

April 1945

[Transcriber's note: Some entries are truncated. Especially the opening lists of wounded in action, distinguished actions, etc. Please see the original document for the full details.]

War Diary, 487th Bombardment Squadron, 340th Bombardment Group

Prepared by: Sgt. James P. Shanley and Cpl. Richard C. Hurley, 487th BS.

i. Losses in Action

Edmund F. Papiernick

Linwood E. Davis Jr.
Jay A. Wight
Lee R. Weil
William E. Durie

j. Personnel who have distinguished themselves in action.

Theodore J. Bennett
Hubert Conwill
William E. Durie
Edgar E. Evarts
Alleson J. Forrester
Dwain D. Gull
Morris Lazarowitz
John E. Leatherwood
Roger D. Lewis
Sweetser Linthicum
Edmund F. Papiernick
Stanley P. Parkins
Carl A. Pennock
Donald A. Peters
John C. Rau
Jay A. Wight

The following flying personnel of this organization have been awarded Air Medal and Clusters thereto for the period covered:

Wayland H. Adams Jr.
Cecil L. Adkins
James W. Austin Jr.
Theodore J. Bennett
Irvin A. Baske

Robert E. Brown
Willard A. Bruce
Marion C. Burger
Marvin K. Carlson
George Chipouras
Jerome T. Chumney
Hugert Conwill
Fred L. Cormack
David C. Cunard
Henry J. Del Percio
James R. Dempsey
William E. Durie
Burt R. Dyar
Myron E. Erickson
Delos Ervine
Richard F. Evans
Robert E. Evans
Edgar E. Evarts
David W. Feltus
James B. Fitzgerald
Alleson J. Forrister
Frank F. Fronek
Pierre P. Garven
Bert M. Gifford
George Gifford
Robert N. Gist
Harry J. Glattle
Chester M. Gretz
Tony J. Gucwa
Dwain D. Gull
Edward J. Hardisky
Werner M. Hartman Jr.
David D. Heater
James V. Heming
Thomas A. Hetzel
Emmett O. Holbrook
Robert E. Holmes
Kenneth R. Hopkins
John K. Houston
Kenneth W. Hovermale
Charles E. Jones
Frank L. Jones
Adam R. Kelly
Donald M. Kenney
Howard J. Knaggs
Wallace L. Krueger
Francis J. La Pierre
Morris Lazarowitz
John E. Leatherwood

William A. Lee Jr.
Robert E. Lehmkuhl
Roger D. Lewis
Julius Lieberman
Vernon J. Lyle
Morgan C. Mattox
Arthur W. Merritt
David J. Mershon
Marlan J. Michel
John C. Miller
Floyd E. Mitchell
Paul T. McCormick
John M. McCullough
Paul E. McDonnell
Charles T. McIlvain
Paul S. McMillen
Harry P. Naruszewicz
William D. Nixon
James M. Oaks
Frederick C. Oldfield
Guy E. Olson
Oscar E. Olson Jr.
Casimir Olszewski
John M. O'Riley
Edmund F. Papiernik
George D. Parks
Olan B. Parrish
George W. Patterson
William A. Paul
Carl A. Pennock
Donald A. Peters
George R. Pew
John Polanko
Harold Price
Leslie C. Price
James R. Rambo
Clifford J. Ramsey
John C. Rau
Frank N. Reynolds
Ira Rifkind
Arthur H. Rigdon
Edward R. Ritterbusch
James W. Russell
Vernon A. Short
Douglas F. Shoun
Dwayne Q. Smith
Marvin H. Smith
David C. Solether
Joe A. Spieri

Kenneth O. Starr
Telmo L. Suarez
John E. Taylor
Harry R. Telander
Frank L. Thibault
Joseph F. Thornsberry
Joseph J. Tomasek
Robert M. Trollinger
Howard L. Trudell
Lawson T. Ware
Charles W. Watson
Caldwell A. Whipple
Jay A. Wight
Nick Yeonopolus
John J. Zugibe

