

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

## February 1944

Prepared by: Capt. Everett B. Thomas

February 1, 1944 to February 12, 1944

Routine. Missions to Colleferro, Orte Marshaling Yards, San Benedetto Harbor, Frascati road junction, Marino road junction and Frascati again, Viterbo, Cisterna, Lenuvio, Campoleone and some pinpoints. For some reason, partially at least due to inexperienced new crews, we have not done the precision bombing for which we had established a pretty good reputation. Rain and cold much of the time and the frequent stand-downs do no help the morale of the crews.

13<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Nemi area up over the beach-head. Plenty of A/A. One ship did not return. The crew consisted of Lts. Ostrem, Bachtell, Shafran, Madison, Sgts. McLaughlen, Nagle and Riley. All bailed out. Nagle's 'chute fouled, but he got it clear and landed safely in the water. Others landed on shore without trouble except Riley who was seen to land in the water with the boats seemingly near, but no word has been received from him since. Lt. Madison was wounded in the leg by flak and went to the hospital. His flak suit was torn to shreds by shrapnel, but protected him completely. Lt. Shafran landed close to a headquarters company just in time for lunch and was back with all the others to share our "C" ration supper.

14<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Perugia Marshaling Yards in the morning with six ships and a three ship 'nickeling' mission over Caramanico area in the afternoon.

15<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Cassino Abbey which the Germans had converted into a fortress. Allies have been threatening for days to blast it if the Germans didn't move out "because it was costing the lives of so many Americans!" Finally went at it today with B-17's, B-26's and '25s'. We had word later that the 321<sup>st</sup> and us working together had stolen the show from the '17s'.

16<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Orte in the morning recalled. Mission to Campoleone in the afternoon. Lost one ship with crew consisting of Lt. Dean, pilot, Major Garske (Group Operations), Lt. Reichard, Sgts. Hawley, Dunaway, Mitchel and Albanese. Some 'chutes were reported after a direct hit and one engine afire, but no word received of any of the crew. Capt. Cover got his majority today and Lts. Pierce and Street their captaincies. Major Bailey formerly Squadron Commanding Officer now sporting silver leaves. Big celebration at the Officers' Club and big heads in prospect for tomorrow.

17<sup>th</sup>

One mission to ammunition dump at pinpoint F679557. Another for the afternoon called off. Capt. Thomas and Lt. Murphey went to Naples to try to get intelligent interpretation of censorship and some relaxation of rulings from Base Censor. Had some luck, but still not as liberal as we formerly enjoyed under the IXth Air Force in Africa or even in Sicily. Weather cold and too much rain. There was a suspicious circular fire on hill to the Northwest of the field tonight and extra guards precautions taken.

18<sup>th</sup>

Mission to pinpoint F917494, but bombs brought back as target was obscured. Stand-down the rest of the day. Heard tonight that Lts. Crane and T.B. Howard had been awarded the DFC. Everybody buying cameos.

With so much stand-down time there is a constant battle for transportation to get into Naples, Pompeii and similar nearby places of interest. The Red Cross has established themselves in one of the buildings at Group Operations and is doing a good job with the donut machine and G.I. coffee cans. Since they have been operating the consumption of liquor dispensed in one and two ounce drinks to the crews has been cut over 50%. Then too the crews in their desire to get the coffee and donuts, hang around for a considerable period with a consequent mingling of the squadron crews. By circulating through the crowd while dunking donuts the Intelligence Officers are able to get interesting notes on happenings on the missions and the reactions of the crews which do not come out at the regular interrogation while the boys are still under stress.

19<sup>th</sup>

Mission to pinpoint F890340. Also repeat the same place in the afternoon. There is a report that the 321<sup>st</sup> Group lost 8 ships while we got four ships holed only. No casualties. On the afternoon mission the 321<sup>st</sup> had 17 ships holed and one belly landed on our field and burst into fire, but the crew got safely away.

20<sup>th</sup>

Mission to F901338 and again in the afternoon. Did not drop bombs on the afternoon mission. We have started an OTU plane identification with a Capt. Schultz from Algiers much to the disgust of the combat crews.

21<sup>st</sup>

Stand-down. Routine. Damn the rain.

22<sup>nd</sup>

George's Birthday which we celebrated by mission to Foligno Marshaling Yards. 486<sup>th</sup> which was leading got off course and went beyond target to Perugia, ran into flak and one pilot was killed. Rest of formation left them and went to correct target and experienced no flak.

23<sup>rd</sup>

Mission to Fabrica di Roma. Canceled on account of the weather which ever since we struck Italy has been definitely on the German side. Seems they should revive their slogan of the last war "Gott mit uns"! The Enlisted Men had a hot house-warming for the Desert Lillie No. 3. [A desert lillie, or lily, is a slang term for a urinal.] Col. Jones was given a rousing reception and responded gracefully.

24<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Fabrica di Roma. O.K. Lt. Madison (who bailed out of Ostrem's ship on the 13<sup>th</sup>) back today. Still has shrapnel in leg.

