

War Diary of the 486th Bomb Squadron

December 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 period covered: | Officers – 97 | EM – 372 |
| 2. At end of period covered: | Officers – 98 | EM - 378 |

E. Marches

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

F. Campaigns

The 486th Bomb Sqdn continued to participate in the bombing of bridges in Italy and Yugoslavia and in close support to the troops in Italy whenever the weather permitted

G. Battles (Missions)

[List of 16 missions can be found elsewhere on this web site, or see original War Diary.]

H. Commanding Officers in Important Engagements

In the month of December 1944, Major Robert M. Hackney, Commanding Officer of the 486th Bomb Sqdn, flew one combat mission on December 27, 1944 to Borovinca East R/R viaduct (Yugo)

I. Losses in Action

None

J. Former and Present Members who have distinguished themselves in Action

[See original War Diary for rank and decoration.]

Benjamin T. McMillen Arne R. Bylund Angelo Adams Edmund F. McDonald Donald B. Pray Robert H. Horton Leroy B. Kennedy James D. Smith John Galletin Raymond E. Jardine Walter Wooten Albert K. King Simon Levine	Marion L. Cooley Gordon P. Davis Carney H. Dowlen Lowell D. McKee Jack D. Layton Martin O. Fischel William E. Powers Frank W. Wilgren Paul Karaica Melvin L. Slocum Nicholas Vasil Conrad N. Wyma Paul Cantino Charles A. Horton Robert J. Zywicke	Robert D. Stevenson Edward A. McHale David P. Calloway Gerald P. Rahatz Charles D. Ross Francis J. Gowiski William C. Clements Harry X. Whalen Larry Summergrade Thomas H. Phelps Robert H. Horton James D. Smith
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December 1, 1944

Mission today to the Villavernia R.R. BR. Results were good. Nineteen E.M. (flying personnel) arrived yesterday. The sun appeared and felt good after an absence of several mornings.

2nd

Mission again – This time to Roveretto R.R. BR and the Calliano R.R. BR. The Calliano target was a hot one. - Lt. Cooley barreled off the end of the runway because his hydraulics were out, Lt. Calloway arrived home with 58 holes and Lt. Cantino luckily escaped an 88 M.M. explosion when the shell passed through his wing. As it was, no one was injured for which we are all very thankful. Basketball and other recreational activities constituted the remainder of the day.

3rd

Manuta East R.R. BR. today - results not good. Weather was bad, two ships with engine trouble but at least no flak. The following is submitted by Sgt. Holdridge of the line communication section “Lieutenant V.V. Strait admitted that he was finally becoming able to grin and bear a little under the strain of radio release. An ultimatum from Capt. Dozier brought long-lost and irretrievably missing headsets scurrying out of combat-crew tents like rats from a burning ship. Cpl. Vinturella, maintenance man, bitterly reviled the radio operator who threw the insignificantly-weighted tuning units from the rear of a homeward-laboring ship in order to lighten the load.”

4th

Today contained a visit by Gen. Canon and Gen. Knapp at which occasion a unit citation was presented for work done by the group in Tunisia and Sicily. The band played and the Sqdns passed in review. An E. & E. lecture was presented to the new crews by the S-2 section and the usual S-3 practice was carried out.

5th - 8th

Stand-downs – damp and chilly weather – arrival of nine new officers and nine new E.M. to fill out the crews. We wish them luck in the squadron. More work lies before all the sections to “break in” these new men.

9th

Winterization continues and soon the squadron will appear to be on a permanent basis with Nissen huts, cement floors etc. Large loads of Xmas presents are arriving which pleases all recipients. The Army appears to be doing a fine job with all the packages as it did last Xmas. Very few people had not received their packages, by Xmas of last year. Steak last night and tonight which we certainly welcome.

10th

Mission again – intense flak a few ME-109's battling with our P-47's over the Brenner Pass. The mess hall has been redecorated by several of the officers, Tipton, Mravinec, Phelps, etc. They have done a fine job and, with an imagination that would bring life to the girls on the walls, we could visualize a night club.

11th

Stand-down because of weather. Roast chicken for supper and more Xmas packages. Usual activities. Evening show “The Hairy Ape” not good.

12th

Stand-down for the squadron and the usual bomb trainer and flying practice were held. Afternoon cinema at the officer's club (one of the newer innovations). The new crews are keeping busy making their new homes comfortable. Evening show at the 306th “Always a Bridesmaid” - not good, but slightly amusing.

13th

Nickeling mission today (12 ships) over northern Italy. The day was warm but cloudy. Usual activities. New crews are settled down and several promotions of the “veterans” came through. Chicken for supper and the evening show “Maisie Goes to Reno” were enjoyed by all. The Officers' mess boasts of a few refurbishings everyday and the pre-fab hut converted for the recreation of the E.M. is also nearing completion.

14th

No mission again today for the squadron. The day opened bright and clear and the usual basketball games and repairs on tents continue. The S-2 war room is nearing completion and promises to be a rendezvous of interest for all the squadron, fresh steak for dinner this evening and a truck left with a movie crowd for the 306th show. An I. & E. discussion [Information & Education] was held with a small group at the E.M. Mess hall at 2030 hrs.

15th, 16th, 17th

Stand-downs account of weather. Xmas packages are steadily coming and though it appears some will be late, we hope most of them will be here. A U.S.O. show was presented and enjoyed Friday night at the Enlisted Men's Red Cross Club. Several men have departed for the States with smiling faces and those of us here who said “So Long” did so enviously. For these three nights chicken has been served for dinner – a streak of good luck that we hope will continue. The usual cinemas have been presented (when not prevented by rain) and the quality of pictures – some good, some bad.

18th

Again a stand-down and the ceremony of presentation of awards canceled due to rain. Chicken again for supper and a fine supply of mail. Decorations for the holiday season are taking effect at the officers' and enlisted mens' clubs; Holly, bamboo, chaff, cotton and paint have made very pleasant results. Most everyone is burning gasoline to keep their tents warm and the soot is now beginning to show on faces and about the area. The weather has been chilly but not very cold and of course with the clothing supplied by the army, everyone is dressed well.

