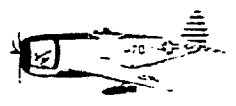




86th Fighter Bomber Group Association
526th Fighter Bomber Squadron



WORLD WAR II DIARY

526 FIGHTER SQUADRON

86TH FIGHTER GROUP

FEBRUARY, 1942 – OCTOBER, 1945

O. H. ad. to 30 Sept '42

526 F-B Sq., 86 F-B Gp., APC
520, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.
Office of the Intelligence Officer.

26 October 1943.

SUBJECT: Squadron History.

To: Intelligence Officer, 86 Fighter-Bomber Gp., A.P.O. 520, New York, N.Y.

1. Following is an outline history of the 526 Fighter-Bomber Sq., 86 Fighter-Bomber Gp., A.P.O. 520, c/o Postmaster, New York City, New York (formerly the 310th Bomb Sq. (D), 86th Bomb Gp. (D), APO 3659, c/o Postmaster, New York City, N.Y.; and APC 525, c/o Postmaster, New York City, N.Y.) as per request.

Frederic H. Henriod
Frederic H. Henriod, Capt. A.C. 0917801.
526 F-B. Sq., 86 F-B. Gp., APC 520, NY, NY.

Incl: 2 cy outline hist

OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE 526 F-B SQ., 86 F-B GP., APC 520, NEW YORK CITY, N.Y.

A. ORIGINAL UNIT:

1. Designation: 310th Bomb. Sq. (L), 86th Bomb. Gp. (L).
2. Date of Organization: 10 February 1942.
3. Place of Organization: Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
4. Authority: General Order No. 5, Hq. Third Air Force, Tampa, Florida.
5. Personnel: Obtained from the 57th Bomb. Sq. (L), 43th Bomb. Gp. (L), AFCC.

B. CHANGES IN ORGANIZATION:

1. On 19 June 1942, the personnel of the organization were transferred from the 310th Bomb. Sq. (L), 86th Bomb. Gp. (L) AFCC to the 387th Bomb. Sq. (L), 312th Bomb. Gp. (L) AFCC, per Special Order 149, dated 19 June 1942, Hq. Army Air Base, Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
2. On 4 August, 1942, 126 men (entire strength) transferred from 387th Bomb. Sq. (L), 312th Bomb. Gp. (L) AFCC, to A/C unassigned and departed from Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma, for Key Field Air Base, Meridian, Mississippi, where they arrived on 7 August 1942.

3. On 7 August 1942, 126 E.M. assigned and joined organization, from A/C unassigned. 23 E.M. from Hunter Field, Savannah, Georgia, assigned and joined organization.

4. On 11 August 1942, all personnel of organization transferred from the 587th Bomb. Sq. (L), 312th Bomb. Gp. (L) AFCC to 310th Bomb. Sq. (L), 86th Bomb. Gp. (L) AAF, per Par. 5, Special Order No. 188, Hq. Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma.

5. On 1 September 1942, new Table of Organization assigned Squadron. Organization changed from Light Bombardment Squadron to Dive Bombardment Squadron, and authorized A-31 and A-24 type aircraft.

6. On 1 June 1943, Fighter Table of Organization assigned to Squadron, superseding Dive Bombardment Table of Organization.

7. On 11 September 1943, Designation of Organization changed from 310th Bomb. Sq. (D), 86th Bomb. Gp. (D) to 526th Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 86th Fighter-Bomber Group., per General Order 49, Hq. 12th Air Force, dated 5 September 1943.

C. STRENGTH OF ORGANIZATION:

1. At beginning of period, 1 officer and 32 enlisted men assigned, Special Order 18, Hq. II A.S.C., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, dated 3 February 1942.

2. Monthly Strength:

a. 28 February 1942,	1 officer assigned	32 E.M. assigned
b. 31 March 1942		36 E.M. assigned
c. 30 April 1942		36 E.M. assigned
d. 31 May 1942		44 E.M. assigned
e. 30 June 1942		84 E.M. assigned
f. 31 July 1942		126 E.M. assigned
g. 11 August 1942	11 officers assigned	197 E.M. assigned
h. 30 Sept. 1942	23 officers assigned	211 E.M. assigned
i. 31 October 1942	27 officers assigned	254 E.M. assigned
j. 30 November 1942	27 officers assigned	267 E.M. assigned
k. 31 December 1942	32 officers assigned	270 E.M. assigned
l. 31 January 1943	32 officers assigned	253 E.M. assigned
m. 28 February 1943	33 officers assigned	254 E.M. assigned
n. 31 March 1943	31 officers assigned	256 E.M. assigned
o. 30 April 1943	32 officers assigned	253 E.M. assigned
p. 31 May 1943	32 officers assigned	253 E.M. assigned
q. 30 June 1943	48 officers assigned	255 E.M. assigned
r. 31 July 1943	47 officers assigned	246 E.M. assigned
s. 31 August 1943	46 officers assigned	244 E.M. assigned
t. 30 September 1943	44 officers assigned	253 E.M. assigned

D. STATIONS: (Permanent or temporary) of unit or parts thereof.

1. Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 10 February 1942 to 4 August 1942.

2. Enroute to Key Field, Meridian, Mississippi, from Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, via train, 4 August 1942 to 7 August, 1942.

- 3. Key Field, Meridian, Mississippi, 7 August 1942 to 19 March 1943.
 - a. 22 officers and 98 E.M. on D.S. to Keesler Field, Biloxi, Mississippi, from 3 February 1943 to 17 February 1943.
- 4. Enroute to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey from Key Field, Meridian, Mississippi, via rail, 19 March 1943 to 21 March 1943.
- 5. Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, 21 March 1943 to 27 April 1943.
- 6. Enroute to New York City P.of E. from Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, via rail, 27 April 1943.
- 7. Enroute to Mers El Kabir, Algeria, North Africa, from New York City P. of E. via water, army transport "John Ericson", 27 April 1943 to 11 May 1943.
- 8. Enroute to La Senia Air Base, near Oran, Algeria, North Africa, 11 May 1943.
- 9. La Senia Air Base, Algeria, North Africa, 11 May 1943 to 11 June 1943.
 - a. D.S. Medioune, Morocco, North Africa, Flight Echelon, 17 officers and 21 enlisted men, 15 May 1943 to 9 June 1943.
- 10. Tafaraoui Air Base, Algeria, North Africa, 11 June 1943 to 7 July 1943.
 - a. D.S. to N. Korba L/G, Tunisia, North Africa, from Tafaraoui Air Base, Flight Echelon, 12 officers and 129 enlisted men, 2 July 1943 to 12 July 1943.
- 11. Enroute to N. Korba L/G, Tunisia, North Africa, from Tafaraoui Air Base, Algeria, North Africa via rail and motor transport, 7 July 1943 to 12 July 1943.
- 12. N. Korba L/G, Tunisia, North Africa, 12 July 1943 to 21 July 1943.
 - a. D.S. W. Gela L/G, Sicily, Flight Echelon, 39 officers and 30 enlisted men, 20 July 1943 to 31 July 1943.
- 13. Staging area, Bizerte, Tunisia, 21 July 1943 to 27 July 1943.
- 14. Enroute to W. Gela L/G, Sicily, from staging area at Bizerte, Tunisia, North Africa, via L.S.T. 388, 27 July 1943 to 31 July 1943.
- 15. W. Gela L/G, Sicily, 31 July 1943 to 1 September 1943.
 - a. D.S. to Barcellona, Sicily, Flight Echelon, 10 officers and 68 enlisted men, 27 August 1943 to 1 September 1943.
- 16. Barcellona L/G, Sicily, 1 September 1943 to 21 September 1943.
 - a. D.S. to Sele L/G, Italy, 3 officers and 0 enlisted men, September to 30 September 1943.
 - b. D.S. to Sele L/G, Italy, 33 officers and 99 enlisted men, 16 September 1943 to 30 September 1943.

