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S&BOMB-379 H1
FEB-1944

X

379 BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON

RX

P.R.C.

00045947

MICROFILMED

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SECRET

O.H. - Feb. 1944.
SQ-BOMB-379-H1

379th Bombardment Squadron HISTORY

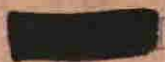
| FEBRUARY, 1944.

Section I.....

WAR - DIARY

P.R.C.

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HISTORY OF 379TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON DETACHMENT IN LIBYA.

FEBRUARY 1944.

This month started off in a most unfortunate manner. On the very first day in a mission of 4 planes, 2 of our planes were shot down making an attack on an enemy convoy just west of Leros. The loss however was not in vain for two direct hits scored by Lt. Slater's and Lt. Lavender's planes which both went down, destroyed a 3000 ton merchant vessel. Damage by cannon fire was also inflicted on one of the two escorting corvettes. As a result of their brave acts, both Lt. Slater and Lt. Lavender were recommended for the D.F.C.

Strangely enough, after this exciting start, the month was not particularly eventful from an operational standpoint. A total of 17 missions were sent out but Axis shipping was scarce and our total for the month was only the above mentioned accomplishments plus two 150 ton Caiques, one 50 ton Caique, and a 1000 ton vessel sunk.

Our last mission before going off operations at Gambut preparatory to moving back to the group was the other interesting mission of the month. Four of our planes were sent out to make a diversionary attack on a convoy just North of Candia, Crete. Our job was to draw off the fighters so that torpedo Beaufighters of the RAF could attack the large 4500 ton merchant vessel under the protection of two escort vessels. Arriving a few minutes ahead of the Beau's our men engaged 6 ME 109's and 4-JU-88's and in a running fight for 20 minutes, shot down one ME-109 and one JU-88 and also damaged another ME-109. By this drawing off the fighters, the Beau's were able to score direct torpedo hits on the large vessel and also one of the escort vessels. For our part in this show, we were commended by the RAF for a good job well done.

The weather during the month is worthy of mention. Constant dust storms, day after day, practically all month, made life miserable for all of us and on quite a few days made operations quite impossible. Feb. 10th, 15th and 17th were our worst days. On these days our weather men announced that the dust filled wind reached velocities between 45 and 50 miles per hour.

We received mail twice during the month on Feb. 4th we received 5 sacks but the really welcome lot was the 30 sacks brought back from the group headquarters in Corsica by Major Wetzel on Feb. 22nd.

One of the highlights of the month was a visit by Lt. General Eaker and Major General Royce on Feb. 16th. During their brief 45 minute stay after arriving in a B-17 from Cairo, they made a brief inspection of our desert camp and upon leaving, General Eaker commented that we had a "grand camp". Another visitor on this B-17 was a correspondent of Yank Magazine named Steve Derry. He remained with us for several days taking photographs and going on missions. He told us that we were going to get a two page write up in Yank when he completed his story. Naturally we are all going to be looking for future editions of Yank very anxiously.

Upon his return from Corsica on Feb. 22nd, Major Wetzel announced that we would be leaving the Middle East and rejoining our group in Corsica within the next few days. We immediately began to pack up awaiting the arrival of transports which were to carry our equipment and supplies. Meanwhile having a months supply of P.X. Rations due us at Cairo, the men contributed a total of \$4000.00, as a loan to the Squadron P.X. fund so that these rations could be purchased and carried with us to Corsica for distribution. On Feb. 24th, 6-B-25's were sent to Cairo to bring these rations back the same night.

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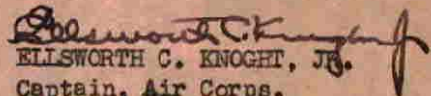
Shortly after these planes left, 12 transports arrived and were loaded to depart the following morning.

Early in the morning on Feb. 26th, Major Wetzel, some of the staff officers and all of the combat crews left for Corsica taking all 14 of our serviceable planes. The one unserviceable plane was turned over to the care of the depot at Devesoir.

Our Planes stopped first at Tripoli for refueling and then hopped on all the way to the base at Ghisonaccia in Corsica. Upon reaching this base, they were not allowed to land because of the muddy condition of the field. Consequently they proceeded north to Bastia and landed at Borgo airfield. Then all personnel except the pilots and crew chiefs proceeded to our base at Ghisonaccia by truck. Those remaining in Bastia stayed in a hotel until Feb. 29th when they then rejoined the Squadron at our new base.

This new base was quite a change for those of us who had been in the desert. Instead of the drab surroundings we had become accustomed to, we now found ourselves at the foot of a range of beautiful, rugged, snow capped mountains. The weather, although considerably colder than that of the desert, was a welcome change from the dust of Gambut.

Going back to those remaining back at Gambut, between the departure of our planes and the end of the month, 28 transports arrived and departed for Corsica with men and equipment. As the month ended, there were only 42 men and 3 officers left at Gambut, awaiting the arrival of the last few transports which were to arrive within a few days.


ELLSWORTH C. KNOCH, JR.
Captain, Air Corps.
Squadron Intelligence Officer.

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379th Bombardment Squadron HISTORY

February.....

The month of February was a busy one for the detachment left behind at the Philippeville Air Base. During the first week, the men were busy preparing for an important movement. On the 9th day of the month, we left by motor convoy for the port of Bizerte. Our route took us through high mountains, capped with snow.

