

# War Diary of the 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron May 1944

Prepared by: 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Donald B. Pray

## 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 – 74:	EM - 329
2. At end of period covered:	Officers – 100 :	EM - 372

## E. Marches (Diary)

(See War Diary of the 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq for month of May, 1944)

## F. Campaigns

The 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq continued to participate actively in the bombing of targets on the mainland of Italy. A majority of missions were flown in direct tactical support of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Army forces.

## G. Battles (Missions)

[List of 28 missions can be found elsewhere on this site, or see original War Diary.]

## H. Commanding Officers in Important Engagements

In the month of May 1944 Major Robert M. Hackney, Commanding Officer of the 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, flew the following combat missions with the Squadron Formations:

[Four missions listed.]

## I. Losses in Action

None

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

(See previous Outline History)

May 1, 1944

Target was Orvieto North RR Bridge. Briefing called for 0715 – take-off at 0824. Six ships from each squadron went on this mission. Primary target had cloud coverage so alternate was hit. We had no bombs hit on the bridge itself, but both approaches had a concentration of bombs.....The rotation program started to see light today when Capt. Nelson L. Dozier, 1<sup>st</sup>. Lt. Duane L. Glade, T/Sgt. Thomas W. Moxon and S/Sgt. Roy C. Brown left for a 30 day furlough to the good old USA....Many of our boys are getting close to the finish as far as combat missions are concerned, and it looks like a shortage of flying personnel if we don't get some more new crews soon...

2<sup>nd</sup>

Briefing was at 0820 – take-off time 0930. Target was north Orvieto RR Bridge. Our box of six B-25's bombed north and north approach to bridge. Percent of bombs in target area was 0% according to the photos.....The mail situation is starting to perk up a bit and it sure has an excellent effect in morale.. Another helpful factor in building up of morale was the announcement of the rotation of ground personnel. This was very welcome news to many as the greatest majority of the boys have been overseas from fourteen to sixteen months. The only disheartening factor is the ½ % as it will take sixteen and a half years to get the original members home.....There has been many opinions on the invasion of Europe – date etc, but in serious reality that will be the happiest and greatest day in world history and for millions of people. Bets are made from 500 francs on up – its almost as bad as the bets Wall Street and Lloyds of London along with Henry Ford were making in reference to when the war would end.....

3<sup>rd</sup>

Briefing at 0730 hours – take-off at 0859. Target was RR bridge 5 miles north of Todi. Bombing results of the 486<sup>th</sup> was the 1<sup>st</sup> element laying a pattern across the south approach and the second element bombed the north approach and middle of bridge with a direct hit on the middle and north approach. The squadron as a whole continued in the regular squadron duties. Many boys are awaiting the rotation program to go into full swing – and believe it or not – many boys develop ailments of all kinds at a point like this; so many that Capt. Wathen had to issue an order that those with rotation fever should refrain from going to the dispensary. Those that are to be sent home will be notified when such time arrives....

4<sup>th</sup>

Target was the Arezzo south RR bridge. Briefing called for 1520 – take-off 1630 hours. This will mean late hours for the mess personnel, as interrogation won't be completed before 1930. The 486<sup>th</sup> pattern was near, but not on, the bridge. Hit road junction at W 0092 with planes #2 and 3....Some of the flight echelon received rotation orders today and will wing their way home: Capts. Richard E. Cassady, Walter E. Silvey, Ira D. Stemple, 1<sup>st</sup> Lts. Albert B. Farry, Clair J. Clark, S/Sgts Edwin S. Pasek and Daniel E. Quinn. They will, in all probability, experience the greatest thrill that could ever happen to any American soldier overseas, when the coast line of the greatest island in the world looms up from the horizon....

5<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down today....No mission today but the squadron busied itself in all departments, getting regular squadron routine work done....The mail situation of late has been very spasmodic, and the only one who could answer the reason why would be old Uncle Sam, and he's not saying a thing. We all know our loved ones and friends are writing, but it still doesn't arrive. This isn't good for morale, but war is hell in more than a thousand ways. The LeMaster – PX officer, really has been taking care of the boys of late – just about every 5<sup>th</sup> day there is a ration of candy, coke and smokes (pipes, tobacco, cigarettes, cigars) for everyone – and don't think they don't “Come and Get It”.....

6<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down today, the weather. It is our most obstinate enemy at present. It just doesn't seem to want to clear up....Today we have word that some more of our men will leave on rotation.. Bona, it makes us feel that at least some of us will be going home soon. It is rumored that ground personnel will run into the same deal after 18 months overseas. That puts greater hopes in the hearts of many men and sets their minds a little more at ease. However the majority will have to wait until the end of the war in Europe before they go home and then it is not sure....The squadron carried on its regular routine functions....

7<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down again. “Weather.” Well, one may come to the definite conclusion that old Mother Nature sure has power predominate over the powers of man. New crews are starting to arrive and they are badly needed as many of our older boys are finishing up this month. We also have word that is gratifying, in that new ground personnel are on their way. These are needed badly to bring us up to strength and relieve some of our old timers from doing two men's work.....

8<sup>th</sup>

As far as the flight echelon activity is concerned – nil, except for the bomb trainer and the gunners going out to their ships and cleaning guns. The ground echelon, rain, shine, or otherwise, is always active and busy; reports, letters, communications, maintenance, supply, mess as an army is no better than its stomach, engineering, medics, and orderly room. They should be commended for the excellent effort and works they perform....

9<sup>th</sup>

Its a serious thought now, we have been grounded for five days and the same old answer, old man weather. Its going to be some deal to make up for these stand-downs, but from previous [illegible] and as records show, if its the 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, they'll make up for it....The regular squadron routine duties were carried out today and in the evening a base-ball game. The boys really seem to enjoy this, and partake in it whole-heartedly....

