

# War Diary of the 488<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron

## June 1944

Prepared by: Capt. Everett B. Thomas

June 1, 1944

Mission to railroad bridge at Narni. Good pattern with direct hits on the bridge.

2<sup>nd</sup>

Mission to railroad bridge at Foligno, also Civita Castellana. 488<sup>th</sup> scored 100% in bombing accuracy on the first target with 18 planes. Lots of packages in – first in a long time.

3<sup>rd</sup>

Mission to same place at Civita Castellana. Had warning that saboteurs were loose on the island tonight. One of the enlisted men, cleaning his new 45, shot himself through the leg. Happened right after supper.

4<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Vernio railroad bridge. Big news of the day – ALLIES ARE NOW IN ROME. Lt. Hagerman, returning from the mission, couldn't get his wheels to come down, so had to make a belly landing. '88<sup>th</sup> beat the '89<sup>th</sup> tonight in baseball 6 to 1 with T/Sgt. McGloin pitching.

5<sup>th</sup>

Mission to road bridge SW of Narni. Enlisted men had a sex lecture given by Capt. Marino, and Capt. Tayloe, adjutant, read them the Articles of War. Mail (regular letters) for first time this week. The Group has finally received the Distinguished Unit Badge and everyone is now entitled to wear the blue ribbon with the gold border. Chow has been very good. Fried chicken for supper tonight. Umm! Umm!

6<sup>th</sup>

Mission to road block at Motefiascone. D-Day caused quite a stir in the squadron. Most of the day was spent in listening to news broadcasts. S-2 put up a large scale map of France. Got to keep track of the troops.

7<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Cecina road bridge. Plenty of accurate flak. Last night two enlisted men rolled an Ordnance truck down a hill and completely smashed it. Paratroop rumor again tonight.

8<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down after 1600 hours. Lt. Yacko from the 489<sup>th</sup> Squadron transferred to us as engineering officer.

9<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Orvieto road bridge in the morning and one-ship nickeling mission in the afternoon. Both missions got flak. Lt. Vertrees went to hospital with minor wounds, but the bridge was smashed completely if that's any consolation.

10<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Fano M/Y [Marshaling Yards]. Another 100% bombing accuracy mission. Capt. Thomas flew over to Rome with Capts. Howard and Mitcham to see if he could find any trace of 8Y, the ship that went down on 12<sup>th</sup> May.

11<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Rain in the afternoon. Man shot today in the group guard. T/Sgt. Deardoff, Ordnance chief who was wounded in the 13<sup>th</sup> May raid, transferred out today.

12<sup>th</sup>

Mission to North Bucine viaduct. No buona. Bomb line really moving. Rain after 2300 hours tonight. Came down in buckets.

13<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Perugia road bridge. The show, Going My Way with Bing Crosby, played tonight. Enlisted men had planned to party for tonight and fixed up a dance hall in the hills with an orchestra (colored), lights, drinks, refreshments and then the girls invited sent word that they would not be there. Everyone disappointed.

14<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Pistoia viaduct, Italy. Good results. Swimming at the beach is getting to be quite popular these days.

15<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Castagno railroad viaduct. "Pappy" Hodges, "Jake" Jacobson, Bob Hanscom and Bob Till left by DC-3 for Oran. From there they'll go by hospital ship to the States. They are the last of our men who were wounded in the raid to leave. 488<sup>th</sup> promotions today were 7 1<sup>st</sup> Lts and one capt.

16<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Pietrasanta railroad bridge. Last night flares were dropped about 25 miles to the north of us. We didn't find out that they were practicing until they had been lighted for ten minutes. Tonight while the show was going on, the 90 mm on top of the hill went off and everybody jumped about ten feet off the ground. There was an unidentified ship just off shore a little ways. Lt. Link left for the States today.

17<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Piombino harbor (nickeling). Lt. Mozer is our new Ordnance Officer. Three more 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenants made today.