War Diary April 1945

1 April 1945
to
15 April 1945
inclusive

Easter Sunday morning brought forth the the first concrete evidence that the 487th Squadron was actually going to move. Following an Easter Sunrise Service on the banks of the sea just opposite the 488th Area first elements began packing equipment for departure the following day. 488th and 489th were the first to leave for Italy via combat aircraft, C-47's and motor convoy. The 487th began shuttling equipment and men over on the second of April and mostly everything with the exception of a rear party and heavy equipment was at the new field by the Seventh of the Month. Combat personnel and aircraft were supposed to take off for a mission from Alesan on 7 April 1945 and land at Rimini, however, a stand-down was declared at the last minute and they took off for the new field in the afternoon. Administrative activities other than immediate essentials closed down on the first of the month and were not fully resumed until April 15th when all elements arrived at Miramare. The rear party at Alesan busied themselves taking down the mess-hall, orderly room, latrines and generally cleaning up. All usable lumber from any 487th buildings and the officer's club was bundled and totted down to the docks at Bastia for shipment to the new field. No one until they started lifting it had any idea how much lumber had been acquired by the Squadron during its sojourn in Corsica. However, after several days of back-breaking details there was a lull which allowed everyone plenty of sack time. Yugoslavs attached to the Squadron and Group worked endlessly on policing and hauling whatever was considered refuse away. When the rear party pulled out on the morning of April 12th the cow pasture we occupied looked exactly as it did the day we landed there one year previous. Our departure meant the end of the war for that Corsican farmer. Personnel remaining at the 486th and Headquarters enjoyed our delectable food served in the officers mess after the EM's mess has been taken down. Apparently the QM was liquidating his stores as the food was actually worthy of praise. In between meals the boys made many trips to the hills and local vino emporiums. The results of the escapades, particularly the vino was quite obvious in many cases. On the morning of April 12th the only remaining latrine and personnel tents were taken down and the last elements of the 487th Bombardment Squadron departed in a cross water and county convoy. What remained of Group Headquarters shared our convoy. The only

building left standing in our area was the officers mess hall which was left for the farmer in payment for the stable we destroyed for slit trench material following the Luftwaffe's raid. Incidentally, the farmer got the best of that deal. Some of the boys left Corsica with regret, but for the majority it was a pleasure. A heavy equipment convoy under the command of Lt. Raber left Alesan on the night of April 6th taking the Southern route and arriving at Rimini three days later. Major Bugbee led the main convoy to a staging area near the Bastia docks where the cooks set up stoves and prepared a hot c-ration dinner. Following that gastronomical delight the convoy began loading on LST's and by sun-down the job was completed. At day break of April 13th the ship convoy sailed from Bastia arriving at Leghorn that same day in the early afternoon. The news of the President's death was announced during the voyage and although there was no demonstration it was felt deeply. The ship was thoroughly policed and vehicles unloaded in time for the motor convoy to progress on to the Staging Area at Pontessieve about ten miles beyond Florence. What little we saw impressed us with the ferocity of the Italian campaign. Italy's modern Fascist Cities were completely sacked and many of them are just one huge pile of rubble while in others only the mere skeleton of elaborately modern buildings remain. It was dark when we went through blacked out Florence which was quite disappointing. At the staging area which was a former oil storage we had a pretty fair hot meal and bedded down for the nite. On the following morning the convoy separated, heavy vehicles and trailers unable to get through the mountainous Northern route took the Southern route by way of Perugia and Fano arriving at Rimini on the fifteenth of April one day later than the others. Capt. Tasker was responsible for this convoy. Major Bugbee's light convoy took the treacherous mountain route with its improvised passes necessitated by Allied Bombing and German demolition. It was hectic, but also proved interesting to disgusted veterans of the Italian campaign. After that trip we are unable to figure out how the Allies have progressed to the present fighting front. At two PM the convoy pulled into the once swank Adriatic resort town of Miramare to find the Squadron settled in windowless and partially destroyed beach houses. However, they were enjoying the luxury of the surroundings – mail service and excellent meals provided by the 488th Squadron. Throughout the entire period the Squadron remained operational attacking front line troop concentrations and bridges in the vital Brenner Route. The following missions were carried out during the period covered:

From Alesan:

April 1, 1945 – Colle Isarco Railroad bridge – 12 ships

First box bombed the east bridge with pattern centered on the bridge. Second box bombed the west bridge possibly hitting bridge, but observations were not positive. No flak was encountered.