10<sup>th</sup>

Briefing 0630 – take-off 0804 with target Terni Viaduct. Bombing results for the 486<sup>th</sup> was a pattern just short of the M/Yds [Marshalling Yards] choke point. Viaduct not bombed due to poor weather....It is rumored that the 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group is going to receive the unit citation from the President of the US for the excellent job they did in the Tunisian and Sicilian campaigns. Its also rumored that they are going to be able to wear the little blue ribbon with the gold border for this. All hope this is true and not just the proverbial rumors that are usually passed around among army personnel....The boys are playing ball at night, then going to the show after the game. So recreation isn't bad. It is also planned to have a dance for the enlisted men and they are most enthusiastic about this.....

11<sup>th</sup>

Six Mitchells from the 486<sup>th</sup> took part in the bombing of Porto Ferrario Harbor. Briefing at 0730 – take-off 0900 – T.O.T [Time Over Target] 1032 hours. Results were excellent with a great concentration of bombs in the harbor area, knocking out the power stations, blast furnaces and buildings.....The squadron carried on its regular duties....

12<sup>th</sup>

Anything might happen from here on in – we are called on to put up 25 airplanes from our squadron. Briefing called for 0700 and 1530 – take-off at 0805 and 1654. 24 of our ships attacked the Command Post at G 167027 – 12 in the AM and 12 in the PM. 3 ships flew with the 488<sup>th</sup> to place a road block at Itri....The latest subject that is receiving comment is the possibility of the 340<sup>th</sup> receiving the presidential citation. We hope this isn't just another rumored rumor, but an actuality. There was quite a bit of excitement to-night when ack-ack guns opened up at Bastia against some Jerry night raiders. The sky was lit up by flares and it sounded like all hell broke loose. Results probably will be told tomorrow – we hope it has been slight. We all hope that is as close as we'll ever get.....

13<sup>th</sup>

Visit by an unwelcome guest. 0330 hours all hell is breaking loose and the following is the experience encountered by all. Ack-ack guns – 40 mm, 90 mm, and 50 cal mg [machine guns] let loose – Jerry was paying his first visit to the 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group on Corsica. We definitely were the primary target. The 1<sup>st</sup> incident was a pathfinder flying over our field and dropping - - - flares. They, Ju 88s, Me 210s and some FW [Focke-Wulf aircraft] started the disastrous show with anti-personnel bombs, strafing and dive bombing. One of the first things that went up was the gas dump with a direct hit, lighting up the whole area for several miles, then it was just a matter of picking out what target Jerry wanted. The enemy attacked with a force from 20 to 30 planes. He gave our airfield a perfect going over. Direct hits on planes loaded with bombs caused great damage. Anti-personnel bombs dropped having a large toll on personnel casualties. Bombing of squadron areas were intended, but thank God, the unwelcome intruders were off in deflection – although they had perfect range on all squadron areas. The 489<sup>th</sup> received the worst of the attacks in the squadron areas, and lost several men due to enemy action. Fox-holes, what there were of them, were loaded to capacity. After the attack was over at 0445, designated officer personnel and Commanding Officer went out to see what damage was done: The following is a summary of the 486<sup>th</sup> casualties and damage.

Killed due to enemy action:

Sgt. Walter J. Labe	-	13079817
Sgt. James B. Saunders	-	36335395
Sgt. John (NMI) Koban	-	31144496

Wounded seriously due to enemy action:

T/Sgt. Donald G. Neumeyer	-	35039801
S/Sgt. John (NMI) Kerr	-	12078298
Cpl. Edward E. Hildebrand	-	38464926
Cpl. Walter C. Hafer	-	33618441
Pfc. Sol (NMI) Hartenstein	-	32860942
Pfc. Leo H. Hoeschele	-	32669131

Minor injuries due to enemy action:

T/Sgt. Walter W. Stauffer	-	35039830
Sgt. Stephen C. Kuzman	-	33166907
Pfc. Donald M. Griffey	-	15320143

Although this catastrophe occurred the group took hold and at noon flew a mission. The engineers prepared the runway and 18 ships were sent up – 6 being from the 486<sup>th</sup>. The target was the mouth of a tunnel 1 ½ miles south of Itri. The ack-ack was heavy, intense, and accurate. One ship – 6M – left formation off Gaeta Point and went to Naples, Pilot Leggett, Co-pilot Jacobson, Bombardier Barnard, Aerial Photographer Skipper. Lt. Leggett came in for a crash landing at Capodichino Airport and did a superior job in making a belly landing. Lt. Jacobson was seriously wounded in both legs and Lt. Barnard had a piece of flak go through his hand. Even in view of this Lt. Barnard administered first to Lt. Jacobson all the way to Capodichino. The airplane was badly shot up and the whole crew remained calm, cool and collected, showing outstanding merit under extreme circumstances. This was Lt. Leggett's and Sgt. Strait's third emergency belly landing – enough said for any man....

14<sup>th</sup>

The day after one of the most eventful days the 486<sup>th</sup> Sqdn has had since being overseas. To-day, again, we sent up 6 ships to RR bridge at Arezzo. Results were, our pattern went to the right of the bridge hitting the tracks...Other activities today were the constructing of fox-holes and believe me that is exactly what it amounted to, if the folks at home could see some of them it would make a very impressive scene to see what really can be made in the line of fox-holes and slit trenches.....The sqdn kept on with regular duties....

15<sup>th</sup>

Briefing at 0830 – take-off at 0940 – 6 B-25s went to Italy to bomb the south Ficulle RR Bridge, but due to weather went to the alternate, Piombino Harbor and installations. Bombs went into and extended beyond target area into tin plate mills. The debris and wrecked aircraft have almost been com [record for this day stops here]

16<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup>

Usual sqdn duties and missions. See Outline History for missions.....

# War Diary of the 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron

## July 1944

Prepared by: 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Glenn L. Pierre

July 1, 1944

General Knapp was seen about the area escorted by Capts. Shealy and Meyer after the party had dined in the luxurious 486 dining salon....Jeffrey Lynn also put in an appearance and chatted sometime with the men. He is assigned to the 321<sup>st</sup> Bomb Gp.....

