

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Sheet 92. War Diary. 526th Fighter Sq., 86th Fighter Gp., APO 650, N.Y., N.Y.  
 Month of July, 1944. Prepared by Charles P. Voller, 1st Lt., above named Sq.

WAR DIARY

to be able to take the airplane back to the States for display and advertising purposes. Captain Murphy, Squadron Surgeon, brought news that Lt. Journell would be in the hospital for approximately six weeks. Lts. Benear and Archibald joined him a few days ago. The former with a serious case of G.I.s and the latter for an unknown reason. Ten more new pilots today. The number of pilots assigned to the Squadron exceeds all previous numbers. The "show" in France must surely going to be a large one. The laundry and price of laundry situations are rapidly coming to a climax. Lt. Kritz and Nordell went into Bastia today to pick up their laundry and after arguing with the natives for some time they started to turn away in disgust when one of the natives, a sixty year old man, ran into the house and grabbed a shot gun. His family prevented him from getting out of the house with it. We shall soon be doing our own laundry. Flew three missions today, one bombing mission, one escort mission, and one two ship search mission.

- 26 Captain Saunders and Sgt. Bushey went into Bastia today to attempt to reason with some laundry people. In the ensuing melee the Provost Marshall and two M.P.'s were called upon to aid in settling the dispute. The matter never was satisfactorily settled and only two out of five bags of laundry were procured. A theft of a goodly portion of the week's P.X. was discovered late this evening. Lt. Benear returned from the hospital. The Squadron flew two missions today.
- 27 The morning mission was particularly successful. Despite poor weather conditions, the target, a bridge North of Galliete, Italy was rendered unserviceable by hits on the North approach. Prior to going into the dive Captain Lucas and Captain Saunders had sighted three J.U. 52's on an airfield approximately ten miles North and slightly East of the target. After completing the bombing mission the flight made a wide sweep and strafed the airplanes thoroughly, all three of them were left burning. Captain Lucas set two of them afire and Lt. Bartlett left the third one blazing. Part of the flight strafed and damaged barracks and administration buildings on the field. On the afternoon mission Lt. Taylor was forced to bail out approximately three to five miles South of Portofino, Italy being hit by anti-aircraft fire when he dove on the target. One flight circled him and gave him cover until he was picked up by Air Sea Rescue and taken to Pionbino, Italy and from there brought back to the Squadron. Major Harry W. "Doc" Dorris, one of our original pilots and former C.O. visited us today. After he had completed his tour here he transferred to the Fifteenth Air Force and he has just now completed a tour there. His stories of fights with enemy planes kept us spellbound all through the noon meal. "Doc" has always been a favorite of the Squadron. The men and officers alike were glad to know that he was going home after completing two tours, downing five enemy airplanes, winning the D.F.C., the Silver Star, and the Air Medal with several clusters. He has certainly done his fair share in the war. Our A-36 was flown to Naples today in exchange for a P-47. That is the last of the A-36's in the Group.

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28 More trouble today. Captain Saunders crashed into a truck while taking off losing about three feet of his left wing. He was able to keep his aircraft airborne and make a circle of the field to land safely. This is the third such accident all caused by carelessness of someone leaving a vehicle either on or near the runway. For the past two days all of our missions have been flown in the morning.

29 The mission today is one that will be talked of for some time to come. After bombing and hitting the primary target, a bridge in the Novara-Milan area, the flight attacked airdromes in the same area. Making four or five passes at five different airdromes they destroyed 23 and damaged at least 10 aircraft of all types including ME-109's, Focke Wulfe 190's, JU-52's and four four-engine airplanes. Also four motor vehicles filled with personnel were destroyed. Two of our planes were hit by flak. Group Operations is attempting to arrange a strafing mission in this same area for tomorrow morning.

30 The morning mission proved that the Germans lost no time in moving most of their serviceable planes from the fields that we attacked yesterday afternoon. The pilots bagged two JU-52's on the ground. The engineers' started work on the runway this afternoon and the field will be closed for three or four days while they lay steel matting the entire length of the runway. The trek to town started about 3:00 o'clock. The object was the bar in the Officers' Club. By 7:00 o'clock most of the officers were present and most of those present were in various stages of enebriation. The only casualties of the evening were two of the Group Officers who were subjected to a verbal barrage mainly because they were Group Officers.