April 2, 1945 – 3 missions with 6 ships on each.

1. Steinach Railroad bridge and tunnel: Bombing was done on third pass. The pattern started on the bridge and extended into the tunnel mouth. No flak was encountered.
2. Fornovo de Taro Railroad bridge: The bomb pattern was centered on the bridge slightly right of center. Two spans of the bridge were observed to be down after turnoff. No flak was encountered.
3. Colle Isarco East Railroad bridge: Bomb pattern hit slightly over on the east approach with possible hits on the bridge. No flak.

April 4, 1945 – Roverto Railroad bridge and gun positions – 15 ships.

First box did not bomb due to Bombardier failing to pick up target. Second box pattern was not fully observed because of flak hits just as bombs were away knocking out sight. Phosphorous bombs hit in area left of gun positions. Seven ships were holed and F/O Papiernik was slightly wounded as a result of intense flak.

April 6, 1945 – Poggio Rusco Railroad bridge: 9 ships
Only three ships bombed with poor results. No anti-aircraft fire was encountered.

From Rimini:

April 8, 1945 – La Spezia Coastal Defense Guns – 9 ships
Pattern hit left side of gun positions. Inaccurate flak was encountered.

April 9, 1945 – Imola Artillery Concentrations – 18 ships
The first box landed on the northwest portion of the target area. The second box did not drop due to a misidentification. The third box started at the south center of the target area and walked across the entire center portion. Flak was inaccurate and no damage was done.

April 10, 1945 – 2 missions with 12 ships in one and 16 in the other.

1. Laveszola Troop Concentrations – 12 ships. Both patterns believed to have crossed eastern half of target area, but accurate observation was difficult due to evasive action. Fires were observed emitting from areas around the buildings. One aircraft was holed as a result of flak encountered.
2. Mass Lombarda Communications Center – 16 ships. First and second patterns covered west portion of north half of target area. Third pattern began at extreme north end of target area and extended into the fields beyond. Inaccurate anti-aircraft fire was encountered.

April 11, 1945 – 3 missions – 30 ships in all

1. San Margherita North Railroad Bridge – 6 ships. Pattern fell on the south side of the San Margherita South bridge. This bridge was hit due to misidentification of target. Flak was negligible.
2. Ala Railroad Bridge – 6 ships. Pattern centered on the south approach to the bridge with possible hits on the bridge. Inaccurate anti-aircraft fire was encountered.
3. Bastia Troop Concentrations – 18 ships. All three patterns centered within the target area. Anti-aircraft fire was accurate starting one minute before bombs away and continuing through the breakaway. T/Sgt. Durie was seriously wounded, F/O Wiel, Lts. Davis and Wight were slightly wounded. Seven bombers were severely holed.

April 14, 1945 – 2 Missions – 21 ships in all

1. Chuisaforte West Railroad bridge and Postumia Railroad bridge as alternate – 12 ships. The first box bombed the primary target with pattern crossing the west end of the bridge. The second box bombed the alternate target and hit in buildings west of the bridge. No opposition was encountered..
2. Argenta North Troop Area – 9 ships. The pattern started at the edge of the target area and extended into the center with a fire noted in the northern part of the area growing larger as our formation broke off. Heavy, but inaccurate anti-aircraft fire was encountered.

April 15, 1945 – 2 missions – 18 ships in all

1. Praduro Army Troop Area – 12 ships. Both boxes were hampered by very heavy ground haze although their pattern landed within the target area. No opposition was met.
2. Medicina Troop Concentrations – 6 ships. All bombs were returned because Bombardier could not kill rate on special equipment. Three ships were holed as a result of the heavy ground fire encountered.

