

War Diary of the 488th Bomb Squadron

September 1944

Prepared by: Capt. Everett B. Thomas

September 1, 1944

Stand-down because our target was knocked out. Lt. Hirsch from Lt. Burrhus' crew went home today. We now have Major Howard for Ops Officer.

2nd

Twelve planes off to Cassano D'Adda rail bridge, Italy. Did a good job. Got 100% which is a good start for the month.

3rd

Twelve planes to Casale Montferrato road bridge, Italy. Another 100%. 'Multi' mail in today. Ahonen made M/Sgt. And Neuberger T/Sgt. (both of Communications) and Robillard of Engineering made M/Sgt, first promotions for any ground men in a long time.

4th

Eighteen 488th planes to Pontivico rail bridge, Italy. It was our first target that we as an individual squadron was ever assigned. Got only 76% but completely knocked out the bridge. There is an order out that every officer and enlisted man has to play baseball twice a week or drill and the 1st Sgt. is enforcing it too. Cairo trip off about noon.

5th

Another twelve planes to Palazzolo rail bridge, Italy, and another 100%. Celebrated our Second Anniversary tonight with a squadron dinner outside the mess hall. Entertainment included a good band (GI), a select group of singers both good and bad and a fine master of ceremonies, T/Sgt. Greenbaum, radio-gunner. Col. Chapman, Group CO, was a guest. The whole thing went off well and everyone enjoyed himself.

6th

Stand-down. This morning kind of like 'the morning after the night before' for some of the squadron. Very quiet in the morning. No Rome trip, no training and fresh eggs for breakfast. Lts. Levy and Shafran left for the States.

7th

Stand-down. Bomb and troop lines moving so much and so fast that S-2 is having a time trying to keep up with them. ALO [Allied Liaison Officer] spoke for supper.

8th

Stand-down. Rain in the morning along with an inspection by Col. Chapman, Maj. Brussels (Gp MO), Col. Bailey and Maj. Cover. It's been decided to make some gunners into wing bombardiers and some of them are pretty good. P-47 pilot bailed out over the ocean next to our field this afternoon.

9th

Twelve-plane frag mission to troop concentration at Santa Lucia, Italy. Lt. Jeffress, bombardier, seriously wounded in the head. Lead bombardier in second box brought his bombs back because he didn't see the target in time to bomb. Lt. Murphey, asst S-2 officer, left for home today.

10th

Twelve planes dropped frags on an explosive factory at Meresca, Italy and had 85% of them in the target area. Routine.

11th

Six planes to Vernio defense positions, Italy. 100% again. Routine.

12th

Mission to Piacenza rail bridge, Italy. Got hits on the bridge but had only 81% bombing accuracy. The mission should have been pretty hot but the chaff ships really did their work well. Capt. Rapp went to 487th as Ops Officer.

13th

Mission to Peschiera rail bridge, Italy with 18 planes and got 90%. It was a beautiful compact pattern all over the target area. No mail.

14th

Sent 14 planes to Rimini fuel and ammo dump and troop concentration but they returned with their bombs due to bad weather over the target. Had second mission scheduled to Bologna called off. Everyone felt better. Capt. Myers went to Group as Bombing Officer. Lt. T.E. Jones and Sgt. Andrist took a ship to Catania to pick up some things for the EM club. They got lost on their way back and haven't been heard from since. The last time they were heard from they were off SW Sardinia.

15th

Stand-down after 0645 briefing, but going to have a try at it again tomorrow with a 0630 briefing. Hope they make it. The food we are getting now reminds one of the days in the desert when all we had were "C" rations. Even the movies are second rate.

16th

Twelve planes off to Bologna M/T [Motor Transport] repair shops, Italy. Got 100%. Bologna is the hub of all the transportation facilities for the Germans. Contrary to all expectations the ack-ack was very inaccurate. Jones and Andrist are listed as MIA. Lt. Lindholm, the new mess officer, got caught by a British agent in Catania. He was trading coffee for fresh eggs. 'Ruff.'

17th

Two missions to gun positions and troop concentrations at Rimini, Italy. Heavy, intense and accurate ack-ack. Five out of twelve planes holed. 8K, piloted by Lt. Lacey, landed on Grosseto A/D in Italy. Everyone O.K. with the exception of the co-pilot. The flak affected him mentally. 'Doc' Marino took him to the hospital at Ajaccio. The bombardier, Sgt. Correll, was the hero of the mission as he helped land the plane in place of the co-pilot. 8C came home on a single engine. Sgt. Jack Wimmer, our prop specialist and one of the best, had a slight mishap when he put an S-20 prop on 8E, Sgt. Green and Alberts plane. Jack said, "It looked kind of funny to me but I didn't think anything of it until I had it on. Then I discovered my mistake."

18th

Twelve planes to Rimini again. 100%. Slight and inaccurate flak. The 310th lost three ships and the 321st another over the same target just a short time before us. Routine. No mail. Everyone winterizing now. Trucks went up to Bastia for some lumber for the squadron but not anywhere near enough was brought back so some of us still have to hunt for lumber. Cairo trip off. Combat crew going to Capri again.