2<sup>nd</sup>

Mission today was a popular success. The men have been bombing bridges so long, that a change to an oil dump that blew up gave them a thrill.....Church services were held at the EM new club house and a good attendance was evident....Cold beer was served at the officer's club and decidedly raised the morale that evening..

3<sup>rd</sup>

Big event of the day was the rough mission – another oil dump. Lt. Pike's hydraulic brakes failed on his return and his ship barreled off the end of the runway and after losing the landing gear on the rough ground, slid to a stop in the gully 100 yards from the end of the strip and then crumpled in two about 12 feet from the tail. Fortunately the ship did not burn and the crew experienced only a shakeup, except for Sgts. Diehl and McHale who were bruised....Lt. Martinson, who was cut by flying Plexiglas came back on one engine with Capt. Shealy as bombardier and they said that they buzzed a weather station of Jerry's so close on a mountain top, that they could read Jerry's weather map in the shack. Flak also hit Sgt. Housken, with Sgt Slocum and Sgt. Smitz in the hospital with moderate injuries. Lt. Mell's ship is said to have cut the “sagebrush” like a lawnmower on the mountain top on his way home and then after precariously missing the mountain they discovered they were about 30 miles from Leghorn with so little altitude that Jerry's tracers and small arms fire was directed at them. One of the gunners fired back and said the ground fire ceased. Lt. Fisher was cut by flak and is in the hospital; nothing serious, we hope....The outstanding feature is the display of “guts” by this “soft and decadent” democratic progeny. Jokes and humor dominate. Youth finds it difficult to believe that mortal injury can be so close and as a result it does not take danger seriously or cowardly but it looks into danger's eyes and thumbs its nose....To maintain the war-like atmosphere which we are all sad to leave, the local flickers are flicking away with “Destination Tokyo”....Pictures were taken today for civilian passports in the event they may be needed if combat crews are shot down behind enemy lines.....

4<sup>th</sup>

Lt. Henthorn came in today with the nose wheel up. Everyone was O.K. Fighters gave the men a hot welcome – probably 4 Me 109s. One probable by 486. The 109 was seen going down in a flat spin in smoke; unfortunately the crash could not be confirmed.....

5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>

Usual mission – usual activities in the squadron....

8<sup>th</sup>

Doubleheader today played in Jerry's back yard. He lost – but not as badly as we expect to inflict later....Captain Buchanan departed for the States wreathed in smiles and pursued by all for the equipment he leaves in his memory.....

9<sup>th</sup>

Church services were again held and enjoyed by all those who attended....Stand-down today presumably because of weather, which during the latter part of the afternoon drowned out sorrows and all. Even Major Hackney was seen wading the puddles and lagoons not to mention the rapids, in a pair of G.I. artics [sic. arctics?]......

10<sup>th</sup>

“Home again, home again, from a foreign shore,” for Lts. Ross, Sedach, Fisher and Wheeler. We are sorry to lose the fellowship of the men as they go, but shall be happy to welcome them back....No mission so “relaxing” was the key word of the day....The officers again won the ball game 5 – 4....Missions or no missions, practice bombing continues and night flying is still being pressed. Also target practice with a towed sock and searchlight practice added to the general training of the group today.....

11<sup>th</sup>

The local cinema presented “Hit the Ice” with Abbott and Costello. Mediocre was the opinion of the show...A U.S.O. show at the 306 was enjoyed by all....

12<sup>th</sup>

Mission produced excellent results – both primary and alternate were hit and the squadron received 100% on both targets....Several Cairo Cossacks returned again after a restful(?) sojourn....Just before midnight a red alert was broadcast over the P.A. System – which always invokes a certain amount of disapproval among those who awaken....

13<sup>th</sup>

Same target as yesterday. Opinion of combat officers reflects disagreement on striking some flak-heavy target when alternate cutting points present themselves....Photo reports are under fire again. Seems men's usual observation does not agree with interpretation and it is disheartening to bombardiers especially when they are not given credit for bombing where they think they have hit....



14<sup>th</sup>

Capt. Shealy, Lt. Cooley, and gang returned from Cairo and points east. They brought back 10,000 eggs (with shells).....The outdoor movie tonight showed “The Adventures of Mark Twain.” Most everyone had a favorable opinion.....Through the efforts of T/Sgt. Sendek an ingenious contraption enabling target practice for gunners has been completed. A stream of water replaces a stream of bullets in practicing the getting of a moving target. To add realism a gun turret is used with a replica of a FW 190 attacking in a pursuit curve....It seems the bomb-loaders Joe Kolcz, Abe Heller, Vin Douglas, Glenn Blair and “Buffalo” almost had some excitement today because when wheeling up a 1000 lb bomb it jumped the dolly and sheared its fuse. Despite it being fully armed Blair de-fused it amid the dust caused by scampering personnel. Cool work Blair, take a bow....

15<sup>th</sup>

Again today Ferrara was hit twice. The morning flight came back with one serious casualty – Sgt. Keller the radio-gunner was hit in the chest and jaw. Several ships made belly landings and were perforated with flak. Patterns traveled in the target area, but most bombs straddled the bridge. The afternoon mission had its tense moments but if any fear was present there was no outward manifestation. Over a period of time injury is relatively light and consequently much joviality and fun exists everywhere. If the missions were to become very hazardous there would be no flinching – only perhaps a more serious demeanor about the squadron. Results of the afternoon mission – good...

16<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down today for which many were grateful because it was feared Ferrara was again to be the target....Swim time and sack time predominated....A U.S.O. show was held in the evening – Negroes took part and provided excellent entertainment....Chicken for supper and there will be foraging in the kitchen after hours to pick the bones clean. Lt. Col. Bailey paid a social visit for supper – no doubt he was on the “in” for supper....Church services were held again – attendance was good....After Tom Green drank salt water given to him for liquor by Hube Hill, a feud arose which has not yet been culminated.....

