

War Diary of the 488th Bomb Squadron

November 1944

Prepared by: Capt. Everett B. Thomas

November 1, 1944

Stand-down. Weather. Routine. Lt. Kanowsky and Sgts. Bray and Wood back. Five new combat men in. Navigation lecture by Lt. Duda to the new enlisted bombardiers.

2nd

Stand-down. Weather. Routine. Lts. Jones, Newhard and Sloan back from the 42nd Wing. They were sent there to break in the 319th Group on the B-25 airplane. Navigation lecture by Lt. Duda.

3rd

Stand-down. Weather again. Medals were presented this morning in the 488th "C-ration bowl" by Brig-Gen. Knapp. Cpl. Rummel was supposed to be on the 489th plane which took off from Naples late yesterday and now it's missing. Capt. Mintz gave a lecture on radio and S-2 gave an E & E [Escape and Evasion] lecture to the new crews.

4th

Fifteen planes to Casale Monferrato rail bridge, Italy. Got 79% bombing accuracy. Ack-ack was plenty heavy and intense. Seven planes were holed and 8F was ditched about a mile north of the tip of the island.

Lt. King [Bryon D. King], pilot was drowned and Sgt. Burger [James A. Burger], tail gunner never came up. He must have gone down with the plane. The rest of the crew is in in the hospital suffering from exposure. Rummel came back. He wasn't on that 489th plane after all.

5th

Stand-down. Weather. Four Officers and four Enlisted Men, all combat men, left for home. S-2 building just about finished. "Multi" mail for a change.

6th

Mission to transformer at Trento, Italy with twelve planes. 100%. Excellent bombing because there were three hospitals located in the area and not a one was hit. One of the bombardiers who was disqualified from flying was transferred to another group as S-2 Officer. We now have Captains Kok, Bombing Officer, and Aswad, Flight Commander.

7th

488th sent eighteen planes to Casarsa road and rail bridge, Italy but they couldn't bomb due to weather. Combat men happy – three new crews assigned today. There's an epidemic of trench mouth and dermatitis making the round of the Squadron.

8th

Pinzano rail bridge, Italy bombed by twelve planes. Got only 50% as the second box missed the target. S-2 building finished.

9th

Sent twelve planes to same target as yesterday but they were unable to bomb due to undercast in the target area.

10th

Mission to Cittadella rail bridge by-pass, Italy. 100%.

11th

Mission to Piazzola rail bridge, Italy. 100%. Two more combat men left for the States.

12th

Stand-down. Weather. Routine. Lt. Garanson gave a navigation lecture to the new bombardiers.

13th

Eighteen planes flew over Castle Novo rail bridge, Italy but didn't bomb because of weather. Lt. Jones and Sgt. Andrist back. They force-landed in Spain due to shortage of gasoline and were interned until just now. The cargo, liquor – \$1200 worth of it was confiscated by the Spanish Government, along with the airplane.

14th

Stand-down. Weather. No flying at all today. One of the engineers broke his shoulder playing football.

15th

Stand-down. Jones and Andrist left for home today along with Major Howard, Ops Officer. Major Howard will be back fairly soon though as he only took a 30 day leave. Ditching procedure lecture by Lt. Tarzey.

16th

Again eighteen planes went to Castel Novo rail bridge, but this time we bombed. Bombing accuracy was 95%. "Cairo Cossacks" left today.

17th

Mission to Faenza road bridge, Italy with twelve planes carrying thousands and three carrying chaff. 92%. Escape lecture on Yugoslavia to all the crews. Could be we'll be operating over in that direction soon.

18th

Stand-down. Communications Officer gave radio release lecture to new bombardiers. Football still the big sport. Maj. Cassada was the referee for the gunners and Headquarters section and two of the gunners got a bit heated. The Maj stopped one scrap on the field but after the game was finished the two went off into the woods and had it out. One ended up with having four stitches taken over his right eye. On the whole though good sportsmanship has been displayed on the football field and most of the fellows have enjoyed the season.

19th

Mission to Faenza road bridge again with twelve planes. 100% again. More ratings for the enlisted combat personnel came out.

20th

Weather made our formation turn back from the Casarsa rail bridge diversion, Italy. Routine.

21st

Weather again made our formation turn back, this time from Obedisce rail bridge, Italy. The Germans have the weather on their side again. USO show tonight at the Enlisted Men's Red Cross Club. Quite good, everybody enjoyed seeing and hearing American girls again.

