

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

## December 1943

Prepared by: Capt. Everett B. Thomas

December 1, 1943

Year ago today we moved from Columbia to Walterboro, S.C. Mission today to pinpoint on bomb line near S. Ambrogio. Christmas packages have begun to arrive.

2<sup>nd</sup>

Mission to pinpoint same as yesterday's. Afternoon mission same target. Turkey for supper.

3<sup>rd</sup>

Mission to Sibenik, Yugoslavia. No excitement. Mosquito nets and similar equipment called in; so, evidently that danger has passed. Buckley and Jones received their captaincies. Bari was bombed last night and as high as 17 ships sunk or damaged.

4<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down from 1030. Weather. Fresh meat for dinner. Dull, cold, dreary day.

5<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Squilla, and target and three alternates ten-tenths cloud coverage. Bombs brought back. Pictures taken of the various department groups.

6<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Weather.

7<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Pescara, alternate for Ancona. A/A heavy. One plane holed.

8<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Aquilla marshaling yards. One ship holed. Seventy-two sacks of mail in. Mostly packages.

9<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Terni. No excitement.

10<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down all day. No coal nor acetylene to make stove; so, we moved Ops and S-2 into new quarters. This was formerly the hen coop and while considerable effort has been made to clean it out with fire and antiseptic the smell is still not that of attar of roses.

11<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down all day. Rained all night. New quarters leaked like a sieve and most everything soaked during the night.

12<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down all day. Mission called off. Weather open and shut. Clear in the afternoon.

13<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down all day. Routine.

14<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Orte. SNAFU.

15<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down. Simulated mission. The three Rover boys on a spree again last night. Stole and wrecked truck. S-2 jeep loaned to officers to go to movies and stolen from in front of theatre in Foggia.

16<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Zara.

17<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Terni. Complete cloud coverage over target. [?] bombs brought back. DFC's awarded to men in the Group. 488<sup>th</sup> got three.

18<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down all day.

19<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down all day.

20<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down all day. Arranged to have Squadron Christmas cards colored by local Italian girl at Red Cross.

21<sup>st</sup>

Stand-down all day.

22<sup>nd</sup>

Stand-down all day.

23<sup>rd</sup>

Stand-down all day. Revamped Christmas card into a design for invitation to Officers' party and dance to be sent to near-by nurses.

24<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down all day. Capt. Thomas and Lt. R.M. Johnston hand-colored the dance invitation. "Night-before" parties in various quarters. Enlisted Men had a formal open house for their new club in the old Operations room. Have a first class bar, tables and settees all of which have been thoroughly scrubbed and blow torched to give a pleasing grained effect. Walls are decorated with cartoons and murals by Cpl. Hanna and T/Sgt. Vargas.

25<sup>th</sup>

Merry Christmas. Turkey dinner with all the fixings.

26<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down all day. Rain... Mud... Everybody has the G.I.'s, but who cares – the turkey was good and there was plenty of it.

27<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down all day. Slippery field. Officers' party tonight. Good time had by all – some as early as nine o'clock. About 2000 hours a convoy of the 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Group, ground echelon, landed at the field and were very much put out to find the place occupied. Started to make themselves at home in the E.M.'s club and tried to eject our men. Luckily Lt. Haynes had not gone to the dance and was able to prevent it. Boy how the wind blew.

28<sup>th</sup>

Tent of some of the cooks burned down about 0630. One man asleep, but got out. Wind still howling. Engle of the 489<sup>th</sup> killed on raid. Every ship hit (we were on stand-down).

29<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down all day. Cold. Wind. Vaccination.

30<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Falconara.

31<sup>st</sup>

Stand-down all day. Parties all night. Sgt. M. Fox badly burned when his tent blew down and burned. E.M. had big party including strip teasers. Michalowski, Lavin, Saylor, Jones and Crane (all Lts. except Capt. Jones) and Sgts. Griffin, Krigbaum and Wells left for home. Good-bye 1943. Ain't we had fun.

[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 4, 2015]