

## RECEIVES HIGHEST UNIT AWARD



**15TH AAF IN ITALY**—Staff Sergeant Calvin H. Fletcher, 24, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ellis B. Fletcher, Stilwell, Okla., a waist gunner with a B-24 heavy bomber group which has received the highest unit award, the Distinguished Unit Citation, 15th AAF Headquarters announced.

He is now entitled to wear the Distinguished Unit ribbon. The award was given for the precision bombing of the Bad Voslau, ME-109 fighter plane factory, the pride of Herman Goering, had just swung into production, when it was attacked by the 15th AAF. Despite intense flak and numerous enemy fighters, this particular group led its entire wing directly over the target, and literally wiped the factory off the face of the earth. Not one building was left untouched. Called by the press "the finest example of precision bombing by Liberators," the destruction was so complete the Nazis never made an attempt to rebuild the plant, or even remove the debris. The group was commanded at the time of the attack by Col. Marden M. Munn of Albany, Calif., who was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his leadership and flying skill.

Sgt. Fletcher entered the service on January 4, 1941 at Oklahoma City. He is credited with 50 combat missions and holds 5 Oak Leaf Clusters to the Air Medal.

# FIRST YEAR OF 15TH AIR FORCE BRINGS MUCH WOE TO GERMANS

## Wipes Out 5,624 Luftwaffe Planes and Strangles War Machine of Hitler by Unceasing Blows.

(By SID FEDER.)

Fifteenth Air Force Headquarters, Italy, Nov. 4.—(A. P.)—Just one year ago, the Fifteenth air force was activated as a strategic long range bombard group. Saturday all the folk gathered round to marvel at how the child has grown.

The Fifteenth was weaned on Ploesti oil, and enemy factories and airfields. It cut its teeth on 5,624 Luftwaffe planes wiped out in the air and on the ground.

Altogether, the Fifteenth has sprayed close to 300,000 tons of bombs over the Balkans, Germany, Greece, Austria, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Poland and France. Fringing thunder from the south, the force under eager smoking Maj. Gen. Norman Twining has chased the Luftwaffe from southern European skies, strangled the German war machine wherever it has ranged and scrambled communications so completely that rarely have the Nazis had more than one main trunk escape or supply line available at one time in the Balkans.

### RECORD OF DESTRUCTION ON NAZI WAR MACHINE.

More than 8,000 railroad cars and hundreds of locomotives have been blown up, 15 per cent of the Axis railroading manufacture has been wiped out; Nazi plane production a short because of the bombardment of the plants in Austria, Yugoslavia, Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, assembly lines Col. Marden Munn of Albany, Calif., got the D. F. C. for one job April 23 when his heavies put 312 of 322 high explosives into the target area at the Bad Voslau, Austria, plant and last May 16 Liberators under Col. Thomas Stead of Etowah, Tenn., virtually obliterated the Wiener Neustadt plant.

Operating alongside their big brothers, the Liberators and the Fords, Lightning and Mustang fighters under Brig. Gen. Dean C. Strother of Austin, Texas, have done overtime work as escorts and as offensive spearheads in wrecking trains, shooting up enemy concentrations and strafing enemy airfields. The Luftwaffe is now so cut up that, compared to the monthly

average of 350 enemy fighters shot down since last November, the Fifteenth found only fourteen German craft in the air in September. Just for the record those fourteen never will be in the air again.

### BOMBERS BIG STORY IN DOINGS OF FORCE.

Lieut. Col. Herschel Green, the Mayfield, Ky., mosquito who piled up some 400 flying combat hours before taking a desk job, is top man in the Mediterranean theater with eighteen enemy planes to his credit, six of them in one afternoon last January. Back of him is Maj. Samuel J. Brown, Bartlesville, Okla., fifteen and one-half.

The numbers are the big story. Since April, they have wiped out 80 1/2 per cent of the capacity within their range, 40 per cent of the aggregate available to the Wehrmacht from all fronts.

The top job was the operation against Rumania's Ploesti fields.

The Germans made Ploesti one of the most heavily defended areas in Europe, but in spite of virtually impenetrable smoke screens, ack-ack guns and all kinds of feints and tricks aimed at steering the heavies to other terrain, the Fifteenth powdered Ploesti nineteen times to Aug. 19 and production was cut from 700,000 tons a month to a trickle of 24,000. Nine refineries were flattened completely, the faucet ran slowly in the other six.