22nd

488th got 100% again, this time on troop concentrations near Faenza, Italy. Mess hall finished for Thanksgiving dinner tomorrow. The light let in by the celloglass lends a cheery atmosphere to it.

23rd

Thanksgiving in Corsica. A stand-down after two tries – first to Italy and second to Yugoslavia. Our one plane secret mission got over to Florence but couldn't land due to weather. Maj. Brussels, Group Flight Surgeon, spoke at noon in the dispensary [sic. Dispensary?] to the crews who are sweating out rotation. All of them have between 60 and 70 missions. The dinner went off without a hitch and most everyone agreed that it was a good idea for the enlisted men to draw numbers for first and second dinner times. The dinner itself was delicious and everyone enjoyed it. On the serving line one of the cooks said, "It's heaven not to have to ration anything."

24th

Stand-down. Weather. XII Air Force inspectors here and they're not overlooking a thing even down to inspecting personnel tents. A major heard any complaints other than rotation or transfers at noon in the Orderly Room. An "A" force agent gave an E & E lecture to all crews at 1500 hours. Mail is pretty slow in coming in these days – today there was only one letter for the whole squadron.

25th

Stand-down. "Multi" mail. Another lecture was given for those crews that were flying yesterday afternoon. Enlisted men are going to give a dance next Thursday at the EM's Red Cross Club. Sather of Ops is the 488th representative. S/Sgt. Lippert of our photo section received a direct commendation from Brig-Gen Knapp for perfecting the installation of a twelve inch camera in the nose of a B-25. The purpose of the camera is to take pictures from the initial point to the target for reference in case we have to go over that target again.

26th

Stand-down. Rain in the afternoon. Driva, our carpenter, got an energizer for his saw. Maybe we won't be bothered with radio interference anymore, we hope.

27th

Rain and a stand-down for a change. Boys back from Rome. All combat crews were called together and given a lecture on the use of the heater after which Capt. Bachtell gave a short talk on if the war ends soon all our planes and gasoline will be taken away from us and strenuous P.T. and an extensive educational program will be instigated. The Group though will be given the choice of volunteering for another theater or sweating out going back to the States. This will be cause for many discussions far into the night. Mail !! Well some anyhow.

28th

Mission to Magenta road and rail bridge, Italy. Missed. 8M came home on a single engine. No mail. Meeting in S-2 at 1900 hours to decide upon a topic for the first Orientation discussion group. Subject of prisoners of war in the U.S. was chosen – kind of touchy but everyone is interested in it.

29th

Stand-down. Secret mission back for a short time. The crew is staying in Florence. Nine gunners from the VIII Air Force in tonight. They have from one to nine missions in heavies. Good movie, “Up In Mabel's Room.”

30th

Stand-down. PRO from Wing making canned radio programs. S-2 raffled off the chances on the “Yearbook” and Capt. Marion won. Money for Group insignia was also taken in. Our engineering Officer is not Capt. Yacko. On the whole the month of November has been fairly slow but full of anxious waiting for the weather, and watching the progress of the campaigns in both theaters. The 488th did its assigned share by flying 196 sorties and dropping 464,120 pounds of bombs. There were eight effective missions, 4 non-effective missions and two times up with combat time only. The bombing accuracy was 86.60%.

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

j. Personnel who have distinguished themselves in action.

David L. Atkinson
William O. Fischer
Julius NMI Fish
Robert J. Martin

Special Orders:

P 6

Neal D. Hallmark
William F. Mills
Lawrence L. Arnold
Robert G. Schlittler
Lindel E. McKenney
William L. Morris
John A. Hutto
William W. Banks
Richard C. Woodbery
Norman M. Lattner
Edward D.T. Shelton
Robert D. Stevens
William B. Pelton
Dean W. Lewis
Julius Hokhold
Dalton N. Eason
Aloys C. Muehlbauer
John P. Kenney

P 7

Harvey L. Akright
Anthony Aveni, Jr.

P 8

Robert A. Crowley
Joseph S. Byrd
John R. Dobbs, Jr.

Squadron Orders:

P 10

Robert C. Bachtell appointed squadron operations officer, Homer B. Howard relieved

John M. Williams appointed squadron athletic officer, Charles K. Johnston relieved

John M. Williams appointed flight commander, George L. Wells relieved.

Dick E Adams appointed information and education officer in addition to other duties

Vincent A. Stoszkus appointed assistant information and education officer in addition to other duties

Captions to photographs:

P 47

Sgt. Kovarick

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Skyliners

Sgts. Ryba, Mirochnick and Wimmer

[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 4, 2015]