19th

Stand-down. Rain and plenty of it. Everyone getting in some sack time.

20th

Stand-down. Rain and sun and showers – mostly showers. No mail. Recent hot rumor is rest camp in Paris this winter.

21st

Stand-down. Sun and more sun for a change – a very welcome change too. Our GI post office must be slipping – they let a trickle of mail come in today.

22nd

Six planes to Ponte di Piave rail bridge, Italy and six to Piave/Susegana rail bridge, Italy. Both 100%. Beautiful pattern bombing again just like the 488th always does, rest of the group joined in with us today. Good show tonight for a change, “Shine on Harvest Moon” with Ann Sheridan.

23rd

The 488th led a mission over the Cruiser Taranto in La Spezia Harbor, Italy. Each plane carried 6 x 1000# semi-armor piercing bombs. The first box laid its bombs right through the middle of the ship, the second box right across the bow and the third box (489th) crossed the stern. Sgt. Zoolalian broke his thumb throwing out chaff. Capt. Ostrem left for home for the second time now, also Sgts. Rush, Souve and Russell (ground man) and Lt. H.C. Smith.

24th

Mission to Piazzola rail bridge, Italy but bombs brought back due to weather. Reports over the radio about yesterday's bombing actually give credit to the Mitchells. The Taranto is reported to have its fore deck awash. Squadron got new barber today as we had to send all our 'Eyeties' back to Italy.

25th

Stand-down. Getting cold at night. Fair show tonight, “Bermuda Mystery” with Preston Foster and Ann Rutherford. One good thing was that it didn't end by having the 'hero' walk in at the end with a uniform on. Shows like that are for the people back home not over here.

26th

Off to Piazzola again and this time we dropped our bombs. Got 100% too. Air medals taking up a lot of time. Seems that orders for the crews can't go through unless they have the correct number of medals. All first pilots get a DFC [Distinguished Flying Cross] now.

27th

Stand-down. Rain and clouds. Still winterizing. No mail.

28th

Stand-down. High wind and rain. S-2 got a new officer as assistant in Lt. Murphey's place.

29th

Stand-down. Rain last night closed field all day. Preparing for inspection tomorrow.

30th

Twelve planes to Magenta road and rail bridge, Italy. 100%. The flak was pretty rough today, but we had only two planes holed. Pay day and everyone glad of it. Cement floor for the new mess hall is almost with most of the work being done by the combat crews. No mail. The 488th didn't do so bad for the month of September. We had twenty missions and sent out 219 sorties and had a bombing accuracy of 93.05%.

Men mentioned in the September 1944 History, excluding crew lists:

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I. Losses in action: officers and men

(b) Wounded

John L. Jeffress

Walter E. Gustafson

j. Personnel who have distinguished themselves in action

Martin V. Misevic

Robert R. Burger

Lyman E. Hodgin

James F. Mummey

Ralph R. Shipman

Winburn B. Reagan

Orville R. Wilson

George W. Inglis

Michael G. Duncan

Cornelius T. O'Brien

Leon B. Correll

Hubert L. Lacey

Robert J. Martin

Edmund J. Ritter

Bernard A. Steed

John J. Swift

David L. Atkinson

Mauno A. Lindholm

Henry C. Gross

Eugene G. Sallen

George W. Clifford

William A. Davidson

Randall C. Cassada

George L. Wells

Special Orders. Personnel Assignments.

P 9

Eugene D. Jordan

P 10

Irving K. Sjoquist
Glenn L. Forbes
Philip McEnerney
Albert C. Dunphe
Stephen Farkus
George J. Killmer
Paul A. Tilden
Darwin H. Clark
Anthony M. Pace
Louis Bubeck
Samuel Schloss
Rufus F. Troup
Charlie W. Wilson
Clifford H. Knight, Jr.

P 11

George E. Miller
James S. Levering
Kenneth R. Garanson
Walter Mahnks
George F. Gess
Herman L. Lisby
Stephen Pudlick
John S. Pike
Paul R. Frohan

P12

Earl A Laird

P 13

Oliver A. Pringle
Milton Wemersley

P 14

Vincent A. Stoszkus, Jr.

P 16

Squadron Order:

Homer B. Howard is appointed Squadron Operations Officer, John E. Rapp relieved.

Edward m. Yacko is appointed Squadron Engineering Officer, John L. Hughes relieved

William H. Ellers is appointed Ground Safety Officer

James M. Tayloe is appointed Alternate Soldier's Voting Officer.

Howard C. McElroy is appointed Squadron Assistant Operations Officer, Roy E. Ostrem, relieved

Photograph captions:

Operation Strangle. Photos taken September 1, 1944.

P 65

Egbert S. Turner

P 66

Cisterna, Italy

Monte Cassino

P 67

Frosinone

P 68

Orvieto

P 69

Attigliano

Terni

[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. July 1, 2015]