

**303rd BG(H)**  
**DISTINGUISHED UNIT CITATION**  
11 January 1944

**O**n 17 June 1944, the First Bombardment Division and its Bombardment Groups were awarded the Presidential "Distinguished Unit Citation" for actions on the 11 January 1944 Oschersleben mission. Most of the 8th Air Force, assigned to other targets in the vicinity of Oschersleben, turned back because of adverse weather, leaving the First Division to face the might of the Luftwaffe virtually alone. One of the fiercest aerial battles of the war ensued in which the First Division fought brilliantly, and still bombed the target. They received a citation from President Roosevelt. The text of the citation reads:



*Distinguished Unit Citation Ribbon*

**DISTINGUISHED UNIT CITATION**

**T**he 1st Bombardment Division (H), is cited for extraordinary heroism, determination, and esprit de corps in action against the enemy on 11 January, 1944.

On this occasion the 1st Bombardment Division led the entire Eighth Air Force penetration into central Germany to attack vital aircraft factories. After assembly was accomplished and the formation was proceeding toward Germany, adverse weather conditions were encountered which prevented effective fighter cover from reaching the 1st Bombardment Division. Taking full advantage of the relative vulnerability of the lead division, the enemy concentrated powerful forces against it.

The scale of the enemy attack is graphically indicated by the fact that 400 encounters with enemy aircraft were recorded by units of the 1st Bombardment Division. The gunners met these continuous attacks with accurate fire, and the division continued toward the targets as briefed where bombs were dropped with excellent results.

On the return trip the enemy continued to concentrate his efforts on the 1st Bombardment Division. Figures of enemy aircraft claimed by our gunners indicate that the heroism of this division inflicted heavy losses on the enemy in the air as well as on the ground. Two hundred and ten enemy aircraft, the largest number ever claimed by any division of the Eighth Air Force for any one mission confirmed as destroyed, 43 probably destroyed and 84 damaged.

The division lost 42 heavy bombers and many of those which returned were heavily damaged. Four hundred and thirty officers and enlisted men failed to return, 2 were killed, and 32 were wounded. The extraordinary heroism and tenacious fighting spirit demonstrated by the 1st Bombardment Division accomplishing its assigned task under exceptionally difficult conditions reflect highest credit on this organization, the Army Air Forces, and the Armed Forces of the Unit.