17<sup>th</sup>

Mission today but light as each squadron put up only six ships. Target was a milk run and was bombed to dust. All squadrons received 100% except one. The nature of the mission was reflected in the attitude of the combat crews because their spirits were high and joviality was dominant at the finish of the mission....There was the usual swimming, practice missions, hobbies and showers to fill the daylight hours. Then at night the spectators enjoyed “Tampico” at the movie after being assured by the Provost Marshall that none but mosquito net and leggin [sic] decked personnel would henceforth be entitled to a seat – no bribes accepted – unless a trip home could be guaranteed for aforementioned Marshall. One each new combat crew arrived today – we welcome them to a happy home.....

18<sup>th</sup>

Mission canceled today. Practice missions were flown and the usual delightful weather and sqdn duties filled out the day. There is a great deal of comradeship within the sqdn and consequently overseas life is made a little less uncomfortable....

19<sup>th</sup>

An early, one ship mission to Rome included Capts. Stith and Meyer, Lts. Ottavio and Hartsock, who will return refreshed no doubt....Drizzle late in the afternoon followed by a mission at 1720. The Mallory operation was completed in record time and praises were received for 42 and 57 Bomb Wings from General Eisenhower, Generals Cannon and Knapp....The new combat crews were indoctrinated on escape and evasion under the auspices of the S-2 section. Ball games continue nightly and a great deal of interest is displayed – they are definitely a morale factor....Mission just returned and reported direct hits on the RR bridge....

20<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down for 486 today....Officers sqdn club house is rapidly nearing completion....Usual swimming, reading, baseball and sqdn duties....

21<sup>st</sup>

Mission called off because of weather...The movie "In Old Oklahoma" entertained the men – it was generally acclaimed as entertaining. The enlisted men's Red Cross Club has proved very popular. The officer's club is the scene of much activity during the evening. Ah Yes! Capt. Dozier and Lt. Glade have returned from a rest (?) in the States. A bit brief (30 days) was their opinion. It appears there will be action taken to render the rest period more satisfactory with regard to travel to and from and length of stay.

22<sup>nd</sup>

Late mission today – results not too sharp....The officer's club is almost completed – everyone is looking forward to its use. The news of Hitler's attempted assassination has evoked such remarks as "Let's leave him for the Russians." Thoughts are becoming optimistic because of the discord in the Nazi fortress, victories and all fronts, etc....The last few days have been hot and humid – the summer has definitely arrived.

23<sup>rd</sup>

Mission today – 88%; men not satisfied – want 100%...Usual sqdn activity.....

24<sup>th</sup>

Early morning mission today was very successful – the combat crews were elated at their work...The afternoon was uneventful with personnel performing their duties, others swimming, some sleeping and still others reading....Baseball again tonight...The Group ALO [Allied Liaison Officer] lectured on the various fronts and a large group listened and applauded....A few new crews have come in and also visitors so that the faces are a bit strange....The evening cinema boasted “Nine Girls” - a mystery story complete with humor and feminine pulchritude – enjoyed by all.....

25<sup>th</sup>

Lt. Merkle has returned from Capri rest camp and he tells us of an amusing incident. Wherein he swam out to a sail boat upon which a man in vacation clothing was sunning himself and said “Capisco Anglais?” The fellow replied “Of course.” They swam together to the beach and were smoking when a Lt. Colonel approached and said to this fellow “General, would you please come over here a minute to meet a few of my friends,” at which point Lt. Merkle gurgled “Ah-ah – Goodbye General,” which remark was returned by the General.....S-2, S-3 and medical lecture was held this evening – new points were introduced and old points reiterated....Sqdn stand-down today....Fresh hamburgers and potatoes with cherry tarts for dessert comprised the salient features of the evening meal. The kitchen is certainly doing a fine job and taking advantage of fresh foodstuffs....Group officer party tonight – Wow – What a party!.....

26<sup>th</sup>

Successful mission today collapsed the Ostiglia RR and RD bridge which was getting to be an obsession with the crews....The line, armament, etc certainly have been keeping up their end of the work. Theirs is routine labor but they get it done and that's what counts. Our compliments for their steadfastness....Operations has held several meetings lately – brushing up the crews on this n' that...Roast chicken tonight – all “chow hounds” were on time, yes sir! The evening show presented “Moonlight in Vermont” with Gloria Jean – a good picture for 14 year olds....

27<sup>th</sup>

Mission in the morning....The remainder of the day passed with the usual work and relaxation. Oh yes, steak tonight!....

28<sup>th</sup>

Weather held down a bombing mission today, however a small nickeling mission was carried out this afternoon...The day was again very hot and the beach found itself very much appreciated...Deanna Durbin played in “To Have and To Hold” at the local cinema and the pulchritude of Deanna was “OO'ed and Aah'ed” by all....

29<sup>th</sup>

No mission today on account of weather...The officer's club was formally put to use – magazines, customers, painted girls on the walls moved in this afternoon....

30<sup>th</sup>

Ferrara RD bridge gave a few anxious moments before take-off but it proved again that chaff and P-47 strafing stops most flak from being close....Usual practice missions etc were run under the auspices of S-3; with bomblines and maps kept up to date by the S-2 department....”The Memphis Belle” was the title of the cinema “sous soir” and all goers were lavish with praise with respect to the presentation of a war picture without “Flag-waving” or ridiculous “Hero stuff”....