18<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down.

19<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down.

20<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down.

21<sup>st</sup>

Mission to Pietrasanta railroad bridge. Another good mission. Flak heavy and accurate. Three planes holed.

22<sup>nd</sup>

Mission to Cricigliana railroad bridge. Bombs brought back Yesterday 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Woodward and Cpl Herdman of Tech Supply left for the States on the rotation plan. M/Sgt. Hawkins is now acting 1<sup>st</sup> sergeant until we receive a replacement. Promotions of two radio-gunners to T/Sgt, five gunners to S/Sgt. And one gunner to Sgt.

23<sup>rd</sup>

Stand-down. More promotions. This time three more 1<sup>st</sup> Lts. Algiers and Malta seem to hold strange attractions for the boys. Malta, it's rumored, has steaks, milk and scotch and lots of pretty girls.

24<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Four more 1<sup>st</sup> Lts. Ideal summer weather on the island.

25<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Officers' Club had informal opening tonight with an excellent attendance. Club has been built by volunteer officers mostly from the 488<sup>th</sup> under guidance of a few master workman. Is really a well executed job as the photographs show. Enlisted men are getting a Red Cross Club which will be ready for them within a short time.

26<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. The beach is really calling these days.

27<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Weather must be pretty bad over Italy, but it's certainly good here. Allied progress in Italy has slowed down to a steady pace. Southern fried chicken for supper again tonight.

28<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Mail in today. Hooray.

29<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Caevo railroad bridge, Italy and the 488<sup>th</sup> smashed a bridge again. The target was just about 20 miles from the French border down along the coast.

30<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Pietrasanta road bridge. No buona. Nickeling mission to Pisa, Leghorn and Aleutia. Blue ribbons passed out today. Big day for the squadron "Year Book." Everyone interested in it. Capt. Thomas gave a short summary tonight at the squadron meeting. He brought the new men up to Sfax, the flight echelon's story. For the Month of June the 488<sup>th</sup> has had 23 missions with 190 sorties and dropped 688,000 pounds of bombs, also roughly 1,400,000 "nickels." [Nickels = pamphlets] Out of 19 missions on which bombs were dropped the 488<sup>th</sup> has scored 13 missions with direct hits on the target. The group has received congratulatory messages from the 5<sup>th</sup> Army and from Brig-General Knapp.

**Men mentioned in the June 1944 History:**

b. Changes in staff officers

Capt Dick E. Adams appointed Unit Gas Officer in addition to his other duties.

1<sup>st</sup>. Lt. John L. Hughes appointed Assistant Unit Gas Officer in addition to his other duties.

1<sup>st</sup>. Lt. Edward Yacko appointed Engineering Officer.

1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Alexander Mozer appointed Ordnance Officer.

j. Personnel who have distinguished themselves in action.

[See original History for rank and details of award.]

Hugh C. Smith

William NMI Duda

Richard F. Hirsch

Richard J. H. McClure

Albert R. Panko

Robert R. Vertrees

Paul K. Weatherly

Lowell E. Anderson

Eddie H. Lake

Charles K. Cuthbertson

Hugh C. Kirkwood

Clarence G. Beatty

Thomas H. Heath

Leon H. Stoneman

Celso B. Castaneda

**Captions on photographs included in June 1944 History on the page indicated:**

P 64

Sgts. Kepler, Pennington, Rollins and Becker. Lt. Mintz.

P 65

S/Sgt. Neuberger

P 66

Lt. Murphey

P 67

Sgt. Kriminick, T/Sgt. Eddie Lake and Sgt. Iljana. Aircraft 8H

P68

Showalter, Aswad, Lazor, Snow, Hirsch, McClure. Aircraft 8H

Clifford, Chrenko, Rackmyer, [Joseph] Heller, Zaboly, Schroeder, Ryba

P 69

Aircraft 8J over Viareggio Harbor

P 72

Aircraft 8L

[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. June 20, 2015]