

War Diary of the 486th Bomb Squadron

April 1945

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A. Original Unit

(See previous outline history)

B. Changes in organization

None for period covered

C. Stations

Moved from Alesan Field, Corsica to Rimini Airfield, Italy, April 7, 1945

D. Strength

- | | | |
|----------------------------------------|----------------|----------|
| 1. At beginning of the period covered: | Officers – 94 | EM – 363 |
| 2. At end of period covered: | Officers – 118 | EM – 388 |

E. Marches

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

F. Campaigns

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

G. Battles (Missions)

[List of 39 missions can be found elsewhere on this website or see original War Diary.]

H. Commanding officer in important engagements

During the month of April 1945, Major Robert M. Hackney, Commanding Officer of the 486th Bomb Sqdn, flew one combat mission to Massa Lombarda, Italy on April 10, 1945.

I. Losses in Action

The following men were reporting missing in action during the month of April:

1st. Lt. John L. Ellis, 2dn Lt. Glen J. Medus, T/Sgt. Joseph Kulynych, S/Sgt. Robert D. King, S/Sgt. Raleigh Mason and S/Sgt. Carl R. Nielson.

April 1, 1945

12 planes today to Perca R.R. BR. It's a long haul but one of the few easy targets left. Looks as if the boys finally hit it. Weather has been fine again today.

2nd

Capt. Pray and a few others took off for our new base at Rimini today. Everyone is anxious to see the place. Have heard it was formerly the best seaside resort in Italy. Most of the men are anxious to get over there for some of those close support missions, however.

3rd

Stand-down. Lots of sun bathing and sacking going on today. Had some more of that delicious Spanish rice for dinner.

4th

Today was a sad day for the Squadron. Nine planes hit Calliano #3 and six went to Rivereto with three chaff and phosphorous. The flak was heavy and accurate. The plane piloted by Lts. Ellis and Medus went down somewhere south of Lake Garda. We can only hope they got out of it all right.

5th

Mission to Salerno today – no flak for a change. Most of the boys took in the movie tonight and nearly froze in the process.

6th

Planes hit the Bondeno R.R. BR. today no flak again. Looks like the bridge was well covered with bombs.

7th

No mission today. The combat crews took off for the new base at Rimini. The weather has been cloudy since early this morning.

8th

The usual confusion that accompanies a move was in evidence today but things are gradually being straightened out. Some baggage has been misplaced causing some slight confusion. Those men lacking mess kits have been scrounging all over for something to eat out of.

9th

Close support work today – The men are all in favor of those short missions. The nights are still cool. The stoves left in Corsica would come in handy here. The Squadron is settling down in villas scattered around the area. Lots of repair work going on – plastering, painting, etc.

10th

More close support work today – Looks as if something big in the nature of a push is about to happen. Several hardy members of the Squadron tried the water today. They got clean but also cold. If the showers don't get here soon there will be a lot more going in – cold or not.

11th

Three missions today, something of a record. Lots of the boys will be finishing up a lot sooner than they had planned if it keeps up at this rate. Beans for dinner, stew for supper...Well, that's the army. The GLO [Ground Liaison Officer] reports that we are killing beaucoup Krauts on these frag missions according to front line census-takers.

12th

The battle for the frag boxes goes on between us and the Eyties [slang for Italians]; lumber is really scarce here, and the boys want the material to build tables and clothes racks. We are having a porch walled in for a war room. Rain late this evening and welcome too, it will keep the dust down. Supper was excellent: Port chops, fresh asparagus, fresh lettuce, and the inevitable dehydrated carrots. The lettuce was the biggest treat.

13th

We were awakened this morning with the tragic news of President Roosevelt's death. Only after they had heard it from the radio would many of the men believe the news. The deep interest that most of the men take in the war and the plans for peace was reflected in the little knots of discussion that took place all day wherever a few men chanced to come together. British and Canadian soldiers expressed their sorrow to several of our men. This is a sad day.

14th

The weather continues perfect, warm days and cool nights. Some of the combat men are getting out in their shorts or bathing trunks and limbering up their pitching arms. The sea is still a little cool according to a couple of the more daring. There is a sensational rumor being bruited about that puts the Yanks 15 miles from Berlin.

15th

Many of the combat personnel have never served in Italy and cannot get over the five cent shave and dime haircut that is so familiar to the rest of us. Inflation reached a fabulous height in Corsica. Flak holed a number of our ships today. In one case the pilot had only rudder control and the co-pilot elevator and aileron. To top it off one engine was hot [sic. shot out?] out but by dint of some pretty fancy teamwork they brought the plane in to a safe landing.

16th

Two abortive missions today. The first was turned back due to weather and the second, a SHORAN mission was forced to return because of a failure in the equipment. The wind is starting to blow dust again and it is impossible to keep anything clean. The British tanks keep the roads all churned up and the slightest breeze kicks up a regular dust storm.

17th

We finally got around to that bridge at Bologna that we were after yesterday. The weather was clear and a pretty good pattern was placed on it. Both mess halls are being painted and windows are being put in. We will really be living in luxury in a week or so.

18th

Due to extreme haze and poor visibility the results of today's mission were not too good. The Group outdoor theatre is quite comfortable on warm evenings. The large screen and comfortable seats are quite a treat. We also got our rations today and we got our first Cokes in about four months.

19th

The Fifth and Eighth Army drive seems to be going very well. The Italian front is getting back in the headlines, but it is going to be hard to crowd Patton and his men off the front page the way they are going. And the long awaited drive on Berlin by the Russians seems well under way.

20th

Two targets today and one of them was very interesting. It was the German Army Group Headquarters for Italy. It was well hit and we hope we caught a lot of brass with their pants down. More troubles with the SHORAN equipment aborted the other mission. Got five new crews yesterday.

21st & 22nd

These have been two very busy days supporting the advancing Eighth and Fifth Armies. The Jerries are starting to back up pretty fast and it seems there may be a chance to cut them to ribbons before they can get across the Po. Most of the targets have been pontoon bridge sites and the results have all been good.

23rd

Three missions today but one was turned back due to weather. The other two got through. The new crews are all afraid the war is going to end before they can get a few missions in. The rest of us hope they are right.

24th & 25th

Stand-down on the 24th and a very welcome rest for the boys who have been flying continuously for quite a while. The boys went back to Austria on the 25th to hit the Steinach bridge. It is considered a fine target as there is no flak there. A beautiful pattern landed smack on the bridge. Steak tonight for the first time in weeks it seems.

26th

Due to overcrowding by operations we in S-2 have had to go in search of a new home. After much fussing around we are setting up in a pre-fab all our own. There is lots of map room and that is enough to make us happy.

27th & 28th

No missions these last two days. Although the reason for the stand-downs has been weather it looks as though the ground forces are taking all available targets.

29th

No mission today – The weather has been partly cloudy all day. It begins to look as if the Squadron won't have any targets left in a few days – which won't make anyone feel bad.

30th

No mission again. The war in Italy is in its last stages. Many men took advantage of the weather to swim and take sun baths.

[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 3, 2015]