

## **368TH GETS PRESIDENTIAL CITATION**

the 368<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group and attached units have been awarded the Presidential Unit Citation.

Following are IX Air Force Press releases for that day in which the 368<sup>th</sup> played a major part. The citation was based on the performance of the Group for 3 September 1944.

### **NINTH AIR FORCE BOMBERS DESTROY HUNDREDS OF GERMAN VEHICLES**

**NINTH AIR FORCE HEADQUARTERS, FRANCE (DELAYED)----**Catching thousands of retreating German vehicles in a tremendous traffic jam between MONS and BRUSSELS, P-47 Thunderbolts and P-38 Lightnings on Sunday destroyed 919 trucks, 757 horse drawn vehicles and 59 Armored cars to set a new days record for the NINTH AIR FORCE TACTICAL AIR COMMAND. The Fighter-Bombers virtually were unopposed by the Luftwaffe.

The concentration of vehicles was discovered early Sunday morning by pilots of the Thunderbolt group commanded by Colonel Gilbert L. Meyers, Milford, Iowa. The group earned top honors for the day by knocking out 294 trucks and 230 horse drawn vehicles and artillery pieces in the dawn to dusk attack.

“The Germans were using everything they can get hands on,” said Captain William R. Gibson, Jeanette, Pa., a Thunderbolt Squadron leader. “We caught a column of horse drawn artillery; some were four-wheeled long toms, and the rest were two wheeled field guns. When we strafed the column the horses belted in every direction.”

A squadron led by Captain John H. Lougee, 3 Cardinal Road, Worcester, Mass. flew a gunnery pattern which left 75 vehicles burning. Another led by Captain William R. Gibson, Jeanette, Pa. knocked out 240 vehicles southwest of MONS where they found a convoy estimated at 500 units.

“I’ve never seen anything like it”, said a P47 group commander. “In the small towns and villages, enemy vehicles were standing bumper to bumper. At one point, we were going down to strafe when a column of American tanks came racing along the road and we had to pull up.”

While the pilots were strafing the columns, Allied tanks raced into the midst of the enemy convoys and within a few minutes dozens of vehicles were abandoned by their crews.