

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

## July 1944

Prepared by: Capt. Everett B. Thomas

July 1, 1944

Mission to Canneto Tunnel, Italy. Routine.

2<sup>nd</sup>

Twelve ship mission to Ostiglia fuel dump, Italy. 100% bombing accuracy.

3<sup>rd</sup>

Mission to Ferrara fuel dump, Italy. Hot target, lost 8L with [2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. James E.] Cooper, pilot, [Owen E.] Wahlstrom, Co-pilot, [1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Roy H.] Pinkard, bombardier, [Jefferson H.] Pettyjohn, radio-gunner, [S/Sgt. Arnold] Krause, Gunner, [Maurice B.] Wynn, tail-gunner and Capt [Geoffrey M.] Crossman, British ALO for the Group. It was the captain's first mission.

4<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down all day. Mail. New ship and crew in. Squadron meeting tonight. Lt. Murphey gave part of the squadron history. The 488<sup>th</sup> has an average of \$5.00 bond per man which is \$2.00 over the average. 488<sup>th</sup> 's ahead in everything.

5<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down after 1400 hours. Weather over in Italy must be bad. New ship and crew in again today. Capt Howard was burning some trash in front of his tent and a shell went off. Must have been a 20 mm from the sound of it. Nobody hurt. Lt. Perry got his captaincy.

6<sup>th</sup>

Two missions today. First to Pianora rail bridge and second to Parma, both in Italy. Four planes holed in all. Both 100% in bombing accuracy. A lot of credit belongs to T/Sgt. Bronson, radio-gunner, who even though he hadn't been ordered to do so, had the presence of mind enough to turn on the camera and got the only pictures of the mission.

7<sup>th</sup>

One plane nickeling mission to Arezzo area, Italy. High winds blowing all day. Good show at night, "What A Woman" with Brian Ahern and Rosalind Russell. Another new ship and crew in.

8<sup>th</sup>

Two missions to Ostiglia fuel dump, Italy. Both 100% bombing accuracy missions and both beautiful patterns. Early morning practice mission again. T/O at 0430 hours. Capt. Thomas took some pictures at the squadron meeting tonight.

9<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Weather. Short heavy rain around noon with intermittent showers in the afternoon. Gas chamber drill today with line men going through in the morning and area men in the afternoon. Everybody going to get a trip to Rome. Baseball tonight between '86<sup>th</sup> and '88<sup>th</sup>. 488<sup>th</sup> won 2 to 1. Lot of mail and packages. Cooks's dog had her litter of pups last night.

10<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Rovigo M/Y, Italy. [Marshaling Yards] Only squadron that [got] 100%. Seems our bombardiers can't miss. Five men left on 30 day leaves today.

11<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down today. At the squadron meeting last night Lt. Murphey made the statement that Capt. Howard, our acting CO, has the highest number of missions of anyone in the Group, and Capt. Howard said that so far for the month the 488<sup>th</sup> is the highest in the Group with a bombing accuracy average of 96%. Everybody sweating who's going to be the first one to miss a target instead of who's going to hit a target.

12<sup>th</sup>

Two missions today to Zoagli rail viaduct and Reggio A/D [Aerodrome]. At Zoagli had 4 ships holed and one man had minor wounds. Air medals are to be put in again. Red alert tonight at 2345 hours but nothing came of it.

13<sup>th</sup>

Two missions today, both to Ferrara rail bridges, Italy. Got 92% and 100%. Sex lecture picture before main picture tonight which was "Two Girls and a Sailor."

14<sup>th</sup>

Twelve ship mission to Corbola rail bridge, Italy. 100% again. Formation was jumped by fighters but no claims or losses.

15<sup>th</sup>

Missions to Villafranca rail bridge, Italy in the morning. 100%. One in the afternoon to Ferrara again. 100%. Seven planes and one man seriously wounded. Stere got it in the hand and [T/Sgt. Arthur W.] Vandermuelen got it through the side. Searchlight practice for the boys tonight.

16<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Vandermuelen died at 0200 hours. The Ferrara bridges getting to be a jinx for us.

17<sup>th</sup>

Twelve ship mission to Alessandria rail bridge, Italy. 100%. Stand-down in the afternoon. Early morning practice mission again. In the early morning ack-ack guns and bombing could be heard. Somebody catching hell.

18<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Weather in Italy, but it's sure nice here. New 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. in today. [Elmer R. Berg] Looks as though he'll be a nice man to work with. No mail.

19<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Sassuolo rail bridge, Italy. 100% again. Capt. Ostrem back from his 30 day leave. Tribble and Litow didn't come back. Mail and packages in.

20<sup>th</sup>

Six ship mission to Mantua rail bridge, Italy. Lt. Kok did a swell job. All planes salvoed and the pattern hit the direct center of the bridge. Picture shows that practically every bomb was a direct hit. B-26 made a beautiful crash landing with nose wheel up. Enlisted men now have a club.

21<sup>st</sup>

Stand-down. No mail. Early morning practice mission. Routine.

22<sup>nd</sup>

Stand-down. Red alert in the early morning.

23<sup>rd</sup>

Another 100% mission. This time to Bergoforte rail bridge, Italy.

24<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Chivasso rail bridge, Italy. 100% again. Roast turkey for dinner. Maybe it's Christmas in July. Anyway it tasted good.

25<sup>th</sup>

Six ship mission to Cervo rail bridge, Italy. 100% again. Steak for supper.

26<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Everybody sweating out the end of the month. Air medals turning the squadron upside down.

27<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Weather again. Group alerted for air, sea or land invasion.

28<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Rain over our target. Still on the alert. Everyone carrying a gun around. Convoys going north all the time.

29<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Talk by new ALO tonight.

30<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Ferrara rail bridges, Italy. Another 100%. Our group only one to get to their target. Enlisted men had a meeting in the mess hall tonight. Was a "if you've got anything on your chest get it off now" kind and it went off pretty well. First sergeant has some good ideas.

31<sup>st</sup>

Stand-down. Means our 97.72% average is safe. Red alert during show tonight but nothing came off. Flew 194 sorties and dropped 628,840 pounds of bombs during the month of July. A record in any language.

**Men mentioned in the July 1944 History on the page indicated (excluding crew lists):**

P 3

b. Changes in staff officers

1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Wm. H. Ellers assigned as Ordnance Officer

I. Losses in action:

Missing from 3 July 1944 Ferrara fuel dump, Italy raid.

James E. Cooper

Owen E. Wahlstrom

Roy H. Pinkard

Jefferson H. Pettyjohn

Maurice B. Wynn, Jr.

Arnold NMI Krause

P 6

Maurice Cepikoff

P 7

Clifton C. Grosskopf

Edmund J. Ritter, Jr.

Hall A. Moody, Jr.

Keith W. Winter

Kenneth C. Ellsman

Elmer R. Berg

P 8

Earnest W. Adams

Herman E. Carlson

Frederick Betlem

Henry L. Albright

Thomas B. Swafford

P 9

William H. Ellers

P 10

Vancy V. Strait

P 11

Clell Mullins

[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 23, 2015]