19th

Two officers left today for the States, we wish them "Bon Voyage" and hope they arrive home by Xmas. Another crew arrived today and have been billeted. Rain has caused another stand-down and caused a gloomy day because of its intermittent character. Steak for supper tonight – The meals have been very good lately and caused no little pleasure. So far no tents have been destroyed by fire – We hope the men continue to be careful. A little mail came in – No show tonight so most will spend the evening "at home" - reading, writing, playing cards and or drinking at the clubs. A Cairo trip left a few days ago with intentions of returning by Xmas with liquor and eggs – we hope.

20th

Stand-down again. A dreary day punctuated by steak for supper and a show at the Enlisted Men's Red Cross Club

21st

No mission, no mail, no cinema, plenty of rain and hamburgers for dinner. On the whole a dreary and muddy environment. Group P.R.O. took pictures of the officers' mess.

22nd

Mission at last – to Lavis R/R Bridge up near the Brenner Pass – no bombs dropped due to weather conditions. The day is clear and cold and windy but certainly a relief from the drizzle and mud. The enlisted men's recreation hall is now being decorated for the Xmas season. Stoves are hot tonight because of the cold weather and a moderate number dressed in heavy coats attended the 488th open air show.

23rd

Stand-down on account of weather again. A slight dry snow and a cold wind kept most tent stoves going all day and most occupants at home. A few training classes were held but except for the usual squadron duties such as getting lumber for construction, making usual orders out on men going to Rome and elsewhere, requisitioning gasoline, and food, etc all was quiet. Cairo ship expected back today did not arrive nor did the ship from Tunis that left yesterday.

24th

Stand-down again – It seems as though we were not sent here to fly – Flying of late has been so infrequent. The day before Xmas was just like any other day as far as regular paper work, ship repairs, motor pool activities and reading, writing and bull sessions were concerned. But, there was one conspicuous exception – because of an abundant supply of Xmas liquor, there was an abundant display of inebriation. The group held an Xmas party for the children in Cervione by donating candy and cookies, etc. Later, a number of carols were sung by volunteers from the 486th over the public address system to the entire group. Parties were held at the Group and Squadron and the revelry was terminated after a midnight buffet at the 486th which consisted of fresh hard-boiled eggs, potato salad, coffee, bread, butter and corned beef. To those who arranged this snack, we are grateful, it was very tasty and well prepared.

25th

Today we celebrate the birth of the man who crystallized moral ideals that are called the principles of Christianity for which man appeared to have been striving 1944 years ago and often appears to be reaching for today. Our method of celebration may appear strange to those who are steeped in the ways of Christianity, because we consume large quantities of alcohol before and after dinner so that it is not long before we know not what we are celebrating, and soon thereafter we know not. Anyhow, the Squadron culinary section did a fine job of presenting turkey, cranberries, gravy, tomatoes, cauliflower, coffee, bread, butter, jam and apple pie for the feast. The evening contained a few cinemas, but on the whole it was spent quietly, as if the moral principles were being pondered by all heads, normal and big.

26th

A mission today to Roveretto, up near the Brenner Pass. The chaff and phosphorus bombs helped reduce the accuracy and amount of flak. The mission was declared successful – We hope – They get more successful every day. Doughnuts and coffee after interrogation for the crews who then hurriedly left group S-2 for the Squadron and for a dinner of fresh pork with applesauce. A meeting of I & E officers, another vehicle accident, a combat crew lecture and the usual cinemas. The most welcome gift today was a large shipment of mail – letters and packages, tonight means more censoring tomorrow morning.

27th

Mission Today to Borovnica, Yugoslavia, results good, target hit. The day was sunny though cool, not cool enough to cause cancellation of the two basketball games. The E.M. won but the the officers lost their game. The various sections are carrying on as usual doing their work as it comes along. Spanish rice for dinner, beans for lunch and fresh eggs for breakfast. An evening show at the 340th or the 324th or the 40th Station Hospital provided entertainment for the night.

28th

Same target today as yesterday – although the bridge was knocked down according to photo interpretation, it was decided to knock more of it down – This was accomplished because both boxes of this Squadron dropped patterns across the bridge. The day passed as usual and the evening meal boasted a number of French girls from Cervione for dinner in the officer's mess as guests of the E.M. for their party and dance which followed.

29th

Mission again today and again to Yugoslavia on the Borovnica target. Boxes did not bomb because of cloud coverage. Alternate in Italy was bombed by one 486th box – Results good. Usual duties and activities. Laundry was returned yesterday and again went out today.

30th

A mission today to the Brenner Pass; Calliano, resulted in two casualties, Sgt. Allwood was injured in the head, seriously and Sgt. Toole was struck in the mouth and jaw by shell fragments, also not a minor injury, but not as serious as Sgt. Allwood's. The bridge was covered by smoke from the bursts and the score was good. If only the politicians who instigate wars could be made to do the fighting, we would have few conflicts. The balance of the day was spent in the usual fashion, line men repairing, loading the ships, men in the area carrying on with the administrative detail. The days are cool and cloudy and stoves are busy all day and evening long. No show tonight so the customary bull-sessions, letter writing, reading, etc will predominate.

31st

A mission today and again to Calliano – and this time though holed no one was hit. Ship 6F, piloted by Lt. Calloway, made an emergency landing with the tail dragging in order to stop. Lt. Calloway's ship was hit by flak which knocked out the electrical system making it impossible to operate the radio or to release his bombs. Consequently with the added damage to the nose wheel a tail drag landing was necessary. A fine job of piloting and landing, Lt. Calloway. Sgt. Toole is not in serious condition and will be up and around after his face injury heals, but Sgt. Allwood is in critical condition. It is hoped he will improve so he can be returned to a base hospital.

