

SECRET

BY AUTH C.O.

444th Bombardment Squadron30 November 1944\_\_\_\_\_  
INITIALS30 November 1944Hq 444th Bombardment Squadron  
320th Bomb Group  
APO # 374

SUBJECT: Historical Records.

TO : COMMANDING GENERAL, 12TH AIR FORCE  
"THRU CHANNELS" - ATTENTION: HISTORIAN1. Outline History of the 444<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron for the period 1 November 1944 to 30 November 1944.

## a. Present Designation

444<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron; 320<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (M), 42<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Wing, 12<sup>th</sup> Tactical Air Command; 1<sup>st</sup> Tactical Air Force (Prov).

## b. Changes in Organization

(1) Changes in designation: From 12<sup>th</sup> Air Force to 12<sup>th</sup> Tactical Air Command; 1<sup>st</sup> Tactical Air Force (Prov).

(2) Echelons or Units

(a) Transferred: None

(b) On DS or TD: None.

(c) Attached to other Hqs for operational control: None.

(3) Change of Commanding Officers: None

(4) Changes of Staff Officers ( not applicable to Gp or Sq). None

(5) Changes in T/O: None.

c. Strength, Commissioned and Enlisted for month of November 1944.

	Off	F/O	W/O	EM	TOTAL
a. At Beginning	79	4	0	332	415
b. Net Increase	5	0	0	8	13
c. Net Decrease	0	3	0	0	3
d. At End	84	1	0	340	425

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d. Stations of Units or Echelons

1. Name of Station: - Dijon Air Base, France.
  - a. Date of Arrival: - 22 November, 1944.
  - b. Date of Departure: Presently here.

e. Movements of unit or echelons None.

- (1) From Alto Air Base to Dijon Air Base, France
  - a. Purpose: Operational Change of Station
  - b. Dates: From 11 November to 30 November, 1944.
  - c. Means of Transportation: Air, water and land.
  - d. Conditions of roads, conveyances, and weather:  
Roads poor, Conveyances bad order, Weather very bad.

f. Campaigns

- (1) Name: Italian
- (2) Duration; From 1 November to 30 November 1944

g. Operations

- (1) Campaign: Italian
- (2) Nature of Operations: Precision bombing of Communications and Troop Concentrations.
- (3) Number of Missions and Sorties for period:  
18 Missions & 166 Sorties.
- (4) Results of the most important missions:  
A German troop concentration was bombed north of Dijon 7 Nov, 1944 which assisted greatly in the capture of that city a few days later.

h. Command Officers in important missions

Captain Birmingham, Captain Plaekter

i. Losses in action: Officers and Enlisted Men

(1) Mission and dates

a. Killed: On 13 Nov '44, Courier to Dijon A/B. France  
Lt. Hisey, Lt. Viebrock, Capt. Fields, Lt. Dawkins, T/Sgt [illegible], T/Sgt Montauruli, S/Sgt Myers, Cpl Peck and Cpl Yohannen.

b. Wounded: On 8 Nov '44, Mission to Voghera RR Bridges  
Lt Rhodes and Lt Hafer

c. Missing: On 5 Nov '44, Mission to Rovereto RR Fill  
Lt. Logsbon, Lt. Drevas, Lt. G.L. Smith, Sgt Kelly, S/Sgt De Lucia, and Cpl Kaufman.

On 8 Nov '44 Mission to Casale Monferrato RR/Br.  
Capt Hammond, Lt. Fowler, Lt. Belker, S/Sgt Bauer, Sgt Buchanan

On 16 Nov '44, Mission to San Margherita RR Bridges  
Lt R.W. Jones, Lt. Jones, Lt Strekosky, Lt Hooper, Sgt Gould, Cpl Hess and Pvt Dininny.

d. Taken Prisoner – None.

S E C R E T

j. Personnel who have distinguished themselves in action.