April 16th

Three targets were named today and practically all day planes were taking off or preparing to do so. The first two missions were attacking Bologna West Railroad bridge, however, the first element returned due to the weather and the second returned with bombs due to the malfunctioning special equipment which doesn't seem to be too successful with this Squadron. The late mission aimed at the Argenta North Troop Area also returned without dropping as the Bombardier could not identify the target. All in all we had a busy but most unsuccessful day.....Conditions at Miramare are beginning to shape up although there is still plenty of fixing up to be done. All administrative offices are in what is known as the Administration Building, a former modern Italian villa. It is in the best condition of any of the Squadron buildings, all white with blue shutters and numerous balconies with stairs leading to a roof garden. The Orderly Room, Executive Offices, Message Center and Special Service are on the second floor with Operations, S-2 and War Room on the first. There are several rooms still unoccupied which will probably be delegated to something or other within the near future. As far as the offices are concerned, "we never had it so good." Civilian help has been engaged to keep the place clean and at all hours of the day Italian women are sweeping or mopping and generally keeping the place in order. Supply and the Motor Pool have not been completely set up as yet although they have reserved an abandoned outdoor movie.....Surprisingly at this late date the mess hall is still in the formative stages. There is one Nissen Hut being used as a dining room and part of a Pre*fab as a kitchen. Wash lines are endless and the washing water is filthy signifying the early stages of setting up. The Squadron's first concern is usually the mess-hall, but apparently it has taken a back seat this time.....Movies have not been inaugurated as yet although we're especially anxious to get started.....

17th

First mission took off this morning at 7:30 AM to bomb the Bologna West Railroad bridge. Heavy, scant but inaccurate anti-aircraft fire hampered the twelve ship formation which scored direct hits squarely in the center of the bridge. Later in the afternoon another formation of six ships attacked troop concentrations at Praduro, Italy. There was no flak encountered and the element's pattern started short of the target area and extended across the southwestern corner.....Italian classes taught by an attractive female university of Bologna graduate will commence in the Squadron next Monday evening. Thus far a hundred and ten have signed up for the course.....For the most part the boys are not set up in their new villa homes as yet, consequently there is much scrounging and repair work going on. When the natives evacuated they took everything movable with them including plumbing fixtures and windows. The windows are being replaced by wood or cement and everyone is trying to have running water restored to their place.....Attractive girls do the cleaning and bed making in most quarters to the tune of one dollar and a quarter per day.....The lumber and left overs and Pre-fabs that came on the LST with the convoy and was shipped from Leghorn by rail arrived at Rimini today. A large detail of combat crew members had the pleasure of guarding and unloading the stuff.....Movies were resumed in the Group tonite and the Squadron is expected to follow suit in the near future.....Nothing is any too well organized as yet and its difficult to ascertain exactly what is going on around here.....

18th

Twelve ships took off this morning at 11:41 hours to bomb Staz di Ceraine Railroad bridge in Northern Italy. The patterns hit the south end of the Fill although bombing wasn't thought to be too effective. All ships returned safely from this "milk run".....We have more Italians on the pay roll than GI's in the Squadron now. However, there are no complaints to be registered as they take care of all the detail work. If we could only get someone to take care of guard the set-up would be ideal. A new guard system has been inaugurated which calls for four on the first twelve hours and eight off and repeating the performance for a period to three days with nine men to a guard roster. This isn't as satisfactory as the jeep patrol, but it may be changed before too long.....Since moving to Miramare regulations have tightened up and the outfit is getting pretty GI. All clerks and men not doing fatigue duty will wear neckties at all times while everyone in the Squadron will wear the complete dress uniform after six in the evening. It seems peculiar after leaving the rear area of Corsica where we could wear anything we took a notion to. Apparently the idea is to impress our British neighbors and the native populous.....The main street which is a highway is one of the busiest we've seen in many a day. At all hours of the day and nite heavy traffic including many tanks are running up and down the road which causes the area to be very dusty and dirty. Further down the road there are several big British, Polish and Italian hospitals taking care of casualties from the front. All told we are in the midst of considerable activity at all times.....Effective last nite movies will be shown in the Group every nite except Wednesday.....

