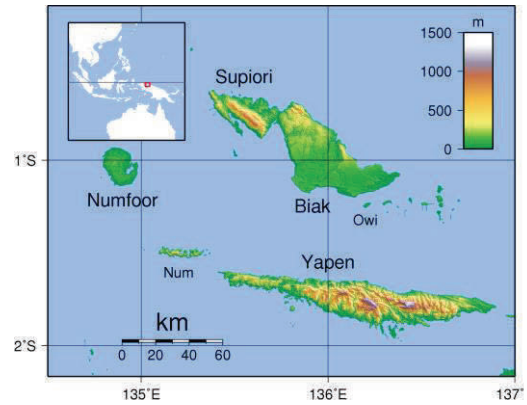


BIAK, SCHOUTEN ISLAND GROUP

The 5th Bomb Group increased its activities during May 1944. With the exception of a few strikes on Truk and Woleai, most of the Bomber Baron efforts were concentrated on the pre-invasion bombing of **Biak Island**.

Supplies, personnel, Moloner Runway and finally **Bosnek Town** supply area and beach defenses bore the brunt of these attacks. It is interesting to note that the 13th Air Task Force of which the 5th Bomb Group was a part, dealt almost exclusively with the pre-invasion beach defenses at **Bosnek Town** where the actual D-Day landings were made.

Perhaps the outstanding Bomber Baron strike in this series was the bombing of **Bosnek** Supply and Personnel area on **Biak Island**. Returning combat crews reported, "Twelve to fifteen good fires were started. Two very large fires, with flumes from 600 to 800 feet high, continued to pour forth black smoke which rose to 10,000 to 12,000 feet. This smoke was observed 65 to 80 miles from the target. Also several large explosions started a solid mass of white smoke to 2,000 feet. Other explosions popped for 15 minutes and were possibly caused by hits on the Japanese gasoline supply. A direct hit was made on the Japanese Army Air Flotilla Headquarters Building, demolishing it."



This series of strikes was unquestionably a huge success as witnessed by the commendation received from the Commanding General of the 5th Air Force:

"Extend my hearty congratulations on your highly successful initial contribution to the destruction of the enemy air forces." (General) Whitehead.

However, these strikes were not without cost to the group. Enemy fighters and anti-aircraft had shot down several of B-24 Liberators, damaged others and wounded several men. One of those losses was B-24J S/N 42-110109.