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SQ-BOMB-489-HI
DEC 1944

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SQ-BOMB-489-HI DEC 1944

Headquarters 340th Bomb Gp (M)
APO 650, % PM
New York, N.Y.

489th Bomb sq (M)
OUTLINE HISTORY
December 1944

SUBJECT: Historical Records.

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

1. Outline History of the 489th Bombardment Squadron (M) for the period of 1 December 1944 to 31 December 1944.

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

b. Changes in organization
(1) Staff officer.
(a) Captain Jack Mair, Assistant Operations officer returned to the States. Captain P. B. Neafus appointed new Assistant Operations officer.

c. Strength for month of December.
(1) At beginning.
(a) 96 officers.
(b) 340 enlisted men.
(2) Net increase.
(a) 5 officers.
(b) 28 enlisted men.

d. Station.
(1) Alesan L/G, Corsica.

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e. Movements of unit or echelon.
(1) None.

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

g. Operations.
(1) Italian Campaigns.
(2) Tactical bombing of targets in Northern Italy.
(3) Missions for period : 15.
(4) Sorties for period : 147.

h. In a number of missions over Northern Italy, this squadron destroyed important enemy supply lines in the Po Valley.

i. Command Officers on important missions.
(1) Major Leonard Kaufmann, Jr., flying as Acting Command Pilot, on mission to Chivasso RR/Br., on 14 December 1944.

j. Losses in action
None.

k. Losses not in line of duty
None.

L. Personnel who distinguished themselves in action.

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S E C R E T

(1) Distinguished Flying Cross
(a) Alexander C. Stewart, 1st Lt., Pilot.
(b) Harold E. Winjum, T/Sgt, Radio-gunner.
(c) Paul B. Neafus, Capt., Pilot.
(d) Louis H. Bergh, 1st Lt., Pilot.
(e) George Bleimes, 1st Lt., Pilot.
(f) Richard V. Collins, 1st. Lt., Bombardier.
(g) William D. Convis, 1st Lt., Pilot.
(h) Robert J. Helle, 1st Lt., Pilot.
(i) Lewis E. Insley, 1st Lt., Pilot.
(j) Ver Keljik, 1st Lt., Pilot.
(k) Joseph M. Nuessle, 1st Lt., Pilot.
(l) David M. Philipson, 1st Lt., Bombardier.
(m) Walter C. Riddle, Jr., 1st Lt., Pilot.
(n) Emil H. Roesler, 1st Lt., Pilot.
(o) Fred R. Voss, 1st Lt., Pilot.
(p) James J. Walsh, 1st Lt., Pilot.
(Q) Robert L. Hertel, S/Sgt., Gunner.
(r) Eddie A. Little, S/Sgt., Bombardier.

(2) Air Medal
(a) John F. Mac Dermaid, 1st Lt., Pilot.

(3) 2nd Cluster
(a) John F. Mac Dermaid, 1st Lt., Pilot.

(4) 6th Cluster
(a) Harold H. Frazie, 1st Lt., Bombardier.

(5) 9th Cluster
(a) Robert W. Martin, 1st Lt., Pilot.

(6) 10th Cluster
(a) Robert W. Martin, 1st Lt., Pilot.

(7) Soldiers Medal
(a) John L. Mitchell, Jr., Capt., Pilot.

(8) Bronze Star
(a) Clifton W. Bennet, Capt.
(b) Alexander Y. Reams, T/Sgt.
(c) William N. Steele, T/Sgt.
(d) Robert L. Gillies, S/Sgt.
(e) Edwin H. Wendt, S/Sgt.
(f) Walter F. Greve, Jr., S/Sgt.

(9) Oak Leaf Cluster
(a) Alan C. Borden, 1st Lt., Bombardier.

m. Number of photographs being submitted.
(1) None.

2. Inclosed are WAR DIARY, 489th Bombardment Squadron (M) for the period 1 December 1944 to 31 December 1944.

For the Commanding Officer:

LEONARD KAUFMANN, JR.
Maj., A.C.
Commanding

LK/rcm

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S E C R E T

WAR DIARY

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

Month of December 1944

DAY EVENTS

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1 - We put six airplanes into the air and sent them to Villavernia to bomb a bridge just outside of town. The bomb pattern, instead of covering the bridge, was laid directly across the town. The inhabitants probably paid dearly in destruction of property and in loss of life as a result of the town's fateful proximity to the bridge.

