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So. Bomb. Key. #1

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SQ-BOMB-489-HI-0.1
June 44

Sq-Bomb-489-HI
June 1944

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Headquarters 340th Bombardment Gp (M)
APO 650, C/O PM
New York, New York

489th Bombardment Sqdn (M)
OUTLINE HISTORY, June 1944
15 July 1944

SUBJECT: Historical Records.

P.R.C.

TO : Commanding General, Twelfth Air Force, Through Channels.
Attention - Historian.

1. Outline History of the 489th Bombardment Squadron (M) for the period 1 June to 30 June.

a. Present designation: 489th Bombardment Squadron (M).

b. Changes in organization
(1) Changes in Commanding Officers: on 4 June Major Leonard Kaufmann assumed command, replacing Major Alexander H. Parrish.
(2) Changes in Staff Officers: on 4 June Lt. Francis W. Schofield was made Bombing Officer; Lt. William L. Rittenhouse was made Operations Officer; Lt. Jack G. Mair was made Assistant Operations Officer; and Capt. Merle F. Peterson was made Bomb Sight Maintenance Officer.

c. Strength, Commissioned and Enlisted.
(1) Month of June 1944.
(a) At beginning: 357 enlisted men - 90 officers.
(b) Net increase: 12 - 6
(c) At end : 369 - 96

d. Station
(1) Alesan L/G, Corsica
(a) Arrived: 19 April 1944.
(b) Departed: ----

e. Movements of Unit or Echelon.
(1) None.

f. Campaigns.
(1) Italian.
(2) From September 1943 to (still in progress).

g. Operations.
(1) Italian Campaign.
(2) Strategic bombing of road and railroad bridges just north of the fighting lines.
(3) Number of missions for period: 21.
Number of sorties for period : 246.
(4) Results of the most important missions.
(a) Mission.
1. On 9 June twelve Mitchells of this squadron dropped 24 tons of bombs on the road bridge at (A-170710), just NW of Centeno, Italy. Direct hits were scored; the photographs later revealed that the bridge was damaged beyond repair. Helping to feed supplies to the German front lines, this bridge affected the ability of the Germans to resist the savage onslaught of the allied armies.
2. On 10 June we duplicated the success of

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the previous day, this time putting out of commission the S. Bucine Viaduct, which was important to the Germans for supply reasons.

(b) Of the twenty-one assigned targets, fifteen were destroyed, two were missed, and near misses were made on four.

(5) Unit was not subjected to enemy action.

h. Command Officers in important missions.

(1) Lt. Col. M. C. Bailey, Deputy Commander of the Group, flew as co-pilot on the mission to the north Bucine Viaduct on 8 June 1944.

(2) Maj. Leonard Kaufmann, Commanding Officer of the 489th Bombardment Squadron (M), flew as co-pilot on the mission to the north Bucine viaduct on 12 June 1944.

(3) Maj. Leonard Kaufmann flew as co-pilot on the mission to the road bridge about 3 miles east of Perugia, Italy, on 13 June 1944.

(4) Maj. Leonard Kaufmann flew as co-pilot on the mission to the road bridge at Pietrasanta, Italy, on 21 June 1944.

i. Losses in action.

(1) None.

j. Personnel who distinguished themselves in action.

(1) William L. Rittenhouse, 1st Lt., Distinguished Flying Cross for extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight.

(2) John Fitzgerald, 2nd Lt., Air Medal, for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight.

(3) Wayne M. Fairchild, T/Sgt., Soldiers Medal, for heroism.

(4) John R. Stone, S/Sgt., Air Medal, for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight.

k. Number of photographs being submitted.

(1) None.

2. Inclosed are War Diary, 489th Bombardment Squadron (M), for the period 1 June 1944 to 30 June 1944;

For the Commanding Officer:

Leonard Kaufmann Jr.
LEONARD KAUFMANN
Major, Air Corps
Commanding.

1 Incl:
War Diary.

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WAR DIARY

489th Bombardment Squadron (M) STATION Alesan L/G, Corsica

Month of June 1944

DAY	EVENTS

1 - We began the month with a highly successful attack on a road bridge northeast of Orte. Direct hits were observed on the bridge and the approach leading up to it.

Lately this squadron has been sending a plane with a full load of passengers to Malta. Those who are fortunate enough to be sent there for a rest find it to be a virtual island paradise. Good food, a variety of drinks ranging from goat's milk to beer, and a friendly, English-speaking people combine to make this a haven for war-weary soldiers. In comparason with the typical Italian cities and people, here one finds a high and admirable degree of cleanliness and respectability. Practically everyone speaks English. Prostitution is virtually unknown, except in the notorious "Gut." There is one price for everyone. And best of all, G.I.'s are conspicuously absent.

2-5 - This has been a period of great activity. Six times we struck at the enemy, blowing up his roads and bridges over which he must move his supplies, equipment, and troops to the front lines. The war in Italy has assumed climactic proportions.