<u>G. O. NUMBER</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>MISSION</u>	<u>ACT</u>	<u>REWARD</u>
215	Major Berge	Oggisli, Italy 14 September, 1944		D.F.C.
221	Lt Ward-Smith	Ferentino, 25 May		D.F.C.
	Capt Michaels	Rieti, 25 Jan. 1944		D.F.C.
	Capt Deacy	Cavaliere, France 15 August, 1944		D.F.C.
223	Capt Plackter	Ostigli, Italy 26 September, 1944		D.F.C.

All awards given for "Extraordinary Achievement while participating in Aerial Flight"

k. PHOTOGRAPHS being submitted:

None.

2. Inclosed are War Diary 444<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron  
for the period 1 November 1944 to 30 November 1944

For the Commanding Officer:

(signature)  
GIBSON G. RAMSAY,  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt., Air Corps,  
Ass't. Squadron S-2 Officer

1 Incls  
1 War Diary  
Special Accounts (if any)  
Supporting Documents (if any)  
Photographs (if any)

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

SHEET NO. 1

WAR DIARY

444<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron

320<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group (M)

Month of November, 1944.

Prepared by G.G. Ramsay. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Air Corps

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1. The month starts off with the (recently) usual non-operational day due to adverse weather. It's even interfering with the movies at night. This in turn was rough on the Briefing Room. So many were there that the underpinning slipped and let the center of the floor sag about a foot. However, the "show must go on" axiom prevailed.
2. Still another day of inactivity as far as combat operations go. The crews were kept busy with bombing practice, gunnery movies and the bomb trainer. Those not so engaged put the finishing touches on their living quarters as cold weather is really setting in.
3. Non-operational is still the adjective describing this 24 hours, and of course, due to weather. A highlight today was a called meeting by Group in the Gp Theatre area to say "Goodbye: to Col Fletcher, our present C.O. and to welcome Lt Col Woolridge, our future Group C.O. The rumor about a move was partially confirmed by Lt Col Woolridge who stated that a move was very definitely contemplated and was one that would please more of the personnel than the moves to Sardinia and Corsica. Tongues are wagging in the Sqdn. and speculation on our future location is widespread. France gets the nod of approval.
4. At last, Ole man weather has relented and 3 missions took off to bomb the RR Fill at Ossenigo on the line through the Brenner pass, the Cassano Di Adda RR Cassano Bridge and the Ossenigo RR Coriche. Capt Plackter and Lt Froehlich was the team that led the 444<sup>th</sup> ships on the first mission and scored several direct hits. On the second mission, Cpts Birmingham and Heller directed the dropping of an excellent pattern and scored several direct hits. The third mission, Cassano Di Adda RR Bridge was not quite so successful. However, possible hits and near misses were chalked up. Only slight damage was suffered from flak

Month of November, 1944.Prepared by G.G. Ramsay. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Air Corps

- 4-Cont No E/A were encountered. Quite a few of the officers wrestled with the local talent at the Beach Club in town accompanied by generous draughts of the so-called cognac. Cap Corse, etc. Some say they even enjoy it.
- More replacements arrived from the States today.
5. Again we had 3 missions. The first, to Marco RR Fill, was not successful, the bombs missing the target. There was no flak, no fighters and no losses or casualties. The second mission, to Rovereto RR Fill on the Rovereto Pass line, covered the target with a good concentration of bombs. However, Ole man Fate stepped into the picture and we lost 2 planes and 1 crew due to E/A. The first plane was badly shot up just before reaching the target, lost a wing and exploded upon crashing. No chutes were seen to emerge. Lts Logsdon, Drevas and G.L. Smith were lost together with Sgt Kelly, S/Sgt DeLuca and Cpl Kaufman, the total crew. The other plane lost was hit by fighters on the bomb run, dropped its bombs in formation but was unable to make it back to base, due to engine damage. Lt Kamansky, pilot, gave orders to abandon ship over the water north of Corsica and all crew members bailed out successfully and were rescued almost immediately by "Air-Sea Rescue". No injuries were received except to wearing apparel. One E/A was claimed shot down by our Squadron and confirmed.
- The third mission, led by Capts Birmingham and Heller, was to Cismon / Del Grappa RR Bridge and was very successful. A good pattern covered the target with several direct hits being scored. There was no flak or fighters and all returned safely.

