

War Diary of the 486th Bomb Squadron

September 1944

Prepared by: 1st Lt. Glenn L. Pierre

A. Original Unit

(See previous outline history.)

B. Changes in Organization

None for period covered

C. Stations

No change

D. Strength

- | | | |
|--|-----------------|----------|
| 1. At beginning of the period covered: | Officers – 101; | EM – 349 |
| 2. At end of period covered: | Officers – 92; | EM – 354 |

E. Marches

(See war diary of the 486th Bomb Sqdn for month of September, 1944)

F. Campaigns

The 486th Bomb Sqdn continued to participate actively in the bombing of bridges and gun positions in Italy. A majority of the missions were flown in strangle operations.

G. Battles (Missions)

[List of 19 missions are found elsewhere on this website, or see original War Diary.]

H. Commanding Officers in Important Engagements

In the month of September, 1944, Major Robert M. Hackney, Commanding officer of the 486th Bomb Sqdn, flew the following combat missions with Sq formations.

September 9, 1944 – Target: Defense Positions at L 815020.

I. Losses in Action

None

J. Former and present members how have distinguished themselves in action.

(See previous outline history.)

September 1, 1944

Morning mission – target was N Italy again – the sqdn made 50% because one box missed the target area and the other made a bullseye. Pictures were taken by S-2 on the line after the mission.....The afternoon was very warm and those free of duty cooled off at the beach...The 488th cinema presented “Minstrel Man” - only about 50% waited for the end before going home.....

2nd

Nickeling mission...Lt. Satterthwaite returned from Rome after having made a recording which is to be broadcast in the States. Rations were drawn today – nine candy bars – one coke – beer – etc. The food has been none too good lately but it is not because of the efforts of the cooks – it is because, we think, of the big drive in S France. The armament section has a fine story, so here it is in its entirety – Last night they handed us the nightmare load, the roughest that we have had in eighteen-odd months of operations. Nineteen ships with double clusters of frag bombs – 418 clusters, or, the way the four crews looked at it, about 104 apiece. So we got underway at about 2300 hrs with premonitions that these bombs would never see enemy territory, but with smiling assurances from operations that this load would not be changed. For three hours grunting and groaning, we got five hours sleep. Hardly had our eyes seen the light of day when our ears heard, “Frag mission canceled.” “Oh oh, here it comes” was unanimous. The final order sent everyone sky-high - “unload six ships for pamphlet mission.” Pamphlets! Ugh! They won't kill any Germans. And besides, Axis Sally said ours wasn't a good enough grade of paper for Nazi latrines. We won't do it. Captain Bridges had helped us the night before, and he was damned if he was going to pass the order on. While we silently applauded, he phoned operations [and told] Capt. Dozier that if they wanted the ships unloaded, he could take them up and salvo everything into the ocean. We wouldn't unload. But we unloaded. Major Hackney and Colonel Chapman said so. Stripes and bars don't equal eagles or leaves so – it was moider [sic. slang for murder] but we obeyed. And furthermore, we spent the afternoon unloading the other 13. As “Buf” Falo said when it was all over: “They broke out [sic. our?] hump”....

3rd

Church services – canceled mission for stand-by at 1400 and a very interesting talk by a Capt from the 8th Air Force at Gp Hdqs on E & E [Escape and Evasion], were the events of the morning. Mission finally left at about 1500 hrs to Italy – results – approach hit – score not yet known. The Cairo Cossacks returned today bedecked with souvenirs of all kinds. An orchestra at the Gp Officer's Club provided music for beer drinking last night the EM Red Cross Club was correspondingly entertained.....

4th

Morning mission to N Italy – results good. There is a good deal of optimism pervading the sqdn. Because of the excellent war news – predictions of course are rife – also are the rumors of our hoped for move to S France. Capt. Stith has left for 12 AF on DS [12th Air Force on Detached Service] for unknown reasons to date. The weather the last few days has been very clear and comfortable. A few more pictures were again taken for history and PR purposes. “Bombline” (less better known as Sgt. Krause) is happy these days because of our numerous gains causing numerous changes in the war situation maps. The Stars and Stripes have been arriving regularly and this paper is well known and

very well liked among all personnel. The 488th area cinema presented “Presenting Lily Mars” - acclaimed as an entertaining picture...The evenings are becoming cool – good sleeping.....

5th

Mission to N Italy again – results 100% and 38% on the two targets. Afternoon stand-down. No show tonight.....

