

This is a collection of entries from the official war diary of the

525TH Fighter Squadron

1 July 1943 – 26 November 1945

These images were scanned from microfilm rolls obtained from the Air Force Historical Research Agency.

AFHRA
600 Chennault Circle
Maxwell AFB AL 36112-6424
(334) 953-2439

The 525, 526 and 527 history files are on rolls A0822 and A0823.
The 86 Group history files are on rolls B0169A and B0170.

THE HISTORY OF THE 525th FIGHTER SQUADRON

3

The story of the 525th Fighter Squadron begins at Key Field, Meridian, Mississippi, when on 8 August 1942, the personnel of the 389th Bombardment Squadron, 86th Bombardment Group (L), began operating as the 525th Fighter Bomber Squadron, 86th Fighter Bomber Group.

After flying a succession of planes which included A-20's, A-31's and A-24's, they received the then new A-36's in which they came overseas. Axis rail and motor columns were soon to discover what a deadly team the plane and the pilots would make.

The first bit of foreign soil which could be called home was La Senia Airrome, Algeria occupied in the latter part of May, 1943. Although no missions were flown from here it was long remembered for its uniformly poor living conditions, wind, dust, poor food and scarcity of water.

Marnia, French Morocco, Medouina, French Morocco, Tafaraoui Airrome, Algeria, Tunis, and Comiso all came into the picture for a short while, but it was not until reaching Korba, Tunisia that the first all-squadron mission was flown, on the 6th of July, 1943. Here also the first combat loss was sustained.

While based on Gela Airfield, Sicily the squadron came into its own, doing wonderful work in support of the 7th Army's drive through Sicily. Flying from daylight to dusk they blasted enemy convoys, gun positions, troop concentrations, strongpoints and road bridges. From Barcellona Airfield, Sicily the first attacks were made on the Italian boot. While stationed there the outfit received news of the Italian surrender soon to be dampened by the bloody battles of Salerno and vicinity in which they took an important part.

The fight up the Italian Peninsula is well known and was supported heroically by the boys of the squadron. Flying from Sele Airfield, Serretelle I/G, Pomigliano Airrome, Marcianise Airfield, Ciampino, Orbetello, Poretta Airfield, Corsica, Grosseto Airfield back in Italy, and Pisa Airrome, the outfit, which had since changed from A-36's to A-47's, soon appreciated for their ability to take it and come home, won the regard of their buddies on the ground for the wonderful support they gave with utter disregard for enemy resistance. By the time Pisa was reached all knew that the "forgotten front" no longer held anything but flak, so it was with little surprise but great anticipation that they received the news of a jump to France.

On 23 February 1945 the planes flew from Pisa to Tantonville Airfield, France and two days later the first combat mission was flown. It was while at this base that the last push, which terminated 7 May 1945, was begun on 15 March 1945. With front lines moving so rapidly they were soon out of range of the small fuel capacity of the fighter, so the last war-time move came, this time to Braunschardt Airfield, Germany on 13 April. By this time the end of the war was plainly in sight and after about two weeks of full scale and unusually fruitful operation the missions became nothing more than routine patrols.

Thus on 7 May 1945 was completed the combat history of the 525th Fighter Squadron covering almost two years. In that time more than 9070 sorties were flown against all sorts of targets. Such a record cannot be made without heartbreaking losses, but with all due consideration to American personnel and materiel versus enemy firepower these losses were as small as work and training would make them.

With the end of the war in Europe came the war of unrest, partially mitigated by redeployment of those men eligible for discharge. An elaborate sports program, social life --- to whatever degree permissible --- and extra curricular activities, serve to keep squadron personnel occupied if not actually satisfied.

With redeployment has come the inevitable shortage of man power finally necessitating, on 1 December 1945, the consolidation of all three squadrons of the group into one Group Headquarters to function by the pooling of resources until sufficient replacements make it possible to operate individually again.

Despite severe shortages the outfit still carries on a very complete flying program from Schweinfurt Air Base. This, of course, has been done with comparatively few of the great number of planes available in combat.

Thus through the continual and unflinching cooperation of all its members: the flying personnel for whom the group has its very existence, ground officers who give so unstintingly of their time and abilities, and enlisted men whose job it is to keep them in the air, on the records and in the mess, the 525th Fighter Squadron in over 2 years of operation has amassed a record second to no outfit of its like in the theater.

Sheet No. 1 Primary, 549th AAF, 1st AF, 1st AF, 1st AF. Tunis (Ground echelon)
Korba, Tunisia (Air echelon)
(Station)

Month of July, 1943. Prepared by WILLIAM H. BLACK ELL,
1st Lt., AC, Ass't. S-2.

DAY EVENTS

1 Our ground echelon is bivouaced in an olive grove SE of Tunis, while the air echelon is at Korba. The 27th Group is also at Korba, and our pilots are getting ready for combat, and will fly their first missions with the 27th pilots. Part of the ground echelon at Tunis is busily engaged in preparing the vehicles for shore landing at some as yet unannounced point.

2 Some of the officers and enlisted men went swimming at a beautiful beach SW of Tunis. We are bivouaced next to the 34th Division, or rather, Co. "I" of the 133rd Inf. Many of these men relate interesting stories of their experiences in the Tunisian Campaign.

3 Seven of our pilots, Capts. Striegel and Gunnison, Lts. Burchett, McCord, Rutherford, Sorensen and Vitopil, flew their first combat mission this date, with 27th Group pilots. The mission was over Sicily, and lasted 1:30. Lts. Watts, DuVall, Jackson, Stylos and Griswold left the bivouac area near Tunis for Korba to begin combat flying.

4 Lt. Hatten flew his first combat mission today, with the 27th Group. Lt. DuVall got 2:00 combat time, but did not get a sortie. The officers and men of the ground echelon are eating with Co. "I", 133rd Inf.; the food is very good.