2-3 - Before our airplanes finally got into the air, there was much uncertainty as to just what the target would be. Orginally the crews were briefed to bomb a bridge in the Po River valley, but after they were taken out to the airplanes, they were called back to Operations to be Briefed for a target in Yugoslavia. Then at the last minute before the second briefing, orders came through from Wing to send the mission to the Canneto railroad bridge in Northern, Italy. Right now at this time the heavy drone of ninety-six engines is vibrating the air as the planes pass overhead on their return from the mission. In just a few seconds they will be peeling off preparatory to coming in on their base leg and landing. This will make our 350th squadron combat mission.

Everyone is concerned about the kind of weather to which Corsica is subjected in the wintertime. There has been speculation here as to whether winter here is as wet, windy, and cold as it is in the southern part of Italy. If the past two or three days are typical of the average winter days in Corsica, then we shall not have to endure another winter as bad as the last one we endured, for these past few days have approximated the ideal. Although the air is cold and penetrating, the skies are clear and dry.

4 - This afternoon the Group officially received the Presidential Citation which was awarded for the outstanding job performed in Africa and in Sicily. Maj. Gen. Cannon, commander of the Twelfth Air Force and Brig. Gen. Knapp, commander of the 57th Bomb Wing, made the formal presentation at a formation held at Group Operations.

Bad weather in Northern Italy prevented any combat flying. The weather here in Corsica was fair. The skies were clear and the sun was almost generous with its warmth.

5-6 - These have been days of stand-downs. For us it seems that the war has birtually stopped. There is even far less discussion of it than there ever has been before. Practically everyone feels that it will drag on until next summer. Recently about a dozen combat crew members have left for the States. They have already been replaced by new arrivals in the squadron.

Today, the 6th, Christmas packages literally overwhelmed. One truck after another brought in gifts from home.

7 - Three years ago today Japan made its infamous attack on Pearl Harbor. We were caught unprepared, and we were almost brought to the brink of disaster. But we rallied, licked our deep wounds and with extraordinary effort recovered to the degree that we could carry the war to the enemy. Now, three years later, we are striking mortal blows at this ruthless foe. The end is not yet in sight, but the eventual outcome is certain.

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S E C R E T

DAY EVENTS

Today has been uneventful. Briefing time had been set for elevin o'clock, but we were put on a stand-down just after breakfast.

More Christmas packages arrived. All of us to a man are eating well right now. Practically all packages contain at least some food, which is really welcome.

8-9 - This has been a period of stand-downs. Camp life continues on the same general level. Life in the combat zone, happen what may, is a routine matter that defies adequate description. It must be experienced to be appreciated. As time wears on in its inexorable way, and as we see ourselves inch on towards victory, we over here become more acutely aware of the immensity of the whole conflict. It has been an uphill fight for us from the time that we landed in Egypt to the present moment. We have had no easy victories, and we have paid dearly every time we have taken the enemy to task. The war for us is a humdrum and highly personal affair that we are anxious to be done with as soon as possible.

10-11 - In two days we ran two missions, which is something of a recent record for us. The mission on Sunday, which carried us to our regular bombing ground, Northern Italy, was rough. About six of our planes were holed, Captain Neafus was forced to land with a single engine at Pisa, and one of our gunners was seriously injured. In spite of terrific enemy ack-ack and fighter opposition, the objective of the mission, to create a railroad fill, was accomplished.

Today we sent our airplanes out to destroy a railroad bridge in Northern Italy. At this moment the photographs are not yet available. No opposition was encountered.

The weather continues to be very fair and mild.

12 - Stand-down.

Adrive through the Corsican mountains is beautiful at any time; today was no exception. The sky was spotted with low-hung cumulus clouds that drifted lazily over the jagged mountain peaks. There was a feeling of chill to the air, but the generous sunshine kept us from being cold. As one travels over the country roads one is apt to comment about the appearance of the countryside. Early in the summer the rolling fields were green, the trees were in full foliage, the air was warm, and nature was approaching its zenity. Now, many months later, one may drive through the same countryside, but it is wearing a different garb. Winter has come. The trees are leafless, the fields are no longer a bright green, and life seems to be at low ebb, as actually it is.

13-20 - Except for a mission on the 15th, this has been a period of stand-downs. As was the case last year, weather again is an ally of the enemy.

Local weather, with the exception of the past two days, which have been rainy, has been very good. There has been plenty of sunshine and at no time too much cold.

21 - The skies are overburdened with grief. Like yesterday and the day before, today has been an exceedingly wet one. The steady beat

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DAY EVENTS

of rain on this Operations-Intelligence Building has been unremitting. The road over which we must travel to Group is virtually impassable in places. At a couple of spots a torrent, rushing down from the mist-enshrouded mountains, has completely overrun the road. The airfield is closed and activity in general is at low ebb. This is Italy in the wintertime all over again, except that thus far it has not been quite as bad, or perhaps I should say that we are equipped to face the elements better than we were last year at this time. Our offices and our living quarters are better housed, and we have more clothing to withstand the cold and the dampness.