25<sup>th</sup>

Mission to Ovietto A/D [Aerodrome].

26<sup>th</sup>

Rain all night and all day.

27<sup>th</sup>

Stand-down after 0710 briefing. More rain. Dammit.

28<sup>th</sup>

Rain. Mission postponed twice, but finally took off for Canino about 1030 when somebody saw a hole. Did not find target and brought bombs back. A gunner of the 486<sup>th</sup> was hit in the forehead.

29<sup>th</sup>

Just so the record will be complete it rained today again and we have a stand-down. After a complete stand-down we had a mission being briefed and taking off within one hour. We were complimented by the higher powers-that-be on our ability to carry out a mission in such a short time.

**Photograph captions with page number Diary for February 1944:  
Also see below photos in History for February 1944.**

P 6

Pompeii Landing Ground Engineering Personnel

Sgts. Hanlan, Harvey, Hawkins, K. Rice, Stinchcomb, Green, Menefee, Edelstein, Alberts, Herron & Rollins

P 7

Pompeii Landing Ground Engineering Personnel

Cpl. Bailey, Sgt. Steiner, Sgt. Fejdasz, Sgt. Brooks, Sgt. Jameson, Sgt. Anderson, Sgt. Lyons, Sgt. Flood, Sgt. Nystrom, Cpl. Fiore, Sgt. Counts & Sgt. Vance.

P 9

Interrogation in back of Group Operations at Pompeii Landing Ground.

Left to right: Capt. Crossman, Lt. W.A. Smith, S/Sgt. Daniels, F/O Rogers, Capt. Pierce, Lt. Murphey, Capt. Thomas, F/O Moore, Lt. Galvin, Lt. E.J. Smith, Heads Sgts. Becker and Howard in background.

P 10

8H over Anzio

P 12

8H begins its last glide.

P 13

8H last glide.

P 14

Flak hole in 8K.

P15

S/Sgt. Navickas next to 8K.

**The following men were mentioned in the History for January 1944 on the page indicated:**

P 6

John L. Lyons

P 7

Bernard C. Schmucker  
Robert M. Scott

P 8

John (NMI) Kulak

P 9

George A. Echols  
Edward J. Beale  
Brice C. Davis  
Donald E. Hoover  
Everett O. Tippitt  
Merton O. Larson

P 10

Gresham J. Grim

P 73

Photo of 8V The Falcon

**The following men were mentioned in the History for February 1944 on the page indicated:**

P 4

I. Losses in action: officers and men.

Robert E. Dean  
Howard G Reichard  
Albert H. Mitchell  
Nicholas (NMI) Albanese  
Austin E. Dunaway  
Mones E. Hawley  
John E. Riley

j. former and present members how have distinguished themselves in action.

Randall C. Cassasa  
Robert C. Bachtell  
John N. Madison  
Eugene D. Penn  
James M. Burns  
Sidney D. Shanken  
Winburn E. McLaughlen  
Brice C. Davis

P 7

Robert A Hunter  
Louis (NMI) Litow  
Currie H. McArthur

P 8

Charles Bradley

P 9

William H. Hudgins  
George W. Inglis  
Evan D. Arnold  
Kenneth L. Adamson  
Walter C. Milner  
Thomas H. Heath  
James (NMI) Humphress

James A. Goodwin  
Martin A. King, Jr.  
Carroll L. Ketteringham

P 10

Carl W. Hathaway  
Hugh C. Smith

P 11

John W. Ryba

P 12

Bernard C. Diekman, Jr.  
Hiliard (NMI) Levy  
Peter (NMI) Kok  
James L. Markey  
Andrew J. Allen  
Lawrence I.I. Fikar  
Clark R. Hagerman  
Alf D. Hemstad  
John C. Jones  
Thomas L. Higgins  
Bernard Greenbaum  
Carmen J. Mascuille  
Lowell E. Anderson

P 13

Wilbur B. Reagan  
Robert E. Gardner  
Edward F. Murray  
Otis O. Chandler  
Kenneth R. Pennington  
Phillip G. Moore  
Joseph R. Healey  
Maurice B. Wynn, Jr.  
Thomas E. Ryan

P 19

Robert H. Perry  
Paul K. Weatherly

## **Photograph captions History February 1944**

P 85

Pompeii Landing Ground Engineering Personnel:

Bailey, Steiner, Fejdasz, Brooks, Jameson, Anderson, Lyons, Flood, Nystrom, Fiore, Counts, Vance.

P 87

Flak hole in 8K after a rough mission over Anzio Beach-head

P 88

S/ Sgt. Navickas, turret gunner on 8K

P 90

Crews being interrogated at Group Operations at Pompeii Landing Ground:

Crossman, W.A. Smith, Daniels, Rogers, Pierce, Murphey, Thomas, Moore, Galvin, E.J. Smith, Becker, Howard.

P 91, 92, 93

8H in final glide over Anzio.

[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 6, 2015]