19th

Six crews were up exceptionally early this morning for a 0745 hours take-off to bomb Budrio Troop Concentrations in Northern Italy. Only inaccurate flak was encountered, but the bombing wasn't too accurate starting short of target and extending about one third into the target area. The second was a late morning mission taking off at 1110 hours to attack the Ora Railroad bridge in Northern Italy. All told there were nine ships, six bombers and three phosphorus – both elements succeeded in hitting the target. Phosphorus pattern walked across gun positions and bomb pattern appeared centered on the bridge. Four ships were holed as a result of the intense and accurate anti-aircraft fire encountered. Several days after the moving commenced Capt. Sterling, the hundred mission man was transferred to the 51st Troop Carrier Wing. Everyone is aware of the fact that he wanted to go home, but no one seems to be able to shed any light on the reason for transfer. Unofficial reports say that he spoke out of turn to the Colonel. Lt. Heckman was also transferred to a fighter group to fly a second tour following seventy-two missions with the Squadron. People do strange things and sounds like one for Ripley.....About the only thing we're enjoying the mess-hall these days is the excellent Italian bread. Apparently the Army has made some arrangement with an Italian bakery to make all the bread for this area and the result is much more appealing to the taste sense than the GI interpretation of bread. Other than that there is absolutely no change in the daily diet which is definitely not good. Many complaints are being registered by the boys who dined so well at the 488th.....S/Sgt. Jones, a former gunner with the 487th who finished his tour when we were at Foggia stopped in today. His heavy outfit is stationed near San Pancrazio and he informs us that they will soon depart for the States after being over for only one year. It all looks very encouraging for our return, but it seems strange that older outfits should be the last to go home unless we will be going permanently rather than to the Pacific....."Buffalo Bill" was shown at the Group movie tonite.....

20th

First mission of the day took off at 1050 hours to bomb the Valorgne Railroad Fill in Northern Italy. No bombs from this Squadron's six ship formation were believed to have fallen within the target area. They encountered scant anti-aircraft fire from Ferrara, but it was inaccurate.....The target for six bombers taking off at 1135 hours was the German Headquarters at Rocoara, Italy. They also encountered flak coming from Ferrara although this was accurate and one plane was holed. Buildings #10, #11 and #12 (our target) were well covered. Direct hits were observed on all three buildings.....Sgt. Liphardt is having a hell of a time with the house maid in his building. Walter is one of these meticulous persons who might take exception to anything and who must have his bed made in exactly the same fashion as it has been for the last twenty-five or thirty years, consequently the girl's bed making technique isn't the same as his and he isn't satisfied. No doubt Liphardt will bring her around to his way of bed making in the near future.....The British Tank outfit that has been maneuvering around the Squadron area and kicking up the dust for the past few days went into action last night. However, the wind took over in their absence and the resulting dust storm which continued throughout the day reminded us of the "dessert campaign".....Several of the boys have made trips to the front since being here, the latest of which was Capt. McGriffin and Lt. Lewis. After spending some time with a combat Major of some kind they came back full of dates. It goes something like this: Ferrara is to fall within the next week and probably within twenty-four hours, Bologna will be encircled withing three days and the Italian campaign could be over in ten days although it isn't guaranteed....."Buffalo Bill" was repeated at the Group movie tonite.....

21st

Three missions were scheduled for today, but after the first one came back immediately after crossing the bomb line the remainder of the day activities were canceled. The fifteen ship formation that was to have attacked Polesella Railroad bridge encountered flak at Modena holing one ship. However, it was weather conditions that forced the formation back.....After sweating out Bologna for months the city finally fell yesterday to the Fifth Army. Bologna should be as much cause for celebration as the fall of Berlin will be. It was surprising to learn that Italian Partisans held the center of the important city for six days before the Armies arrived. War news is so good that we can hardly digest it and it all lends fruit to the rumor that we will soon be on our way home.....Major Rapp met with a group of key men this evening that are supposed to go home immediately to form the nucleolus of the new 340th Group which will go to the Pacific. Top technical men only are supposed to go home on this deal and the exact number is not yet known although they will number around ten or twelve. Col. Chapman is reported to have said that he will only take fifteen percent of the Group to the Pacific so it is quite obvious that we will have to be leaving in the very near future in order that the chosen fifteen percent may join the organization in the States. Needless to say no one is anxious to be among the chosen lot.....Group Headquarters has the best deal in the entire organization as far as living conditions are concerned, of course that is the typical situation. Their offices and quarters are all in one large resort hotel with plenty of room to spare. It must be wonderful to just come down stairs to find your breakfast awaiting your arrival without going outside and waking a couple blocks. The hotel is still intact and boasts windows, hot and cold running water in every room and several elaborate bathrooms on each floor. A lot of those boys will hate to go home.....