5 Everyone is speculating as to the Allies' next move. Most suspect it to be an invasion of Sicily. Large flights of heavy and medium bombers are seen flying in that direction every day.

6 First squadron mission was flown from Korba today, target being anything of opportunity on roads and railroads in area of Sciacca, Sicily. There were 12 aircraft. Mission was led by Capt. Striegel. Some strafing of military objectives was reported.

7 No missions were flown today. Nothing eventful.

8 Two missions were flown today from Korba. First was led by Capt. Striegel and included Capt. Gunnison and Lt. Rutherford, remainder being pilots of other squadrons. First mission was reconnaissance over central Sicily; uneventful. Second bombed and strafed bivouac area, store tents and ammunition dumps at Agrigento with excellent results. Pilots encountered first flak.

[REDACTED]



Sheet No. 1 War Diary, 525th Medium Bombardment Group, Gela, Sicily
(Station)

Month of July, 1943. Prepared by WILLIAM H. BLACKWELL
1st Lt., AC, Ass't. S-2

DAY EVENTS

21 First mission from Gela West flown today by Capt. Gunnison and Lt. Vitopil, reconnaissance over roads in Western Sicily.

22 Two missions were flown today, both bombing and strafing. First covered roads N and NE of Nicosia, bombing motor truck convoy. Second mission bombed enemy strongpoint SE of Petralia.

23 Two missions were flown today. The first sought targets of opportunity on roads from Termini to C. Orlando. Second bombed landing barges East of S. Stefano.

24 First mission today bombed a supply dump near C. Orlando. Second bombed and strafed ships in Milazzo Harbor. Hits were scored on a ship and 2 seaplanes in the harbor. Cover observed 4 s/e a/c bearing yellow wings and black crosses. When cover turned into them they broke and fled.

25 Two missions today. One mission bombed 400' ship in Milazzo. Other sought an enemy armored column.

26 Milazzo harbor bombed by only mission flown by squadron today.

27 Bombing mission was flown today, target, enemy vehicles in by NE of Mt. Etna.

28 Stand down today. No missions flown. Everybody taking advantage of day off to visit nearby towns.

29 Three reconnaissance and strafing missions were flown today. A number of enemy motor vehicles were destroyed.

Sheet No. 6 War Diary, 525th Bombardment Group S.M. Gela West, Sicily
(Station)

Month of August, 1943. Prepared by WILLIAM H. BLACKWELL
1st Lt., AC, Ass't S-2

DAY EVENTS

1 Beginning a new month today. On strafing mission in Randazzo area was flown today. Lt. Col. Stephen B. Mack, wing A-3 is attached to our squadron for flying and got his first sortie with us today. Lt. Fischer was hit by flak during this mission, apparently a 20 mm shell exploding on the right hand side of the cockpit. Although severely injured, he managed to fly his plane back and land it at Agrigento. Lt. Burchett drove over and flew the ship back.

2 One bombing mission today, with road junction at Cesaro the target.

3 A fighter sweep and one bombing mission flown today. Sweep was uneventful; bombing mission successfully attacked 3 ships off coast at S. Ferdinando.

4 First mission over Italy was flown today, led by Capt. Gunnison and consisting of 12 a/c, and bombed marshalling yards at Gioia Tauro. On a second mission, with objective to demolish the town of Troina, a German stronghold, due to haze, Regalbuto was bombed instead of Troina. Capt. Striegel, leading the flight, realized the mistake upon entering his dive, and attempted to tell others not to bomb, but message was not heard.

5 One mission, strafing, was flown today. Some trucks were destroyed.

6 Three missions were flown today. First bombed roads at Eastern end of Troina; second bombed road junction at Cesaro; and third put in a road block in Randazzo area. The area around Randazzo is called "Flak Alley" by the pilots, because of the accuracy and intensity of the flak encountered in that area.

7 Two bombing missions and one 4 ship reconnaissance mission were flown today. Red flak was observed for first time by pilots, and this is supposed to indicate that enemy fighters are coming in.

Sheet No. 7 War Diary, 525th FIGHTER BOMBING SQDN. Gela West, Sicily
(Station)

Month of August, 1943. Prepared by WILLIAM E. BLANCHETT
1st Lt., AC Ass't. S-2

DAY EVENTS

8 First mission today was one of 12 a/c to create road block near G. Orlando. Second mission bombed artillery positions SE of Maso. 1st Lt. Graham weible joined the squadron today.

9 A busy day with four missions. First and second bombed road intersection at Patti. On second mission, Capt. Striegel and others spotted a battery of AA guns in an orchard near Patti, and upon his request, a mission of 4 ships, which he led, returned and knocked out the battery. The last mission bombed a highway junction near G. Orlando.

10 Four missions today. First, a fighter bomber sweep, bombed bridge and road near Patti. Second bombed roads at Barcellona. Third bombed and strafed artillery positions, where large explosions were seen after the bombing. Fourth mission bombed olive groves where enemy vehicles and infantry were reported.

11 First mission bombed gun positions on Mandazzo-G. Orlando highway. Second attacked similar target on tip of G. Orlando. Third was an 8 ship reconnaissance mission. Fourth bombed town of Gioiosa Mare.

12 Two missions today. First dive bombed Patti. Second bombed and strafed enemy artillery positions near Adrano.

13 First mission today was a reconnaissance mission over Northern Sicily and the toe of Italy, and was uneventful. Second was to bomb 20 to 30 landing barges reported at G. Lindari; barges were not seen and bombs were returned to base.

14 Maj. Tarrant led the first mission which bombed a supply dump North of Gioia Tauro, Italy. Lt. Burchett led the 4 ship cover. Second mission bombed a road intersection at Spadaflora. Third bombed and strafed supplies on the beach at Spadaflora.