31 As a result of last night's "blow off" the Intelligence Officers of each squadron were called together and given a lengthy discussion on awards. The object of the discussion was to show that Group was not at fault because the awards were not being granted. The discussion in the Bastia Officers' Club did bear some fruit. Captain Williamson, Lt. Beebe and Lt. Nordell left for Foggia this morning to get their orders to go home. They were accompanied to Foggia by Captain Henriod. The party spirit continues to gain momentum and approached a climax tonight. The Officers' Club in Bastia was again crowded by Officers of this Squadron. Two new pilots were assigned to the Squadron today.

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526th Fighter Squadron  
Outline History, August 1944

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HEADQUARTERS 526TH FIGHTER SQUADRON  
86TH FIGHTER GROUP, A.P.O. 650, N.Y.

31 August 1944

AG 314.7

SUBJECT: Historical Records.

TO : Commanding General, XII Tactical Air Command, A.P.O. 574.

1. Outline History of the 526th Fighter Squadron for the period 1 August to 1 September 1944.

a. Present Designation: 526th Fighter Squadron, 86th Fighter Group, XII Tactical Air Command.

b. Changes in organization:

- (1) Changes in designation: None.
- (2) Disposition of echelons and subordinate units: Same.
- (3) Changes in Commanding Officers: None.
- (4) Changes in Staff Officers: None.

c. Strength, commissioned and enlisted men:

- (1) Month of August 1944.
  - (a) At beginning: 58 officers; 247 E.M. assigned.
  - (b) Net increase: None ; None
  - (c) Net decrease: 4 officers; 6 E.M.
  - (d) At end: 54 officers; 241 E.M. assigned.

d. Stations: Poretta Air Base, Corsica.

e. Movements: None.

f. Campaigns: Continued Italian and Southern France Campaign.

g. Operations:

- (1) Campaign: Italian, Southern France.

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(2) Nature of operations: Combat missions by fighters of P-47 type aircraft, on dive-bombing, strafing, harassment and patrol, particularly in attacking enemy communications, and principally of dive-bombing and strafing type.

(3) Number of missions and sorties for period: 69 missions, 462 sorties.

(4) Results of important missions:

(a) Mission: 15 August 1944: Four planes bombed highway bridge in Southern France, 1) which was being extensively used by the Germans in defense against American landings in Southern France, 2) the weather being hazy and probability of success being fair. 3) Near misses were scored after which 4) 42 enemy motor vehicles and artillery pieces were destroyed. 7) railroad cars strafed and many destroyed, 5) seriously interfering with the enemy's conduct of its defense.

(b) Mission: -16 August 1944: Armed reconnaissance by eight planes in the Toulon-Avignon, France area, 1) where the enemy was using the roads to transport vital supplies and men in defense of Southern France against our landings there. 2) Probability of success was not very good for the mission since the weather was extremely hazy and visibility almost nil. 3 & 4) Nevertheless, a 15 car troop train was destroyed, a small electric train strafed out of commission, and at least 25 motor vehicles destroyed. 5) seriously crippling the enemy's materiel, manpower and avenues of ingress and egress.

(c) Mission: 16 August 1944: Eight planes on an armed reconnaissance mission in the Toulon-Avignon area, 1) where the enemy was using the highways and railroads extensively to bring up men and materiel, 2) hazy weather making probability of a successful mission only fair. 3) Disregarding the weather, the mission was completed with great success. 4) the flight destroying a large tank, three motor vehicles and at least 40 oil cars and railroad cars. In addition, three enemy planes were seriously damaged, one completely collapsing, 5) all of which inflicted heavy loss on the enemy.

(d) Mission: 17 August 1944: Twelve planes strafed 1) an extensively used enemy airdrome at Orange-Caritat, France, 2) in hazy weather where chance of success was not good 3 & 4) 5-10 enemy JU-88s on the ground, a dinky train, several motor vehicles, and a large number of railroad cars were destroyed by strafing, one ammunition car blowing up, and many cars loaded with airplane parts and equipment being among those destroyed, 5) all of which were highly damaging to the enemy during the critical period when American troops were pouring into Southern France.

h. Commanding Officer's important missions: None to report.

i. Losses in action: Flight Officer Reginald M. Jorgenson was lost seen at N-9090, Southwest of Savigliano, Italy, 20 August 1944

j. Former and present members who have distinguished themselves:

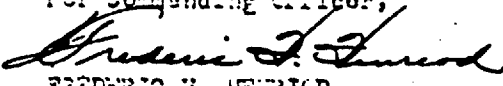
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(1) The following oficers received the Distinguished Flying Cross for extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight.