This evening is the last one we will experience in this year of 1944. During the past year many marvelous victories have been won, many valorous deeds performed. We have suffered lives lost and injuries and wounds inflicted and we may prudently ask ourselves – For What? A simple answer is of course – To win the war, but will we win the war if we do not prevent another? And so each man must become cognizant of his part to see we bequest to our children no such similar a horror. To this end every soldier and civilian should acquaint himself with the nations as they exist today and so solve in an intelligent fashion problems of poverty, work, laws and human relations that tend to cause such conflicts. We cannot do this without the friendly cooperation of all peoples and without doing in our everyday lives those acts that are just, that are truly associated with the superiority and freedom of mans' mind as distinguishes him from lower animals – If we cannot be as men, we can expect to continue to fight like vicious animals. Let us then be men and lift ourselves above “Irresponsible freedom, artificial superiority and preferential justice.” D.R. Richberg, The Home Front Battle After the War.

January 1, 1945

C. Photographs as follows:

1. 486th Bombardment Squadron, 340th Bombardment Group, Alesan L/G, Corsica, December 1944:
Crew just returned from combat mission, Sgt. J. Mignago, S/Sgt. D. Linnabarry, Lt. O. Outlaw, Lt. J. Galletin, Sgt. J. Sztyga, Cpl. H. Roberts.
2. 486th Bombardment Squadron, 340th Bombardment Group, Alesan L/G, Corsica, December 1944:
Crew just returned from combat mission, S/Sgt. D. Linnaberry, Lt. L. Canon, Lt. L. Kennedy, S/Sgt. H. Rockafeller, Sgt. J. Mignago, Lt. R. Byland.
3. 486th Bombardment Squadron, 340th Bombardment Group, Alesan L/G, Corsica, December 1944:
Communications and message center personnel taken in front of message center: Sitting L to R: Cpl. J. Garrity, S/Sgt. H. Ackley, S/Sgt. D. Pittman. Kneeling L to R: Cpl. T. Parrish, Pfc. P. Saroglia, Pvt. G. Daniels, Cpl. P. White, M/Sgt. H. Mitchell, Sgt. L. Walker; Standing L to R: Pfc. L. Ojile, S/Sgt. G. Roe, S/Sgt. M. Holter, Sgt. B. Brune, S/Sgt. M. Cravens, S/Sgt. H. Ives, T/Sgt. W. Cawthon, Lt. V.V. Strait.
4. 486th Bombardment Squadron, 340th Bombardment Group, Alesan L/G, Corsica, December 1944:
Officer's basketball team, L to R: Lt. W. Clements, Lt. S Rohwer, Lt. L. Kennedy, Lt. G. Davis, Lt. A. McMillian.
5. 486th Bombardment Squadron, 340th Bombardment Group, Alesan L/G, Corsica, December 1944:
Inter Squadron Basketball Game on Corsica, 486th Officers VS 489th Officers.
6. & 7. 486th Bombardment Squadron, 340th Bombardment Group, Alesan L/G, Corsica, December 1944:
486th Officer's Club midnight snack, Christmas Eve, 1944

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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 period covered: | Officers – 97 EM – 378 |
| 2. At end of period covered | Officers – 91 EM – 377 |

E. Marches

(See War Diary of the 486th Bomb Sqdn for month of January 1945).

F. Campaigns

The 486th Bomb Sqdn continued to participate in the bombing of bridges in Italy and Yugoslavia and in close support to the troops in Italy whenever the weather permitted.

G. Battles (Missions)

[List of 19 missions is found elsewhere on this web site, or see original War Diary.]

H. Commanding Officers in Important Engagements

In the month of January 1945, Major Robert M. Hackney, Commanding Officer of the 486th Bomb Squadron flew one combat mission on January 17, 1945 to Calliano R/R Bridge #2, Italy.

I. Losses in Action

Sgt. Raymond D. Alwood, injured December 30, 1944, died January 2, 1945 from wounds sustained from a bombing mission to Calliano R/R Bridge #2.

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

[See original War Diary for rank and award.]

George R. Henthorn Cornelius G. Smits Charles F. Vail William F. Mravinec Robert G. Woolcott Randall G. Preston Marion F. Cooley William P. Laney Henry S. Greer Alvin E. Jackson Robert d. Douglas	John Kelmel Donald A. Kruetzfeldt Joseph Mignogna Arlie V. Phillips Cecil C. Usher Harry L. Roberts John C. Diehl Martin D. Fishel David P. Callaway Thomas D. Cahill Robert J. Zywicke	Carney H. Dowlen Robert N. Coupland John (NMI) Galletin Hugo M. Faust Robert A. Dilbeck Raymond J. Alwood
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January 1, 1945

The bridge at Palazzola received our attention today with all bombs in the target area. The mission was not subjected to flak except at extreme range and with inaccurate bursts. The day was celebrated by several men in the same fashion as was New Year's Eve. Otherwise the chilly and blustery day was as usual except for a turkey dinner that was very fine and for which the cooks are to be thanked. Lt. Carroll returned from his two day hospital stay out of a three day pass and informed us his flu and the lack of heat in the hotels gave him no little displeasure. Cinemas were held inside at the #306th Service Group and 40th Station Hospital for those who desired to attend.

2nd

No mission today due to weather which was cloudy and with a cool wind from the north. An I. & E. discussion, movies at the 306th and 40th Station Hospital provided the entertainment for the evening.

3rd

The 486th had two targets on one mission today, both in north Italy at the Brenner Pass line, results 100%. The men are signing up for the USAFI courses every day, so far about a dozen men have taken applications. In the afternoon a basketball game was held between the 486th and 487th at our court. Spanish rice for the evening meal and a G.L.O. talk for enlisted men at their Red Cross Club later.

4th

A mission today to San Margarita, Italy that did not obtain success. Better luck next time! Orders arrived allowing several more men to go home – Of their good fortune we are envious. The Xmas supply of mail has just about all arrived and it may be safely assumed, the edibles are at least half gone. Chicken for supper and cinemas at the 40th Station Hospital and 306th Service Group but none at the 340th. An afternoon show for officers at their group club helped pass the time for some of those not in the mission. The first meeting for those who signed up for algebra instruction under the auspices of the I. & E. program was held tonight.