Sheet No. 8 War Diary, 525th Fighter Group, 8th AF, Sicily. Gela West, Sicily
(Station)

Month of August, 1943. Prepared by WILLIAM H. BLACKWELL
1st Lt., AC, Ass't S-2

DATE _____ STARTED _____

15 Two missions today, both reconnaissance. Uneventful.

16 One mission, target of opportunity on toe of Italy. Bombed railroad yards at Lamezia, and destroyed a couple of trains.

17 Nothing doing; sack time. Everyone was happy to learn that Messina had been taken, meaning the end of the Sicilian campaign.

18 On a 12 ship fighter sweep along coast of Italian toe, 5 trains were strafed with much damage being caused. Lt's. Anton and Ford failed to return with remainder of flight, and much concern was felt until we learned they had landed at Lentini because of engine trouble.

19 No missions today.

20 Two 4 ship patrol missions were flown over North coast of Sicily today. Nothing eventful. Major Thomas and Lt. King are at Palermo today.

21 No missions today.

22 Flight of 12 a/c, led by Capt. Striegel, escorted B-26's from Termini Imerise, Sicily to Salerno, Italy and return. On return trip, formation was attacked by 12 Me-109's and Ma-202's. Capt. Striegel and Maj. Tarrant turned and engaged the enemy, Capt. Striegel taking on a Ma-202 and Maj. Tarrant, a Me-109. Capt. Striegel chased his for some distance, pouring lead into him. When last seen, the Macchi was heading for the Italian mainland, losing altitude, and smoking. It was probably destroyed. Only two of Capt. Striegel's guns were firing, else he would surely have brought the enemy down. After a few bursts were fired at the Me-109 by Maj. Tarrant, it broke and fled. Five of the B-26's were lost to enemy action. The 27th Group was supposed to provide cover for the rear formation, but never rendezvoused with the formation. It was the rear formation that was attacked by the enemy fighters.





Sheet No. 9 War Diary, 525th FIGHTER PO BUN SQDN. Gela West, Sicily
Barcellona, Sicily
(Station)

Month of August, 1943. Prepared by WILLIAM H. BLACKWELL
1st Lt., AC, Ass't S-2

DAY EVENTS

23 Today, 12 a/c escorted B-25's attacking Battipaglia, Italy. There was no contact with the enemy.

24 On a mission to bomb railroad yards at Sapri, Italy, Capt. Striegel performed a feat worthy of the DFC. When approaching the target, he observed a naval vessel, either a cruiser or destroyer, in a cove S. of Sapri. Realizing its value as a target, and yet not wishing to divert the entire formation from the assigned target, he led the flight into the dive, but saved his bombs, and coming off target, he proceeded to the vessel and bombed and strafed it at low level, scoring direct hits on the stern, setting it on fire and causing it to sink. Lt. Griswold, his wing-man, also strafed the vessel.

25 No missions today. Getting ready to move to new I/G at Barcellona, near C. Milazzo.

26 Moved by truck to new landing ground. A residence on the beach has been selected for Operation's and Intelligence. Officers and men are bivouaced in orange and lemon groves.

27 Railroad junction and bridge at Sibari was bombed today.

28 Two missions were flown today. The first bombed bridge and an intersection at Castrovillari; second escorted A-36's from other squadrons to Catanzaro. No contact with enemy.

29 No missions flown today.

30 Railroad yards at Sapri were bombed by a 12 ship mission today. The yards did not appear active, had been previously bombed.

31 No missions today. To date, pilots have flown 869 sorties, and have 1447:00 hours combat time.



Sheet No. 10 War Diary, 50th AFWAFB, 20th ABW, Barcellona, Sicily
(Continued)

Month of September, 1943. Prepared by WILLIAM H. BLACKBELL
1st Lt., AC, Ass't. S-2

DAY

DATE

1. No missions were flown today.

2. Misfortune overtook the squadron today; Capt. Striegel failed to return from a bombing mission over Lamezia, Italy. He was apparently hit by flak, his plane exploding, as a huge red ball of fire was seen while he was in his dive. Maj. Gunnison, operations officer, became CO in absence of Capt. Striegel.

3. No missions today.

4. A 12 ship armed reconnaissance mission covering roads from Cozenza to Catanzaro was flown today. Considerable strafing of m/t's accomplished.

5. No Missions.

6. No missions. Lt. Douglas W. Rowden, Jr., joined the squadron today.

7. Road intersection at Lauria bombed by 12 ship mission led by Maj. Gunnison.

8. No missions were flown. News received of Italy's capitulation.

9. Four patrol missions, 8 ships each, over "Apples" Beach were flown today. Our part in the Italian invasion is to aid in furnishing constant air cover over the invasion beaches. No contact with enemy.

10. Same as yesterday, except it's "Peaches" Beach. No contact with enemy.

11. Four 8 ship missions were flown, three covering "Blue" route. Covering roads inland from invasion beaches, and one patrol over "Apples" Beach.

15

██████████

Sheet No. 11 War Diary, 525th FIGHTING BOMBARDMENT GROUP, Barcellona, Sicily
Sele L/G, Italy
(Station)

Month of September, 1943. Prepared by WILLIAM H. BLACKWELL
1st Lt., AC, Ass't S-2

DAY

EVENTS

12 Four armed reconnaissance missions were flown covering roads and railroads in Potenza area. Considerable strafing of m/t's reported.

13 Four missions flown again today. While strafing trucks, Lt. Lister's plane was hit by flak, and he was forced to bail out. He stuck with his ship until he had reached our lines, and was seen to safely land. Lt. Louis, with twelve enlisted men, accompanied the 527th Squadron to Sele L/G, which is to be our new field.

14 Six missions were flown. On one, Lt. Thornton reported over radio that he was hit and was heading for our advance field to land. No one saw him, and there is no report of his landing. We all hope he bailed out this side of our lines.

15 Five missions of 47 sorties were flown today. Targets included two armed reconnaissance missions, railroad yards at Torre Annunziata, Nocera-Cara road, and gun emplacements at Battipaglia.