6th

Eleven men left for the States today; 4 Officers and seven EM; all with smiles! No mission today, 10/10 coverage at about 5,000 feet. Cinema canceled on account of rain....

7th

Stand-down on account of weather. 340th ball team lost to the 406 Service organization and this lost the championship of the southern half of Corsica. Evening show was not bad – not good.....

8th

Stand-down again. Evening show - “Captive Women” - a “stinkeroo”...

9th

About ten officers and nine EM began their journey to the States today – one ship buzzed the area and shook the S-2, S-3 tent with propwash. Afternoon mission in support of troops on E side of Gothic Line – results good. The weather has been cool lately and it appears that soon the snap of fall will be in the air. Lt. McMillen landed late due to nose wheel trouble and consequently made a tail landing. Some of the men “trucked” down the road to the 306th show. It cannot be emphasized too strongly how important the movies are to pass the evening.....

10th

Chapel services again – well attended – well presented. Mission to ammunition factory not successful [on] account target could not be found. This is very rare. Other mission on troop concentrations in N Italy 100% successful. The new pilots are rapidly checking out – soon a majority of them will be flying as co-pilots. Because events are leaving the island in the rear areas, a number of personnel are getting anxious to “move up” to change scenery....

11th

Frag mission today on enemy defense positions – results – excellent. Practice missions and usual sqdn duties filled the day. The mess is mostly canned goods so of course one hears the usual objections about the meals. Evening show at the 488th was “Trip Around the World.” As a musical comedy the men enjoyed it as well as any as many laughs could be heard.....

12th

Mission this morning brought down the bridge. Bombing was excellent. New crews have been arriving during the past few days to replace those who have gone home. Training and duties carry on as usual..

13th

Morning mission today – N Italy bombed again. Afternoon nickeling mission on Gothic Line. Awards and decorations are coming in more regularly and the men appreciate this. Meals lately have been poorer, although the cooks try to improve them, because fresh food is not coming in. Lt. Strait, communications officer, has come into the sqdn to replace Lt. Pray who is now a bombardier – this is what appears to be the situation anyway. The cool nights will soon see a revived interest in stoves. Mail came in again and as always at mail time, anticipation is reflected ubiquitously. The evening cinema, a musical comedy, was slightly corny, slightly good – so on the whole it consumed a few monotonous hours....New crews are coming in rather frequently, but the tired ground personnel go on and on.

14th

Morning bombing mission of troop positions netted 5% - not good! Afternoon mission canceled after crews had made ready at their ships 25 minutes before take-off. Liquor is now in quality and for a short time to come, in quantity at the bar because of a recent flight to Cairo. Fresh meat tonight! Mosquitoes are using us for fresh meat of late....

15th

Very early morning mission canceled after all crews had been pre-briefed. Groans and curses were noticeable because of early rising to no avail. This is the second cancellation of a “hot” target and the men are now apprehensive. Stand-down for the balance of the day. Rain was threatening but only a shower occurred at 1700. The evening show presented “The Battle of China” lauded by all – one person said “It makes one feel like fighting.” The other film “Sing the Blues” was a musical comedy that a few people walked out on, but as a whole it had its humorous parts and good music. If only the corn would be left out!

16th

Early morning mission finally ameliorated exacerbated nerves. The Bologna M/T [Motor Transport] depot was well plastered as were gun positions. Flak was moderate and the returning crews were quite amazed...Steak for supper – a cool swim at the beach – usual practice missions etc filled the day....

17th

Usual church services and a hymn sing scheduled for the evening. The morning mission supported the Gothic Line attack. Results were 100%. The afternoon was spent from 2 – 4 listening to Lt. Col. from Washington D.C. who explained various aspects of insurance, GI Rights, bonuses, etc. It was an edifying lecture. Beer again came in with another PX day. Food is still generally poor and everyone hopes it will soon improve. More combat personnel are ready for the medical disposition board. Soon another large turnover in personnel is expected....

18th

Morning mission again in support of assault on Gothic Line – results 95%. The new combat personnel are flying regularly and soon new faces will be seen in all ships. Food is now quite poor and to alleviate this a ship has left for Sicily for fresh produce. The evening show “Three Men in White” was enjoyed by all....

19th

Stand-down; intermittent showers all day. Tent stakes were driven deeper and ditches were improved in anticipation of rain. No potatoes in the mess for several days – not good. The day as a whole passed monotonously to the accompaniment of rain splattering on tent roofs.....