31<sup>st</sup>

Group stand-down today; clouds were thick in the blue....And now that another month has come to an end, it may be interesting to review some of the factors affecting the squadron....The meals have on the whole been very good and everyone appreciated how good a job is being done to get such foods over here in adequate quantities. Also the army has provided entertainment on film and stage. Although some of the pictures have not [been] welcomed warmly, it is nevertheless realized by all that the mere fact of giving some sort of “movie” to millions of men is a Herculean task and to be lauded....The missions have on the whole been very good. Casualties have been few in men and planes and bridges knocked out have been numerous....The morale of those recently “come across” needs little bolstering and the morale of those who are veterans is kept up by their own fortitude and experience. There can be no denying however that in an army so huge that there is to be expected many things not to a man's liking but a view of our aim helps us to persist in his tasks....Medics, S-2, S-3, supply, line, administrative, etc are all operating very well because the organization has had experience enough to know what to do and when it must be accomplished. And so we begin another month with the hope of a near finish of hostilities.....

# War Diary of the 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron

## August 1944

Prepared by: 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Glenn L. Pierre

A. Original Unit

(See previous Outline History)

B. Changes in Organization

(None for covered period)

C. Stations

No change

D. Strength

- |  |                |          |
|--|----------------|----------|
| 1. At beginning of the period covered: | Officers – 91  | EM - 362 |
| 2. At the end of period covered:       | Officers – 101 | EM – 349 |

E. Marches

(See War Diary of the 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sqdn for month of August, 1944)

F. Campaigns

The 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq continued to participate actively in the bombing of bridges and gun positions in France and Italy. A majority of the missions flown were bridge targets in strangle operations.

G. Battles

[List of 27 missions can be found elsewhere on this web site, or see original War Diary.]

H. Commanding Officers in Important Engagements

[List of four missions flown by Major Hackney.]

I. Losses in Action

Missing in Action: 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. J.P. Hoschar, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. C.E. Arnold, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. V.J. Ottavio, T/Sgt. A.D. Alldredge, Sgt. W.D. Koseski, Cpl. C.T. Henry.

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

[See original War Diary page 21 for rank and decoration.]

Damaini	Durkin	Prehutcko
Staub	Summergrade	McMillan
Somers	Brink	Fisher
Satterthwaite	Helferich	Braden
Sedach	Knuckles	Easley
Morrison	Wright	Middlekauff
Dalton	Vail	Giles
Rahatz	Ottavio	Dowlen
Vezone	Diehl	Morris
Rowher	Hanecak	Mravinec
Streckert	Rausch	Merkel
Carlson	Jones	Gilley
Barron	Moyer	Clements
Regan	Cahill	Keller
Hoschar	Nomland	Crespi

Miller Pike Whited Fisher Spoonamore Wyma McKivison boney Mehle LaRue Slocum Smits Layton Koseski Strait Alldredge	Craig Bylund Burnett Cain Little Plotsky Cupp Podvjski Hill Schmitz Jones Martinson Mell Hickman Whalen	Laney Horton Kennedy Garvin McHale Leving Richenback Dittmeir Cooley Turner Davis
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August 1, 1944

Stand-down for the squadron today...Usual duties and recreations..

2<sup>nd</sup>

Mission to France! Conjectures are abundant; does this presage an early invasion? Bets were made and as the time unfolds its poignant episodes the players will have cast their lot. The mission was confirmed by PI as having destroyed the bridge. The flak was heavy and a majority of the planes were holed. One flak burst exploded within the right wing of Lt. Hill's ship and caused the ship to flip over. Lt. Hill quickly cut the left engine and flew home. Upon his arrival he again started the right engine and landed with a hole so big one could not reach across it with both arms outstretched. Lt. Hill deserves more than praise for such handling and we hope he gets the DFC....The 488<sup>th</sup> cinema presented Ginger Rogers in "Lady in the Dark" - the picture was slightly capricious but "enjoyable" as the word went....

3<sup>rd</sup>

Mission to S France again today. No flak left the men speechless. Squadron did well and the PI says the bridge was destroyed....."Rosie the Riveter" was a humorous picture enjoyed by the majority of the spectators.....

4<sup>th</sup>

PX rations today – 5 candy bars, cigarettes, etc....Morning mission today....Balance of day – as usual....Lt. Lewis returned from DS to 57 Wing Hdqs...

5<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down today because of very adverse weather. A jovial and often noisy party was held at the Group Officers Club....

6<sup>th</sup>

Late chaff and frag mission by 3 486<sup>th</sup> ships. All other sqdns highly commended the skill of these chaff ships...Church services were again held for a good sized audience...Chicken for supper – there were no leftovers...Practice missions, ditching practice, and dingy drill help turn leisure hours into valuable experience for combat personnel....

7<sup>th</sup>

Early mission today – yes very early – briefing 0620. Target again France to destroy important RR communications. Cancellation of all leaves for 10 days of combat personnel augmented quantity and circulation of rumors and predictions of invasion of S France. Rumors put the invasion within 1 – 2 weeks....The local flickers presented “A Guy Named Joe” which was considered by most as a good picture...Ed Sendek's turret trainer continues to be armament's chief claim to fame. No less than one brigadier general (Knapp), three colonels including Col. Chapman, Lt. Col. Bailey, and a few odd majors and war correspondents made a pilgrimage to watch the wonder in operation. Glenn Blair pre-flighted the turret, but his nervous trigger finger made a poor showing. So Col. Chapman gave some elementary instruction to one of the correspondents, who began to register several effective squirts after a few minutes practice....

8<sup>th</sup>

Laundry was collected and sent out today. Early morning mission against S. France. Bombing was good and the Sqdn again received 100% accuracy...Higher headquarters has struck with sudden swiftness snatching five much-needed men from the section. Blair, Ken Charlow, John Kluba, Tom Hooe, and Irv Yormark are the victims who are reported to be going into Very Heavy Bombers. Predictions have it that Charlow, as section chief, is going to have stupendous problems with loading bombs on those 80 station racks, and that Blair will be ready shortly for a section 8 when he starts to figure out that fire control system. Everyone feels the hardest for “Thirty-five Mission” Yormark, whose chances of rotation look slimmer and slimmer.