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17. Staging area at Milazzo, Sicily, 21 September 1943 to 22 September 1943, Area #151.

18. Enroute to Sele Air Field (Salerno Area), Italy from staging area at Milazzo, Sicily via L.S.T. from 22 September 1943 to 23 September 1943.

19. Sele Air Field, Italy, 23 September 1943 to 30 September 1943 (end of report period).

E. CAMPAIGNS:

1. Sicilian Campaign:

a. First Squadron sortie flown by Lt. Wilson E. Gilliland, who accompanied the 27th Bombardment Group on an LST mission over Southwest Sicily.

b. First Squadron mission flown on 7 July 1943, by Commanding Officer, Capt. Reginald D. Winters, Capt. Stell, 1st Lt. Harry W. Dorris and 1st Lt. Wilson E. Gilliland, strafing and bombing the railway station, warehouse and factories at Mazara, South of Marsala, Sicily, in which mission, Capt. Stell was attacked by three enemy aircraft, receiving serious damage to his plane and being himself wounded by enemy aircraft fire.

c. The Squadron continued from 7 July 1943 to 18 August 1943 (date Sicily completely occupied by Allied forces), to perform strafing, bombing and reconnaissance missions over Sicily and Italy, executing 84 completed missions during that period in support of the ground and naval forces, and on independent targets designed to soften the enemy in the rear.

2. Italian Campaign:

a. The first Squadron mission over Italy was flown on 4 August 1943, consisting of a twelve aircraft bombing mission over the railroad yards at Rosarno, Italy, in which Lts. Estep, Oman, Cook, Ferguson, Claus, Klass, Fisby, Trapman, Orr, Greer, Kones and Capt. Stout participated, with Lt. Fager as a spare, causing serious damage to the marshalling yards at the above mentioned place.

b. The Squadron continued flying missions over Italy from 4 August 1943 to 30 September 1943 (end of report date), consisting of strafing, bombing, patrol and reconnaissance sorties, executing 76 complete missions (averaging approximately 10 aircraft each) between 18 August 1943 and 30 September 1943, which number is included in 112 completed missions flown by the Squadron between the 4 August 1943 and 30 September 1943. The total number of completed missions flown by the Squadron from its inception into combat on 7 July 1943 to 30 September 1943 amounted to 160, with a total of 1407 sorties comprising said missions.

c. The Squadron moved to Italy as mentioned above and continued operation from Sele Air Base, Italy, particularly in close support of ground forces, from that date until the 30 September, 1943, during the critical stages of the Salerno Area battles.

F. COMMANDING OFFICERS IN IMPORTANT ENGAGEMENTS:

1. Capt. Reginald D. Winters commanded the Squadron during the Sicilian

Campaign, up to and including 10 July, 1943, on which date he was killed in action or missing in action, not returning to base from a mission on that date. During his command, Capt. Winters displayed unusual and outstanding and bravery, and particularly on 7 July 1943 when he drove off three enemy aircraft who were attacking Capt. Glenn A. Stell, who was wounded and who was to later be appointed commanding officer in the place of Capt. Winters.

2. Major Glenn A. Stell as Operations Officer and senior officer in command at the time, temporarily assumed the office of commanding officer of the Squadron on 10 July 1943, and on 13 July 1943 was permanently appointed Commanding Officer of the 525th F-B. Sq. (then the 310th Bomb. Sq.), which office he held at the date of the end of this report, 30 Sept. 1943. Prior to and during the time Major Stell has been Commanding Officer of the Squadron, he has highly distinguished himself as a superior pilot, whose courage and bravery have won for him the highest praise from those working under him, together with that of his superior officers in the Group. Particularly, on 7 July 1943, Major Stell was attacked by three enemy aircraft, and after having his plane seriously damaged to the extent that altitude and speed control were lost, he flew his plane at dangerously low altitude from Sicily across the Mediterranean to Korba, Tunisia, at a dangerously low air speed, successfully bringing himself and his plane back to base, although he had been wounded in the encounter. His record from the inception of combat service to date is replete with similar performances of heroism, courage and leadership.

G. LOSSES IN ACTION:

1. Sicilian Campaign.

a. Wounded:

1. Lt. Charles E. Place, wounded in hip, arm and shoulder by enemy anti-aircraft fire on 18 July 1943, at which time, although suffering from serious loss of blood and shock, he brought his plane back to base without throttle, which had been destroyed.

2. Lt. Robert F. Hood, wounded on leg on 16 July, 1943, when he bailed out near Canicatti, Sicily, after having been hit by anti-aircraft fire.

3. Major Glenn A. Stell, wounded by enemy aircraft fire, in the leg, in encounter near Marsala, Italy, 7 July 1943.

b. Missing in Action:

1. Lt. John P. Torland, seen to bail out near Tricina, Sicily, on 18 July 1943, after having been struck, apparently, by enemy anti-aircraft fire. Eyewitnesses reliably reported that he was taken prisoner by German officer and enlisted men.

2. Lt. Francis D. McCarroll, seen to bail out near Regalbuto, Sicily, eyewitnesses reliably reporting that he was seen to land safely and become a prisoner of war at the hands of German and Italian personnel.

3. Lt. Walter I. Kones, killed in action one mile West of Mazzarino, Sicily, on 27 August 1943, mechanical failure of aircraft, while fifteen miles from base on return trip of bombing mission over Sibari, Italy.

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4. Lt. Harold Sittler, killed in action at Maso, Sicily, on 1 August 1943, after engaging in a strafing mission. Cause of death unknown.

5. Lt. George W. Campbell, reliably reported to be a prisoner of war, after bailing out near Mt. Etna, Sicily. Cause of bailout unknown.

2. Italian Campaign:

a. Wounded in Action:

1. None.

b. Missing in Action:

1. Lt. Herbert C. Estep, Jr., failed to return from mission on 12 September 1943, cause unknown.

H. MEMBERS WHO HAVE DISTINGUISHED THEMSELVES IN ACTION.

1. Lt. Harold V. Sittler, leading a twelve aircraft flight over Messina Harbor on 24 July 1943, one of the heaviest defended flak areas known, scoring direct hits on enemy cruiser and 2 destroyers, for which, among other things, Lt. Sittler has been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

2. Lt. Charles E. Place, who, after having been seriously injured by enemy flak, and whose plane was damaged to the extent that there was no throttle control, successfully brought his plane back to base, making a successful landing after being required, while suffering severe shock and great loss of blood, to reach across his body with an uninjured arm and cut the switch, for which feat, among other things, he was awarded the Purple Heart and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

3. Lt. Robert F. Hood, who, after having been wounded and his plane seriously damaged by enemy flak, bailed out, landing on the ground between friendly and enemy lines, being held up and robbed by an Italian officer, eluding capture with the help of friendly troops, for which feat, among others, he has been recommended for the Distinguished Flying Cross, and for which engagement he has been awarded the Purple Heart.

4. Major Glenn A. Stell, commanding officer, who has been awarded the Purple Heart for wounds received in combat with enemy aircraft in flight on 7 July 1943.

5. Lt. Jewell G. Dyer, who has been awarded the Soldier's Medal for heroism over and above duty while attempting to rescue personnel near a burning plane on 10 July 1943 in the vicinity of live bombs which exploded.

6. S/Sgt. Jay M. Biesecker, who has been awarded the Soldier's Medal for heroism in rescue work near a burning, exploding aircraft on 10 July 1943.