5th

No mission due to bad weather – an intermittent rain and hail throughout the day cast melancholy shadows into tents and offices, chased only by dim glowing bulbs run on 110 AC. Chicken for the evening meal was enjoyed as was the show held in the enlisted men's mess hall for this squadron alone.

6th

No mission again because of the weather. The usual activities colored by an afternoon show at the officers club and an evening show at the 306th. Several men are preparing to leave for home at the break of a flying day. The evening again encouraged a drizzle.

7th

No mission again. Church services as usual, duties as always. Several officers and men bid adieu to the squadron as they left for the States with smiling faces. Hamburger for dinner, a cinema for the evening and a G.L.O. talk on the front situation by Capt. Johnson the Liaison Officer.

8th

Mission scheduled but canceled on account of front up north. An afternoon basketball game was won by the 486th officers who played the 489th officers. The steak at dinner was provocative of the chewing one puts in on an all day sucker and potatoes were missed. Mail deluged Sgt. Harkins but made the recipients happy.

9th

A mission today that paid all the way. Another bridge crumbled to the chant of "Gott in Himmel." Practice mission, practice in the trainer, all goes fine when the weather is fair. An evening show held in the Squadron area found an eager group of spectators that enjoyed "One Body Too Many." Lt. Monson, bomb sight maintenance officer was suddenly transferred to the 319th Bomb Squadron and started on his way home with that Group this morning.

10th

Mission canceled [on] account of weather after the crews reached the briefing room at Group. Huge thunderheads could be seen up north and appeared to pilots as the "Wall of China" appears to the primitive Chinese peasant as he labors with his oxen. Several new dogs and other miscellaneous material have been given the squadron by the now departed 319th Group. Finding objects to make the office and living tents more comfortable is often demanding of the ingenuity – and when such objects as bulletin boards, wooden houses, chairs, etc are presented gratis, they are much appreciated. An afternoon cinema at the Officer's Club (GP) presented "None But the Lonely Heart" a very finely done picture.

11th

Mission scheduled but canceled on account of weather. Evening show at the Enlisted Mens mess hall - "None But the Lonely Heart," enjoyed by all.

12th

Again the weather prevented a mission. The day was rainy and damp, the stoves were hot and well appreciated. Chicken for the evening meal and a movie at the Enlisted Mens mess hall, entitled "Rhapsody in Blue," a dance at the Officers Club but the incessant rain kept many at home. A ship left for Cairo today: Ships scheduled for Rome and Naples stayed on the ground. From Sgt. Holdridge of the line communication section comes the following excerpts, that cover this part of January - "Even as

radio release continued its erratic course, a new spectre loomed and fearsome speculations were let loose. Speculation #1 – Just how complicated was SHO-RAN to prove. (Cpl. Vinturella, first back from D.S. [Detached Service] at the 310th to study the new topic, was mum and mysterious, said he would return to his erstwhile profession, as a radio mechanic, with his tongue in his cheek. Pfc. Ojile, present D.S. incumbent was reported missing his trumpet. Sgt. Brum, gathering that SHO-RAN, which – perhaps it can be told – is a method of radar bombing – and being both fascinated by it and admittedly – and repeatedly – tired of being a buck sergeant, prepared to depart for the 310th as soon as Ojile returned. Speculation #2 was another method of radio release to be tried. This brought shudders to all. The homeward departure of the 319th, which brought envy to all, brought headaches as well to communications as commercial radios at bargain prices, picked up from the about to depart, appeared at the line tent for “minor” repairs. 6M, Sgt. Whipple's new ship, transferred from active service at the 319th, was gigged only 37 times by the communications inspector. Remembering the 44 gigs against the lamented 6T mechanics of all trades hoped that the new ship would at least better 6T in respect to number of missions. The smiling blond officer with the captain's bars was Capt. Vancy V. Strait, communications officer, vice 1st Lt. Strait.

13th

Weather again canceled a projected mission and local time was the extent of the flying. Storage eggs from the States for breakfast – not good – too much storage! Usual canned goods for lunch and fresh pork for dinner. Potatoes are lacking and they are missed. The evening brought forth entertainment by a U.S.O. unit, half the prospective spectators turned back because of the large crowd, but the show was enjoyed by those who attended.

14th

A heavy rain all night before and an overcast again prevented a mission. Aide from and occasional hunting trip, basketball games and plodding through the sticky mud there is little physical activity – Outside of “live” jobs. No mail arrived today. At least two dozen men have availed themselves of the Institute courses during the past month – It is good to see such an interest.

15th

Lt. Bahm, Asst. S-2 Officer, has graciously accepted the Diary for the next few days. His accounts follow: A mission at long last. Only one box. They bombed the main bridge at Motta Di Livenza. Got 100% in target area. A heavy rain tonight.

16th

Stand-down and no fooling. Beastly weather – raining cats and dogs. Steak for mangiare [Italian for 'eating'] but very very tough.

17th

Target for today --- Calliano #2. Major Hackney flew lead in 6H. 86% in target area but it looks like the RR line was cut.

18th

Another mission today. 12 of our ships went after the San Michele RR Bridge across the Adige River in the Brenner Pass. Made only 73%, bombing accuracy. This was the first flak free target we have had on the Brenner. The steak for chow was practically indestructible and of high tensile strength which somewhat modified the sentiments of those who bitched about the microscopic portions, before sampling it. Teeth and fillings lost in the engagement will be replaced at government expense.

19th

Stand-down just at briefing time. Weather did not look too bad here, but Italy was socked in. Enlisted mens basketball team whipped the 489th enlisted men something to something. I refuse to discuss chow anymore. It isn't that it is that bad from the nutritionist angle, but gastronomically – Ugh – and any way it's a very dull topic for a war diary. Dance at the Officers Club. How very exciting.

