

War Diary of the 489th Bomb Squadron

November 1944

Prepared by Sgt. Walter F. Greve, Jr.

I. Losses in action

(a) Missing

D.H. Rossler
J.R. Gittings
S.L. Newman
H.W. Harris
C.E. Corle
D.E. Mallicoat

November 1, 1944

Bad weather is still working against us. But it has not prevented our flying practice missions. For every combat mission we fly we run off at least five practice missions. Captain Crittenden is the Squadron Training Officer, who is kept busy in this important capacity.

2nd - 3rd

This has been a period of disappointing stand-downs. Briefing time is set, preparations are made for a mission, and then the stand-down.

4th

The important railroad bridge near Villafranca di Asti came in for a heavy pounding from the Group today. Thirty-four tons of thousand pounders were unloaded within the vicinity of the target. It will not be necessary for us to return there. But we paid dearly for the success of this mission. One of our planes, 9E, was hit by flak a few minutes off the target and crashed into the city of Alessandria. The ill-fated crew consisted of Lt. [Donald H.] Rossler, pilot, Lt. [James R.] Gittings, co-pilot, Lt. [Sidney L.] Newman, bombardier, Sgt. [Henry W.] Harris, radio operator, Sgt. [Chester E.] Corle turret gunner, and Sgt. Mallicoat, tail gunner.

5th

Today we sent twelve planes to the Padua South railroad bridge. We dropped 48 thousand pounders and were credited with a mission efficiency of 83%.

6th

Twelve of our aircraft went for the Trento Transformer Station in northern Italy. The five hundred pound bombs were released by radio, but failed to find their mark.

7th

The target was the Ala railroad bridge. It was a double track two-span steel bridge only one hundred feet long. Our first box scored at least two hits, one on the center and one near the north end. The second box of our planes dropped short and to the left.

8th - 10th

During this period we ran only one mission, which was disappointingly unsuccessful.

Camp life continues along the same general plane. It is a day to day existence, with an occasional leave to look forward to. Improvements in the area are being made in anticipation of our remaining here for the winter. 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 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 highly personal affair that we are anxious to be done with as soon as possible.

11th

Flying in the 1st and 2nd boxes of the lead flight of eighteen aircraft, this Squadron bombed the Cittadella railroad bypass. The first box released by radio and put its pattern across the center of the bypass, scoring several hits. The second box started two hundred yards short and walked into the smoke of the first pattern.

12th - 13th

On the 13th this Squadron put up eighteen aircraft to bomb a road bridge at Faenza, Italy. Heavy cloud coverage of the target made observations of the results impossible.

14th - 20th

Six of our planes on the 17th went back to the Faenza road bridge on the Eighth Army Front. Probable hits were scored.

On the 18th we led a flight of eighteen aircraft to the Novska railroad bridge in Yugoslavia. The bombing results were excellent. The mission was an exceedingly long one, lasting four hours and fifty-three minutes.

21st - 27th

The Faenza defense area in Italy came in for a heavy pasting on the 22nd. Fragmentation bombs were dropped and probably caused considerable damage.

28th - 30th

This was a period of heavy rains, cold winds, and monotonous stand-downs.

[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. October 4, 2015]