7. Sgt. John J. Gaffney, who has been awarded the Soldier's Medal for heroism in rescue work near a burning, exploding aircraft on 10 July 1943, in which he was seriously wounded.

8. Sgt. Clifford R. Young, who has been awarded the Soldier's Medal for heroism incident to rescue work near a burning aircraft at Korba, Tunisia, 10 July 1943.

9. Cpl. Clifford E. Herman, who has been awarded the Soldier's Medal for heroism incident to rescue work at Korba, Tunisia, in the vicinity of a burning, exploding aircraft.

10. Pfc. Carmon Palmieri, who has been awarded the Soldier's Medal for heroism incident to rescue work at Korba, Tunisia, in the vicinity of a burning, exploding aircraft, in which Pfc Palmieri received serious injuries.

11. The following officer pilots, who have been recommended, and their applications forwarded to higher authority, for the Distinguished Flying Cross, based on their unusual bravery and heroism during aerial flight over enemy territory; and for individual feats of courage and bravery over and above their line of duty:

- 1. Major Glenn A. Stell, Capt. John G. Claus, Capt. Wilson B. Gilliland, 1st. Lt. Joseph F. Campagna, 1st. Lt. Harry W. Dorris, 1st. Lt. Herbert C. Estep, Jr., 1st. Lt. Everett E. Fager, 1st. Lt. Harold H. Hill, 1st. Lt. Robert F. Hood, 1st. Lt. Hugh A. Pennal, 1st Lt. Michael P. Yannell, 1st. Lt. Robert J. Frisby, and 1st. Lt. Dale R. Garrels.

✓ 10 Feb 1943 -
C.F. 1743

526 F-2 Co., 86 F-2 Gp., APO
520, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.
Office of the Intelligence Officer.

1 November 43.

SUBJECT: Squadron History.

To: Intelligence Officer, 86 Fighter-Bomber Gp., A.P.O. 520, New York, N.Y.

1. Following is monthly supplement to Outline History required by AII ABC directive and as requested by you, covering the month of October, 1943.

Frederic H. Henriod
Frederic H. Henriod, Capt. 0917501,
526 F-2 Sq. 86 F-2 Gp. APO 520, NY, NY.

Incl: 1 cy outline history mo Oct 43

OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE 526 F-2 SQ., 86 F-2 GP., APO 520, NEW YORK CITY, N.Y.

A. ORIGINAL UNIT: See original outline.

B. CHANGES IN ORGANIZATION:

1. On 12 October 1943, the advance party of the Squadron moved to Pomigliano, Italy, together with the planes.

C. STRENGTH OF ORGANIZATION:

1. Monthly Strength:
a. 31 October 1943 officers assigned E.M. assigned

D. STATICS: (Permanent or temporary) or unit or parts thereof.

- 1. Advance party enroute Sele River airport, Italy, to Pomigliano, Italy, via motor transport, 12 October 1943.
- 2. Rear echelon enroute Sele River Airport, Italy, to Pomigliano, Italy, via motor transport, 23 October 1943.

E. CAMPAIGNS: Operations continued over Italy, otherwise no additions.

F. COMMANDING OFFICERS IN IMPORTANT ENGAGEMENTS: No additions.

G. LOSSES IN ACTION:

- 1. Italian Campaign:
 - a. Capt. John G. Claus, missing in action near Civita Castellano, Italy.

11-1-43

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
Redesignated S-26 37r Bomba Sq.

SQ - FI - 526 - H
27 APR 43 - O.S. 1943

Sheet No. 1 War Diary, 310 B. Sq., 86 B. Co.,

Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

Month of April, 1943. Prepared by Frederic E. Henriod, 1st Lt., 310 B. Sq. 86 B Co.

DAY

EVENTS

- 27 The Squadron entrained at Camp Kilmer at night, and left for the Port of Embarkation at Staten Island, with drawn curtains in the coaches. The coaches were piled with men, B-4 bags, guns, bed rolls and other equipment, so that it was impossible to walk down the aisles. The slow trip to New York saw some of the men playing chess, others sleeping on the back of their necks, and most everyone "bitching" about something. It was insufferably hot in the closed in coaches. Sometime in the morning hours, about 1 A.M. we left the train and carried our B-4 bags, and full equipment about half mile to the waiting ferry where we finally arrived exhausted. Almost in silence we watched the darkened buildings of New York City grow dimmer in the chill sea air and finally arrived at the docks where we boarded the "John Ericsson" (formerly the Kungsholm), after waiting for what seemed like hours, and after walking another quarter of a mile to the gangplank.
- 28 Remained aboard ship all day preparatory to departure, during which time the officers and enlisted men, comprising some three hundred men in our outfit, prepared for the sea voyage. In this early stage we had already heard rumors that we were to dock at Oran, Algiers, North Africa. Precautions against secrecy had been lax all along the line, and both officers and men had their wives in hotels in New Brunswick or New York while we were at the staging area. We never did discover how everyone seemed to know where we were going before we got started. During the day the enlisted men were trying to make themselves as comfortable as possible on the open deck where they slept during the voyage. Some were quartered in cramped, three deck bunks inside, where the air soon became stale. We soon found that bathing or shower facilities were highly unsatisfactory.
- 29 About 9 A.M. our ship pulled away from the docks and set out for Oran. Aboard to were about 1500 negroes, an engineers outfit, a contingent of Army nurses, and several other contingents. The ship shone all day on a calm sea. We followed the coast South, zig-zagging as we went. During the first two days out, the enlisted men quickly learned that one of the few pastimes on a boat loaded with soldiers, was poker. Games flourished, and thousands of dollars passed hands during the voyage. Some played pinochle, others just wandered around.
- 30

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Sheet No. 2. War Diary, 310 B. Sq., 26 B. Op. APO 3659, c/o P-master, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of May, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st. Lt. 310 B Sq. 26 B Op.

1 The sea remained calm throughout the entire voyage of 12½ days, during which time to we were advised that submarines had been near on several occasions, and that two 11 had been destroyed by the naval escort. These were unauthenticated "latrine" rumors and we never did find out just what happened. As we were about to pass North of Casablanca, half of the convoy split off and went to that city, while the remainder of us continued on to Oran. During the trip many of the boys who had never been on the water before, became sick, which added to the general discomfort. A good number of them had the ~~flu~~ flu. Significantly, there was no segregation in the ship hospital of whites and blacks. Due to the lack of bathing facilities and scarcity of water, the men became dirty and unshaven. The evenings and nights were cold and there was considerable uncomfortableness on the open decks where the men slept. The officers were allowed on the upper deck where the Air Corps and Engineers officers spent considerable time with the nurses on board. This association continued into the night throughout the voyage. A ship Chaplain named Parker did considerable preaching over the loudspeaker system, and there was considerable music also. In the evenings, there was usually a movie of ancient vintage in the overcrowded, overheated Officer's Lounge, which rendezvous was a misnomered, large room with wooden benches, a ping pong table, officer's bunks on either side separated by partitions. The food on the ship was excellent. Highlight entertainment values were furnished by colored jam sessions that seemed to just appear around the piano. On the lower deck, an equally hot white band, consisting of guitar, trumpet, clarinet and drums, amused a good many of the soldiers and seamen. One afternoon about dusk we approached and passed Gibraltar, which to most everyone on the boat was a spectacle of awe. Most of the boys had never been away from home until the war started, and this was their first view of foreign soil. Coming into the harbor at Oran proved equally as interesting, and we docked at about 4 P.M., shortly after an announcement on the radio announced the capture of the last elements of the Axis forces in Tunisia. After waiting on board all afternoon, we finally left the ship with our equipment and marched a mile or so along the quay, where waiting trucks took us through the crooked streets of Oran to a field near the airdrome at LaSenia. The night was black as pitch, and the enlisted men managed somehow to pick a bare spot and wrap themselves up in blankets for a restless night. The officers were taken to a barracks building across the road, where they slept for the first time on French beds consisting only of two inch wide slabs of steel. This first night proved to be one of the roughest we had encountered.

