



Sheet No. 56 War Diary, 525th FIGHTER BOMBING SQDN. Pomigliano, Italy
(Station)

Month of April, 1944. Prepared by WILLIAM H. BLACKWELL,
Capt., Air Corps, S-2.

DAY

EVENTS

14 (Cont'd) Lt. Johnson's plane was hit over the target and he was forced to bail out. His parachute was seen to open and his descent was followed to 1,000 feet or less, and it is believed that he landed safely.

Lt. Brinley led the second mission of the day, made up of 4 planes each from the 525th and 526th Squadrons. The objective was to cut the railroad tracks near ORTE. Four direct hits were scored on the tracks and two hits on 15 to 20 oil cars, resulting in a large explosion and clouds of black smoke. 2 motor trucks were destroyed (1 flamer), and 5 damaged by strafing. A factory was also strafed.

The last mission was led by Lt. Wood. 3 direct hits were scored on the CAPRANICA railroad station and several more hits and near misses on the tracks at various points. The weather made bombing and observation difficult, and the damage to the railroad station was unobserved. 1 motor truck was destroyed north of FURBARA A/D.

Four pilots also flew a mission with the 527th Squadron today, but could not get in to the primary target because of bad weather, and dropped their bombs on FURBARA A/D instead.

Nine new pilots reported to the squadron today. They are 2nd Lts. Robert L. Anderson, David S. Baker, Russell J. Bell, John E. Borrello, Graydon S. Brown, Richard A. Davis, Howard G. Decker, Jr., James G. Finlayson and Felix F. Simmons.

The squadron baseball team, very appropriately nicknamed the "Travellers", and under the managership of Lt. Joe Clark, today won their first game of the season, from the 332nd Service Group team, on the latter's field by a score of 7 to 3. The opening battery for the Travellers was Johnny Wetzell and Louie McGraw. Wetzell pitched airtight baseball, allowing only one hit, during his four innings on the mound, and was relieved by Gene Gumbert in the fifth, who finished the game. Dick Gibbs replaced McGraw at this point and finished the game behind the plate. Gumbert handled the first base job before going to the mound, Surney Bielick was on second, Alex Papalás at short, and Ken Barnes at the hot corner. Terrebonne, Edwards, and Moose was the starting outfield. Roush and Shifley replaced Edwards and Moose in the fifth and finished the game at center and right. The squad is practicing daily and with more experience, should develop into an interesting and colorful team. The home diamond is almost completed, and several games have already been scheduled for the near future.





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DAY EVENTS

18 Lt. Watson led 6 planes on another mission to bomb railroad tracks today. A 30 to 35 car train was bombed with a direct hit in the middle of the string of cars, causing an explosion. Another 20 car train was bombed by two aircraft with hits in the middle of the cars, causing additional explosions. Both trains were stationary and without locomotives. One motor truck was destroyed and one damaged by strafing.

19 No missions were flown today. The movie "Girl Crazy" was shown in the stadium near the Pomigliano Railroad Station.

2nd Lt. Andrew M. Harrison, only recently assigned to this squadron, was killed when his plane crashed while on a practice flight.

The Travellers today ran their winning streak to three in a row, as they downed the 332nd Service Group team by a score of 13 to 3. Batting around the entire lineup in each of the first three innings, the Travellers scored 12 of their runs, added another in the fourth, and coasted on to an easy victory. Ken Barnes, making his initial appearance as a pitcher, held the visitors scoreless and allowed only three hits during his four innings on the mound. He was relieved by Gumbert, who finished the game.

20 Capt. Kasun led the first mission today, to bomb the tracks between ORTE and ATTIGLIANO, but bad weather prevented the flight from getting to this target, and the rail line between VITERBO and CAPRANICA was bombed instead. Several direct hits were scored on the tracks, causing breaks in at least three different points.

Lt. Wood led the second mission and as on the first, the alternate target was bombed because of bad weather north of the Tiber River. The town of ITRI was covered with a good pattern of bombs, including several direct hits on roads in the town.

The Travellers' winning streak came to an abrupt halt this afternoon, as they were stopped by the 415th Night Fighter outfit by a score of 8 to 2. Aided by several errors early in the game, the visitors took an early lead, and were never threatened. Hoyt Smith started on the hill for the Travellers, but after two shaky innings, during which he allowed six runs on only 3 hits, he gave way to Wetzel, who fared no better, and Gumbert finished the last three innings.