20th

In spite of freezing mist and drizzle early this morning the day resolved itself into a fairly sunny one, and we had a mission to the Trento Marshaling Yards. Very hot target. Twelve ships with bombs and three with chaff and phos. Three ships holed but no casualties. One of the other squadrons, the 487th, lost one ship in flames over the target. Weather looking quite poor tonight. High wind and light rain. The Russians are keeping up their fabulous advance. Its almost impossible to visualize the magnitude of the damned drive.

21st

Another day another mission. Aimed at the San Michele RR Fill and with great good luck two bombs hit the damn thing, and both boxes got a 100% with one good hit on yesterday's mission. The boys have been getting awfully cold on these rides and their chief complaint is that their fingers freeze. There have been a few films shown around here lately but I cannot comment on them as I have not been free to see them. Life is as exciting as usual so there is little to say. There is the ever present seething, surging tide of all-encompassing rumors, good and bad. Nobody pays any attention to anybody else's rumor but insists that his is right.

22nd

Today was extremely cold and the boys on today's mission report that it was 22 below Fahrenheit. This combined with extreme length of the mission made for some runny noses and frozen fingers. They went to the Dogna RR Bridge way up by the Austrian border, and just a few miles west of Yugoslavia.

It was a refrigerated milk run and we got another 100% and one box got probable hits. The Russian advance (and I use that word although it inadequately describes the stupendous drive) is the big news around here. Keeping up with their front lines on our map is really wearing out the grease pencils.

23rd

Stand-down today, but not until the boys got out to their ships and were ready to go. At least they didn't have to get in their class "A" uniforms for the presentation of our second presidential citation. This was the one we got for the sinking of the Italian destroyer "Taranto" back in September. General Cannon, did the honors with General Knapp looking on. The Air Corps' standard of individuality was maintained by the various manners in which different fellows responded to the same command. There was however some semblance of order as they went by the reviewing stand, in that the order "Eyes Right" was observed, not out of a sense of discipline, I believe, but rather as a good opportunity to get a better look at the generals.

24th

We were stood down today because of bad weather to the north, but it was a glorious day here. The sun shone brilliantly all day long and it was hard to believe Spring wasn't here yet. The enlisted mens basketball team played and beat the Group Headquarters team 35 to 39. We had steak tonight and it was not tough...

25th

Another stand-down and another beautiful day. Because of the three consecutive stand-downs the Red Cross gals had a surplus of doughnuts and so they came around this morning and passed them out along with cups of steaming coffee. The gesture was especially appreciated by those lazy souls that slept through breakfast. The enlisted mens basketball team went down to Wing this evening but they won't be back for a while so the score will be recorded tomorrow. The Cairo plane returned today with its complement of utterly exhausted, physically weary and morally broken men.

26th

For Lt. Bahm's diary accounts I am grateful, says the writer hereon, herein and heretofore. A late briefing again gave birth to a stand-down due to the weather. With the fresh eggs recently bought in Cairo, the squadron finds more men at the breakfast tables. Another basketball game this afternoon and with the usual activities of the Squadron the day was punctuated with talk of the great Russian rushin [sic] and of our contemplated move to Italy.

Sgt. Holdridge has this to add from the Line Communications Section, "Flushed and tired, Pfc. Ojile returned from his successful completion of the SHORAN course at the 310th. Some of the fatigue could be traced to nightly 4 o'clock poker sessions, Ojile running the financial gamut from \$0 to \$0. Disdainfully, he resumed (to a degree) his radio maintenance. Sgt. Cravens refused to take any more algebra until a stove was installed in the Group briefing room. Said Cravens firmly: "No heat – no algebra – and the hell with my future." So with a few cinemas, a dance at the Officers' Club and an early chicken dinner, the day endeth.

27th

Late morning mission to N. Italy. Primary covered so the alternate was bombed. The air was very turbulent and when the ships returned they were seen rocking about in loose formations. All men are closely following the Russian offensive and hoping the Russians will soon be in Berlin.

28th

Despite ominous weather a mission went to Italy. Results – 100%!! again!! The day was windy and gray and few left their tents except for necessities. Rumors of our move are crystallizing and it appears such a change is somewhat more than a week ahead.

29th

Late morning mission today to Roveretto R.R. BR. It is a “hot” target so chaff ships went too. The last few days brought information that Jerry is leaving the Po Valley – This remains to be seen. A snow last night covered the entire area for the first time this season. Eggs for breakfast, usual canned rations i.e. beans for lunch and hamburgers and dehydrated potatoes for dinner. Evening cinemas and clubs were open and the usual bull sessions and card games were employed to pass the evening.

30th

Nickeling mission today – No bridge knocked out. The usual activities, etc. Another new crew arrived today, which is the second in two days. Several men have left and others anticipate leaving for the States soon, so the new crews will be welcomed and will be given jobs to do. The Cairo and Cannes ships returned with rest personnel who began their recuperation. No mail today, but there are a few cinemas and the I & E discussion will occupy the evening for many.

31st

Again a mission to Roveretto in the Brenner Pass. Unfortunately two men were struck by flak – Lt. Eddy and Sgt. Kingsbury – We are very unhappy to report such bad news but we wish them the best possible recovery. Bombs were dropped directly across the R.R. bridge and the Sq made 100%. Lt. Harbough had his hydraulics shot up and had to land tail dragging. He used excellent judgment when he saw he could not stop at the end of the runway by revving up his right engine to spin completely about, thus averting an accident off the end of the field. And so another month has quickly sped by. The missions fell mostly at the end of the month because of poor flying weather at its beginning. The meals were as usual, with frequent fresh eggs for breakfast, canned goods for lunch and fresh meat suppers. Basketball games, cinemas, rest trips too, were eagerly accepted.

