks were made from all clock positions. Two B-17's were rammed by F.W. 190's. This all out effort to annihilate the group lasted 40 minutes and continued even while the group was on the bombing run. Three fortresses were lost and thirteen suffered battle damage before the group reached the target. A fourth B-17 went down after the target as a result of damage inflicted during the attack. During the fierce aerial battle, the gallant crews maintained perfect formation under superior leadership and valiantly repulsed the aggressors, inflicting severe losses. The gunners of the group accounted for 13 enemy aircraft destroyed, 2 probably destroyed, and 6 damaged. Without once wavering from its primary duty to destroy an enemy objective, the group made a highly successful bombing run over a five-tenths undercast. Thirty-five aircraft unleashed eighty-eight tons of bombs on the assigned target with devastating results. The officers and enlisted men of the 452d Bombardment Group (H) displayed extraordinary heroism, vigorous determination, and unwavering devotion to duty above and beyond that of all other units participating in the same operation. Their noteworthy accomplishments constitute an invaluable contribution to the war effort of the United States and reflect the highest credit on themselves and the Army Air Forces. (General Orders 1173, Headquarters 3d Air Division, 27 June 1945.)

**BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:**

**OFFICIAL:**

**EDWARD F. WITSELL**  
Major General  
The Adjutant General



**//Certified True Copy//**

**DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER**  
Chief of Staff