

War Diary of the 488th Bomb Squadron

February 1945

Prepared by: T/Sgt. Don J. Goranson

February 1, 1945

Stand-down after crews out at briefing. Catania plane back with liquor for Enlisted Men's Club

2nd

Sixteen planes to Lavis rail diversion bridge, Italy. 100% bombing accuracy. About 0700 hours one of the officers' tents burned down but most of the stuff was saved. Lt. Burger got his captaincy today and Lt. Kanowsky made Flight Commander

3rd

Stand-down just after pre-briefing time. Weather in Italy. Barber shop caught fire this morning but didn't burn down. Advanced party left for Rimini this morning in a C-47 taking a jeep with them. Lt. Hughes of the Supply headed the party. One of the Yugoslavians was caught by the guard around 8F last night. No damage had been done to the plane, but the Yugoslav was turned over to the Group guard.

4th

Fifteen planes to Ala rail bridge and station, Italy. Two beautiful patterns and two 100%. Big PX today – the largest we've ever had. The quartermaster must be cleaning house. Lt. Hathaway back from his 30 day leave.

5th

Mission to Calliano rail bridge #3, Italy. Good results resulting in 100% bombing accuracy for us. Advance party of carpenters who were to have left for Rimini called off. Rumor has it because the runways were bombed but the weather must be the real cause. Capt. Tayloe called a Squadron meeting for 1630 hours and explained that our move had been delayed for 30 days. It was almost like being granted a reprieve due to all the rumors spreading around – Squadron Supply has a sign “have you a steel helmet?” Lt. Stoszkus of S-2 gave a lecture to the Enlisted Men on the last censorship regulations.

6th

Mission to Lavis rail diversion bridge, Italy but the formation returned without dropping their bombs because of weather. First samples of the group insignia came in today – the rest should be in soon. There are reports of two new fighter groups to defend the Brenner Pass.

7th

Twelve planes to Dogna North rail bridge, Italy. Our bombing accuracy was 100%. Second box got mixed up and lead plane was on the wrong channel so only numbers one and four dropped. Men back from Capri rest camp. Lt. Williams got his captaincy today.

8th

Twelve planes and three as an anti-flak element bombed Piacenza North rail bridge, Italy. Our bombing accuracy was 94%, and the flak was heavy, moderate and inaccurate to accurate. We had two planes holed.

9th

Stand-down. Beautiful day in Corsica but poor weather in Italy. Truck stolen on line yesterday afternoon but not reported until this morning. Could be that the load of chestnuts worth \$44 had something to do with it. “Saratoga Trunk” shown in the mess hall. Christmas tree taken down today so Christmas is officially over for the 488th.

10th

Stand-down. Formation practice in the afternoon. Windy.

11th

Stand-down. Routine.

12th

Six planes and three as anti-flak element on Ala rail bridge, Italy. A big miss. Weather cold and windy. Very little mail.

13th

Six planes to Calcinato rail bridge, Italy. Another big miss. Presentation of Bronze Star medal to ground men.

14th

Twelve planes to San Michele rail bridge, Italy with no flak. 100% bombing accuracy but our average is gone for the month.

15th

Stand-down. Meeting of board of governors of the Enlisted Men's Club to decide on some of the policies. Two new 1st Lts in from the States who used to be squadron and group bombing officers. S-2 remodeling.

16th

Stand-down. Bad weather in Northern Italy.

17th

Six planes to Lavis rail diversion bridge, Italy with plenty of accurate flak. 8Q came in with a flat tire, 8C with 37 holes and 8X with an 88 right through the wing. Altogether a rough mission. S-2 briefed the new men who just came in two days ago.

18th

Fifteen planes to Ala station and marshaling yards, Italy. 75% bombing accuracy. The anti-flak element hit their assigned gun positions right on the head. Promotions for ten more enlisted men.

19th

Stand-down. Enlisted men received their shots from the Medics today.

20th

Sent twelve planes to Romano di Lombardo rail bridge, Italy and Calcinato rail bridge Italy. Got 25% on the first and 100% on the second.