16 Seven missions today. Six were escorts for C-47's and C-54's moving us to Sele L/G, and other was a 4 ship strafing mission flown from the new field. The lines are not far removed from our new location. The mosquitoes are bad here, and the bees are so thick they will hardly let you eat.

17 Upon arriving at Sele yesterday, we were very happy to find Lt. Lister. He was slightly injured in his parachute landing, but will be all right soon, says Capt. Anderson. Six missions were flown today, three of which were bombing and strafing.

18 Misfortune struck us again today. Two of our best men were lost. Lt. Strainis was seen to bail out near Fisciano, but his parachute was not seen to open. His plane was apparently hit by flak. Lt. Fred Fouts, than whom there are few better pilots, failed to return from a strafing mission. He was last seen near Coliano, and it is not known what happened to him. Three missions were flown today.

██████████

Sheet No. 12 War Diary, 525th FIGHTER BOMBING SQDN. Sele L/G, Italy
(Station)

Month of September, 1943. Prepared by WILLIAM H. BLACKWELL

1st Lt., AC, Ass't S-2

DAY

EVENTS

19 Five missions, totaling 35 sorties were flown today. Nothing unusual to report.

20 No missions.

21 One escort, 4 ships, and one bombing mission flown today.

22 First mission today bombed town of Pagani. Lt. Howell led mission. Second mission was a very successful one as far as damage to the enemy is concerned, but almost proved too costly for us, as Major Gunnison was forced to bail out over water after an ammunition dump he was strafing blew up near Capua A/D, blowing his plane up with it. A four plane search mission was sent back to look for him. This was Maj. Gunnison's 50th mission.

23 Maj. Gunnison returned today; everyone crowded around to hear him relate his experience. He was rescued by an Italian fishing boat which carried him to Ischia Island. He went from there to Capri, spending the night there. We are all very happy to have him back. One mission, led by Lt. Schuyler, was flown, target being to block road 1 mile east of Nocera.

24 Two bombing and strafing missions were flown today, Lt's Burchett and Schuyler leading. First bombed gun positions near Nocera. Other bombed and strafed motor trucks.

25 From a four ship rhubarb in the Capua area today, there failed to return one of the most universally liked man in the entire group, Lt "Chile" Reeder. When last seen, "Chile" was flying on deck. We do not know what happened to him. A four ship search mission, led by his best friend Lt. "Stinky" Burchett, returned to search for him, but no trace of his whereabouts was found.

26 No missions. we are beginning to have too much rain for flying off this field.



Sheet No. 13 War Diary, 525th FIGHTER BOMBING SQDN. Sele L/G, Italy
(Station)

Month of September, 1943. Prepared by WILLIAM H. BLACKWELL

1st Lt., AC, Ass't S-2

DAY	EVENTS
-----	--------

27 Same as yesterday.

28 Still no missions. Wet weather.

29 Same as yesterday.

30 The last day of the month. At the end of this month, we have 1382 sorties, and 2345:00 hours combat time. There is talk of moving us to an all-weather field.





Sheet No. 14 War Diary, 525th FIGHTER BOMBARD SQUAD. Sele I/G, Italy
(Station)

Month of October, 1943. Prepared by WILLIAM H. BLACKWELL

1st Lt., AC, S-2

DAY

EVENTS

1 Ten new pilots joined the squadron today, coming to us from the 20th replacement Bn., in Africa. These men are 2nd Lts. William R. Allen, John R. Dolny, Robert L. Drew, Enoch S. Duncan, Wendell Hook, Richard S. King, James P. Dickison, James A. Gaines, George W. Palmer, and Miles C. Wood, Jr. Major James H. Thomas has been transferred to Group Headquarters as Assistant Operations Officer. Lt. William H. Blackwell becomes Squadron Intelligence Officer. No missions were flown.

2 No missions today. Wet weather renders the field unfit for flying. Lt. Thornton caught a C-47 at Montecorvino, headed back to Africa, and then presumably to the U. S.

3 Wet weather; no missions.

4 Tragedy struck in our midst today when 1st Lt. Donald S. Batten was killed by a German mine. He, together with 1st Lt. Burchett and Sgt. Di Meglio, had gone up to Caserta and vicinity in search of Lt. Reeder, who failed to return from a mission in that area. On a secondary road near Avellino, the right front wheel of the jeep in which they were riding struck a mine. The explosion of the mine wrecked the jeep and caused injuries to Lt. Batten which proved fatal in a few hours. Lt. Burchett and Sgt. Di Meglio were also injured but not seriously. Although very young, Don Batten was recognized as a natural flier and an excellent combat pilot. Liked by everyone, he will be sorely missed.

5 No missions.

6 Nothing doing. Still wet, with plenty of mud. At night, some of the officers and men go over to our "Club" close to the seashore to write letters or listen to the record player.

7 No missions.



Sheet No. 15 War Diary, 525th FIGHTER POLY BOMB SQUAD. Sale L/G, Italy
(Station)

Month of October, 1943. Prepared by WILLIAM H. BLACKWELL
1st Lt., AC, S-2

DAY EVENTS

8 More new pilots joined the squadron today. 2nd Lts. Herschel H. Mattes, Edward H. Ryan, Jr., Coleman H. Shaunty, John B. Watson, Jr., James C. Westall, Jr., and Flight Officer Joe J. Angell all came to us from the 20th Replacement Bn. Capt. Burt, and Lts. Fischer, Ford, Greene, Hirschberg, Webster, Crow, and Vitopil, left the squadron today for some destination in Africa. All of these men have completed many missions, and it is believed they will be sent home.

9 Nothing doing today. There is talk of the other squadrons moving to a field near Naples with our squadron to follow later.

10 1st Lt. Nicholas J. Kasun was assigned to the squadron today. We are to move to a field near Battipaglia any day now. Most sections are ready for moving.

11 Lts. Mattes, Ryan, Shaunty, Watson, Westall, and F/O Angell were officially assigned to the squadron today. No flying.