The various line and ground crews carried on efficiently and earned the thanks of the air crews just as the air crews got their thanks by contributing visually to the destruction of the Wehrmacht. The unit received another presidential citation, its second and now men sport a cluster on their blue badge. The contemplated move is still being contemplated and the Russians are still rushin to Berlin and are approximately 45 miles away. Everyone is so happy about the news and perhaps, with some wonderful victories that appear shortly ahead the end of this bloody war may be declared in Europe

February 1, 1945

C. Photographs as follows:

1. 486th Bombardment Squadron, 340th Bombardment Group (M), Alesan L/G, Corsica January 1945:
L to R: Sgt. Thomas J. Gough, S/Sgt. Howard L. Olson
2. 486th Bombardment Squadron, 340th Bombardment Group (M), Alesan L/G, Corsica January 1945:
Telephone Lineman: Sgt. Louis J. Walker
3. 486th Bombardment Squadron, 340th Bombardment Group (M), Alesan L/G, Corsica January 1945:
Sweating a mission back from Brenner Pass, Crew Chiefs and Engineering Officer
4. 486th Bombardment Squadron, 340th Bombardment Group (M), Alesan L/G, Corsica January 1945:
Christmas dinner at 486th Enlisted Men's mess hall, Foreground: M/Sgt. Willard H. Baker
5. 486th Bombardment Squadron, 340th Bombardment Group (M), Alesan L/G, Corsica January 1945:
Looking over the war situation, 1st Lt. Donald B. Pray, S-2 officer
6. 486th Bombardment Squadron, 340th Bombardment Group (M), Alesan L/G, Corsica January 1945:
Keeping the charts up to date, Sgt. Russel F. Krause, S-2 clerk
7. 486th Bombardment Squadron, 340th Bombardment Group (M), Alesan L/G, Corsica January 1945:
Prior to take-off on the ship's 100th mission, Kneeling L to R: T/Sgt. Robert D. Stevenson, S/Sgt. Simon Levine, T/Sgt. Ralph (NMI) Jones, T/Sgt. Rocco A. Petrozzi, Crew Chief. Standing L to R: Lt. Robert J. Zywicke, Lt. Otis O. Outlaw, Lt James D. Smith, Lt. Francis J. Gowiski.

War Diary of the 486th Bomb Squadron February 1945

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 – 91 EM – 374
2. At the end of the period covered: Officers – 103 EM – 382

E. Marches

(See war diary of the 486th Bomb Sqdn for the month of February 1945)

F. Campaigns

The 486th Bomb Sqdn continued to participate in the bombing of bridges in Italy and in close support to the troops in Italy whenever the weather permitted.

G. Battles (Missions)

[List of 21 missions can be found elsewhere on this website, or see original War Diary.]

H. Command Officers in important engagements.

In the month of February 1945, Major Robert M. Hackney, Command Officer of the 486th Bomb Sqdn, flew one combat mission on February 25, 1945 to Sestre Calende factories, Italy.

I. Losses in Action

The following men were reported mission in action during the month of February:

1 st Lt. C.R. Ross	Sgt. J.R. Long
2 nd Lt. O.O. Outlaw	S/Sgt. A.A. Kropp
1 st Lt. C.R. Fisher	Sgt. R.R. Chappius
1 st Lt. T.D. Cahill	1 st Lt. R.J. Figler
T/Sgt. N. (NMI) Vasil	2 nd Lt. J.V. O'Conner
Sgt. J.T. Decker	2 nd Lt. R.F. Siman
S/Sgt. E.B. Sichling	Cpl. N.R. Lewis
1 st Lt. M.W. Knighton	Cpl C.R. Claflin
2 nd Lt. J.C. Smith	Cpl. J.R. Davidson
2 nd Lt. E.C. Reseburg	

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

[See original War Diary for rank and decoration.]

<p>Carl W. Toole Arthur W. Vaughn Daniel J. Harkins R.F. Krause David P. Callaway Raymond D. Jardine Harold L. Garvin Albert K. King Jr. Lowell D. McKee Don E. Braden Richard F. Cassidy Maurice Granger Francis X. Driscoll John C. Eddy John L. Ellis Merrit L. Espy Merlin R. Flora</p>	<p>Charles M. Morris Jr. William S. Peak Joseph S. Zukauskas Joseph Kulynych Nicholas R. Loveless Donald V. Wheeler Marshall W. Knighton Aloysious L. Bahen Beryl Burdette Lloyd S. Canon Michael L. Soltis Issac N. Fehr Donald E. Linnabery Charles A. Horton Leonard W. Jame Paul N. Contino Paul I. Rabold</p>	<p>John Galletin John M. Moyer martin J. Regan Garnett L. Carroll Raymond J. Alwood Cyril S. Staub James W. Clark Alpheus J. Donovan Robert W. Greenwood Raleigh Mason Roman H. Figler Jr. Arthur A. Kropp William R. Patton Francis J. Gowiski Simon Levine William E. Powers George S. Faith Melvin L. Slocum Joseph F. Skipper Conrad N. Wyma</p>
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February 1, 1945

After being briefed, the mission was canceled [on] account of bad weather. An afternoon show at the Officer's Club, and the usual evening shows at the 306th and 40th Station Hospital were presented. The enlisted men of this squadron are having a dance tonight and their mademoiselles are eating in the officers' mess.

2nd

Mission today to Chiusaforte, just south of Dogna up near Austria. Results 100% for the box that dropped, no flak and all went well. Two new crews again arrived, we welcome them and wish them a pleasant stay. The Russians continue to provide the main topic of discourse – They are still going through the Jerry lines toward Berlin, soon to be spelled with a non-capital “B” we hope. Usual activities during the day and a dance at the Officers' Club this evening, which is a celebration of the 2nd year overseas of the 340th Bombardment Group (Medium).

3rd

No mission again due to the weather. Practice flights and training were held, but aside from an intra-squadron basketball game, a trip to Bastia by a 2 ½ ton truck and a movie at the 306th and 40th Station Hospital, the day was uneventful. PX supplies drawn in ample quantities pleased everyone. Following is some news from Sgt. Holdridge of Line Communications: In these days wrought with rumors of a move, the section spent a good three days tearing down crates, extracting certain pieces of secret equipment, tearing said equipment apart, and then re-tearing down the crates into smaller pieces. In an effort to drown out the noise of his arguments with Cpl. Vinturella, Group Communications Inspector (also Tech Sergeant) Pulos brought a P.A. system to his tent – his story being that it was in need of repair – and for the next few nights the hillside was filled with eerie noises, weird snatches of conversation and even weirder crooning.

