
Sheet No. 1 WAR DIARY, 442nd Bomb Sq. Decimomannu Air Base
Month of March, 1944. Prepared by John G. Gemmill, 1st Lt., AC
& Jack C. Howard, 1st Sgt.

OUTLINE HISTORY FOR MARCH

The strength of the Squadron on the 1st of March, 1944 was as follows:

<u>Officers</u>	<u>Enlisted Men</u>	<u>Total</u>
64	260	324

Two Officers (Pilots) were assigned to the Squadron during the month.

There were no Combat Personnel completing tours of duty this month.

1st Lt. Clifford R. Conrad was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. S/Sgt. Jerry W. Rodgers was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. Sgt. William F. Fuller was awarded the Purple Heart.

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1. The mission today was cancelled due to weather. Lts. Larrabee, Scafidi and Conrad returned from Rest Camp at Capri.
2. Targets for today were Gun Assembly positions behind the Casino sector of the battlefield. We furnished 8 a/c in the 32 plane formation. The bombing results were good. There were no encounters in enemy aircraft; a few planes in the formation were damaged by anti-aircraft fire.
3. Target today was the Ostiense Marshalling yards, Rome. We furnished 6 aircraft in the 24 plane formation. A fine pattern of bombs destroyed the two railway stations and about 200 railroad cars. There were no enemy aircraft seen, and only slight flak was encountered, which did no damage. One plane flew local transition and one plane was on a practice gunnery mission.
4. 2nd Lts. Williams and Zellerbach were assigned to the Squadron; both officers are pilots. Today was non-operational. The mission was cancelled due to weather.
5. More Officers and EM were sent to rest camp at Capri. Mission cancelled because of weather.
6. One plane completed a weather mission. Weather again caused cancellation of the mission.
7. We furnished 9 aircraft in the 34 plane formation which attacked Ostiense Marshaling Yards, Rome, Italy again today. Major Friday was the Flight Commander, Capt. Speegle the lead pilot and Lt. Darby, lead bombardier. The bombing was good; there was no opposition.
8. Target was Tiburtina Marshaling Yards, Rome, Italy, but weather forced the formation back before reaching the Italian coast. We furnished 9 aircraft in the 35 plane formation. One plane flew on transition.
9. Tiburtina Marshaling Yards, Rome was again the target and we furnished 9 aircraft in the 36 plane formation. The bombing was good; opposition was slight. T/Sgt. Raymond Burns returned to duty from DS with XII Training Command; Lts. King and Hodges returned from BTC where they were on temporary duty training the French. S/Sgt. Spangler also returned from BTC; Lts. Klark and Brown and Sgt. Marvick went on DS to BTC for a 30 day period. 8 planes participated in a practice mission. One plane flew on local transition and two planes left on a cross-country flight.
10. Florence Northwest Marshaling Yards, Italy was today's target. The Squadron furnished 9 aircraft in the 35 plane formation. The bombing was excellent and there was no opposition. Capt. Leahy returned from 10 days DS at Cairo. S/Sgt. Carranco formerly with the 319th bomb Group was assigned and joined this Squadron as an armorer. Two planes returned from cross-country flight.

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11. The mission was cancelled due to weather. Four planes flew on local transition.
The first "Retonga Hour" program was put on in the Officer's Club this evening. Under the able leadership of Lt. Larrabee, it is promised that this will be a regular Sunday night feature.
12. Cancelled again because of weather.
13. We furnished 7 a/c in the 28 plane formation attacking Viareggio Railroad Bridge, Italy. The bridge was only damaged by near misses, but the railroad yards and station took a number of direct hits. Again, no opposition.
One plane flew on local transition.
14. Today's target was Prenistiva Marshaling Yard, Rome, Italy. We provided 9 a/c in the 34 plane formation. The bombing was again excellent. The formation was attacked by a dozen enemy a/c of which 1 ME-109 was destroyed, 1 ME-109 probably destroyed and 4 ME-.09's and 2 FW-190's damaged. We had no losses, but 4 of our planes were damaged by attacking a/c.
15. The much fought for and bloody town of Casino was today's target. Major Friday was Flight Commander of the Group formation and Capt. Probasco and Lt. Darby were lead pilot and bombardier. Our's was the sixteenth and last Group across the target. The Squadron furnished 9 a/c in the 36 plane formation. The bombs landed squarely on the target. No enemy a/c were even sighted, and the slight heavy flak did no damage.
One plane completed weather mission.
16. The target today was a gun concentration just north of Aquino. Italy. We provided 7 a/c in the 27 plane formation. The bombs were again right on the money. Two enemy aircraft attacked the formation and one was shot down. The Squadron had no losses but 441st lost a plane to flak; the crew landed by parachute behind enemy lines.
1st Lt. Fitzpatrick, Squadron Executive Officer was promoted to the rank of Captain. 2nd Lt. Boyne was promoted to rank of First Lieutenant. One plane completed Special Weather mission.
17. The mission today was cancelled due to weather.
All personnel of the Squadron were assembled at Group Headquarters together with the personnel of the other Squadrons of this Group to hear an address by Lt. General Eaker. General Eaker said "When we teach the B-17's to fly as well as the B-26's, we will really have something."
12 planes participated in local flights.
18. The mission today was cancelled due to weather.
Capt. Probasco, Squadron Operations Officer, was transferred to Group Headquarters and was there named Group Operations Officer. Lt. Gemmill returned to duty from the 60th Station Hospital.