- Capt. Vernon A. Williamson
- 1st Lt. Fort (MI) Benear
- 1st Lt. Paul R. Cordell
- 1st Lt. Herbert C. Estep (MIA)
- Capt. Stanley G. Wright (PCW)
- Capt. Eugene E.M. Schmitt
- 1st Lt. Robert E. McClintock
- Capt. Robert B. Fleming
- Capt. Roy (MIA) Schiller
- 1st Lt. William G. Russell
- Capt. Jackson (MI) Saunders
- 1st Lt. Charles C. Meyer (MIA)

2. Inclosed is War Diary, 526th Fighter Squadron, 36th Fighter Group, for the period 1 August to 1 September 1944.

For Commanding Officer,  
  
 FREDERIC H. MERRICK,  
 Capt., A.C., S-2 Officer,  
 526th Ftr. Sq., 36th Ftr. Gr.

Incl: War Diary orig. & 3.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Sheet No. 94. War Diary. 526th Fighter Sq., 86th Fighter Gp., APC 650, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of August, 1944. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, Capt., above named Sq.

WAR DIARY

1 August dawned on this Isle, hot and sultry and dusty. Even so, it is not nearly so hot as it is in Naples for example. There is generally a slight breeze blowing off the Mediterranean from the East which lends some relief in the afternoon. Capt. Williamson, Lts. Nordell and Leebe, went to XII TAC in Naples with Capt. Henriod, to obtain their papers to go home and to attempt to obtain their awards. Not only the Squadron, but people in Naples are still talking about the great mission flown by our Squadron on July 25th in which at least 25 German planes were destroyed. There were no missions flown today for the reason that operations have ceased pending installation of a steel mat runway. A Group party was staged in the evening in Group Headquarters to announce the release of Col. Kofahl from further command of the Group, and the substitution of Col. Bates in his place, effective tomorrow. There was considerable drinking, and considerable ribbing of various personalities, including both Colonels.

2 Col. Earl E. Bates, Jr., took over the command of the Group, and Col. Kofahl went to the 37th Fighter Wing preparatory to being rotated back to the States. Many of the pilots are taking advantage of the five or six day stand down to re-visit Rome, the now famous Riviera Hotel, which has been universally nicknamed the Marina Hotel. Others spend considerable time in Bastia, where the people remain sullen, and the liquor bad. The Senegalese, Frenchmen and Slavs still roam up and down the one highway along the road building sides. There are very few English on the Island compared with what we have had at other places. The Slavs are a contingent which the Italians originally brought here as prisoners, putting them to work as laborers, and they have stayed on as members of the Allied Forces. They are supplied with U.I. clothing and equipment, as are the French - Many of whom believe that the U.I. is wearing French equipment. Our bivouac area is not bothered much by itinerant "Frogs" as we were by the Italian "Guineas", and what few wander through the place are not seeking work or wash, but usually want to buy shoes, watches or other commodities. Shoes will sell for any price between twenty and fifty dollars, and a \$17.00 watch will bring \$100.00. On the other hand, it costs five or six dollars for a small wash, and it is said that the ladies of remunerative sin don't but an eye when they demand from twenty to thirty dollars. As a result, the venereal rate has gone down, the blood pressure up, and virtue has its own reward in at least a small measure, - economically speaking.

3 Spt. James B. Angel, probably the tallest and leanest man in our outfit, left today for Sagnoli Personnel Center # 6, where he will be rotated back to the United States. The Airdrome here (Poretta) was opened for an hour or so today, but was closed again, and no missions flown. P-T boats nightly slip quietly out of Bastia Harbor and make the trip to the Southern French Coast. Some of them even venture into the harbors. They claim their percentage of kills runs about 60%, which simply means that out of nine P-T's in a mission, there will be an enemy vessel sunk on at least 60% of the missions. Some of our pilots have gone on missions with them and proclaim it an adventure which all should not behind. In Naples, the harbor is clogged with shipping. The invasion of

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Sheet No. 95. War Diary. 526th Fighter Sq., 86th Fighter Gr., APO 670, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of August, 1944. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, Capt., above named Sq.