On the evening of the 4th Allied armies poured into Rome. The Germans evacuated the city without subjecting it to their customary destruction. At this late stage of the war the Germans yielded to worldwide public opinion and left the city intact; this is surprising in view of the fact that they have had no qualms in that respect in the past. The capture of Rome should have far-reaching effects on the progress of the war in Italy, and it should cause important political reactions in satellite Axis powers.

6 - D Day, towards which all of us have been looking for so long, at last has become a reality. Early this morning a huge armada of Allied ships set out across the Channel to storm Hitler's Festung Europa. An equally formidable armada of aircraft carried troops and supplies to be landed well behind the channel coast in France. Details of this momentous event are not yet available for public consumption, but when they are revealed we shall be amazed at the magnitude of the operations.

For approximately a year speculation has been rife as to when and where the mighty blows would be struck. Now we have the answers to those questions.

7 - Major Parrish is no longer with us. He is returning to the States for some specialized study. Replacing Major Parrish is Major Kaufmann, who has done such a splendid job as Operations Officer. As Commanding Officer of this squadron he will fill an important position which he is well qualified to hold.

More replacements have been assigned to us. Cpl. William Robinson has joined us in S-2. Other sections, including the Orderly Room and Operations, have had additions made to their staff.

8 - Eighteen of our Mitchells struck at the north Bucine Viaduct. No flak or enemy opposition from the air was encountered. The 2nd box of our formation placed bombs directly on the viaduct.

The following are excerpts from the A.L.O.'s daily news bulletin.

"Closely following our capture of Rome came the great news that the invasion had started. The magnititude of the operation, in which thou-

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sands of ships and planes are assisting the landing of thousands of men, guns, vehicles, etc., necessarily means that to start with we cannot look for large territorial gains . . . . It is apparent that so far our losses have been far lower than expected during the initial landings but the hardest battles are yet to come with Rommel rushing up with his mobile reserve divisions to the area of our first landings.

"We entered operations officially April 19, 1943. In less than 365 operational days we have accumulated a total of 400 missions, the two missions sent out this morning constituting the Group's 399th and 400th combat mission. It is believed, although as yet we have no confirmation of this, that this total of 400 missions is more than the total missions of any respective Group under the 57th Wing, notwithstanding that these other Groups have been in operations longer than we have."

9 - Again we ran another successful mission, this time to a road bridge northwest of Centeno, Italy. When our planes had left the target, four spans of the bridge were down.

10 - The Italian bomb line is changing rapidly, which is very heartening to us here in Corsica, where we have been so dangerously exposed to enemy attack. Soon we should have friendly troops opposite us on the Italian coast. This will considerably lessen the danger of an invasion of the island, although we may still be harassed by Jerry paratroopers. To cope with such possibilities, we are planting machine guns in many places in the squadron area. A security plan is being drafted and other steps are being taken to minimize the danger accruing to our present location.

11 - Inclement weather kept our bombers inactive. A hot morning was followed this afternoon by a cooling thundershower.

Our meals continue to consist mainly of the hated "C" rations. Our stomachs are taking a nasty beating. Although some of us are already suffering from the ill effects of bad food, later in life most of us will be inflicted with stomach ailments.

The mosquitoes here are vicious. Corsica is notorious for being ridden with malaria-carrying mosquitoes. Every day we take one Atabrin tablet, which may keep malaria at a low level.

12 - Soon the SUN will fall below the mountain ridge in the west and another day will have passed into oblivion. Time is taking its toll. And as the days pile up, we are able to answer more and more of the questions which we have projected from time to time since entering the army. All the questions have not been answered, but gradually the list is becoming smaller. The most recent question which has been answered is, When will the Second Front be opened? Now that we know the answer to that one, the next question in logical sequence is, When (and how) will Germany collapse? We hope to have the answer to that one by late November of this year.

Our mission today was a successful one in the Florence area. WE have been doing consistently good bombing for a number of weeks. Overwhelming air superiority plus precision bombing played a very important role in the great battle for Rome. Likewise it helped lay the foundation for the all-out assault on Festung Europa.

13 - The following excerpt is from a letter which one of the boys wrote

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home. It is characteristic of a strong feeling prevelant among most of the boys.

"And when the end (of the war) comes, won't the panty-waists, the USO commandos, the brave soldier boys who fought the war from the confining safety of the United States be proud of what they did in bringing about victory! They who see their girl friends and their wives regularly; who eat well, sleep without interference; who enjoy clean living; who do all of this while others are slugging it out in a bloody, inglorious way - those boys can be proud of themselves. If they want to avoid a veritable barrage of contempt and obscenity, they had better stay clear of those of us who have been fighting this war for them. We have no respect whatsoever for them, and we do not intend to show them any when we return.

"I mention all this to you, not because I am a chronic complainer, but because it throws some light on what we in the overseas service talk about whenever we have time to indulge in extra-curricular conversation. We feel strongly about this matter, and we do not intend to pass it off lightly when we return."

14 - Air activity over the east coast of the island continues as usual. Just a moment ago the fighter patrol which helps to guard this vulnerable spot streaked by. Flying in pairs, these planes stand guard night and day.