Well, it looks as if our wishes were coming true at last. It is pretty well established that the Group will go to France at last. All there is left to speculate on is the exact location and the area Between Lyon and Dijon is getting

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SHEET NO. 3

WAR DIARY

444<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron

320<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group (M)

Month of November, 1944.

Prepared by G.G. Ramsay. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Air Corps

- 5-Cont        the nod. Ye editor will settle for Paris, but me thinks this is just wishful thinking, worse luck.
6.            There were two missions today; one to Ossenigo Rail Cut, the other to San Anbrogio. The first, led by Capt Plackter was a miss. The second led by Capt Birmingham to San Anbrogio followed suit and no losses or casualties were suffered by either the Squadron or the Krauts.
7.            One mission, 11 sorties took off today to bomb a Troop Concentration near Forli. Frags were dropped in a good pattern and the target well covered. Scant flak was encountered but no damage was sustained. The Squadron is still buzzing with speculation about the coming change of station and it is pretty well established that the event will take place on the 17<sup>th</sup>.
8.            Two missions, 15 sorties were flown today. The first to Casale Monferrato RR Bridge was costly to the 444<sup>th</sup> in that an accidental hit by flak struck the left engine of Capt Hammond's ship. The plane burst into flames immediately, spun in and crashed. No chutes were seen and the Squadron lost 5 sterling officers and men. Capt Hammond was 444<sup>th</sup> Operations Officer. The following is a list of the crew lost:- Capt David G. Hammond, Lt R. B. Fowler, Lt Samuel D. Balker, S/Sgt Kenneth Bauer, and Sgt Homer ? Buchanon.
- The second mission was to the Voghers RR Bridge and achieved good results. Several direct hits were scored. All returned, no damage, no casualties. Two Officers, Rhodes and Haher were slightly injured by flying plexiglass on the first mission.
9.            Non-operational today as far as missions went, but very operational as to the weather. Shortly after supper, the wind started blowing and kept most of the personnel up a goodly portion of the night banging onto their tents and

Month of November, 1944.Prepared by G.G. Ramsay. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Air Corps

9-Cont belongings. One tent was blown down.

10. One mission, 10 sorties today to bomb the Peri RR Sidings. The formation turned back before reaching the target due to weather. No flak was encountered but enemy fighters attacked for about 10 minutes. One A/C slightly damaged, no-one injured.

Part of the advance echelon for our move to La Belle France is getting ready to leave at 0800 hours tomorrow. Paris, here we come (we hope).

“Long handles” are the accepted garments of the days, and night for that matter. Cold weather has really settled in for the duration.

11. One mission, 9 sorties, on this, the 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Armistice of World War I. A good pattern of bombs covered the target of the RR Bridge at Povereto on the Brenner Pass Line. Capt. Reeder and his bombardier, Lt. Glassbitz, were the team that led the 444<sup>th</sup>. There were no losses and no casualties. Our move to France is still the main topic of conversation. Part of the advance party has already left.

12. Sunday, and non-operational as far as “feuding” is concerned. Lousy weather set in about noon and it was plenty cold by mid-afternoon. Church services and “sack time” occupied the officers and men of the 444<sup>th</sup>.

13. We almost had credit for a mission today. 9 ships took off for enemy territory to bomb a RR Bridge but Ole Man Weather interfered and they had to turn back. No mission credit was given.

14. Tragedy struck the 444<sup>th</sup> this AM about breakfast time. A teletype report was received that our ship, bearing some of the advance party to Dijon, France,

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SHEET NO. 5

WAR DIARY

444<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron

320<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group (M)

Month of November, 1944.