12 Waiting to move. No missions.

13 We will move tomorrow to Serretelle L/G. There, we are to live in an Italian tobacco warehouse.

14 A rainy day, but we moved to Serretelle L/G. The landing strip is of turf and looks good. Some of the personnel of the 526th and 527th are here, but their planes are all at Pomigliano A/D near Naples.

15 One mission was flown from our new field, to bomb and strafe vehicles reported on road near S. Andrea. Maj. Gunnison led the mission, with Lt. Schuyler leading the cover. Lts. Dolny and Duncan participated in the mission, being the first of the new pilots to get a sortie. No movements were observed, but the road was effectively blocked by bomb bursts.

Sheet No. 16 War Diary, 525th FIGHTER BOMBING SQUAD. Serratella I/G, Italy
(Station)

Month of October, 1943. Prepared by WILLIAM H. BLACKWELL
1st Lt., AC, S-2

DAY EVENTS

16 One mission, 16 a/c, bombed town of Mondragone today. Enemy was believed concentrated in Western end of the town.

17 No missions today.

18 No missions.

19 One mission, 16 a/c, led by Lt. Anton, bombed a highway bridge over Garigliano river, South of Minturno. Near misses observed.

20 Three missions of 16 a/c each were flown today with objective to knock out a highway bridge and a railway bridge over the Garigliano River, same ones bombed yesterday. On each of these missions, led by Lt. Watts, Lt. Howell, and Maj. Gunnison, 4 of the a/c flew cover. Hits and many near misses were reported on the two bridges. Lt. Watts, leading cover on the final mission, did not return. It is believed that he was hit by flak, but no one saw him bail out or crash. We hope he bailed out safely.

21 One mission today, armed reconnaissance with 16 a/c, led by Lt. Schuyler. Several trains, some halftracks, and trucks were bombed and strafed. Good news today! Lt. Watts is safe, having bailed out between the lines N. of the Volturno River, where he was rescued by British troops.

22 No missions today. Lt. Watts returned to the squadron; he suffered burns about the head, neck and arms, when he attempted to stay with his plane until over our lines. His experience somewhat parallels that of Lt. Lister. Everyone is happy to have Lt. Watts back with us.

23 Again today, missions were run against the two bridges over the Garigliano. First was led by Lt. Schuyler, second by Lt. Anton, and each consisted of 12 a/c, with 4 cover. It is reported that the 27th Group, as well as the other two squadrons of our Group, have been working on the same bridges. They are now believed to be entirely unserviceable.

Sheet No. 17 War Diary, 525th FIGHTER SQ. ACR S&M. Sorrotelle I/G, Italy
(Station)

Month of October, 1943. Prepared by WILLIAM J. BLACKWELL
1st Lt., AC, S-2

DAY EVENTS

24 Three four ship combats were flown today, covering roads and railroads North of bomb safety line and South of Rome. Several trains and trucks were strafed. The steam locomotive was seen to explode. All pilots returned.

25 Again, three 4 ship combats were flown, this time covering roads and railroads Northwest of Rome. Traffic observed was inconsiderable. Several trucks were strafed, and a German jeep left burning. The missions were led by Lts. Anton, Shortlidge, and McCord.

26 Four 6 ship bombing missions were dispatched today to knock out German artillery positions near Vignone. Lts. Anton, Howell, Schuyler and Seagle led. No reports were received from ground forces, but the target area was heavily bombed and strafed.

27 Two 6 ship missions bombed gun emplacements on Sacta Point, led by Lts. Schuyler and Shortlidge. A large red explosion was seen at point of bombing.

28 A very busy day! First mission was a 12 ship one, bombing gun emplacements N. of the bomb line. Lt. Anton led. Two of the returning pilots believed wrong target had been bombed, but majority of flight were confident that correct one was hit, which was borne out by later events. In the afternoon, three 4 ship combats were flown over roads and railroads North and Northwest of Rome. These were led by Lts. Anton, Shortlidge and McCord. Five of our a/c were hit by flak, Lt. Anton's ship having a large chunk torn out of his rudder and tail assembly. One train was destroyed, and several trucks.

29 No missions were flown today.

30 Two missions, one 12 ship and other 6 ships, bombed railroad bridge over Garigliano River. No direct hits were seen on the bridge itself, but hits were seen on the tracks approaching the bridge. It is believed to be unserviceable. Lts. Schuyler and Seagle led the missions.



Sheet No. 18 War Diary, 525th FIGHTER PG BRG SQDN. Serretelle L/G, Italy
(Station)

Month of October, 1943. Prepared by WILLIAM E. BLACKWELL,
1st Lt., AC, G-2

DAY

EVENTS

31 No missions today. Our new pilots come to the end of this month with their first combat flying behind them. They are coming through splendidly, and the squadron is fortunate in getting as fine a bunch of new men as they are. At the end of this month, the number of sorties flown is 1637, and the total time totals 2673:30 hours.

- 30110 / 1943

Sheet No. 19 War Diary, 525th FFI, 50th AF, 525th FFI, Serretelle L/A, Italy
(Station)

Month of November, 1943. Prepared by WILLIAM H. BLACKWELL
Capt., Air Corps, S-2.

DAY

1 One mission, 12 ships, was flown today. It was led by Lt. Col. H. E. Kofahl, and the town of Pontecorvo was the objective. Enroute, the flight was to join flights from the 526th and 527th Squadrons, and all were to circle over Caserta on way to and from target. Information was that high army officials would be observing them. Target was found and bombed, but the formation did not remain with the other squadrons, because of the great number of aircraft in the air.

2 No missions were flown. Our communications with the advance elements of the Group are not good. Frequently, they cannot be reached by telephone, and this is supposed to account for our failure to receive more missions. The details on yesterday's missions were flown down. Maj. Gunnison returned from Cairo today, where he had been on a few days detached service.