9<sup>th</sup>

Mission to S France again. The weather was definitely unfavorable but after three passes at the target the sqdn obtained 63% accuracy. The new ration weeks began today and many traveled to Ghisonaccia for their sweets and tobac...Fresh ham and potatoes for supper! The evening brought with it a steady shower and caused a cancellation of the cinema...As a substitute, the club, reading, and writing not to mention card playing consumed the monotony...

10<sup>th</sup>

An early morning (0200) heavy rain caused an inundation of many tents. Shoes and gear floated by, while in some tents the floor was not visible because of the water. Slit trenches filled with 5' of water and during the flood many laughs and flashlights could be heard and seen while attempts were made at salvage. Indeed, a good practice day for Noah! The weather was unfavorable for missions so again a stand-down. The evening brought forth the vision of a huge waterspout off Alesan field about 5 miles out to sea. Despite threatening weather and a sprinkle the cinemaites braved a possible deluge to see “Gaslight,” which was acclaimed highly satisfactory because of its quality of acting and staging.



11<sup>th</sup>

Mission today was quite a challenge to the skill of the combat crews – coastal gun positions on the coast of S France. Returned crews reported excellent results – we shall see! Weather was forbidding till late afternoon at which time the 48 ship mission left. Cinema presented “Fired Wife” - an amusing picture, albeit slightly corny.

12<sup>th</sup>

Mission again to coast of S. France. Target – coastal guns on which excellent patterns were reported. Afternoon was consumed by usual squadron activity and inactivity....

13<sup>th</sup>

Church services as usual. Mission gave the squadron a 96% - the combat crews are doing excellent work this month! The evening meal was graced by feminine presence at the officer's mess – but the nudes on the wall caused no consternation. The afternoon sun was very hot and a good proportion of the squadron cooled off at the beach. The news of a SS troop and a Wehrmacht division fighting between themselves caused optimistic comments – we hope its true. With missions day in and day out the various ground sections are kept busy – they may not be doing dangerous or heralded work but it is being done and done well and on time....

14<sup>th</sup>

Mission to S France again – but combat crews meeting at 1800 hrs provided most of the news – THE INVASION OF SOUTHERN FRANCE would take place at 0800 hrs the following morning. Invasion beaches were shown, plan of air, land, and sea forces was outlined to some extent. Because of the 0400 briefing the next morning most all crews retired early.....

15<sup>th</sup>

The Group sent 72 ships into the air and over the S France coast by 0730 this morning. Very few boxes dropped their bombs because of the damned weather which blanketed the coast. This was very disappointing, however, because little or no flak was observed; everyone returned safely and grateful for that at least. In the afternoon bridges at Avignon were selected as targets. This indicated the B-25s could be taken off ground support work and put back on semi strategic work. A French Major General and his aide-de-camp accompanied the invasion during the afternoon after being initiated about the Group by Col. Chapman. The mission was rough – three ships did not return and most were holed. Two went down over the target and one over the sea. Our ship, piloted by Lt. Hoschar was struck in the right wing flew apart and set the ship into a flat spin. No one was seen chuting out but chutes may have been overlooked because of the excited state of the crews due to the intense, and accurate flak. Some are inclined to believe several men may have gotten out safely and the writer is one who believes. On the return trip, pilots J.D. Smith and Morrison spotted a 488<sup>th</sup> ship going down and when the crew landed in the water they each dropped spare dingies and radioed fixes for air-sea rescue. The squadron was not happy and groups of men could be seen about the area in discussion, quiet and

soberly talking about the mission. The Sqdn's turn for stand-down will serve tomorrow and so to help forget about the mission. Quite a few boys drained their sorrows with some beer and whiskey – in fact singing could be heard during the small hours. Earlier a truckload of personnel went to the 306 S.G. [Signal Group] show, because the Gp shows have been discontinued until further notice....The manpower shortage in the Armament section left Bob Sturgis with no one on his flight but Jim Sheldon so he is once more a regular armorer, while “Buf” Falo, John Dietzen, and “Tex” Dyson, who hardly knew what armament was six weeks ago, have learned the hard way and now take care of their own ships.....

16<sup>th</sup>

Sqdn stand-down today...Usual duties and customary methods of relaxation. Gp continued its cinema run tonight and presented “Her Primitive Man” - it was acclaimed mediocre.....

17<sup>th</sup>

Mission that was scheduled for the afternoon was canceled on account of the weather. Otherwise nothing of any interest took place....

18<sup>th</sup>

Afternoon mission canceled because of showers. The day dragged again because the usual activities were again predominant. The evening meal consisted of fresh steak and potatoes and then mail call during which two sacks of letters were distributed. Thus everyone was a little cheered up. During the evening the usual cinema was canceled in favor of a GI show by the 321<sup>st</sup> Bomb Gp. Typically GI it nevertheless was enjoyable. Presently 8 new pilots arrived and the big problem before Ops is transition and instruction. The engineering section is working smoothly and efficiently along with the other line personnel – and ships go up in good condition every day, barring the weather.....

19<sup>th</sup>

Early mission today (0530) briefing and target was again communications in Rhone Valley, S France. Since the invasion of S France the 340<sup>th</sup> has moved off ground support to resume bombing their semi-strategic targets. This indicated the ground troops are doing well. After a 3 ½ hour mission the crews returned and were quite disgusted because cloud coverage, about 11/10<sup>th</sup> as one officer said, obscured the target. Consequently, another mission left for the same target at 1608. Mission successful; according to returning crews, the north span of Montefaucon Bridge is down. The evening found the weekly dance of the Group Officer's Club a lively affair – it is reported four females were present....Also at the local cinema the audience was bored and disgusted with the picture “Hi Good Looking”.....

20<sup>th</sup>

Morning mission gave unsatisfactory results – of the 15 enemy ships on the A/D [Aerodrome = airport] only a few were hit...Of course everyone was disappointed especially Capt. Bridges who was awakened at 0300 to change the bomb load! Stand-down for the rest of the day and usual church services were held.....