22 - For a change there was no rain. But it has been bitterly cold with a high wind that tossed our airplanes about the sky like a boy's kite.

A mission was run to a rail bridge north of Trent in Italy. For over three hours our crews flew in sub-zero weather, but to no avail. The primary target could not be located, because of ground haze, and the alternate target was not bombed for the same reason.

23 - Winter has come to Corsica. Borne on a cold and cruel wind sweeping down from the north are the first snowflakes of the season. The mountain barrier to the west is a solid white in its winter garb, and the skies are overcast as they are at home at this time of the year.

Just a few days ago we were issued sleeping bags. These are standing us in good stead now. Crawl into one, zip up the side, pull on the hood, and you virtually are locked out from the cold.

24 - Late in the afternoon of this day before Christmas, I am making this notation at S-2. There is no activity here. Rain is beating fiercely on the roof top, and a cold wind is whistling through the prefabricated sections of the building. This is a miserable day, and it appears that the morrow will be no better.

25 - Christmas Day has come, and in just a few more hours it will be "last Christmas." Already my thoughts and the thoughts of everyone else are poised toward Christmas, 1945, and there arise in our minds the same questions which we asked ourselves on every holiday since coming overseas: Where shall we be a year from now? What shall we be doing then? Now we have the answers to those same questions which we asked last year.

Today for us has been a quiet and uneventful one. Some of us felt light-headed as a result of the night before. And some of us continued to have no feelings even today.

Christmas dinner was better than could be reasonably expected. In fact, it was very good. There was plenty of everything which is customary on Christmas: delicious turkey, dressing, and all the fixing necessary to make this an excellent meal.

26 - "Beaucoup" Christmas packages arrived today. Virtually everyone contained food of one kind or another. A soldier overseas cannot receive more practical gifts than canned food of the variety that we have been receiving.

The Mission to Northern Italy was a complete failure. There is belief that the Germans did some "jamming," causing our radio-controlled bombs to release at the wrong time.

27 - Recently there has not appeared in this diary any world news, main-

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DAY EVENTS

ly because this life has become so much of an organizedbore that few of us have any desire to follow even the vital and important events that are happening from day to day . However, there has been no stagnation of activity on the far-flung battlefronts. As a matter-of-fact, an exceedingly serious situation for the American First Army has developed on the Western Front in Belgium. About nine days ago the Germans launched a large-scale counter offensive, which broke through the American lines, and which has not yet been checked. Very little information has been forthcoming, but the Allied Nations, and particularly the United States, have been warned of the gravity of the situation. It has been intimated that our losses in life and material have been appallingly high. We have been advised that this successful German breakthrough may result in an appreciable lengthening of the war.

The Russian winter offensive is over a month late. On the Italian Front there is little activity, because of poor weather. The American offensive in the Philippines is going along "according to plan."

Our mission to the Brenner Pass line was a highly successful one. The target, a railroad bridge, was completely destroyed. It was the same bridge we missed yesterday.

28 - The following news item appeared in a recent issue of the Stars and Stripes.

"The 12AAF was congratulated today on completing 350,000 sorties in 25 months of operations....

"General Eaker described the 12th AAF as 'the scourge of the German soldier in the Mediterranean,' which had severed enemy lines of supply and attacked his troop concentrations and equipment in the front lines as well as destroying or damaging a total of 4,914 enemy aircraft.

"During its more than two years of operations, the 12th AAF has operated from bases in Africa, Pantelleria, Sicily, Italy, Sardinia, Corsica, and Southern France, and has dropped more than 175,000 tons of bombs on enemy targets in twelve countries. In this period the 12th AAF suffered losses of 2,277 American planes.

"The 12th AAF was first composed of Strategic and Tactical Aircraft, and formed the American and major part of the Northwest African Air Forces. After the Italian invasion and the formation of the MAAF, the 12th AAF was split and its heavy bombers and escort fighters were incorporated in the 15th AAF...."

29 - Some Allied military strategists now tentatively add three to six months to their estimates of the time required for victory in Europe as a result of the present Nazi counter-offensive

During the past few days this squadron has had assigned to it five crews that have just arrived from the States. Recently we lost approximatly the same number - men who were lost to the States.

30-31 - These two days can be disposed of by the word "uneventful."

Walter F. Greve Jr.
sgt. WALTER F. GREVE, JR.
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