12 The officers and men pitched in and arranged a bivouac area in what looked like a corn or wheatfield, with rough furrows. The night before, we had heard the children in the streets hollering for "bon Bon" and "cigaretta" and this constant plea followed us the next day and as long as we were in Africa. The natives gathered around and begged for anything they could get. They are filthy and appear to be infested with vermin, and it is not unusual to see them relieving themselves alongside the roads and streets, or even in the streets. The children appear to be small and undernourished. They all go barefoot and wear nothing but rags. The thing that interested most of the men was the fact that the women went about with what looked like a white sheet wrapped around them, covering their heads, with one eye poking out of a small aperture in the sheet which was folded and held together by the women at nose level.

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CONFIDENTIAL

Sheet No. 3. War Diary, 310 P. Sq., 86 P. Co. APO 3659, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of May, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st Lt., 310 P. Sq., 86 P. Co.

DAY

EVENTS

- 13 Continued our bedding down process. The weather has been ideal since we left the States, with no sign of rain. Our Orderly Room is now functioning, and everyone is pretty much unpacked, with pup tents in neat rows marking our outfit. The dust is terrific and the wind is blowing making it impossible to keep clean. Our men have seen the LaSenia airport, where all kinds of planes seem to be stationed. The hangars are gutted from the pounding received by the Allies in November, 1942. The runway is good and serviceable, and many four-motored planes are on the field.
- 14 Many of the men went to Oran and saw the ancient city, with its colorful uniforms among the crowded streets. There are soldiers from all parts of the world. The people speak French, Spanish and Arabic, and the city has many more European nationals than the rural districts, where the Arabs are numerous. The general theme among the men is the beauty of the French girls, with their tuxon breasts which most everyone calls buckets. Our G.I.s are having difficulty getting these girls to warm up to them, and they keep a respectful distance. There seem to be few, if any brothels. However, there is a G.I. brothel run by the M.P.s, with a supervised prophylactic station across the street. The water here is terrible, and unpalatable. There is a lot of wine which the men have learned to call "Veeno", floating about, and already we have had numerous cases of drunkenness among both the officers and enlisted men. A peculiar characteristic of this beverage is it's delayed action and complete effectiveness once it strikes.
- 15 The veterans of Faid Pass, El Quetta and the Kasserine Pass are pouring into Oran - principally men of the 1st Division. They are a hardy looking lot. Most of them have only the clothes they are wearing, and these are dirty from the recent battles they have been through. They have some hair-raising tales to tell. Most of them say the casualties were terrific in Tunisia. German and Italian prisoners are arriving daily in trucks and over the dinky railroad that passes by our camp. These prisoners are a sorry looking lot. For the most part the Italians seem to be glad the war is over for them. The Germans remain sullen and silent, and conversation with them indicates that they still believe in Hitler and his ideologies. Most of them cannot be convinced that the fortunes of war are going against the Reich, and many of them refuse to believe a person when he tells them that New York and Chicago have not been razed by German air power.
- 16 There are large concentrations of men and materiel here, and numerous airborne troops are stationed near here and more arriving daily. From the activity it appears that invasion is a certainty. The 1st Division boys are virtually tearing the town apart, and the Continental Hotel, which is a sort of gathering spot for everybody, has had to close down its sidewalk bar at 5 P.M. At 5 each day, colored American troops stage a small parade down the main street of Oran, accompanied by a brass band, where they stop in a large square and put on a band concert, followed by Retreat. The odors in Oran are not inviting, and one can smell cheap wine everywhere. The people walk in the street as well as on the sidewalks. Lazy or sick Arabs sleep standing up against a building. Many beg. Many more are blind, and some have their faces eaten away by syphilis. The boys have been told that in a square between LaSenia and Oran, the Arabs sell women. Several state that they have seen this bartering. We have no showers except in salt water, which leaves one's hair sticky and stringy. The water makes washing of clothes almost impos-

CONFIDENTIAL

Sheet No. 4. War Diary. 310 E. Sq., 86 E. Co. AIC 3659, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of May, 1943. Prepared by Frederick H. Henriod, 1st Lt., 310 E. Sq., 86 E. Co.

DAY

EVENTS

- 16 sible. The flies and mosquitoes are thick, and everyone sleeps under mosquito netting. The food has been good since we arrived here. Electric lights are unknown, and we really don't need them, since it is 9 or 9:30 before the sun goes down, and everyone is ready for bed. We are merely marking time, waiting for our airplanes to get to us. Everyone is seeing the countryside and the towns around. The fields seem to be very fertile and as far as the eye will reach there are grape vineyards, with huge clusters of grapes hanging on the vines, about half-ripe. Native two-wheeled carts jerk down the road, drawn by sorry-looking diminutive donkeys. Frequently the donkeys are as small as their drivers. They are a nuisance on the highways but the Allied command apparently has no policy of keeping them off the highways.
- 19 Oran suffered an air raid tonight, and from LaSenia we watched the tracer bullets filling the sky. It was our first experience with an air raid. Everyone put on his steel helmet and got in slit trenches, which the men have been digging for the past week. A boat was bombed in the harbor and another bomb went through a building used for a warehouse. Several were killed. The things we have missed most up to date are Coca Colas and Scotch whiskey. Little wooden sidewalks are appearing in our area, where enterprising G.I.s are building miniature houses out of lumber that has been "policed" up, which is the polite G.I. way of describing finding, buying or stealing articles.
- 20. Another air raid tonight, about half as long and of apparently less intensity. The full moon is ideal for enemy bombers. Lts. McCarroll, Smith, Hill, Hood and Stell, left here for Casablanca where they expect to do some transition flying in the ships we are about to get. The mail from home is beginning to trickle in. The boys have found a good beach, and a truck leaves every day for a refreshing swim in the Mediterranean. The native kids beg the leavings out of the enlisted men's mess kits, and frequently can be seen eating the slop from the cans where the scrapings from the kits are thrown. Dogs seem to be everywhere, and the natives, for some reason or another, take greater pride, show more affection and value these animals more than they do their own children.
- 22 We are still marking time, waiting for our planes. In the meantime, we are gathering maps and equipment for our further activities. The docks at Oran are a confusion, and almost anyone goes there and takes anything he wants or needs. This sort of policing exists in most of the units here, which results in other units going short on various items. There seems to be no adequate means of checking the equipment in or out. The fellows are still drinking vino and generally regretting it. Many of them have bought chickens, eggs, goats and other victuals which they cook over a small campfire in the early evening or morning. The water problem and the dust, wind, mosquitoes and flies are our worst problems.
- 23 The mail is coming in faster, and the boys, who have had nothing much to do but see the sights and go swimming and make a small shanty town with their shelter halves and boards, are writing letters by the hundreds. They all have a sense of humor under the most trying conditions, and many of them in their letters have told the stock story going the rounds that the mosquitoes here are so discriminating as to look at the dog tags before taking a bite to make sure they get the proper blood type.

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Sheet No. 5. War Diary. 310 E. Sq., 86 E. Gp. APO 3659, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of May, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st Lt. 310 E. Sq., 86 E. Gp.