20th

Six fifteen briefing had just got underway when a stand-by until nine was called on account of weather. Moaning and Groaning was audible but not without reason – the sky was ominous and the runway was spattered with mud puddles. Why call a mission in the first place? With intermittent rain all day the usual monotony pervaded the area with a bleak background. Tents and dwellings are being “winterized” for more cold damp weather which we hope is still at least a month away. Show canceled [on] account of rain and “bull sessions” were held in numerous tents.....

21st

Early morning mission canceled after everyone was up and had eaten. Weather again provided Jerry with respite. “Winterizing” of tents continues – It is rumored we are here to stay for some time yet – It is hoped we move soon. Food continues to be poor – one eats just part of a meal unless “C” rations are still a novelty...

22nd

Morning mission to N Italy blasted another bridge into the river. Evening show entitled “Shine on Harvest Moon” was acclaimed enjoyable and entertaining.....

23rd

Morning mission achieved mediocre results – bridge was not hit except on one approach. Usual practice missions were flown and various sections carried on their usual tasks...Dinner and supper boasted of wieners and steak. The evenings are dull – the club having lost its appeal because of the cooler weather. Parties are absent except for a few enterprising men who have “tent parties”.....

24th

Stand-down for the squadron today. Usual activities – an excellent supper and of course the Sunday services. During the day with a hymn sing at night which was contested by minor clouds.....

25th

Stand-down; weather is helping Jerry because we can't hit him if we can't see him. Evening meal was fresh meat, potatoes, and lettuce and tomatoes again. Show was “Bermuda Murder” which was not bad. During the day the crews flew practice missions, ground crews fixed the ships and the S-2 and S-3 as well as other sections carried on as usual....

26th

Stand-down for the sqdn. The days are quite warm and comfortable but the nights are actually cold. Soon winter weather will be here and the days will be short. Already at 1830 it is dark. The film “Desert Victory” was shown at the 488th area – it is a superb film and promises to be a celluloid epic of the battle in the desert in Africa during 1942....

27th

Stand-down again. The weather is comfortable but too cloudy for missions. The days drag on and soon one will be hearing griping to a larger degree because of the relative inactivity. Fresh meat for supper again – a new show for the evening “City without Men” was all right – after the show the usual bull sessions, card games, and reading.....

28th

Stand-down again [on] account of weather. Boredom is now a chief gripe. Fresh meat again for supper and a vegetable stew for dinner – both were tasty.....

29th

Stand-down again. The field and taxiways are muddy and the sky is windy and cloudy. Chicken for supper, a lecture by the ALO and the evening cinema entitled “Action in Arabia” proved to be the events of the day....

30th

Early afternoon mission relieved the stand-down siege. Results were reported as good. Steak for supper - “Bingo” at the EM Red Cross Club. And again the last of the month. Reviewing at the end of the month often gives much the same information because as a whole life in this sqdn has been rather ordinary. The usual missions were flown in support of the Italian campaign, food was very poor except for the last week, a prolonged stand-down period was experienced because of weather, a considerable number of crews were returned to the States and replaced by new crews, the various sections trained, worked, practiced, informed, griped, and carried on with usual red tape, personnel took trips to France, Italy, Egypt, Capri, Sicily and Tunis; the mail has been unsatisfactory because it seems to be delayed somewhere, crews are served with doughnuts and coffee after missions, tents are being winterized and a search for wood and stoves is on, the movies have been all right – some good and some bad, the church services are well attended and well presented, the Italian help was returned to Italy and now a few Corsican lads are substituting in the mess, usual PX rations, weather increasingly chilly – and so life goes on – a thrill and a novel experience for the newer men; a dull and empty life for those of many months overseas service. As a final word – the voting is now in effect and it is hoped the sqdn is politically conscious and interested enough to exercise the right for this very important aspect of the kind of life for which they are now working and fighting.....

[The original War Diary contains eight photographs, but captions for those photographs were not included in the record.]

[Many of these same events are also recounted in the War Diary of the 340th Bombardment Group HQ Squadron, though from a different perspective. The HQ diary can be found here:

http://57thbombwing.com/340th_History/340thGroupHistory.php

Transcription by Dan Setzer, son of Sgt. Hymie Setzer, 340th BG HQ Squadron. April 20, 2015]