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DAY

22 (Cont'd) Capt. John W. Hendrickson was today assigned to Group Headquarters, as Group Engineering Officer.

23 Railroad tracks in the area of ORVIETO was the target for both missions today. The first formation consisted of 8 planes and was led by Lt. Ryan. Two definite breaks in the tracks were secured as the result of direct hits, and near misses caused possible damage to a bridge.

Lt. Ryan led the second mission also, and secured only probable damage to the tracks. One hung bomb was salvoed, and a direct hit scored on a highway.

Word was passed around this evening that the "Canino" mission was to be run tomorrow, accompanied by a 0415 briefing. With 8 aircraft scheduled for the flight in this squadron, Lt. Mathis surmised that "both" pilots returning would be stood down for a couple of days.

24 The Canino Landing Ground made up the target for an early mission this morning. Lt. Dolny led the 3 plane formation. 10 to 15 revetment areas, some of which had planes or material in them, were thoroughly strafed. If they were planes, all were definitely damaged. 15 planes taxiing on the field were strafed and some possibly damaged. Lt. Brinley got his sights on a ME-109 circling the field with his wheels down, and got in a good burst at him. Lt. Watson, coming in close behind, got a good 10° deflection shot at the enemy plane, and fired a burst into his fuselage. The plane began smoking and burst into flames, after which the pilot bailed out and the plane crashed not far away.

Lt. Horrigan led today's second mission, an 8 plane formation to bomb railroad tracks. Lt. Purdum scored a direct hit at one point, causing a definite break in the track and several near misses at another point.

The mission was not the big success it was hoped to be, but probably much more damage was done by strafing than could be observed by the pilots. Using the new explosive bullets, most of the pilots fired over 1200 rounds. Lt. Watson is now the "ace" of the squadron, with one victory and one probable.



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DAY

EVENTS

25 Railroad tracks were again the target for both missions flown today. Lt. Hook led the first formation of 8 planes and bombed the tracks between NARNI and ORTE. Breaks in the tracks were secured at two different points, and near misses caused possible damage at a third. One motor truck was destroyed by strafing.

Lt. Brinley was the leader on the second mission. Three definite breaks were secured, with two probable direct hits at another point. All 8 aircraft thoroughly strafed 25 or more railroad cars at one place and 30 at another. Two flangers were observed in the first string and all cars seemed to have material in them. Trucks mounted on six flat cars were strafed and damaged at another point.

A big raid on Naples was made last night during the middle of an entertaining movie. The AA boys claimed 5 planes, but the spectators on the ground did not see it that way.

An improvement in the food has been noted the past week.

26 Rain and bad weather forced a standdown for the entire day.

One officer and 15 enlisted men of the Ordnance unit were today assigned to the squadron.

27 Rainy weather continues. No missions.

Lt. Shaunty was assigned to MATS and will leave for Algeria as soon as possible.

28 It wasn't until early this evening that we learned of our coming move from the comfortable apartments which we have occupied for the past several months, to Marcianise Airfield near Caserta. Our orders are to be ready to leave by noon tomorrow and everyone is busy packing personal equipment.

Today marks the 1st anniversary of the Group's departure from the States. The Group Officers are having a party and dance tonight, and the enlisted men are also planning a party.

Capt. Louis was assigned to Group Headquarters today.

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DAY

EVENTS

30 All of the day was well taken up with the task of moving the squadron to our new location at Marcianise Airfield. This field is located about 3 miles out of Caserta, on the Naples-Caserta highway. It is fairly well laid out and our bivouac area is only about 200 yards from the line and dispersal area.

Early in the morning, men were up and about, packing their personal belongings, and getting ready to move. There were many late sleepers though, for on the night before, April 29th, the Group Officers threw a big party in their new Officers' Club. This, incidentally, was both opening and closing night for the Club. The occasion for the party was the first anniversary of the Group's having left the States.

A tent detail preceded the main body of the squadron to our new area, and set up a number of tents. Operations and Intelligence are in a small building near the line, one of the very few buildings on the field. The line sections are nearby, and most of the planes are only a couple hundred yards away.

Our bivouac area is devoid of trees but there are some nearby and along the roads. The mess was quickly set up and provided a good evening meal. Our Italian KP's and barber came along with the squadron. As you walk down through the tent area, you are liable to be accosted by one of Taffy's offspring, with a tug on your trousers leg or a little nip at your heels, for all of the six pups are owned by men in the outfit, and are full fledged "members" of the squadron.

During the month 359 sorties and 683:55 combat hours were flown by the squadron.