WAR DIARY

Southern France or wherever it will come cannot be far in the offing. The stalemate in Italy before the Gothic Line seems to be merely the calm before the storm, and the favorite tactic of the Allies to date--that of punching on one front, relaxing, then punching on another--is being carried out.

- 4 Sgt. Virgil Hagans was tried and convicted by General Courts Martial in Naples today and sentenced to two years on a statutory charge. News came today that the doughfeet in Normandy have broken through today and ended the temporary stalemate in that sector. The stand down is still providing an opportunity for the officers and men to visit Bastia, Corto and even Ajaccio. At Bastia there is an Officer's Club, consisting of what was formerly a sumptuous sea-side home of some twelve or fifteen rooms, about a mile North of Bastia. There is a good bar where Cap Corse, Cognac, Vermouth and one or two other drinks can be purchased. A veranda overlooks the sea, and comfortable chairs provide a place to relax, look out over the sea toward Elba, and drink whatever is purchased. Sand has been hauled in to form a comfortable beach at the North of the Club, and a diving board is in process of construction. Local beauties sun themselves in the afternoon, and kids sans clothing unshockingly plunge into the brino in front of the equally unshocked Corsican belles. Some nights a small orchestra, featured by a crooked fingered accordionist, plays "Violetta" and "It's Love, Love, Love" and whatever other bits of music it has at hand. The enlisted men can enjoy themselves in the Red Cross in Bastia, which serves ice cream twice a week and provides a pleasant lounging place overlooking the sea in front of the only park in Bastia, presenting a welcome contrast to the dust of our cork forest bivouac area.
- 5 Last night one of our planes flew transition night flying for the first time since we left the States. This portends some long escort missions.
- 6 The writer obtained Capt. Williamson's and Lt. Nordell's Distinguished Flying Crosses at Foggia and delivered them via a Catalina Flying Boat to these pilots who are still at Bagnoli waiting for a boat home. Col. Kofahl is at the personnel center also, awaiting shipment home. He also obtained a D.F.C., much to the irritation of the pilots in our Squadron who haven't been so rewarded although having flown many more missions. Our Squadron started flying again, flying four missions, taking off on the new steel mat runway, which all the pilots have stamped with their approval.
- 7 Destroyed all Intelligence and Operational Summaries for months past by burning. One mission flown today, bombing a railroad track. Col. Eates seems to be doing a good job as C.C. He was formerly Commanding Officer of the 79th Group, which is also stationed here in Corsica. There have been no changes in Group personnel as yet. The Squadron Officer's Club is generally lively at nights where drinks of real American whiskey can be purchased, while they last, at forty cents a throw. The place gets noisy at times, as attested to by the enlisted men the next morning by their sly reminders of inability to sleep on account of strange nocturnal noises. Unfortunately the Kisson Hut which houses the

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WAR DIARY

the Officer's Club happens to be in the close proximity of a number of the enlisted men's pyramids. Poker sessions are nightly affairs. The walls are lined with bamboo poles, a red bar adorns one end, camouflage netting provides and ugly, but the only available substitute for ceiling streamers. All day long a portable phonograph whines out canned tunes provided by the Special Services Department of the Army. Such tunes as "Charlaine" and "Sleep Kentucky Babe" have enjoyed a renewed Squadron popularity since the phonograph's arrival. Pin-up girls adorn whatever space on the walls that is not absorbed by the bamboo poles, running the gamut from nudity to a disgusting surplusage of clothes from the hips down. Occasionally someone is interested in a crossword puzzle. The enlisted men generally have a radio somewhere in the vicinity and a bottle of vino or medicinal alcohol nearby, although there is surprisingly little drunkenness in the Squadron. The proportion is greater among the officers than among the enlisted men.