3 An eight ship mission bombed several enemy artillery positions just North of the front line. It was led. Mission considered successful.

4 Three 4 ship rharbs were flown today, all covering roads and railways North of Rome. Lt. Col. Kofahl, Lt. McFall and Lt. Lorenson led the flights. Several trucks were destroyed, and one train was destroyed and another damaged. Any success that we may have had, though, was overbalanced by our loss, as Lt. Bertil A. "Swede" Liljeborg, crashed on an airdrome he was strafing, and his plane was seen to disintegrate. "Swede" was a fine pilot, a very clean, likeable fellow, and had many friends. He missed him. Lts. Watts, Jackson and Buyer returned today from the XII AF test camp.

5 No missions. Lts. Schuyler and Little left for test camp.

6 Maj. Gunnison led an 8 ship armed reconnaissance mission in AF - XII area. Road block created.

Sheet No. 20 Air diary, 525th Bombardment Squadron, Serrastelle I/II, Italy
(Station)

Month of November, 1943. Prepared by [Name]
Santa Air Force, S-2.

07

07

7 One armed reconnaissance mission consisting of 12 ships was dispatched to attack some "bumper to bumper" traffic reported in enemy territory. The roads were covered, but the traffic had dispersed. Four of 3. Horsa was bombed. Lt. William A. Allen left today for the IIT A. Africa Evaluation Board. He had been overseas over two years, having flown with the 488.

8 No missions. Rainy weather.

9 Field still very wet. No activity. It is reported that we will be moving to Ronchiano A/II soon. The other two squadrons are already there, and as there is a concrete runway on the field, they are able to fly many times when takeoff is not practicable on a turf runway.

10 No missions.

11 Back in operation, with two missions. Both were to strike railroads over roads and railroads south of here. A considerable number of motor trucks were destroyed, and 3 trains were strafed. The flight led by Lt. Griswold, and consisting of Lt. Zell, Lt. Ryan, Lt. Mason, and Lt. Lattes, encountered 2 Ju-88's, in the area of Ronchiano A/II. The enemy aircraft were circling at around 200'. One broke and fled, getting away. Lt. Ryan, Lt. Mason and Lt. Lattes all made passes and fired at the remaining one, and it was seen to catch fire and head eastward. Before he went far, the fire went out, and he started an attempted climb. This time, Lt. Lattes made three more passes at him, firing numerous bursts in his, the last pass coming up under him, and closing fire at 50 yards. The Ju crashed into the hillside and exploded. There was some doubt as to who should get credit for the loss, but it was decided that Lt. Lattes actually brought him down. Lt. Lattes full name is Herschel S. Lattes, and his address is 5657 Melvin St., Pittsburg, Pa. Again, our victories were negatived by our loss, as 2nd Lt. James W. Laines failed to return. Apparently, he was hit by light flak, and possibly was hit himself. His plane was smoking, and abruptly turned and plowed in, exploding upon impact. Laines was not seen to bail out. This quiet, likeable boy had just a few days previous been recommended for the Air Medal. 1st Lt. Henry S. McCord left us today for Africa, and will probably go home from there. He has a total of 54 missions.

3d Lt No. 21 1st Army, 58th Bombardment Squadron, Serralle L/L, Italy
(Station)

Month of November, 1943. Prepared by WILLIAM H. BISHOP
Capt., Air Corps, S-2.

DATE _____ SUBJECT _____

12 Three 4 ship rhubarb missions were flown today, covering roads and rail-roads north of Rome. Lts. Lister, Griswold and Shortlidge led. Very little movement was observed. Lt. Drew strafed 6 tri-motored seaplanes at Lake Orbetello Naval Base and destroyed them. Lts. Schuyler and Weible returned from West Camp.

13 Lt. Schuyler led the only mission of the day, to bomb a battery of six enemy artillery pieces. Mission believed successful. Maj. Justus W. Bone joined the squadron today.

14 No missions because of rain. 1st Lt. James J. Joover, Squadron Communications Officer, returned today after a stay of more than 2 months in the hospital. He was in a hospital in Egypt, and states that he talked with several of the fliers who were in the famed ildesti raid.

15 Lt. Watts received his promotion to Captain today; it was dated November 3rd. Lts. Jackson and Duncan left for a few days at West Camp. Still raining.

16 We heard today that Capt. Stanley W. "Stinky" Purchett would be going home in a few days.

17 Weather continues bad; much rain, and field very wet and muddy in places.

18 Lt. Hugh P. Davison left for 14 days leave. Most of squadron will move to Fondigliano tomorrow, leaving skeleton crews and some pilots to trim up planes when field become usable.

19 Moved to Fondigliano today. Squadron will live in apartments, and set up locks good. To live in a real building, with water, and possibly lights later, is more than a novelty to us after living under trees and in tents for so long. During all of June, July and August, and most of September, we did not live in tents even, our only shelter being a friendly tree or the sky above. Lt. John R. Sorensen left for Africa today, and will probably get to go home. He has a total of 55 combat missions.

Serial No. 22 War Diary, 525th Fighter Squadron, P.O. Box 3000, Foggia A/D, Italy
(Station)

Month of November, 1943. Prepared by William H. Laddell

Capt., Air Corps, 3-2.

DAY 20 STATUS STATION

20 Our planes are still at Ferretelle I/A. We learned today that Lt. Ford has left for home. Today has been a busy day, with all departments settling up their equipment. Operations and intelligence all have set up near the group operations tent, a very good one, but some work will have to be done to improve it. The orderly room is set up in one of the apartments occupied by the squadron, and the adjutant, Lt. Louis, is very busily engaged in strengthening the mess section. A new mess sergeant, S/Sgt. Hollis Hieu, has been appointed, and some changes made in the cooks personnel.

21 Lt. William S. Tucker, formerly base officer, was transferred to the 33rd Fighter Group.

22 Our aircraft are still at Ferretelle. It will be several days before they will be able to take off.

27 Our planes were flown up from Ferretelle, and today we flew our first mission from Foggia. Objective was railroad junction S. of Rome, and Maj. Harrison led the 12 ship mission. Several direct hits on the tracks were seen.