21<sup>st</sup>

Morning mission – to Italy for a change – results good – the bridge is down. Afternoon was a combination of sqdn duties and recreation the early evening found the ALO a guest for supper and as a lecturer on the war fronts. Mail was again quite plentiful and smiling faces could be seen leaving the mail tent. Although a goodly number of personnel follow the various fronts avidly, it is quite surprising that a considerable number pay little heed of day to day development. Especially is this so among combat officer personnel. As this is from the writer's observations, he cannot yet submit a reason why. The evening brings with it a cinema - "Sahara" which was more or less a "hero" story of war – though it was enjoyed in a tense fashion...

22<sup>nd</sup>

Stand-down for the group today – it appears we are short of targets. Rations cards were given out to the officers for the new period and some rations were drawn at the 35 Station Hospital....Lt. Sellers returned last night and had many listeners today when he related some of his experiences in evasion escape from Italy....Two new crews again arrived and it appears there will be rapid turnover of combat personnel soon, because many crews are reaching the 70 mark....

23<sup>rd</sup>

Sqdn stand-down today was unexpectedly canceled when a mission was called for Avignon, a dreaded target! After great apprehension the combat crews discovered all flak at Avignon was silent! It may have been removed – no one seems to know. However to spoil a free ride the ships came home over Marseilles accidentally, and there a small amount of flak was observed. The target was so unexpected that the combat gunners were required to assist in loading bombs – they went to work cheerfully and Capt. Bridges said without their help the mission would not have been on time....

24<sup>th</sup>

Morning mission to S France returned with bombs [on] account of weather. Early noon mission with frags to assist the sqdns on Avignon was successful because the bridge bursting complement had no flak after the run by the frag and chaff ships. The day was again quite warm the evenings are very pleasant except that mosquitoes are now becoming too numerous. The dark hours began with a cinema entitled "Smith of Minnesota" acclaimed by the men as "just mediocre." Practice and training are kept at a high standard by S-3, the line crews are doing a big job very well and the sections are cooperating to form a well knit squadron. As a final word today – the "morrow" promises to be quite a day – it being the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (M), USAAF....

25<sup>th</sup>

The day's activities after a few late risers entered the mess hall, began with an S-2 lecture presided over by Capt. Stith, who as always presented the material in a friendly efficient manner. Late a first aid lecture was held by S-3 for new crews and during these instructions the camp area was being made presentable because quite a few wheels (Sqdn jargon) are expected. At two o'clock at Gp Ops awards were given to officers and enlisted men by Gen. Knapp and Col. Chapman. It was an impressive ceremony because so many were cited in military fashion. The general said this group has done the best bombing in the world – we expect the general was referring to pinpoint bombing. After the citations the straight lines of khaki clad men, snapped to a smart salute as did the spectators, at the playing of the National Anthem, which concluded the ceremonies. Some men then retired to the bars and some to the beaches, to whet up an appetite for a fresh chicken dinner – everyone did justice to the cook's culinary skill – however, there were no 'brass hats' present – which is not surprising because rumors of their visits are seldom founded. At seven o'clock the outside amphitheatre at the 488<sup>th</sup> was packed. The USO entertainment (Unit #76) began 15 minutes late as is the custom with GI entertainment, but was applauded by all. The show was good but certainly not excellent. At the finish long columns of men could be seen trekking down the road to begin the evening's dance and party. The USO entertainers divided their time between the O's and EM's clubs and it was not long after 2000 hrs that the majority were quite gay. And so as darkness fell in varying degrees among the revelers, the party gradually dimmed out and thus ended the celebration of two years of activity of the 340<sup>th</sup> BG (M)

26<sup>th</sup>

Group stand-down was no doubt appreciated by numerous owners of hangovers. The day was warm and aside from a few practice missions the usual activity prevailed. In the evening the cinema presented “Crazy House” which began late causing no little consternation and broke down several times, causing more consternation, however, the picture was humorous and enjoyed by all...

27<sup>th</sup>

Usual church services – well attended – well presented by Chaplain Cooper, better known as “Chappy.” As a regular fellow, Chappy is well known and popular with all. Stand-down was canceled for stand-by and usual training practices we[re] inaugurated - “Sunday, Monday & Always,” (permission not obtained from copyright owners)...Three truckloads of men attended the movie at the AA battery and enjoyed the picture “Double Indemnity”.....

28<sup>th</sup>

Target presented at 0555 briefing was a few miles from Lyon – a long, long trip. Only one box of the 486<sup>th</sup> dropped – results: some say possible hits, some say pattern was short. Afternoon stand-down and because the weather is hot it will be spent at the beach for many. Laundry (GI) goes out today – service is about every 8 days and takes about 6-7 for return. The local cinema presented Joe E. Brown in “Casanova Kelly” which was mediocre. During the walk home one of the EM was struck by a jeep and injured severely. Capt. Wathen took over and had him taken to the hospital. As usual some one must be injured before men can be convinced they drive too fast and foolishly....

29<sup>th</sup>

Morning mission to N. Italy, results were stated as good – pattern across bridge. Afternoon stand-down...

30<sup>th</sup>

After crews arrived at ops at 0555 for briefing a stand-down was called for at 1330 – the moaning and groaning after such early arising for no avail was noticeable. After leaving the briefing room in record time the crews drove home to “hit the sack.” The evening brought the “Canterville Ghost” at the 488<sup>th</sup> cinema area. The show was a big success, being different from corny musical comedies, so-called, and usual war glory bunk....