During the hazardous journey, we were caught in a severe snow storm and the going was rough over the hills and around the curves that was barely discernible. Many of the jeeps ran out of gas, and we were stranded in the mountains until a gas truck was sent back from our stop-over point to fill us up again.

We finally reached Souk El Arba, and had a hot meal and a few hours of rest, before starting on again. Finally, on the 10th, we reached Bizerte, and set up camp in a bivouac area. The weather was perfect.

But on the 11th, a heavy rain left our area a sea of mud, and this situation continued during the 10 days that we remained at the bivouac area. We saw a few movies in the headquarters area, and also received ~~knives~~ two weeks rations of cigarettes, cigars and candy.

Finally, our shipping orders came through, and we boarded three LST's in the harbor, manned by British crews. We left the harbor on a sunshiny morning. The sea was calm, but the general number of men suffered from seasickness.

Twenty-four hours later we pulled in to the harbor of Ajaccio, in Corsica. We were impressed by the beauty of the scene; an old town with snow-capped mountains in the background. We remained at a bivouac area for two days, and then left by motor convoy over rough roads to our new Base at GHISONACCIA, on the eastern side of the island.

An area was allotted to us for our new squadron area, and it was only a matter of a few days when we were set up with new tents, and GI stoves. Here again, snow-capped mountains formed the background for our Base.

Before the month was over, our men in the detachment at Gambut, Libya, began to arrive with our planes. There were many happy reunions after four months of separation.

So, once again our complete squadron was ready for action against the enemy. We knew the following months would be busy ones, and we were all looking forward to resuming the fight;

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Section II.....

OPERATIONS for
FEBRUARY, 1944.



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379th Bombardment Squadron HISTORY

Section II.....Operations for February, 1944.

DATE:	Target:	No. Planes:
Feb. 1	Sea Search	4
Feb. 2	" "	4
Feb. 4	" "	4
Feb. 5	" "	3
Feb. 6	" "	4
Feb. 7	" "	4
Feb. 9	" "	4
Feb. 11	" "	4
Feb. 13	" "	4
Feb. 14	" "	4
Feb. 16	" "	4
Feb. 16	" "	4
Feb. 18	" "	3
Feb. 19	" "	4
Feb. 20	" "	4
Feb. 21	" "	4
Feb. 22	" "	4

Total sorties	<u>66</u>
Brought forward	<u>1299</u>
Grand total	1365

Total sqdn. missions for month....	17
Total sqdn. missions brought for....	<u>216</u>
Grand total....	233

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Section III.....

PERSONNEL CHANGES for
FEBRUARY, 1944.



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379th Bombardment Squadron HISTORY

Section III.....Personnel Changes for February, 1944.

Feb. 4th Atwood, Samuel H. Sgt.
 Gonzalez, William M. PFC
 Helms, Marvin J. PFC
 Dy to Ds, Gambut, Libya.
 Schopf, Wames Pvt.
 DS, Gambut, Libya, to Dy.

Feb. 7th Nichols, James O. T/Sgt. Hinkle, Samuel D. S/Sgt.
 Evans, Harry D. S/Sgt. Boggs, Charlie H. Sgt.
 Fort, Arnold V. S/Sgt. Jaffe, Eli S/Sgt.
 Thyne, Clair J. Cpl.
 DS, 6699th Depot Guard Company Detachment, to Dy.

Feb. 9th Miller, Charles R. Sgt.
 Dy to DS, Corsica.

Feb. 20th Ventura, Antonio M. Sgt.
 DS, Corsica, reasgd to 380th Bomb Sq. as of Feb. 6th.
 Turnquist, Isom P. Sgt.
 Geier, Alex Cpl.
 DS, Corsica, reasgd to 428th Bomb Sq. as of 6 Feb.
 Miller, Charles R. Sgt.
 DS, Corsica, reasgd to 380th Bomb Sq., as of 5 Feb.

Feb. 24th Baird, David H. Cpl.
 Ellis, Gerald V. PFC
 Swank, Ralph T. Cpl.
 Dy to DS, Unknown as of 20 Feb.
 Estep, Emory P. S/Sgt.
 DS, Corsica, to Dy.

Feb. 25th Sprinkle, Clarence D. M/Sgt.
 Tynan, Arthur N. Sgt.
 Dooling, Franklin M. Cpl.
 Rhodes, Edd H. PFC
 DS, Gambut, Libya, to Dy.

Feb. 26th 25 Officers & 75 EM.
 DS, Gambut, Libya, to Dy.

Feb. 27th Morris, Arthur F. Sgt.
 Trfd to Personnel Center #1, ABS, departed 26 Feb.
 Scott, James W. T/Sgt.
 Moore, John C. S/Sgt.
 DS, Gambut, Libya, to Dy.

Feb. 28th 5 Officers & 23 EM. Number of Officer at end of Feb.
 DS, Gambut, Libya, to Dy. 1944. 59
 Number of Enlisted Men at end of
 Feb. '44. 308 Assgnd. 3 Att'd.

Feb. 29th 17 Officers & 43 EM
 DS, Gambut, Libya, to Dy.

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Section IV.....

AWARDS & DECORATIONS for
FEBRUARY, 1944.

(No awards or decorations came out on General Orders for
the month of February, 1944. at the time of this writing)