22nd

Today called for an all out effort consisting of the record breaking number of four missions. However, weather permitted but three canceling out the fourth. All three missions attacked Ferry Stages on the Po River. The First mission of 12 ships taking off at 0700 hours and the second raid of six bombers forty-five minutes later bombed with success. Poor weather sent the third mission back without dropping and a stand-down for the remainder of the day was declared.....T/Sgt. Preswich, motor pool sergeant, left yesterday on an emergency furlough to the States. His successor has not been named as yet and its doubtful that there will be one. Pres' last words were that he'd join the outfit in the States.....Capt. Jacobs was transferred back to his old organization and has been replaced by Lt. Raber as mess Officer. Now if the cooks were replaced we may have some pretty fair meals.....Protestant Services were held in the big factory occupied by the 520th and 770th Service Units. The building must have been a model automobile factory at one time, but bombs and shell fire have undressed it of all former glory. Some [say] is was a Chrysler Plant. Catholic Mass was said at the little mission church across from Group Headquarters in Riccione. It's small be accommodates the boys from this and the Service Group.....Berlin was entered by Russian Forces this morning much to the pleasure and elation of all 487th members....."Untold Glory" was shown at the Group outdoor movie tonite. The strange thing about this movie is that it was actually meant to be an outdoor theatre with high walls and a vine covered roof. Regular theatre seats are also a feature.....

23rd

Crews were up again early this morning for a 0647 hours take-off, however, only five bombers got off to bomb the Ferry State at Polesella on the Po. Anti-aircraft fire was heavy and accurate holing one ship although the pattern crossed the south approach to the stage. The second mission of the day took off at 1505 hours although weather hindered them and all bombs were returned to the base.....Two and three missions a day are beginning to be a habit with the 487th Squadron. Combat men who have finished up their missions were on detail in Ordnance today hauling bombs around. That is but on example of the amount of work around here since the all out effort has been put forth.....The roof of the Administration Building was crowded this morning when a B-26 came in for an emergency landing and exploded at the end of the runway. This is the first time we've been able to see the field from the squadron area and the roof garden is an excellent viewing stand. All crew members of the B-26 were rescued before the plane burned.....The first class in Italian was held in the War Room this evening. Participation runs fifty cents a month and the turnout which has been divided into three separate classes is well over a hundred. Each student will get four hours of Italian per week. The instructress is a young girl graduate of the University of Bologna with a lot of charm and it's still undecided whether the boys are interested in learning Italian or more about the Signorina.....We had an alert around eleven o'clock tonite although they don't mean much and come with regularity. We have yet to see an enemy plane here at this field....."Tonite and Everynite" with Rita Hayworth was shown at the Group movie tonite.....

24th

Up early again this morning for an early briefing and take off at 0740 hours. The twelve bombers reached their objective at 0857 and laid a well placed pattern covering the center of the bridge. Heavy flak was encountered. The second was a nickeling mission covering Legnago and Lusia areas. Cremona South Ferry Stage felt the weight of of the last twelve ships formation bombs. Both boxes scored hits, but the second box scored direct hits on the center of the pier. Again no opposition was

encountered.....Last night's air raid alert was indirectly the work of Major Rapp. It seems that he was slightly under the weather and instructed the Adjutant, Lt. Smith to have the CQ sound the siren. Lets hope he doesn't get those ideas often. Lt. Smith is quite unhappy about the opening of a bar in the officers quarters directly across from his room. He had a taste of it last nite when the officers got drunk and started to play soldier with his clothes.....We are still without a shower in the Squadron or in the group and its getting to be quite uncomfortable to say the least. Every time the question is brought up you are told that they're working on it, but the question is who's working on it and where.....Pfc. Powell, Sergeant of the Guard wrecked another weapons carrier last night in a collision with an English vehicle, but the seriousness of the injury has not been announced as yet.....The enlisted mens club is scheduled to open Saturday with a dance. 1st/Sgt. Parkins came back from Bari last night with eight hundred dollars worth of Italian vintages....."Marriage Is A Private Affair" with Lana Turner was shown at the Group movie area tonite.....

