

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

## October 1944

Prepared by: Capt. Everett B. Thomas

October 1, 1944

Thirteen planes to Piacenza North rail bridge, Italy this morning. 100%. This afternoon seven planes bombed Magenta rail bridge, Italy. Another 100%. Good start for October. We now have two more Captains and another 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Two men left for home. O.D.'s are all the rage again according to an order on the Orderly Room bulletin board. No mail !!

2<sup>nd</sup>

Stand-down. Lt. Mintz, Communications Officer, made captain today. Very strong wind coming out of north blew down S-2's map boards for the second time this week. No mail !!

3<sup>rd</sup>

Twelve planes to Magenta RR Bridge, Italy again. 8 of them holed. No one observed any hits and the cameras refused to take any pictures – at least we didn't get any so no credit for the mission. The crews are getting tired of going up into this particular territory as the flak is really accurate. Many of the crews, 44, have reached 60 missions and consider themselves done, but we have only 14 crews available and no new crews in sight. A co-pilot smashed up Maj. Cassada's jeep last night. Said he hit a cow but there's another story going around – one connected with a truck.

4<sup>th</sup>

Twelve planes started for Magenta again but it was closed in.

5<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Weather good here but it must be bad in Italy. The first old crew member to return for a second tour of duty came in today. He was sent to the 310<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group but got a transfer to the 488<sup>th</sup>. Bombardiers played the Headquarters Officers today in baseball. Bombardiers won. Morale is none too high, everyone seems restless. Food isn't up to par either. No mail – maybe that's the trouble.

6<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Field closed due to rain and high wind. Rome trip didn't take off. S-2's map boards blew over again.

7<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down, but sunshine here all day. Rome goes still stranded. Mess hall moved to new location near the ack-ack battery. Ops had to give up their tent in favor of the mess hall, but they're going to build them a building soon. Lts. Gross and McDonald made flight commanders today.

8<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Rome strandeers still over there 'sweating it out.' At noon today a mine was exploded on the beach – wish someone would notify us when mines are going to be exploded. MAIL !! First in six days.

9<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down given us before 0830 hours. A plane was taxied off the taxi strip ruining a prop on a rock. Training flights off. St. Louis Browns and Cardinals drawing crowds around the radios nightly. Warm and sunny. No mail.

10<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Routine. No mail. Rain in Rome is keeping our planes off Littorie A/D. Cold here.

11<sup>th</sup>

Two missions, first to Chivasso rail bridge, second to Canneto road and rail bridge, Italy. Both flak free. Both 100% missions. Boys from Rome finally back.

12<sup>th</sup>

Missions to stores and bivouac area four miles below Bologna, Italy. Radio-gunner Martin wounded in the leg. Got 98% but second box had radio malfunction. This is the first time the radio release has been tried in our squadron. Lt. McElroy, asst Ops Officer, got his captaincy. Packages in.

13<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Routine. Packages. Rain at night.

14<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Routine training flights. Rome trip back on time. PX tomorrow but no cigarettes. Capt. Marino gave a lecture on first aid procedure in the air.

15<sup>th</sup>

100% received on Ronco Scriva rail bridge, Italy. 2 planes went on a nickeling mission [pamphlet drop] in the afternoon.

16<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Orderly Room and Ops building them a house.

17<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Promotions for combat crew enlisted men came through.

18<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Magenta rail bridge, Italy. Flak heavy, intense and accurate. Lts. Jones, Newhard and Sloan on DS [Detached Service] to the 319<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group to break them in on the B-25's. The 319<sup>th</sup> is changing over from B-26's.

19<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Magenta again.

20<sup>th</sup>

Two missions first to Canneto rail bridge. 100%. Second to Palazzolo rail bridge. 100%.

21<sup>st</sup>

Stand-down. Routine.

22<sup>nd</sup>

Stand-down. Routine.

23<sup>rd</sup>

Stand-down. Routine.

24<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Maj. Cassada had a squadron meeting tonight and told everyone about a new transportation arrangement. No vehicles will be taken off the base. Capt. Bachtell back from the States.

25<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Rain. Presentation of Air Medals by Brig-General Knapp. S/Sgt. Iljana spotted a mine floating 15 miles west of Monte Cristo on practice mission. Mail !!

26<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Rain caused rivers all over the place – one through the motor pool. New Group PRO building in our area completed. Mail !!

27<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Squadron received its first load of two by fours but only about half the amount required.

28<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. S-2 moved to old Ops tent and are going to make a building. Newest rumor is that 32 key men will go home on 30-day furloughs and the rest of the squadron sweat them out. When the 32 return the rest of the squadron will return to the States while the 32 proceed to 'CBI.' [China-Berma-India theatre of war]

29<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. 'Multi mail.' Maj. Cassada told crews that they would have to fly more than 60 missions and the crews didn't take it too bad.

30<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Big news of the day is 2 new crews in.

31<sup>st</sup>

Stand-down. Pay day. We had only 11 missions, had only one 98% and the rest 100% for a bombing accuracy average of 99.77%.

## **Men mentioned in the October 1944 History, excluding crew lists:**

### I. Losses in action: officers and men

#### (b) Wounded

T/Sgt. Robert J. Martin

### j. Personnel how have distinguished themselves in action.

Frederick C. Koerner  
Homer R. Howard  
Edmund J. Ritter, Jr.  
William Duda  
Troy E. Jones  
Thomas P. Keating, Jr.  
Elmer A. McDonald  
Robert C. Pagh  
Andrew N. Ryck  
Robert J. Martin

## **Special Orders**

P 8

Arthur V. Rappeport  
Eugene W. Carey

## **Squadron Order**

P 10

Lt. Henry C. Gross appointed flight commander, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Howard C. McElroy relieved

Lt. Elmer W. McDonald appointed flight commander, Capt. Robert H. Perry relieved

Lt. William H. Ellers appointed squadron ordnance officer

Lt. Vincent A. Stoszkus appointed assistant intelligence officer

[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. July 2, 2015]