Throughout the day giant C-47's have been winging gracefully up and down the silvery shores of the island. We have been curious to know where they go and what they carry. For the last week they have been making numerous and regular trips. This may be the forerunner of an invasion.

15 - We struck again at communication lines in northern Italy, but we failed to knock out our objective, a rail bridge.

16 - Just after nightfall, the big guns all around the field opened up with a terrific barrage. Every one hit the trenches in short order. For about fifteen minutes the guns maintained an almost continuous bombardment, which was directed out to sea. When the all-clear was sounded, we felt relieved. This morning the ack-ack boys gave us an explanation of the excitment. An unidentified ship out at sea failed to give the proper signals, and thus it was assumed to be an enemy vessel, as it probably was.

The mission today carried us to Northern Italy. Bad navigation caused the formation to miss the Initial Point, thereby causing the mission to be abortive. Very seldom is a mission unsuccessful because of poor navigation. Our navigators are doing a splendid job of finding the targets, which for months have been minutely small.

S-2 has a new Intelligence Officer. His name is Dale G. Kesterson. This section is still far under T.O. strength.

17 - Reveille was at 0400 hours. The stand-by became immediate at 0500 hours. But as the hours wore on there was less likelihood of a mission, for the weather clouded up and finally early in the afternoon there were thundershowers. At 1700 hours the skies cleared and a call came through for immediate briefing. The crews went down to Group Intelligence, but no sooner did they arrive there than a stand-down was declared.

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That in broad outline is what occured here. But there were definite underlying factors which entered into the situation and which were determinative of our status. Before daybreak French invasion forces landed on Elba, which is just across the sea from us. Throughout the night there was a continuous bombardment of the island, which we could here clearly, and shortly before dawn the skies were filled with fighter planes providing cover for the landing parties. All of this accounts for our day long stand-by, for it was intended that we provide close support should it be necessary.

18 - A cold, determined rain has been falling for many hours. The The regular cadence of the falling drops on the tent top is soothing to the nerves. This weather kept our planes grounded all day.

S-2, with its situation maps of the various fighting fronts all over the world, is a main center of attraction during these tense, vital days. All day we are fired with a barrage of questions concerned with the progress of the war.

19 - No mission today - bad weather.

Today Elba fell to Allied hands. Prisoners taken amounted to 18,000, which is a good-sized haul from an island the size of Elba.

20 - Again weather is responsible for keeping our planes grounded.

A year ago we were suffering from the energy-sapping heat of North Africa. From all indications Corsica enjoys unusually mild summer weather. All day a cool breeze has been blowing in from the sea. Now just before darkness closes in on us it has become chilly. By midnight it will be cold.

21 - The long spell of enforced combat inactivity was broken late this afternoon when forty-eighty planes of the Group took off to bomb a viaduct in the Bologna area. The results of the mission are uncertain, but it is probable that direct hits were scored.

This morning Tom Gossack and Matthew Finneran went home under the rotation plan.

22 - General Knapp, commander in charge of the 57th Bomb Wing, has issued an order requiring all combat crew members to fly a total of seventy missions or be overseas a full year before they may be elegible for assignment back to the United States. Up to now the policy has been to ground an airman at about fifty missions and return him to the States. In the great majority of cases, none of them have had to remain overseas longer than seven or eight months.

The question which all of us are asking is, Will we go back to the States when Germany is defeated, or will we be sent immediately to another theatre?

23 - We were pleasantly shocked today. Three men whom we had never expected to see again suddenly made their appearance, walking in on us like ghosts. On May 25 plane #659 9W, with Lt. Ellen as pilot, Lt. King, co-pilot, Sgt. Yocca, radio operator, Sgt. Wright, turret gunner, And Sgt. Scott, tail gunner, was hit by flak over the target, a railroad bridge two and one half miles southwest of Ficulle, Italy. It lost altitude fast, crashing into the side of a ravine. Today we got a detailed story of just what happened to the crew. The fortunate three who returned, King, Vargo, and Yocca, had this to say. All of them were able to get out of the plane before it crash-landed. But not all of them survived the jump. Lt. Ellen's chute failed to open.

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WAR DIARY
489th Bombardment Squadron (M)
Month of June

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Wright was shot and killed by Italian Fascists as he parachuted towards the earth. Scott reached ground safely but was taken prisoner, as were King, Vargo, and Yocca. The last three-named men managed to escape and eventually reached the safety of friendly territory, but only after many harrowing experiences. All of us were thrilled at the unexpected appearance of these men.

24-30 - During this period activity has been on a reduced scale. On the 27th Cherbourg, third largest French port, fell before the Allied onslaught aftermany days of fierce fighting. Thus is completed the second phase in the great struggle for the liberation of Europe. On the 29th and the 30th we flew missions to Northern Italy, the first combat activity in about a week.

Walter F. Greve
WALTER F. GREVE
Sgt., A.C.
S-2.

WFG/wfg

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