4th

Mission today, results 90%. Good concentration of phosphorus on flak positions caused very little flak opposition.

5th

Today a bursting star. A star with seven points; points of valor and duty and courage. Today seven men went down in a flak killed ship and tonight seven empty bunks bring lumps to mens' throats. Lt. Ross and his crew on an operational mission over the Brenner Pass attacked gun positions so that the main flights could bomb accurately and they did – The mission was recorded as 100% accurate. We hope the reports of one chute seen means at least one chute. And so it is again proven; where the Yanks are duty placed, they rise to the task like men.

6th

Mission again – to Lavis today, no bombs dropped due to bad weather over target area. Lt's. Eddy and Harris are recuperating swiftly at the 40th Station Hospital. Sgt. Kingsbury is yet in an uncertain state of healing. Usual cinemas and evening sitting about the stoves.

7th

The mission today dropped again in northern Italy in the Brenner Pass and the Squadron received 100% with probable hits directly on the target. The weather appears to be getting warmer and the air crews are doubly grateful because there is no extreme discomfort with frozen fingers to contend with. Some of the recently arrived new crews have already been flying after having been indoctrinated by the various sections. Fresh meat for dinner after a tasty spaghetti and hash dinner. The afternoon found the basketball court again striped with chalk boundaries and pounded upon by the 486th and antagonists. No mail tonight, but the actual postponement of the Group's contemplated move and the news that the Russians are driving forward across the Oder River at the few points has brought favorable topics of which to think.

8th

A late afternoon mission today to Piacenza, a hot target but rendered considerably less effective by dive bombing P-47's and phosphorus carrying B-25's. The group in all probability destroyed the bridge. Almost every night men have gone down to the 40th Station Hospital to visit members of this Squadron confined therein. It shows generosity and thoughtfulness and I know the patients appreciate it.

9th

No mission today due to weather but several practice missions were flown nevertheless. The wind of the day rattled doors and flapped canvas but aside from an enlisted men's basketball game and a movie at the Officers' Club, the day was quite monotonous. Mail came in after a delicious ham supper and caused smiles and cheers. The targets are of late becoming quite infested with flak and the men don't like it, to say the least.

10th

Despite clear and warm weather in Corsica, no mission was flown. A few hundred miles means a great deal with respect to flying weather. The day was spent welcoming another new crew, eating fresh pork at dinner in company with the Colonel and a Red Cross girl, celebrating Manns' birthday at the Club and carrying on with the usual practice and office duties. Again from Line Communications Sergeant Holdridge; having suffered, for various reasons, along with the rest of the line men, the recent passing of 6M and the still recent demise of 6T, Communications men applauded Engineering's superstitions, christening of the two new ships as 6G and 6D; and prepared to go to work. Maintenance Chief Cawthorn, while in charge of quarters the other night, almost put his jeep through a front somersault while bringing it to a very sudden stop. We heard one of the guards near at hand throw a bullet in the chamber. Signs of the Times: Sgt. Mitchell wearing a sweat-shirt and throwing a baseball around. Sgt. Cravins talking about how Arkansas looks in early Summer.

11th

Yet another stand-down today. Chaplain Cooper again presented the usual religious services in an effective and interesting manner. The balance of the day saw the usual activities, usual practice.

12th

A warm and sunny day found the Group on a target but this Squadron had its turn for a stand-down. Spam and cheese for lunch and chicken for dinner. The evening was spent by some at the various cinemas, some playing cards, etc. On the whole another uneventful day.

13th

By coincidence the thirteenth accompanied a double misfortune over the Brenner Pass on today's mission. Two ships were seen to go on single engine, but we are very optimistic about the crew's safety. The two ships retained controlled level flight and it is felt they may have landed at an emergency strip in Italy or bailed out. We fervently hope they all are safe. The usual activities finished the day and the evening boasted an I. & E. discussion on "war criminals" and the usual cinemas.

14th

No definite word on the two ships yet. If the men bailed out it could mean two or three months for news of all. An 08:50 briefing was all but concluded when a stand-down was called for the squadron and so the usual practice was carried out and the usual basketball games and evening recreation was indulged.

15th

Again a stand-down was called just prior to scheduled take-off. Several promotions were awarded to officers late last evening, our congratulations. U.S.O. show at Enlisted Men's American Red Cross was a big success.

16th

Stand-down once more [on] account of bad weather, cloudy day – few activities. Dance at the Officers' Club was a pleasant affair.

17th

Late morning mission today resulted in only one box of the 486th dropping [on] account of concealing haze and uncertainty of target. Group was host to Wing and Air Force and MTOUSA I. & E. Officers. Again a little mail and the usual evening cinemas.

18th

Brenner Pass mission by three boxes of ships resulted in 98% accuracy for the Squadron. Flak was accurate and damaged Lt. Cooley's ship to the extent it was thought at first all members would have to bail out. The flames on one of the engines fortunately ceased and it was then decided to take the ship back. All men remained cool and their courage is indeed an example for all. The day was a day of religious services and the evening boasted a few cinemas and a lecture by the G.L.O. (Ground Liaison Officer).

19th

Stand-down, usual activities and attempts at recreation.

20th

Over the Po Valley on a nickeling mission during the afternoon demonstrated today's contribution to the war effort. Two more crews arrived today and once again we welcome them to our Squadron. Predominantly F/O's [Flight Officer] and quite young in years, an added impetus is given to the declaration that flying personnel are indeed of the younger generation. Strictly for civilian consumption was "Winged Victory." "Maisie Goes to Reno" was enjoyed.

21st

The mission to Udine which was coordinated with the 310th Bomb Group was abortive because of solid undercast. The new crew constructing their tent from 2x4's and frag boxes have almost completed the floor. Once again as often in the last few months the men take cheese and bread from the mess hall and toast the sandwiches at night over their hot stoves, supplementing the snack with perhaps bullion cubes, crackers, jam etc. The usual shows and training filled in the day.

