

War Diary of the 488th Bomb Squadron

April 1944

Prepared by: Capt. Everett B. Thomas

April 1, 1944

Mission to Orvieto R.R. Bridge. No buono. Fine Spring morning, but afternoon overcast with a cold gale blowing.

2nd

Same target as yesterday. Beautiful Palm Sunday. Quiet as a grave in the afternoon with everybody sleeping or reading.

3rd

Mission to Orvieto R.R. Bridge. Still no buono. Lt. Myers went off on a mission of his own. All ships holed.

4th

Mission to Perugia A/D [Aerodrome]. Lt. Myers got his captaincy today.

5th

Stand-down.

6th

Mission to Perugia A/D again.

7th

Mission to Ficulle R.R. Bridge. Made two runs on the target. Nice Spring day.

8th

Mission to R.R. Bridge North of Orvieto.

9th

Stand-down all day. Overcast. Easter Sunday. The sunrise service sort of flopped largely because of weather.

10th

Mission to R.R. Bridge at Attigliario. Ruined that bridge. Getting ready to move to Corsica much to everybody's disgust. We're perfectly happy in this nice location in which we have the best and most compact set-up yet.

11th

Stand-down all day. Advance party left for Corsica.

12th

Mission to Todi R.R. Bridge. Was called off just as we finished briefing, then changed to immediate stand-by and finally we got off.

13th

Mission to Ficulle R.R. Bridge

14th

Mission to Viterbo A/D.

15th

Mission to R.R. Bridge north of Todi.

16th

Mission to Todi R.R. Bridge. Convoy started for Salerno enroute to Corsica. Everybody up for a 0430 breakfast. Left only a few ground crew men and all the crews except for a couple of ships which sent over a day or two ago. Later in the morning Group suddenly called for additional ships with full loads of men and baggage to leave. They had just told us we'd be here at least a week and more likely two.

17th

Mission to Todi R.R. Bridge. Remnants of the Squadron ate with the 447th of the 321st Group. In the middle of the morning, men to fill up two more ships were suddenly called for to take off as soon as they could pack. Ready in short order, but did not take off until 1315 hours. Flew to Sardinia, then north to Corsica. Weather up to noon had been warm and sunny, but then changed to a heavy gale, blowing up a storm.

18th

Corsica. Setting up housekeeping and those who are here are eating with the 486th, about three-quarters of a mile down the road. The location is at the foot of a small hill, between it and the sea. Our Squadron area is in the midst of heavy underbrush and cork trees, but looks as though it would be a nice set-up once everybody turns to and clears out his individual tent area. There is the last word in radar installations at the top of the hill, and plenty of guns in all sizes surround us. Goons and Gurkas on the beech (which has not been cleared of mines).

Bamboo grows to 20 feet and more down in the marshy sections and there are several small streams which are supposed to have fish in them. Wild boar hunting up in the hills. We are 48 kilometers from Bastia and 2 from Prunete. More ships and crews in today.

19th

Mission to Piombino harbor. Got two large ships. Convoy came in today and everybody busy setting up. They think they were shadowed by a sub on the way across and the destroyer escort dropped depth bombs. There were the usual card games on the LST. At night the heavy dew in combination with the soot from the smoke stacks got the deck sleepers a bit dirty. Rough seas, but otherwise uneventful trip.

20th

Stand-down all day. Some of the more ambitious have cut loads of bamboo stalks and are fixing up natty fences around their "ouselots." Photographic evidence is attached showing combat crews actually doing manual labor. Morale is good. The food is good and has been good for the past three months and contrary to all rumors previous to the move, it is still good on Corsica. Movies are a nightly feature on the slope in our own area. The area, after being cleared of shrubs, is compact and chummy. Lights are available steadily due to the efforts of our Communications Section, and, by and large this Squadron is enjoying the best location yet and is looking forward to all expense paid summer vacation.

21st

Stand-down.

22nd

Mission to Ficulle R.R. Bridge.

23rd

Mission to Orvieto North R.R. Bridge.

24th

Mission to same target as yesterday. S/Sgt. George C. Price killed by a stray piece of flak.

25th

Mission to Bridge South of Ficulle.

26th

Stand-down all day. Rain and heavy gale.

27th

Same only more so. Many tents down.

28th

Three missions for this Squadron to Bridge South of Orvieto, Attigliano R.R. Bridge and the main Orvieto R.R. Bridge. No excitement.

29th

Mission to Terni Viaduct.

30th

Mission to Marciana R.R. Bridge. No excitement. The Squadron had 25 missions, 156 sorties and dropped 548,760 pounds of bombs for the month.

Captions of photographs included in the Diary for April 1944 on the page indicated:

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A natty fence decorates the area.

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Mess hall of the 488th

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The Enlisted Men's side of the mess hall overflows.

P 15

Ack-ack gun crews on the alert for enemy planes.

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The newest thing in radar and the men that make it work.

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Panoramic view of squadron area.

Men mentioned in the History for April 1944 on the page indicated:

P 7

Samuel W. Vance
Robert N. Pond

P 8

Saleem (NMI) Aswad
Thoms C. Sloan
Clarence G. Beatty
John (NMI) Lazor
Clarence H. Snow

P 9

John E. Rapp
Bernard A. Steed
Troy E. Jones
Richard J.H. McClure
Charles O. Smyre
Stephen (NMI) Woytek
Edward H. Zoolalian
James C. Burrhus, Jr.
George (NMI) Gregory
Frederick S. Newhard
Andrew J. Lockhart, Jr.
Ernest L. Woughter, Jr.
Carroll M. Ricks
William E. Porter
James F Kelley
Robert R. Burger
Elmer A. Iljana
Rubin London
Raymond D. Chesney

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Walter G. Deardoff
Edward S. Bryk
Charles K. Cuthbertson
Loss W. Carroll
Herbert A. Michael
Frank A. Schilling
George W. Thomas
Jack (NMI) Oddo
Harvey L. Bargsley

Harry C. Brinson
Samuel (NMI) Salgat
Leon H. Stoneman
Pedro F. Cavazos
J.D. Wright
Celso B. Castaneda
Ricardo Belbosque
Vincent Whelan
Merle O. Wyckoff
Phillip E. Zendejas
Russell M. Marsh
James H. Bush

Captions of photographs included in the History for April 1944 on the page indicated:

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General Knapp presents Pvt. Jernigan with an Air Medal while Col. Chapman, GP CO, Maj. Cassada, Sq CO, and Maj. Bennett, Gp Adj wait to congratulate him.

P 70

General Knapp presenting the radio, turret and tail gunners the Air Medal

Lt. Murphey, S-2 Officer, gives the crews a big grin as a send-off as they start down to briefing.

P 71

Leaving Paestrum

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Left to right: Lt. W.A. Smith wields the shovel, Capt. Wells the rake and Capt. Ostrem slings a mean ax.

[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. June 10, 2015]