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19. The target today was the Railroad Viaduct 7 miles west of Arezzo Italy. The Squadron furnished 7 planes in the 27 ship formation. The bombing results were excellent. There were no enemy a/c encountered and the slight inaccurate flak from Elba did no damage to our a/c.
1st Lt. Oliver G. Shuh, squadron Gunnery Officer was designated Squadron Operations Officer. Two Planes flew on local transition.
20. The old acquaintance, Orvieto RR Bridge North was today's target. We put up 7 a/c in the 27 plane formation. Most of the planes did not drop on the primary target because of cloud cover, but bombed Porto Ercole on the way home, plastering dock installations and shipping. Half a dozen enemy a/c attacked; 2 were destroyed. All our planes returned safely.
M/Sgt. James W. Martin, Squadron Line Chief, received orders relieving him of assignment with the Squadron and ordering him to report to Army Air Forces Officers Candidate School at Miami Beach, Florida to attend Special OCS for Engineering Candidates. One plane flew on local transition.
21. Major Friday as Flight Commander, Lt. Shuh as lead pilot and Lt. Darby as lead bombardier, flew on No. 1 spot today as the Squadron led the Group in another attack on the RR viaduct west of Arezzo. We furnished 7 a/c in the 28 plane formation. The bombing was excellent with several direct hits on the viaduct. No enemy a/c and the slight inaccurate flak did no damage.
The S-2 War Room, next door to the EM Day Room, has been completed and the first news forum was held in it this evening.
Nine EM were promoted from Corporal to Sergeant. Two planes flew on local transition.
22. The targets for today were Poggibonsi RR Bridges, Italy. We furnished 7 a/c in the 27 plane formation. 441st lost its Squadron Commander and Squadron Bombardier in a crash landing on takeoff. The bombs destroyed one of the Bridges and hit both approaches to the other. No enemy a/c, slight flak and no damage.
Lt. Robert J. Young, Ass't. Intelligence Officer of this Squadron, was transferred to the 17th Bombardment Group. Lt. Young had been on DS with the 17th Bomb Group. Two planes flew on local transition.
23. Florence Campo di Marte Marshaling Yard, Italy, was today's target. Major Friday was the Group Flight Commander. We furnished 6 a/c in the 24 plane formation. The bombing was again excellent. There was no opposition.
24. Orvieto RR Bridge North was again the target. We furnished 6 a/c in the 24 plane formation. The target was missed. There were no enemy aircraft encountered and the slight flak did no damage.
Major Gordon F. Friday was placed on temporary DS to Cairo. Capt. Speegle assumed the duties of Acting Squadron Commander. Two planes flew on practice bombing missions.
25. The target was Poggibonsi Marshaling Yard, Italy, but weather forced the formation back at the Italian coast. We furnished 6 a/c in the 24 plane formation.

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(Equals British Most Secret)

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26. Again our old friend, the RR Viaduct west of Arezzo, Italy was the target. Capt. Speegle and Lt. Darby were lead pilot and bombardier, as we led the Group formation, also furnishing 6 aircraft in the 23 plane formation. The viaduct was missed, but the approaches were cut and an ammunition train blown up. There were no enemy a/c and no flak was encountered.
Cpl. Shotsberger, formerly of the 319th Bomb Group was assigned and joined the Squadron and will work with the Armament Section.
27. 17 planes participated in local transition flights.
28. Today's target was Certaldo RR Bridge, Italy. We furnished 7 a/c in the 28 plane formation. The bombing was excellent and there was no opposition.
1st Lts. Shuh and Darby were promoted to the rank of Captain. All of the following 2nd Lts. were promoted to the rank of First Lieutenant: Brown, Hampton, Harpster, Harte, Hodges, King, Klark, Maggio, Menaugh, Montez, Ratering, Bottomley, Claybaugh, Scafidi, Rowan, Rood, Freestone, Olmsted, Pincomb, Wendling, Schwartz, Deatley and Conrad. 3 planes flew on local transition.
29. We furnished 7 a/c in the 28 plane formation, which took off to bomb Arezzo RR Bridge, Italy. Complete overcast over the target prevented bombing. Again, no opposition.
30. The mission was cancelled due to weather.
31. Cancelled again due to weather.
The ending of March was the starting of the Athletic season for the personnel of the Squadron. A fine ball field was completed and interest and participation in soft ball was very high. There were several practice games between the Officers and the Enlisted Men and all concerned were getting in shape for the opening games in the Group league and also the intra-Squadron league.