- 8 One mission flown today. The pilots are liking their P-47s better every day. The mechanics on the line don't like to work on them as much as they did on the A-56s, saying that gadgets are harder to get at, etc. Lt. Benear is insisting on painting his plane to appear like a shark. How he can do this with the cigar-shaped P-47 is something of a mystery and we are sweating out the picasso result.
- 9 Joe Louis, heavyweight champion, is with the Group today, having his picture taken with various Group Officers, being shown around the field, and taking a swing or two at a knitted golf ball. He is scheduled to give an exhibition tomorrow night. However, a downpour tonight makes the scheduled exhibition a matter of conjecture. This is the first rain we have had since we came to Corsica and it served as a welcome relief to the clammy heat that has hung low over this part of the beach for the past few days. The pilots flew one twelve plane mission tonight, bombing a bridge with good results.
- 10 Joe Louis' exhibition was of course the highlight of the social day. He and his troupe of course made local aspirants look like amateurs, but one has to admire the guts of some of these boys who are willing to get in and mix leather with the Brown Bomber Sergeant. Due to inclement weather the only flight of the day was unable to reach the target. Despite the weather there have been hundreds of heavies and mediums winging their way over our field today on their way toward Southern France with their cargoes of death. It looks like the prelude to something big. A lot of the fellows count them going over and more eagerly count them coming back, and the grins on their faces when the count tallies up indicates a silent, unexpressed satisfaction that these G.I.s have when they know their "big friends" haven't lost a plane. If all the G.I.s of all Squadrons are like those in our Squadron, we've got the bitchingest Army in the world with the biggest hearts in the world.
- 11 Today marked a day of variety in the way of targets. One mission attacked a gun emplacement, another attacked a Seektakt Station and another a Wurzburg radar station. This is another little indication that the invasion is now only

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WAR DIARY

hours away, since destruction of radar equipment and gun emplacements in the past have been the overture to the powder opera. All in all our boys flew 36 sorties, which simply means that's a lot of sorties and a lot of work for the linemen who will work into the wee hours of the morning if necessary to get the ships in condition for another heavy schedule tomorrow. Today we had a field day on medals. Our Squadron obtained 7 Distinguished Flying Crosses - for Schmitt, Fleming, Russell, Schiller, McClintock, Wright, and Estep, making nine in the last few days. Besides these, we were awarded a bunch of air medals and clusters. This puts us far in the lead of other Squadrons. A rocket shell with English markings landed on the South end of the runway during the night with a terrific explosion that woke everyone up. No one knows its source or the reason for it's being dropped there. Everyone in the Squadron thought the invasion would come off today from all indications and rumors, but it didn't. Betting is running high as to when the date will be, and there are numerous number pools about the Squadron as to the exact date of invasion.

12 Some of the officers and men went to the Red Cross dance in Bastia in the evening, where the 86th orchestra played. Four of the members of this orchestra hail from our Squadron - Gill, Knecht, Turley and Rosen. One mission was flown, attacking a gun emplacement near the Southern Coast of France. The P-T boats in Bastia harbor are all shined up, loaded with brassy looking torpedoes, with steam up, ready to go as soon as the order is given.

13 There is a stand down all day today for maintenance. Our planes have been operational for a good many days and have taken a beating both with operational hours and rick holes. Col. Bates told the C.O. and Intelligence Officers the plan of the Invasion which is forthcoming. It appears to be better planned and more detailed than any other we have been on. A stack of directives two inches thick constitutes the S.O.P. for this show, and if planning has anything to do with the success of a venture, this Southern France drama will be tops. Lt. Benear obtained his D.F.C. today, which runs our week's total to 10.

14 Major Weigle briefed the officers on D-Day and the invasion, and Capt. Henriod briefed the enlisted personnel later in the evening on the same subject. There is a stand down today in order to get all planes ready for the Invasion of Southern France, which starts at 0800 hours tomorrow morning, after a parachute invasion four hours prior thereto. There has been occasion for greater secrecy on this invasion, since reports indicate that the Germans have already picked up the convoy, know the invasion is coming, but don't know exactly where. The enlisted men were visibly interested in the news and just as visibly relieved to know that another step toward home was being taken. Hundreds of heavies and mediums are again flying over the field today, as they have been doing the past ten days, on their way to soften up Southern France.

15 "D" day dawned bright and clear and our first mission took off in the dark at 0515. Our pilots flew a record number of missions - nine in all, the last one