DAY

EVENTS

- 25 The most important event of the day was dinner with ice cream, which we had obtained through the Red Cross from an ice cream factory in Oran. We traded them the ingredients for the manufacture. The weather is still hot, and no rain. The soldiers and equipment from everywhere seem to stream through Oran. The Officer's Club in Oran, operated by the Red Cross, does a thriving business ; 2 every day, when we can get sandwiches and coffee. For the service we contribute what we think it is worth in a box marked "2 Francs if-you think it is worth it". The club sponsors dances each week, and a G.I. band from an available unit furnishes the music. French girls are brought in, properly escorted by their mothers or older sisters. In spite of the strict chaperone system, many have been known to become intimate with the soldiers without benefit of chaperone.
- 26 Our Squadron's tent city has become the pride of the vicinity. Clean, well-kept small side-walled tents have been erected by the men, with built-up bunks, a drainage trench around the whole thing, and frequently there are sturdy double-deck bed arrangements that make it possible for four men to live comfortably under two shelter halves with wooden sides. One ingenious group has even rigged up a washbowl system with running water, constructed of G.I. cans. The water is still unpalatable. One man wrote to his folks that it tasted like someone had already drunk it.
- 27 We haven't heard from our pilots who left some time ago for Casablanca. We are still doing the town and countryside and waiting for the day we will move up to the front. The kids are still swarming about the camp. Typical of their ambitions is a statement made by a little French boy today, who speaks a little English, when he said that after the war he intended to go to America and marry an American girl with long brown hair.
- 28 A lot of English airborne troops have arrived in the area. We don't know their destination but have heard that they are going about 60 miles up the coast toward Mostaganem. The American and English soldiers seem to hold a respectful distance. The average American soldier seems to dislike the British and thinks and states that Lend-Lease is a joke, and that the Americans are really financing the War.
- 29 Many of the officers frequent the Florida Club in Oran, where a poor French orchestra tries to gain the favor of the patrons by playing American tunes. The 1st Division boys are trying to convince the 9th Division fellows that the First won the Tunisian Campaign, and vice versa. The result is numerous bloody noses and broken heads on the streets of Oran. These boys who have been doing the heavy fighting are relaxing in a big way, and a lot of drunkenness exists.
- 30 The morale of the boys is waning a bit on account of inactivity. Many of them frequent a French garrison about half mile away, where they swap yarns with the French and drink the poor grade of wine that the French soldiers give them. As a result, some of the boys come in at all hours of the night, singing and causing some confusion. The English who are camped close by have their tea religiously about four times each day. They have no hesitancy in coming into our area and asking for a spot of milk for their tea. The G.I., biggest hearted in the world, give it to them, as they do bon bon and cigarettes to the youngsters.
- 31 Pay day today and a rush for town. One of the favorite pastimes here is buying

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Sheet No. 6. War Diary. 310 E. So., 86 E. Co. APC 3559. c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of May, 1947. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st Lt. 310 E. So., 86 E. Co.

DAY

EVENTS

31 souvenirs and trinkets to send home to the folks. The principal commodity for sale, it seems, is the red, blue, black or tan wallet. Leather goods are everywhere. The natives have already learned that the American soldier spends freely and have jumped the price of everything. All during the month there has been practically nothing in the store windows except these articles. The country around is in full bloom with tomato plants, grape vines, olive trees and grain everywhere. All of the biscuits and maltose and dextrose tablets that have been issued in the K-ration packages have been given away. Nobody eats them, and they represent a 90% waste to the government. The roads are a mass of military traffic, and large tanks and pieces of equipment seem to be moving westward from Tunisia either to or through Oren. The harbor is usually filled with boats of various kinds. Convoys come every few days, at which time, the mail comes in and the boys spend many hours answering mail from home. The general tenor of the mail from home is that the home folks are willing to sacrifice anything in order to finish the boys overseas with what is necessary to win the war. The boys overseas, likewise, are wondering how the folks back home are, and how things are going. The waste around here is terrific, and one can hardly think, after seeing the huge dumps of gasoline and tires, that at home both of these commodities are rationed. A Non-Commissioned Officers Club has been opened near here, where the boys can go and play various games, drink the local wine, and pass pleasant evenings. It is open to all the enlisted men. The officers have a club on the second floor of the administration building in the barracks adjoining the field, which are modern up-to-date buildings of concrete finish, painted red. The men were amused at the sign on one of the doors in these buildings which had a sign reading "Douche", until they discovered this was the French word for showers. At the officer's club, there is a bar that serves wine and lemonade only. In the evenings one of the enlisted men entertains the officers with selections on an accordion. Occasionally some outfit reserves a large room downstairs for a dance, at which function French girls are brought from Oren. It is also attended by nurses camped nearby - the same unit that came over on the boat with our Squadron. Compared with the United States, the morals of this part of the world are low. Every urchin on the street solicits the soldiers, and everywhere can be heard the well known Fucky-Fuck which the soldiers have taught the youngsters. Frequently these kids pander for their older sisters. The honorarium runs anywhere from a package of cigarettes to a dollar.

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Sheet No. 7. War Diary. 310 E. Sq., 86 E. Co., APO 3659, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of June, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st Lt. 310 E. Sq., 86 E. Co.

DAY

EVENTS

- 1 We are hearing rumors of leaving this area. The food continues to be good, although the Base Section seems to have a priority on the luxuries. We have a small PX in the officer's club, where we can get a ration of 1 carton of cigarettes, 1 box of Chuckles, tooth paste, brushes, hair brushes, soap, etc. for very reasonable prices. There is also an Officer's store in Oren where one can get almost anything, including a blouse, if necessary. The natives around here will pay almost anything for a pair of shoes, a barracks bag or mattress cover. Some of the enlisted men have been known to get as high as \$18 for a mattress cover from the Arabs. The people in town seem to be living on a diet of fish and tomatoes. The first week of June saw a rush of goods to Oren. The stores all popped out with new things for sale, including women's dresses, shoes and hats. Nobody seems to know where this comes from. Questioning the natives does no good, for they won't tell where it came from. My best guess is that a ship from the continent arrived, and was allowed to slip through by the Axis and the Allies by some kind of agreement.
- 6
- 7 We are scheduled to move tomorrow or the next day, so everyone is getting ready. Fellows are gathering in their laundry from nearby towns, Arabs and French women. Although they were cautioned not to take their laundry to these places, they persist in doing so.
- 8 Orders flew thick and fast today. We have been ordered to move. As a result, all of the tents are coming down, packing boxes are being nailed down, and the equipment is getting a last greasing and tightening up. We are not sure where we are going but believe it to be Tafarouin. All of the equipment, boxes, etc. was either loaded on trucks or taken to the railroad depot. At 10:30 P.M. we got another order not to move, and everyone was immediately "blasted off" in the G.I. vernacular. Cursing followed, but everything was unloaded, and men were working all night without any sleep in such unloading. It seems that the rail transportation ran into a bottleneck or a priority. The result: we don't know whether to re-pitch the tents or sleep on the ground until the next order comes through.
- 9 We found out why the unpacking. We were scheduled to go to Gujan, and those in our Group Command objected so strenuously that someone higher up was convinced that we should be sent elsewhere. We spent the day living out of barracks bags and continuing the cursing which started last night.
- 10 No one dare go to town or anyplace else because of the order to be on the alert to move at an hour's notice. We are "sweating out" these orders. As a result there is a lot of letter writing, checker playing, and considerable poker playing.
- 11 Word came that our destination would be Tafarouin, so we are starting to pack all over again.
- 12 Part of the Squadron moved to Tafarouin today. This airrome has the only concrete runway in Africa, we understand, so we are well pleased to be able to start our overseas training on such a field. There is an English Spitfire outfit on the field, and also a contingent of Lockheed-Hudsons. The English occupy all the buildings and we are to bivouac across the field in a grain patch. We started breaking ground and pitching tents in the afternoon, as well as dig foxholes.