Prepared by G.G. Ramsay. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Air Corps

- 14-Cont crashed and all on board were killed. Combat missions, but not ferry trips, are expected to bring casualties. We understand that an unexpected storm was the cause of the accident. Some mighty fine officers and men were killed. They were Lt. Hiesy, Lt Viebrock, Capt Fields, T/Sgt Montauruli, T/Sgt Heeko, S/Sgt Myers, Cpl Peck, and Cpl Yohannen. The crash occurred in France yesterday, Monday the 13<sup>th</sup> of November, 1944.
15. Another non-operational day due to weather. However, preparations for the move to France are still in progress.
16. There was 1 mission of 9 sorties today led by the team of Birmingham and Heller. It was a miss in more ways than one. The target was not hit and the 444 lost a ship and crew. It is M.I.A. and was last seen in the Po Valley on single engine at 4500 ft. escorted by a P-47. The crew consisted of Lt ?W. Jones, Lt L. J. Strekosky, Lt H.L. Hooper, Sgt O.T. Gould, Cpl H.A. Hess and Pvt W.K. Dininny. We are hoping that they are safe, even the POW's.
17. Ramage and Drake were the team that led a mission (9 sorties) to the Aviso RR Viaduct but it was a dry run due to smoke obscuring the target. No losses, no casualties. There is plenty of celebrating in the area tonight as several of the officers received well deserved promotions, including Capt Berge, who has quit "railroading". He attained his majority.
18. Ramage and Drake teamed together today to lead a mission of 9 sorties to the alternate target of Pizzicrettone RR Bridge and completely demolished same with direct hits. Flak was encountered but there were no losses of either men or A/C. This was an Air Medal raid (100%) however, we understand that this practice has been discontinued as of the 12<sup>th</sup>. Dumb tough luck!
19. A second echelon of officers and men moved out today to the new base of

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19-Cont Operations at Dijon, France. Part of the Officers' area looks like a cyclone struck it as tents were struck and only debris is left.

The mission today was a complete fizzle. The primary and alternate targets were obscured and a target of opportunity. Ala RR Bridge was missed by nearly 2,000 feet as no-one had been briefed on it and the Krauts resented the intrusion on their privacy by sending up beaucoup flak. However better luck next time.

The usual Sunday night dance at the Officers Club at Bastia was about as exciting as usual even though there was no orchestra present.

20. There was a mission, 9 sorties, to the Rovertto RR Bridge today but all plans were called back due to weather over the target.

21-30. We are now no longer in the 12<sup>th</sup> Air Force. Our present affiliation is with the 1<sup>st</sup> Tactical AF (Prov) and we are on our way to La Belle France.

The Air Echelon left Corsica on the 22<sup>nd</sup> For Dijon – Longevic airdrome but was weathered in at Marseilles to Dijon.

Much bad weather was encountered and our vehicles are somewhat the worse for wear.

The Squadron is now set up in the village of Ressey des Cîteaux about 16 K. from the airdrome. Activities center around the Chateau de Bessey, a very imposing structure of ancient vintage but quite impossible for decent living.

The Ems are billeted with private families in the village while the Officers are all quartered in the Chateau.

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21-30. It is the consensus of opinion that the only way to warm the Chateau is to burn it down. If what we are living in is a chateau, a winterized GI tent is a palace.

It has been impossible to fly any missins from our new base due to the weather which has been "Celing Zero" ever since we have been here. PBY2's would have been handier on the airdrome. However, the Bessey inhabitants say that the weather will improve about January. We hope so.

Here endeth our participation in the Italian campaign and the start of our operations against the German fortress itself. It is something that all of the Squadron has been looking forward to and the 42<sup>nd</sup> Wing can rest assured of the 444<sup>th</sup> squadron's whole-hearted cooperation.

F I N I S

S E C R E T