25th

Operations slowed down today and there was only one mission taking off at 1003 hours to bomb Steinach South Railroad bridge in Austria. One box of the twelve ship formation bombed the primary and all bombs fell in the target area around the bridge and tunnel mouth. The other box bombed the alternate which was Volargne Railroad Fill and the pattern covered the tracks north of the target. Inaccurate anti-aircraft fire was observed, but it did not reach the formation.....We came over to Italy expecting the food to improve once we were on the mainland, but unfortunately it has degraded to a very low ebb. Rations are very poor and the treatment rendered them would do anything but improve the flavor. Bread is conspicuous by its absence at some meals. many of the boys have expressed the desire to hire an Italian chef that they claim can do wonders with C-rations.....There are at least twenty-five combat men waiting around for their decorations to come back on order before their rotation papers can be submitted. The move delayed all activities along those lines, but even without the confusion of a move its a long wait. Lts. Evans and Erickson flew over to Florence yesterday to do a little checking up only to find out nothing and to be chewed out by a Wing Major.....The guard set-up has been relaxed and instead of pulling a three day tour the individual pulls only one day and is expected to work the following morning. It is much better that way although the jeep patrol is still the most ideal from the standpoint of the guard.....This being Wednesday night there was no movie shown at the Group theatre.....

26th

Eight o'clock alert this morning for twelve aircraft which was changed to a stand-by until the afternoon when at 1600 hours another alert was called, but on the hour the status reverted to a stand-down for the remainder of the day. This was the first missionless day in over two weeks and the change was a welcome one.....The Italian front is moving with such swiftness that it is difficult to ascertain the exact locations of either armies. Verona, bombed many times by the 487th fell tonite. Milan and Turin are reported to be in Partisan hands. Radio commentators say that there is very little fighting left to be done in Italy, the German Armies are cracked. The entire war front lends meat to the rumor that we will soon depart for the U.S.A.....A meeting of all section heads took place tonite, but the topic of the get-together is tightly bound in secrecy.....If it weren't for the 488th shower even the few who are using it would still be bathing in the old reliable helmet. Our shower is still in the process of being erected and an opening date has not yet been announced.....Special Service is finally set up with books and equipment available. Athletic equipment is in the war room, what little there is left of it. More of that type of thing will be found in personal quarters. Stars and Stripes are free in the combat zone and since the troops are moving so fast its doubtful that we'll be enjoying that little item much longer....."Cover

Girl” with Rita Hayworth was shown at the Group movie tonite.....

27th

Showers and a cloudy sky kept all planes on the ground today. There was a stand-by at noon followed by the announcement of a stand-down for the remainder of the day. It's rather a let down after two and three missions a day, but some of the boys would just as soon fly and get their missions in. Passes to the local towns were given out in abundance. Rimini with all if its destruction is anything but ideal for a day off although Riccione, the home of Group Headquarters is the closest and the most intact town in the vicinity. San Marino was out of bounds up until the last day or so when it was opened to site-seeing groups of four or more with a sergeant in charge. Such an order is typically British, but being with the 8th Army we must abide by it.....Lt. Azzara was to fly his first mission as Pilot today. He has almost completed a tour of combat as a co-pilot which is not only unusual but the first time its happened in the Squadron.....At the meeting of all section heads last night seventeen ground men were chosen to go home on rotation and various other extra deals that have come up hurriedly. No one is throughly familiar with the arrangement and until they leave everything is subject to change. Evidently the 12th Air Force is going to disband piecemeal and this quota of one thousand men divided among the various organizations is regarded as the first gesture in that direction. A complete list of those going home will probably be published soon.....Sgt. Ivan Johnson is scheduled to leave on the regular rotation policy of one half of one percent within the next few days.....The fight for Berlin still rages and the link-up of American and Russian forces in the center of Germany was announced simultaneously from the Big Three Capitols. Mussolini is reported to be in Partisan hands, captured in Northern Italy at the Swiss frontier.....”Cover Girl” was repeated at the vine covered outdoor theatre of the 340th Group again tonite.....