31<sup>st</sup>

Early briefing, early mission to N of Venice. Results – good – the bridges are down and we received 71%. The French B-26 boys stopped at our field today to re-fuel. A few pictures were taken and after a little conversation it was discovered one was from Marseilles and one from Brest. Additional pictures were taken of various sections and it is hoped a number can be used in public relations work and in the sqdn diary. Ration week #3 began today and those with cards and ambition drew beer, candy, tobacco etc. Several men departed for Foggia a few days ago to meet the medical disposition board – it is rumored we will lose them all but their families will be jubilant. After another month has so rapidly slipped by it may be well to again review it with a clear if tired tone. Because of the invasion the food was less fresh except for results of excursions. Mail was hardly if at all delayed, the various sections carried on as usual, the new men full of eagerness and pep, the experienced men carried on efficiently and with little effort always hoping for a quick finish of hostilities. Everyone grew conscious of an increase in rumors as to when and where we would go, because of the situation in France. A series of shows could be considered as “fair to middlin” and because of the country life the young blood is easily bored and often wishing for a change to the bright lights of a big city. During many a hot day of the past month, many with free afternoons cooled off at the seashore. The beach was a wonderful place to relieve oneself of the heat of the day. No air raid alarms were heard during August and except for the brief pistol carrying episode all was calm.....

**[The photos found at the end of these War Diaries are not in order. The page number in square brackets identifies the PDF page association with the caption.]**

July 5, 1944

C. Photographs as follows:

1. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, San Pancrazio, Italy, November, 1943:  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt. William E. Kesler. [Page 30]
2. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, Foggia, Italy, December, 1943:  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Frank O'Leary. [Page 31]
3. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, Pompeii, Italy March, 1944: L to R  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Richard F. Cassady, Capt. Forrest G. Stith [Page 51]
4. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, Pompeii, Italy March 1944: L to R  
Cpl. Frank Thomas, T/Sgt. Walter Sutton [Page 42]
5. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, Foggia, Italy December 1943:  
Capt. Nelson L. Dozier [Page 47]
6. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, Pompeii, Italy, March 1944: L to R  
T/Sgt. Bernard W. Searles, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Clifford W. Swearingen, S/Sgt. Leon Witiver  
[Page 43]
7. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, Catania, Sicily, September, 1943: L to R  
Sgt. George H. Hogrefe, Sgt. Joseph C. Browning, Sgt. Clinton J. Schrack, S/Sgt. James T. Stark, Sgt. Hugh C. Day, Cpl. Lawrence I. Hirleman. [Page 39]

August 8, 1944

C. Photographs as follows:

1. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, Alesan L/G, Corsica, July 1944:  
Dispensary, Orderly Room, Operations and Intelligence, and Message Center. Men, left to right: Sgt. Russell P. Krause, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Vincent J. Ottavio, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Donald B Pray.  
[Page 49]
2. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, Alesan L/G, Corsica, July 1944:  
Cpl. Kalapanidas with his German Command Car. [Page 38]
3. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, Alesan L/G, Corsica, July 1944:  
L to R in line, S/Sgt. J. Rausch, T/Sgt. Cecil Riordan, S/Sgt. R. Spoonamore, S/Sgt. Robert L. Helferich, S/Sgt. R. J. Boney, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. M. J. Regan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. G.P. Rahatz, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Charles 'Cat' Ross  
[Page 50]
4. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, Alesan L/G, Corsica, July 1944:  
View of the half completed Officer's Club and Officer's Mess Hall.  
[Page 34]
5. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, Alesan L/G, Corsica, July 1944:  
6E after it had made a force landing and run off the end of the runway. Men in the picture reading from L to R are: Service Group man dismantling the ship. [Page 52]
6. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, Alesan L/G, Corsica, July 1944:  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt. R.V. Schnur and 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. D.V. Wheeler on the porch of the house they built from frag boxes and logs. [Page 33]
7. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, Alesan L/G, Corsica, July 1944:  
6P with bombs ready for loading. [Page 35]

September 8, 1944

C. Photographs as follows:

1. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, Alesan L/G, Corsica, August, 1944:  
Sgt. Earl A. Leising. [Page 37]
2. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, Alesan L/G, Corsica, August, 1944:  
Pvt. Ernest C. Platt, Cpl. James F. Garrity, and Cpl. Sidney Perle standing, Sgt. Russell F. Krause and T/Sgt. Albert C. Palmour kneeling. [Missing]
3. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, Alesan L/G, Corsica, August, 1944:  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Faith, T/Sgt. Hanecak, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Podvojski, Sgt. McKee, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Carlson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Barron [Page 46]
4. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, Alesan L/G, Corsica, August, 1944:  
Cpl. Schlosser, Cpl. Burman, Cpl. Weech, S/Sgt. Moore, Cpl. Stuczyk, Pfc. Cheek. [Page 45]
5. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, Alesan L/G, Corsica, August, 1944:  
Major Robert M. Hackney [Page 32]
6. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, Alesan L/G, Corsica, August, 1944:  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Barnard [Page 44]
7. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, Alesan L/G, Corsica, August, 1944:  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Mell, Major R.M. Hackney, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Satterthwaite [Page 36]
8. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, Alesan L/G, Corsica, August, 1944:  
Lt. Vail, Staub, Mell, Faith, Barnard, Satterthwaite, and kneeling Sgts. Knapp and Brink, Cpl. Johnson, Cpl. Carpenter, and Sgts. Bills and Garvin [Page 41]
9. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, Alesan L/G, Corsica, August, 1944:  
Cpl. Landis, Sgts. Kariaca and Tokarski, Lt. Rabatz, Sgt. Layton, Lts. Morrison and Whited. [Page 40]
10. 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, Alesan L/G, Corsica, August, 1944:  
View of Officers Mess Hall and Club with Lts. Adams and Bylund at door [Page 48]

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

[http://57thbombwing.com/340th\\_History/340thGroupHistory.php](http://57thbombwing.com/340th_History/340thGroupHistory.php)

Transcription by Dan Setzer, son of Sgt. Hymie Setzer, 340<sup>th</sup> BG HQ Squadron. April 19, 2015]