On March 30, the Third Group strength was bolstered by the arrival, from Bachelor Field, North Territory, Australia, of the remenants of the Twenty Seventh Group. These twenty five officers and two enlisted men were personnel of the Bastard Son of the Third Group, which had been sent to Manila, Philippine Islands, and which was fighting as infantry on Bataan. Of the organization, Lts. Rose, Birnn, Schmidt, Stafford, Bender, Salvator, and Capts. Hubbard and Stephenson were assigned to the Ninetieth Squadron.

One runway having just been completed the Third Bombardment Group was ordered to receive delivery, at Brisbane, of nine B-25C airplanes belonging to the Dutch. Lts. Schmidt, Wilson, Birnn, Keeter, Rose, Miller, and Richards were among those who returned to Charters Towers with these aircraft; three of which were assigned to the Ninetieth Squadron.

A training program was set up to familiarize the pilots and gunners with their new equipment, especially the new Bendix power turret, which was completely new to all personnel of the Squadron. This program became quite trying to the crews who were eager to get into action.

On April 8, 1942, the Ninetieth Bombardment Squadron sent to Brisbane Capt. Hubbard, Lt. Schmidt, Lt. Birnn, Lt. Bender, Lt. Ketter, and Lt. Wilson. Here in a secret session they learned that they were to conduct a series of raids from the Philippine Islands, along with members of the Thirteenth Bombardment Squadron. While in Brisbane the B-25s they had were to be fitted for the trip. Belly tanks were installed and at first Nose tanks were contemplated but later

abondoned. April 11, rolled around and at 1:00 AM Lt. Schmidt and Birnn as a team, Lt. Wilson and Keeter as a team, and Capt Gunn and Lt. Bender with Capt Hubbard as bombardier in ten B-25s of the Third Group, of which three were Ninetieth Manned, took off from Charters Towers in a drizzling rain and were off for the Phillipines. Dawn came and the group were strung around the Gulf of Carpenteria. Finally, around 9:00 on the 11th, all of the B-25s had checked in at Darwin and were being refuelled for the long haul to Del Monte, Mindanao. Lt. Schmidt and Birnn blew a tire so did not continue. In flights of three the band started for the Phillippines. Past Ambon, now Japanese held, the Ninetieth went, then through violent tropical equitorial fronts and storms and at dusk, past Davao, now Japanese held; and finally into Del Monte. Eventually everyone arrived here and assembled at the Del Monte plantation to make plans for the days to come. The group of five planes were to leave Del Monte at dawn on the 12th, and bomb Cebu City, then return to a hidden field at Valencia.

Dawn came and "Pete" Bender, "John" Keeter, and "Bennett" Wilson were in the planes that carried out a raid on warehouses and shipping at Cebu. The damage that they wrought was heavy but they were not to get off too lightly. Japanese float planes jumped the band and the fight was on. The Nips were none too eager however and one was shot down by the concentrated fire of the whole flight.

Back to Valencia the Ninetieth went to refuel and reload. There were many eager hands there to help as the Air Corps troops there

were thrilled to have decent American equipment at hand again. The two P-40s, the entire force from Maramag, a few miles distant, went aloft to cover the operation.

At 4:00 PM the Ninetieth made a second attack on shipping at Cebu and sunk two transports. The Anti-Aircraft from warships was heavy but they went through despite the barrage.

That night the planes were serviced and reloaded again and the crews got a bite to eat and a few hours sleep after two days almost constant operation.

At dawn they went out again, th s time to Davao's airport and supplies. The raid was highly successful and a fuel dump was left afire. Later one of the P-40s in delivering its final attack, however, hit the hanger top with its wing but managed to fly back, one wing badly crumpled. That left one P-40 for coverage.

To Valencia the gang raced and laid low while Japanese Bombers and reccos looked hard and far for them. They were not found however so in the afternoon of the 13th, another raid was made on Cebu City shipping. Again another hit on a transport and again a race against enemy planes. This time Zeros from Manila. Dusk was at hand however and the Japs were foiled. Del Monte, the field for friendly assembly that evening, however, had not been left alone. A B-17 was set afire and craters were left to show that the Nips had been there with heavy bombers and dive bombers.

For hours that night planes were reloaded with belly tanks and engines checked for the long flight back to Austrailia. Finally at

three AM the Ninetieth of Wilson and Keeter started for home. Wilson had fourteen people besides 3400 lbs. of gasoline to take off with. In a drizzling rain they came out of Del Monte in the dead of night. Bender had his belly tanks shot up at Del Monte and had to improvise some from a B-18. In fact his take off was finally delayed for another day and he didn't leave till the night of the 14th.

The usual grind followed to Australia. Long seiges of instruments plus storms and tropical fronts. At last Australia was beneath them and the Ninetieth Squadron had written history. The longest bombing raid of all time was finished. The Job - Well Done.

Because of the fall of Bataan and the subsequent assumption of the complete capture of the Twenty Seventh Group, the Twenty Seventh personnel were assigned to the Third Bombardment Group. Capt. R.D. Hubbard then replaced Lt. B. G. Wilson as Squadron Commander and Lt. Wilson became Operations Officer.

On April 19th, 1942 the Ninetieth Squadron was called upon to furnish the first two of numerous ships to perform reconnaissance missions in the New Guinea - New Britain area. Lt. R. L. L. Schmidt with Lt. Birnn co-pilot, T/Sgt Barlow bombardier, Lt. J. A. Riola navigator, carried out a reconnaissance of area D - New Britain and New Guinea with nil sightings. The second ships carried out a reconnaissance mission over a similar area but on returning to Charters Towers encountered extremely bad weather and crashed into a mountain near Cairns, instantly killing the entire mission - Lt. J. J. Keeter-pilot, Capt. G. G. Stephenson-copilot, Lt. E. T. Tisonyai-navigator,