28 Two missions were flown today. The first bombed a main approach to a tunnel, and was led by Capt. ... The second consisted of three ship attacks north of Rome. Latter mission straddled a considerable number of motor trucks. Two new pilots, 2nd Lt. Robert J. ... and Robert H. ... joined the squadron today.

29 No missions today.

30 No missions today. At the end of this month, we have a total of 1700 sorties, and 2075:15 combat hours. Total strength of squadron is 44 officers and 222 enlisted men.

Sheet No. 23 War Diary, 525th FIGHTER BOMBER SQDN. Pomigliano A/D, Italy
(Station)

Month of December, 1943. Prepared by WILLIAM H. BLACKWELL
Capt., Air Corps, S-2.

DAY EVENTS

1 One mission was flown today, bombing enemy positions in close support of our ground troops. Capt. Watts led the 16 ship mission. The target area was well covered. Lt. Schuyler, Assistant Squadron Operations Officer, and Lt. Blackwell, Squadron Intelligence Officer, received promotions to captain today, effective 5 November.

2 Continuing the close support of the ground troops, three 12 ship missions were flown against the enemy, bombing and strafing his front line positions. Lt. Howell and Capt. Schuyler led the missions. Several explosions and flashes were seen indicating hits on ammunitions or gasoline dumps.

3 Maj. Gunnison led the only mission of the day, with 12 aircraft, to bomb enemy positions on the front. Weather and visibility were so bad that all bombs were returned. 1st Lt. Griswold and 2nd Lts. Drew and Westall left for Rest Camp.

4 No missions were flown today. 2nd Lt. Raymond F. O'Hara was assigned to this squadron today.

5 Two missions were flown today. The first bombed the railroad and a train near Ladispoli, a small town NW of Rome. The returning pilots reported hits on the track behind the train and on the bridge ahead of it. Upon request, a 4 ship mission led by Maj. Home was sent back to bomb the train, but upon arriving at the target area, the train was gone, whereupon, the railroad was bombed and additional hits were secured. Some of the bombs used today were equipped with delayed action fuses, set to explode within 15 minutes to 15 hours, depending upon various factors. 2nd Lts. Harry P. Mathis Jr., Robert F. Mumm, Richard G. Oldham, Junior G. O'Neil and Carl H. Pierson joined our squadron today. 1st Lts. Anton and Louis received promotion to captain.

6 No missions today. Maj. Gunnison, formerly Commanding Officer of this squadron, and Maj. Home were transferred to 86th Fighter Bomber Group. Maj. Edwin A. Bland Jr. was assigned as Squadron Commander.



Sheet No. 24 Pomigliano A/D, Italy
(Continued)

Month of December, 1942. Prepared by WILLIAM H. BLACKWELL

Capt., Air Corps, S-2.

DW

7 One mission of 12 ships, led by Capt. Watts, was sent to bomb communications at Viticuso. The target was well covered and much smoke was seen over target.

8 Two 12 ship missions was flown today. First mission led by Lt. Howell to bomb town of Viticuso. Weather prevented locating assigned target; flight proceeded to Fondi where visibility improved and bombed roads and railroads. 6 hits reported on roads. Lt. Weigle's ship was pretty badly damaged, either by flak, or by an explosion underneath him. He, however, was not injured. Second mission led by Capt. Watts, bombed the town of Viticuso. Target area was covered by clouds. Target was seen through clouds and was bombed and strafed. Direct hits were seen and 4 hits on edge of town. Capt. Watts was appointed Squadron Operations Officer with Capt. Schuyler as Assistant Operations Officer.

9 A very busy day today. 5 missions. First mission of 8 ships led by Lt. Howell to attack convoy on coastal roads South of Civitavecchia. Convoy was not found, so flight bombed and strafed railroads and buildings alongside A/D at Furbara. Several hits were seen on railroad tracks and buildings. Second mission consisting of 11 ships was led by Maj. Bland to bomb communications at Tivoli. Target was well covered and aircraft strafed in dive. Much damage was done to the enemy. Again, our victories were negatived by our loss, as 1st Lt. Douglas R. Plowden failed to return. His wingman lost sight of him when both entered dive. Lt. Plowden was not seen to crash or bail out. Lt. Plowden's absence is sorely felt by everyone. The remaining three missions for the day were 4 ship rhubarb missions to bomb and strafe roads and railroads North of Rome, and were led by Maj. Home, Capt. Watts and Lt. Jackson. Much damage was done to a number of enemy locomotives and railroad cars. Hangars at Orbetello Naval Base was strafed; 2 ships and barge heavily strafed off shore at Nettuno; several buildings with vehicles strafed. 3 gas tanks near factory strafed, no results. Building with antenna strafed, antenna was damaged. 1st Lt. Griswold and 2nd Lt. Westall returned from Rest Camp.

10 Target for today was to bomb communications at Atina, by a flight of 12 ships led by Lt. Howell, but heavy rain storms and clouds prevented completion of the mission. All bombs were returned to base.



Sheet No. 25 Air Station, 520th Bombardment Group, Pomigliano A/D, Italy
(Station)

Month of December, 1943. Prepared by WILLIAM H. BLACKWELL
Capt., Air Corps, S-2.

DATE: _____ SUBJECT: _____

11 Two missions were flown today. Capt. Watts led the first mission to bomb communications at Arce. Target was dive bombed with direct hits on overpass and highway near overpass. Second mission to bomb railroad junction at Galera by a flight of 12 ships, led by Maj. Bland. No direct hits were seen on railroad junction but bomb bursts were well clustered around target. Direct hits on tracks just West of junction. Antenna and searchlight were heavily strafed. 1st Lts. Kasun and Louis and 2nd Lt. Watson left for Rest Camp. 2nd Lt. Drew returned from Rest Camp today.