21st

Eighteen planes to bomb Bressanone rail bridge, Italy but bad weather prevented the formation from bombing. Three of the planes got separated from the formation and finally broke out of the clouds at 15,000 feet right over the field. They caused vapor trails and everyone was happy to find that they were B-25's instead of German Ju's. Gas mask and gun inspection, and presentation of Bronze Stars today. Show tonight in movie area but it was cold outside.

22nd

Same target and number of planes as yesterday only 0820 hours briefing instead of 1020 hours. The first box missed but the second hit on the South end of the bridge. Accurate flak but no planes holed. Inspection of gas masks and guns again all day in front of Supply.

23rd

Stand-down – Group Ops finally decided it was our turn. Meeting of Officers to plan for party at Ill Russe next Tuesday. Lt. Hughes and Sgt. Driva, Squadron carpenter, left for Rimini to set up our area and make partial arrangements and repairs on the buildings. The last three nights there have been flares over Bastia – could be there is some interest in the four destroyers in the harbor.

24th

Third time in a row that the target was Bressanone rail bridge, Italy, but due to solid undercast around the primary target it was not bombed, and the first alternate was also covered with clouds so that the second alternate, Pizzighettone rail bridge, Italy was bombed – or rather bombs were dropped around it. We got a snappy 22% bombing accuracy.

25th

First mission was to Vipiteno rail bridge, Italy on the Brenner route with six planes. The flak was intense and we had three planes holed. We got 100% bombing accuracy. Second mission was to Sesto Calende Factory, Italy which is making assault boats. Our six aircraft scored 100% bombing accuracy. Lts. Miller, Holtz, Rosenthal and Silverman left for the 310th Group where they'll take a 10 day course in the new type of Shoran.

26th

Twelve planes on mission to bomb Spillimbergo ammo dump, Italy but could not get in due to cloud coverage over the target. All bombs returned. Supply taking orders for XII AF scarfs and ash trays. Thirty-three Enlisted Men promoted. New policy on promotions – when a new combat Enlisted Man comes in he is automatically made a corporal, upon flying two missions he makes sergeant and upon completion of eight missions he makes staff sergeant. New crew.

27th

Twelve planes to the same place as yesterday and this time the mission completed. 100% bombing accuracy. One of the ammo dumps exploded and smoke went up to over three thousand feet.

28th

Stand-down. A complete stand-down. S-2 got a new officer – Capt. Edward J. Glynn. Beer rations along with payday. The end of a not too spectacular month for the 488th. We had 21 missions with 228 sorties dropping 530,500 pounds of bombs.

Men mentioned in the February 1945 History, excluding crew lists:

j. Personnel who have distinguished themselves in action

Robert C. Bachtell
William NMI Duda
Hall A. Moody
William B. Pelton
Christ G. Busche
Charles A. Wood
Carroll L. Ketteringham

Special Orders:

P 7

Author L. Allen
Eugene C. Capel
Alesander B. Courtis
Joseph C. Bolerasky
George J. Minerva
Glenn L. McCombs

P 8

George W. Hammond, Jr.
Samuel L. Wyse, Jr.

P 9

Haven R. Carr
Robert J. Brown
Charles B. Connors
Roger B. Williamson
Jack C. Clinton

Squadron Orders:

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William H. Ellers is appointed Special Service Officer
William F. Fey is appointed Flight Commander, Elmer W. McDonald is relieved
Benjamin L. Kanowsky, Jr. is appointed Mess officer, Mauno A. Lindholm relieved
John L. Hughes is appointed Fire Inspector
Harry A Mintz is appointed EFM Censor
James M. Tayloe is appointed Custodian of EM Fund

Photograph captions:

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Lavis Diversion R.R. Bridge

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Ala Station Yard & R.R. Bridge

P 26

Calliano R.R. Bridges

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Piacenza N. R.R. Bridge

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Ala R.R. Bridge

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Dogna Town R.R. Bridge

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San Ambrogio Station Yard

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San Michele R.R. Bridge

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Lavis Diversion R.R. Bridge

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Ala Station Yard

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Romano Di Lombardo

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Calcinato R.R. Bdrige

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Bressanone R.R. Bridge

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Pizzighettone R.R. Bridge

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Vipiteno R.R. Bddige

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Sesto Calende Factory

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Spilimbergo Dumps

[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 11, 2015]