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Sheet No. 8. War Diary. 310 B. Sq., 86 B. Gp., APO 3659, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of June, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st Lt., 310 B. Sq., 86 B. Gp.

DAY EVENTS

- 13 Spent the whole day pitching camp and assisting in getting straightened out. The weather is exceptionally hot today. We set up tents and headquarters for the squadron on the line and started to work. The pilots are eager to continue flying their planes which have been assigned to them, and which they have been flying at Cujda and Meddouina. The natives are selling chickens, eggs, etc. to the enlisted men. Several of them barbecued a goat.
- 14 Many of the men in the squadron saw the King of England today at La Senia airport. He arrived in a huge four-motored Manchester. He looked a little tired and worn. The roads are jammed with military traffic, and every once in a while a convoy of trucks will pass with German and Italian prisoners of war. The Germans have to be guarded pretty well, but the Italians need no guard and seem to be glad they are captured. A story is told of one of the 1st Division enlisted men who locked up thirteen Italian captured prisoners at night and the next morning he counted 28. One of them had escaped and brought 15 more of his buddies back. We went to the docks in Oran today and got several more tents that we needed.
- 15 Troop trains pass by LaSenia airport daily loaded with Italian and German prisoners. They stick their heads out of the small windows of small cars that are no bigger than our G.I. trucks. At our former camp at La Senia, this dinky railroad had to go up about a 5% incline to go over a road, and the boys would grease the tracks with G.I. soap, and the helpless little train would spin its wheels, back up to get a better start, and finally, after spending much effort and time, would make the grade. Tonight we had a Group party, where beer and cream puffs were served. A few of the Officers brought a group of nurses bivouacked about six or seven miles away.
- 16 Many of the squadron have found a reservoir where they go swimming. It is an ancient dam built of stones, holding back the water from a small stream, and forming a lake about half mile wide and four or five miles long, with a depth of approximately 100 feet. It is up in the hills about ten miles away. It is the first fresh water we have seen for days. The pilots are doing some patrol work over the Mediterranean. The 311th Sq. is slated to leave our Group next Friday. Lts. Koness, Greer and Ferguson came into our Squadron from the 311th. One of our truck drivers killed an Arab between Tafarouia and LaSenia today, when the old fellow moved directly into the path of one of our trucks.
- 17 The pilots were advised as to the danger areas over which they could not fly, which included the city of Oran, Spanish Morocco, and the dry lake south and west from LaSenia. Orders have been given to shoot any plane down that enters these areas. Reports indicate that the Axis have sympathizers in Spanish Morocco who have shot down some of our planes when they came too close to the border.
- 18 We obtained the call signs for the various airports in Africa, from Operations in LaSenia today. Our mess hall is feeding the Group headquarters. The food has been very good lately. The natives continue to insist in coming into the area and over the field. It is almost impossible to keep them out.
- 19 We instructed the men on the S.O.P. for alert. The pilots are flying daily and our Operations section is and has been operating daily. We were told that the

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Sheet No. 9. War Diary. 310 B. Sq. 86 B. Gr., APO 3659, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.
Month of June, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st Lt., 310 B. Sq., 86 B. Gr.

DAY EVENTS

- 19 Scotch guards who are stationed with the British on the other side of the field had chased several German spies through the hills to the west of here, and had run them into the arms of a French Garrison back in the hills, where they were taken prisoner. We are also told that this area is infested with German spies and saboteurs. One of the pilots flew aloft and shot down an escaped barrage balloon which had got away. All around we see the evidences of the invasion of November. The dry lake has grounded planes and trucks in it, the buildings and hangars around LaSenia and on the road from Oran to LaSenia and Tifarouia are pocked with bullet holes. Today Capt. Ayers, with the NATC, who has been intelligence officer with an outfit at the front in Tunisia for many months, spoke to us today about operations in his theatre.
- 20 Capt. Ayers gave a talk on aircraft identification and its importance in combat. We get a kick out of kidding Chaplain Fischer, a preacher from Texas. Lt. Morris entertained most of the Squadron area with his trumpet in the evening. The pilots have been very busy the past week with their planes. Some of the boys go back to LaSenia in the evening to get a hot shower at the barracks.
- 21 Another talk by Capt. Ayers on aircraft identification. More convoys of German and Italian prisoners are passing each day. The Arabs still trade with the enlisted men and are doing a thriving business in pocketbooks.
- 22 Lt. Col. Dixon gave us a talk on anti-aircraft and radar activities in combat. What with all these talks, it appears that we are slated for combat within a short time. Lt. Barber, our statistics officer, is now at Mostaganem in the replacement pool, having been transferred there at his own request. A large British Halifax, four motored plane landed on the field today, fresh from England via Gibraltar. It had developed oil leaks and was forced down here. It was interesting to talk to fellows who had been in London just a few hours before.
- 23 Another talk by Capt. Ayers on Dive Bombing tactics. Capt. Murphy, our Squadron physician, has ordered the boys not to swim in the reservoir, for fear of infection causing sleeping sickness.
- 24 The heat is still terrific, and we still have had no sign of rain since we left the states. Capt. Ayers gave another talk on Air Sea Rescue, telling us about the Malrus rescues, how the Germans and the Allies had religiously lived up to the rules of fair play in air sea rescue work.
- 25 Destroyed classified documents which had accumulated at Key Field, Meridian, Mississippi, for which we had no further use. We now have a screened in, wooden walled mess hall, with a dining hall built for our officers and the Group officers. We have strenghtened the guard about the field because of reports that paratroopers have been landing within fifteen miles of the field. A number of them have been captured in various parts of Africa.
- 26 Lt. Saer of the 312th Sq. forgot to put his wheels down and as a result made a belly landing in an A-36, on the concrete runway. It made considerable noise, and caused considerable smoke and dust, but he was uninjured. It is the first instance we know of where an A-36 has made such a landing. A beautiful formation of 50 B-24s crossed over Oran today on an unknown destination. They landed at the

Sheet No. 10. War Diary. 310 B. Sq. 86 B. Gp., APO 520, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of June, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st Lt., 310 Sq. 86 B. Gp.

DAY

EVENTS

- 27 Some of the fellows in the squadron observed the belly landing of a B-17 on the LaSenia airdrome, with a full crew. The pilot brought the big ship in without a quiver, and from all outward appearances the only thing that was damaged were the propellers and the underside of the fuselage. All of the occupants were uninjured. Lt. Chandler and Lt. Henriod went to Casablanca this afternoon on a blue Navy transport complete with plush seats. From LaSenia to Casablanca the whole countryside was covered with ripened grain, and small circular spots looking like craters in which ants were crawling around, turned out to be native threshing patches, where the farmers were either throwing the beaten grain into the air for the wind to blow the chaff away, or a farmer was driving a horse or camel in a perpetual circle stomping the grain out of the husks.
- 28 Rumors are flying that we are about to move to Tunisia. Consequently everyone is doing a little packing preparatory to a sudden move.
- 29 Group headquarters and part of the ~~xxxxx~~ squadrons left today for Korba, Tunisia, Africa, on advance echelons to our new base, where we are slated to operate over Sicily.
- 30 The squadron spent all day tearing down tents and packing boxes preparatory to going to Korba, Tunisia. Everyone seems to want to be on his way to the combat area. We hate to leave the showers that Lt. Calamai has rigged up out of a water trailer, pipe and cans.

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Sheet No. 11. War Diary. 310 P. Sq. 86 B. Sp., APO 3659, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.
Month of July, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st Lt., 310 P. Sq. 86 B. Sp.