12 Lt. Shortlidge led the only mission of 12 ships today, to bomb harbor and shipping at Civitavecchia. Bad weather over target forced flight to glide bomb the alternate target; the town of Itri. Several hits were seen in center of town and much smoke and dust over road junction, indicating possible hits on road.

13 Only one mission was flown today. A flight of 12 ships was led by Lt. Howell to bomb a bridge at Pontecorvo. 2 hits scored on middle of bridge and possible hits on Northeast end. Remainder of bombs were well clustered in target area.

14 Capt. Watts led the first mission of 12 ships to bomb communications; town of Sora. Several hits in railroad yards and others in area. Aircraft strafed in dive. Second mission was a flight of 12 ships to attack harbor and shipping at Civitavecchia. Large ship in harbor was bombed and strafed and believed destroyed. Hits were observed on docks and several hits were seen in town.

15 Two 8 ship missions today, both led by Maj. Gunnison to bomb gun positions. Target area over Acquafondola of the first mission was well strafed. Large flash, probably gas or ammunition, was seen. Second mission was enemy gun positions in the area of Viticuso. The entire area was well covered with bomb hits and well strafed during dive.



Sheet No. 26 War Diary, 525th Bombardment Squadron, Pomigliano A/D, Italy
(Station)

Month of December, 1943. Prepared by WILLIAM H. BLACKWELL
Capt., Air Corps, S-2.

DATE EVENTS

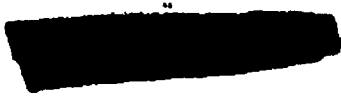
16 One mission was flown today. Maj. Gunnison led a flight of 12 ships to attack enemy positions in close support of our ground troops. Bombed target, scoring good bomb pattern. Area strafed in dive. Fifth Army reported that the target was hit and well covered, and expressed appreciation and commendation for a successful mission. From AIR LIAISON OFFICER report, Par. 2, Hqs. Fifth Army, 23 December 1943, comes the following: "Prisoner of war from 131st IR, 44th Division, reports a large number of casualties were caused by dive bomb attack on positions on 16 December 1943 in the CASALE CASINESE area".

17 Again, one mission was flown today in support of our ground troops. Capt. Watts led a flight of 12 ships to attack enemy positions at Cervaro. Although haze prevented free observation, target was located and was well bombed and strafed.

18 Only one mission was flown today. A flight of 12 ships led by Capt. Watts were airborne to bomb harbor and shipping at Civitavecchia, but due to bad weather, flight bombed alternate target of Terracina. Well placed hits were seen in town and railroad yard. Capt. Louis, 1st Lt. Kasun and 2nd Lt. Watson returned from Rest Camp today.

19 Two 12 ship missions were flown today. Capt. Watts led the first mission that bombed and strafed harbor and docks at Civitavecchia, with many hits seen on South harbor, town and North part of harbor. Large explosion seen in the ammunition stores area. Second mission was led by Lt. Howell that heavily bombed and strafed factory 2 miles North of Arce. Two large explosions were seen with flames 200 feet and columns of smoke 500 feet in the air. Capt. McMurray and 1st Lts. Carstensen and Weigle left to spend a few days at Rest Camp.

20 One 12 ship rhubarb mission flown today, covering roads and railroads North of Rome. The three 4 ship flights were led by Capt. Anton, and Lts. Shortlidge and DuVall. Bad weather and consequent poor visibility interfered with the mission, and very little strafing was done, barracks and radar station being only targets hit.



Sh. at No. 28 Pomigliano A/D, Italy.
(Section)

Month of December, 1942. Prepared by WILLIAM H. BLACKWELL

Capt., Air Corps, S-2.

DNI

27 Two missions today. First mission was a 12 ship armed reconnaissance, led by Maj. Bland. Due to heavy clouds, flight turned out to sea and came in and bombed highway bridge at Pontecorvo. The second mission was a very important mission led by Capt. Watts. A flight of 12 ships was assigned to silence a gun position. A very successful mission. Capt. Watts and all pilots that participated in this mission were highly commended by the Army Ground Forces, and a special commendation was received from Lt. Col. Harold E. Kofahl, our Group Commander. Pilots participating, in addition to Capt. Watts were Maj. Home, Lts. Mathis, O'Neil, Jackson, Nelson, Ryan, Shortlidge, O'Hara, Lister, Watson and F/O Angell.

28 Two 12 ship missions were flown today to bomb the shipping and harbor installations at Civitavecchia. First flight, led by Capt. Watts scored 2 direct hits on tracks in railroad yards and 2 direct hits and near misses on an enemy military vessel and several hits on South of docks. Second flight led by Capt. Anton scored 6 hits on docks in North part of harbor and heavily strafed and damaged four 60 foot power barges. Lts. Rook and Ryan left for Rest Camp today.

29 Capt. Watts led the only mission of today. A flight of 12 ships that heavily bombed and strafed a military truck parking area. Returning to base, strafed a convoy of 15 military trucks, damaging 4 - 5 and one jeep. Strafed bivouac area. Capt. Schuyler left today to spend a few days at the Rest Camp. 2nd Lts. Dolny, Duncan, Hook and Westall received promotion to 1st Lt., effective the 15th of December.

30 One mission today. Maj. Gunnison led a flight of 12 ships to attack the town of Atina. The mission was very successful, later report from PWI source revealing that the Command Post of the 44th Division was bombed out. A message was received from Army expressing commendation.

31 One mission was flown today. A flight of 12 ships led by Maj. Gunnison to bomb communications at Frosinone. Due to solid cloud cover over primary target, flight was forced to bomb and strafe alternate target of Formia, scoring many hits over town. Lt. Howell received promotion to captain, effective 20 December. At the end of this month, we have a total of 2164 sorties, and 3425:25 combat hours. Total strength of squadron: 47 officers and 225 enlisted men.