22nd

Though not the first President of America [sic. - ?], Washington, whose birthday today is celebrated, was one of the most revered and successful in the task of unifying America. The extreme northern end of the Brenner Pass was the target of today's successful mission. Lt. Wilson and crew were struck by flak and the dropping of the indicated oil pressure was the first prompting toward a bail out. Starting down the valley toward Switzerland in anticipation of leaving the ship, it was observed the motor was weak but serviceable, so they brought the good old B-25 home with Lt. Adams who was injured in the nose compartment. We wish him a speedy recuperation. Wieners and sauerkraut for the evening meal, followed by "Lake Placid Serenade," a stinkeroo.

23rd

The mission to the Brenner again today was a hot target because ack-ack was not stopped due to the phosphorous element not dropping because of a Jerry smoke screen. A few minor flak wounds were experienced. The Brenner is a hot area and causes much worry by the crews. The usual training etc carried through the day and the usual cinemas at night. Mail has come in lately and the usual large amount of answering gives the censors considerable work. Lt. Warns, just over from the States is welcomed into the S-2 section.

24th

No combat flying for the Squadron today as it assumed its turn for a stand-down. Practice firing on the range, practice flying and bomb trainer, first aid lectures and escape and evasion instruction with the usual duties filled in the day.

25th

A much rejoiced milk run was the event of the day. Church services were once more held and well presented and attended. Steak for supper (with hide) and "Keys of the Kingdom" at the 340th outdoor theatre, were the events of the evening.

26th

Complete undercast prevented bombing by the mission today. The men appreciated the flak free ride however. The usual sunny day found several on the pistol range and basketball court. As usual practice and the customary duties were indulged. The playing of French records for beginners in the day room, of that language took place and later the outdoor theatre presented "And Now Tomorrow" which was declared a good picture. Tent stove continue to exhale lustily the soot of gasoline combustion. Lights glimmer warmly within the heated tents at night.

27th

Striking an ammunition dump in Italy with such accuracy that the explosion rocked the ships at 9,000 feet gave the crewmen a sense of great satisfaction after bombing bridges for so long. For an hour in the evening a colored personnel band played excellent boogie woogie in the Enlisted Mens' day room. Coffee and doughnuts were served afterward.

28th

We bid goodbye to February of 1945. On this day, Major Wells and Dweyer of Group Headquarters and Sgt. Helferidge of the 486th bid goodbye forever to their hundredth mission. Commendations were in order and the author here expresses his admiration for their completion of 100 combat missions for their country. A dogfight developed with our P-47 cover and two fighters were seen to go down trailing black smoke, we hope to beat hell, they were Jerries. Reflecting on the past month we review with pleasure the progress of the Allied armies. The enemy appears to be sustaining with his second wind

the Allied drives, and allied victory is a matter of time, but also a matter of lives and it is the responsibility of every Allied citizen to realize this and do his work, not as a person but as a part of the gigantic scheme of war. The weather on the island has given relief from daily burning stoves and aside from a few burns and near tent bonfires, all has been well. Rations and mail and movies have been regular, however the majority would like improved movies, more candy and mail, but no matter what the amount there would be those who would voice displeasure. Work carries on somehow no matter how tired and monotonous it may be. After months and months one gets the habit of living without his home and family and grudgingly lives with his thoughts as an alternative. Rest trips continue and provide a valuable asset to the happiness of a man's thoughts. The food has not been very appetizing lately. Lunches are generally of heated canned food and the dinners of fresh meat but of a poor quality. Dehydrated potatoes and carrots and the inevitable peas and string beans appear to be the basic constituents. As usual, the evening meals are supplemented by home cooking in the form of toast and jam and coffee in tents at night. New crews have come and old crews have gone, but aside from a very very infrequent rotated ground man, the ground personnel grinds on forever.

March 4, 1945

C. Photographs as follows:

1. & 2. 486th Bombardment Squadron, 340th Bombardment Group (M), Alesan L/G, Corsica, Feb. 1945:
Views of the Enlisted Men's area.
3. 486th Bombardment Squadron, 340th Bombardment Group (M), Alesan L/G, Corsica, Feb. 1945:
Outside view of new S-2 office.
4. 486th Bombardment Squadron, 340th Bombardment Group (M), Alesan L/G, Corsica, Feb. 1945:
Inside view of new S-2 office with Sgt. Frank Walpole working on the awards and decoration chart.
5. 486th Bombardment Squadron, 340th Bombardment Group (M), Alesan L/G, Corsica, Feb. 1945:
T/Sgt. Edward Sendek giving instructions to Sgt. Hubert Hill on the operation of the new turret trainer that he designed.
6. 486th Bombardment Squadron, 340th Bombardment Group (M), Alesan L/G, Corsica, Feb. 1945:
Parachute man Sgt. James Fox fitting T/Sgt. Alvin Jackson with a new parachute harness.
7. 486th Bombardment Squadron, 340th Bombardment Group (M), Alesan L/G, Corsica, Feb. 1945:
Cleaning guns after a mission; Standing left to Right: gunners S/Sgt. K.A. Brown, S/Sgt. L.E. Congalton, S/Sgt. A Morrow, Kneeling: armorer Pfc. D.M. Griffey.
8. 486th Bombardment Squadron, 340th Bombardment Group (M), Alesan L/G, Corsica, Feb. 1945:
Back from a mission to the Brenner Rail Line, Kneeling L/R: Lt. C.A. Horton, Lt. R.F. Kennedy, S/Sgt. G.S. Bogart, Standing L/R: Lt. G.P. Davis, T/Sgt. W.F. Powers, Lt. R.E. Donaldson and S/Sgt. J.O. Scoggins.
9. 486th Bombardment Squadron, 340th Bombardment Group (M), Alesan L/G, Corsica, Feb. 1945:
Evening chow at the Enlisted Men's mess.

[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. May 1, 2015]