DAY

EVENTS

- 1 Lts. Chandler & Henriod left in staff car for Korba, Tunisia.
- 3 Lt. Wilson S. Gilliland was the first 310th pilot to fly a combat mission. He flew with the 27th Group on a mission over Sicily, to bomb and strafe a Panzer unit between Marsala and Manzara, Sicily.
- 4 Camp has been set up in an olive grove near a wheat field at Korba, north. It is about two miles from the sea, and the dust rises in great clouds whenever an airplane engine is started. The boys go swimming daily in the sea, which is a beautiful blue. At night the phosphorous makes a pretty sight in the water. We see hundreds of heavy and medium bombers flying daily overhead on their way to Sicily and Italy. Our airdrome seems to be directly on the route. Our airfield was dragged out of a wheatfield by the Engineers and consists of a flat dirt runway that is mostly dust. Our Group headquarters is on a hill overlooking the field and about a quarter of a mile away. It is about a mile west of what looks like some ancient ruins. The Red Cross girls come daily and furnish coffee and donuts to the pilots only. We are about 18 miles north of Hammamet, Tunisia, on the Gulf of Tunis. The Prince of Wales is reported to have a villa in Hammamet.
- 5 We have been spending a lot of time throwing natives out of our cactus fenced olive grove. They live all over and all around the airfield and it seems impossible to keep them out. Capt. Winter and Capt. Stell arrived here today from Taffrouia.
- 7 Capts. Winter & Stell went on a mission over Marsala, Sicily, where Capt. Stell was jumped by three ME-109s, his ship being riddled. Capt. Winter helped drive them off, and Capt. Stell, injured, manouevered his plane back to base after having his speed control effectively knocked out, flying his plane a few feet above the water across the Mediterranean.
- 8 Capt. Stell was given a wonderful writeup by the Public Relations department of the 12th ASG, which writeup was promptly cabled to the States. One of the boys in the 27th Group, which is on a field adjoining ours, was killed in action over Sicily today. Our Squadron ran two missions today, near Canicatti and Licata, where locomotives, radio station, bivouac area and trucks were effectively strafed, the mission encountering light flak, and observing many movements of the enemy which were promptly reported. A bomb from a friendly plane dropped near here today, about 50 feet from a gun emplacement. Fortunately no one was injured. One of the enlisted men had his tent burned up in the middle of the night, and bullets he had there were whistling all around the area as the heat set them off.
- 9 Capt. Stell was awarded the Purple Heart for injuries received in his mission over Sicily on July 7th.
- 10 Today is "D" Day. Night before last Capt. Winter, our commanding officer, told the officers of the Squadron, in detail, about the plan for the invasion which was to begin on the Southern shores of Sicily on July 10th. Last night he told all of the enlisted men about the plan, pointing out to them on a map the course that would be taken, the number of naval and ground units involved, etc. "D" Day for our Squadron spelled "Disaster". After an early morning mission by pilots of our Squadron, where enemy roads and installations were seriously damaged, eleven of

Sheet No. 12. War Diary. 310 B Sq. 86 B. Gp., APO 520, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of July, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st Lt. 310 B Sq. 86 B Gp.

DAY

EVENTS

- The second mission of our squadron came back with the terrible news that our commanding officer, Capt. Reginald D. Winter, had crashed near Barrafranca, Sicily. An hour or so after this bad news, three of our enlisted men were killed when a 309th plane careened off the runway with bombs attached, demolishing the plane and two of ours. Three other injured enlisted men were taken to the hospital. The dead were Stakovich, Saturday, and Kosabuchi, and the injured enlisted men were Gaffney, Palmieri and Hancock. On top of all this, we later discovered one of our enlisted men, Harold Brown, in a hospital, seriously injured as the result of a motorcycle accident.
- 11 Two more missions were flown today over Sicily, one to the railroad yards at Termini Imerese, Sicily, and another to the road junction at Caltanissetta, both of which were highly successful. The enlisted men of the squadron have found a place where they have been able to buy Italian and German motorcycles for any price between five and fifty dollars, and as a result our area is resounding with the sound of about fifteen motorcycles. The men use them to go to work in the morning and to return at night. Also to go to the various small towns nearby.
- 12 One mission was flown today, in which Lt. Hood was seen to bail out over Sicily near Canicatti. He was seen to land safely and start running up a hill. The place where he landed may or may not be enemy territory, so we are eagerly awaiting some word as to his whereabouts and condition. General House came over to the area today and added a little cheer to a situation which has been rather gloomy since "D" Day.
- 13 Two more missions flown today, both successful. We have been getting a goodly portion of C-rations since we have been here, and these, together with K-rations, have been our usual meals since we arrived in Korba. There are a few local vegetables, but it is dangerous to eat them. There are lots of white-meat melons, which are tasteless compared to those from Texas or California. The people around here are almost 100% Arab. They are just as dirty as those in Algeria, and the boys are missing the French girls that were numerous on the streets in Cran. Many of the fellows have had the G.I.s which is the well-known Army diarrhoea. Up until now, hardly a man in the squadron has shaved since D-Day and no one has taken a bath.
- 14 Today we were overjoyed when Lt. Hood walked into headquarters and gave an amazing report of having bailed out, being held up and finally being picked up by our own forces. An Italian officer had robbed him of his personal belongings before being frightened away by an approaching American half-track. Lt. Hood received the Purple Heart for the injuries he received on the July 12th mission. Our living quarters are quite comfortable. We have an army canvass cot, with four poles at each corner, over which we stretch our mosquito netting. We haven't pitched any pyramidal tents, since there is no rain, the weather is hot, and it is more comfortable in the open air. We stretch our shelter halves on convenient limbs of the trees under which we sleep, to keep the sun off.
- 15 Yesterday and today the pilots have met noticeably little anti-aircraft fire. On all their missions over Sicily, the natives ride along the roads apparently unconcerned, making no effort to dive for a ditch. On the contrary these people on the roads and in the fields wave at the fliers as they go over. Typical of the missions that the boys are running daily are the two ran today. On the

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Sheet No. 13. War Diary. 310 B. Sq., 86 B. Gr., APC 520, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of July, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st Lt. 310 B Sq. 86 B Gr.

DAY

EVENTS

- 15 first, an eight man mission made eight direct bomb hits (500 pounders) on the railroad yards at Enna, Sicily, and eight direct hits on the railroad and highway junction at Alia, Sicily, after which they strafed 14 railway cars at Stefano and 3 at Lecara, encountering small arms fire from the rooftops along the railway from Alia to Felaga, and heavier flak in the other areas. On the second mission twelve pilots flew their ships on a bombing mission of opportunity from S. Stefano to Palermo, on the north coast of Sicily. In this mission, they bombed and strafed 4 large boats and several small vessels at Termini Imerese, scoring direct hits. They strafed two trains between Termini Imerse and Alia, and strafed trucks along the highway. A ship was also strafed near Termini, as were 7 railway cars at Palazzo, several North of Corleone, and several motor vehicles near Marineo, where they observed several fires and a large explosion. These missions represented an almost impossible distance for the range of our planes, considering the fact that our boys had to fly up the Tunisian coast, across the Mediterranean, all the way across Sicily, and then shuttle back and forth on the North coast of the latter. A fight occurred in the messhall tonight, in which one boy was cut with a spatula, requiring 12 stitches to be taken in his cheek.
- 16 The Spitfire unit which occupied a field near ours, and which is now in Sicily, was reported to have lost 30 men in a German raid where direct hits were scored on the barracks in which the men were quartered.
- 17 Lt. Townsend was reported missing over Sicily, as were two other pilots of the Group. Lt. Charles E. Place, in a flight over Sicily, was struck by enemy flak and had his left arm almost shot off, and his plane severely damaged. The flak rendered his throttle or speed control completely useless, so that he could gain no altitude. He suffered from considerable pain and loss of blood, but notwithstanding this fact and the fact that his plane was dangerously shot up, he brought it back to base. Having no throttle control and the arm used to control the landing, he reached over across his body with his good arm and cut the switch and made a perfect landing. His feat was considered by everyone as the greatest they had heard to date in the war. On top of this excitement, a pilot from one of the other squadrons, Lt. Crow, forgot to put his wheels down, and landed his plane on the dirt runway, with two 500 pound bombs attached to his wings, and he lived to tell the tale.
- 18 Lt. Townsend returned to camp after having spent 18 hours in the chilly Mediterranean. He had bailed out yesterday after having been hit by enemy flak, and his motor having gone out over the sea. He managed to climb aboard his dinghy, lost his rations, and fortunately shot a turtle with his pistol, which he had started to eat, when a Walrus seaplane, searching for others, stumbled upon him in the water and rescued him. He was apparently none the worse for the harrowing experience. Lt. Torland was hit by flak over Sicily, and was seen to bail out. Lt. Fox is in the hospital in Tunis with a case of Malaria.
- 19 We have been having movies occasionally on top of the hill near group headquarters. For the most part the movies are old, and the generator invariably breaks two or three times during the show. It is a welcome relief, however, to the long hours we spend in seeing that two or three missions go out every day. During the past few days we have been told that over 40 of our own transport planes have been shot down in Southern Sicily by our own naval units.