28th

Stand-down was in effect all day, evidently due to the weather. Not in any way does the climate of Northern Italy compare with that of Corsica. A cold wind is constant and rain is always threatening. However, despite weather condition there were numerous passes issued by the Orderly Room today. A great number of the 487th personnel could be found down in Riccione eating crumpets and tea at the British Salvation Army. Needless to say that establishment has become a favorite.....There has been much running around lately to procure items for the new enlisted mens club to be opened in the near future. T/Sgt. Gillis is president and responsible for all function. His ability will be judged when the place opens.....To the surprise of the entire Squadron the showers opened up for business today. When plans were in the making the unit had ten individual shower units, but upon opening only six were installed – two for officers and four for enlisted men. After weeks without one there was a waiting line all day and exclamations of how wonderful the water was followed each man out.....The British have been generous in allowing us to enjoy their ENSA Shows featured regularly at the Garrison Theatre in Riccione. “Evs On Leave” was their latest production and all who saw it claimed it to be the best show they've seen overseas. USO Shows have never been so acclaimed.....

29th

A mission was scheduled this morning, but a stand-down was declared shortly after noon in favor of the weather. It's beginning to look as though the 487th has flown its last mission because if poor weather prevails the war will be over before we get another chance at the enemy. According to news reports Himmler has offered the United States and Britain “unconditional surrender” but they have skipped Russia and consequently their offer was not accepted. President Truman called a press conference last

evening to discourage VE-Day celebrations in the States and told the people that there was no foundation to the rumor of peace. However, neutral sources and news commentators insist that negotiations are in order and that peace will come to Europe at any moment. Hitler is reported to be near death and still in Berlin.....Three of Rome's loveliest girls made their way to Rimini and are now holding forth in the immediate vicinity. One has gold teeth, the other has diseased looking eyes while the last is just indifferent. They commanded as much attention by the Squadron boys as Betty Grable would if she were here. Judging from the money spent, one would think that a European beauty had been found, but evidently its just any old port in a storm.....Our ex Sergeant of the Guard, Pfc. Powell is suffering from two broken jaws as a result of his accident last week. Perhaps after his mouth is wired closed for five weeks and he is fed through a straw for that same length of time he will realize that fast driving does not pay. His condition is uncomfortable, but not serious. Lt. Smith after a visit to the hospital said that he looks like square jawed Dick Tracy.....Most 487th personnel could be found in the local towns today rather than in the Squadron area which is always characteristic of a stand-down....."Mrs. Skeffington" was shown at the movie tonite.

30th

Another stand-down was celebrated today. Every day lately there has been a raid scheduled, but its always called off before take-off time and we cant figure out whether its the weather or war developments. We would like to think that a peace is being negotiated. Sunny Italy is affording us the same dismal welcome that it did over a year ago down at Pompei – the sun only holds forth on very rare occasions.....1st/Sgt. Parkins took a jeep loaded down with officers and men to Bologna today. Bologna is opened up now and everyone who has been there seems very fond of the city.....Sgt. Carlson and Cpl. Lozano returned to the Squadron from the hospital in Naples today, much to their surprise as well as ours. Both of them expected to be evacuated to the States when their orders to return to the unit were presented to them.....Marvin Finn returned from Naples with his bride of a month today. They were married while the Squadron was still stationed in Corsica and after we moved over here Marvin went down to bring her up. He was fortunate in getting air transportation and the couple are now at home in Riccione.....Our move didn't delay pay call and everyone was paid in the mess hall this afternoon by Lt. Smith. All nite poker games followed the day of days. The change from the huge French money to the familiar Lire was a relief and greatly appreciated.....Emily opened up her Red Cross Enlisted Mens club down in Riccione last nite. As everything else, the club is the best set-up we've had during our tour of very lengthy overseas duty. Cookies and coffee were served free of charge as an opening gesture....."Double Indemnity" was shown at the Group movie tonite.....

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