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Sheet No. 14. War Diary. 310 B. Sq., 86 B. Gp., APO 520, New York, N.Y.

Month of July, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Kenriod, 1st Lt. 310 Sq. 86 B. Gp.

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20 At noon today some of us took off as advance echelon, headed for Gela, Sicily. We have heard of the navy shooting down our own transports, hence everyone on the advance party felt a little concerned about this trip. However, we made the hour and a half trip without event, flying low over the water at about 50 feet and rising as we approached Sicily to fly over the hundreds of naval vessels strung along the coast. They were still unloading men and materiel. Barrage balloons were strung up everywhere in the harbors, and there were several sunken or half-submerged boats in the harbors. Our new field is not so dusty as that at Korba. It has been dragged out of a tomato farm. We put our cots up on a hill which overlooks the Mediterranean on one side and our field on the other while Gela is a half-mile South. Our bivouac area is in the center of a hill which was terrifically fortified by the Axis. All around one can see camouflaged pillboxes and deep trenches in the side of the hill. Hundreds of hand grenades are lying about on the ground, in boxes and under every tree. Thousands of rounds of Italian ammunition is also lying around, as are soldiers' letters, helmets, leather ammunition pouches, maps and other implements of war. Land mines are everywhere and we don't dare move out of the little cluster of trees that we have chosen as our bivouac area. Everything makes it appear that the Germans and Italians left in the greatest haste. The natives welcome us with open arms and shouts of "Caramelli" which is the counterpart of "Bon Bon" in Africa. The people here seem to be a little cleaner than those in Africa, but not much. The rough two wheeled cart which was pulled by a half-pint donkey is replaced here by more sturdy two-wheeled carts, with bright and gaudy pictures painted on the sides, with a donkey almost twice the size pulling it. The streets of Gela are not only filled with soldiers, but also with filth and dirt. The people live under the most unhealthy conditions, and an open sewer can be smelled in the middle of town. Pigs and other animals live in the front room of the main street with the people, who apparently are poor and hungry. A peculiar thing about this part of the world is that the houses and buildings are disgustingly dirty and unkempt, while on the inside one may find a handsome interior. The same thing holds true of the churches. Everyone is a Catholic and seems to build his whole life and existence around the church. Our bivouac area was an almond grove, and the almonds are ripe. We can reach up over our beds and pick our meal. We have the sky for our ceiling and the usual four poles and mosquito netting for our bedroom. The night here is really chilly.

21 Today we had a stand-down which gave us an opportunity to straighten out our living quarters. Our bunks in the almond grove are near several buildings of two-story stucco design, in one of which lives an elderly priest who has told us of the pillaging of the Germans and the rape of their young girls by German officers. We don't know whether to believe these stories, since we have quickly learned that the Sicilian tells you what he thinks you will be pleased to hear in order to gain personal favor. We suspect that they told the Germans the same kind of tales. There are wells scattered about in these groves, where the people get their water. The water is better than that in Africa, but still tastes stale. We are living on C-rations for the present. The groves are walled in by large cactus plants, and we find the natives selling and eating the pears which grow on these plants. Our planes are getting ready to resume operations and our pilots are ready to get into action after a one day rest. All up and down the road to Licata are endless convoys of Allied trucks and equipment which

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Sheet No. 15. War Diary. 310 B. Sq. 86 B. Gp., PO 520, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of July, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st Lt. 310 B. Sq. 86 B. Gp.

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- send huge billows of dust into the air. Alongside the airfield, on the flats, is bivouacked a contingent of inky black South Africans in the British service, with whom the natives are having some difficulty when they get drunk and make advances toward the women in the neighborhood. Dead bodies are still floating along the beaches off Gela, and there is a film of oil on the water. The shore has not been de-mined as yet, and occasionally one will pass a spot where the odor of an unburied enemy soldier is met. Water has to be hauled to our camp from about five miles up the road where a water point has been established. We can see and hear the big guns pounding away up the road inland, at night.
- 22 Nobody has been able to take a bath since we landed here. We are getting up at 5 A.M. and often are kept going until after dark. We resumed operations from our new field, and one of our boys came back today with flak in the wings of his plane. The flak seems to be heavier according to all reports. We haven't heard from Lt. Forland as yet, but he is believed to have been safe, although he may have been in enemy territory. Many of the enlisted men have been venturing into Gela and the surrounding territory, and the native girls are attracting their attention as a happy contrast to the Arab women in Africa. In the past few days all of the men have dug themselves slit trenches or foxholes.
- 23 We finally found a shower about five miles away on the road to Forte Clivo. It is situated in a dry stream bed off the road. This provided us with the first real fresh water shower in many days. We had two heavy missions of twelve planes each during the day and a lot of damage was done to an enemy convoy off Cape Orlando. At about 11:30 at night the air raid alert was sounded. This consisted of the G.D. firing three shots into the air. The bombing took place up the road about ten or fifteen miles, we think at Forte Clivo. However, the flashes were large, red and orange. We could hear the loud explosions, and watched the show for better than a half hour.
- 24 Today was a red letter day for the Squadron. The pilots flew several missions, but in the afternoon, one of our flights of twelve planes, led by Lt. Sittler of Pennsylvania, accomplished what had been thought to be the impossible. The flight took off on a mission along the North coast of Sicily to bomb and strafe the shipping on the North coast from S. Stefano to C. Milazzo. Finding no suitable targets, Lt. Sittler led his flight into the deadly harbor of Messina, one of the heaviest flak defended areas in the world at this time, and fearlessly dove through a curtain of anti-aircraft fire, scoring direct bomb hits on a large enemy cruiser and two destroyers lying along the west shoreline. The cruiser and one of the destroyers were set afire, and the whole flight weathered the encounter and came back to base. As a tribute to their daring, the German radio broadcast late tonight announced that a large Allied ship was burning in Messina Harbor, having been destroyed by Axis fire. Up until this time, it was believed too dangerous an area to send even medium bombers in. Tonight we had another air raid, and for an hour or longer we watched flashes, flares and curtains of tracer bullets lighting up the sky. The enemy bombers, however, left our area alone.
- 25 We had been going at such a pace, that we knew today was Sunday only when the Chaplain came down onto the field with his kit and held services in the Intelligence tent. The beaches are still mined. Some of us ventured down a road leading to the beaches, and talked to an elderly Italian lady who had lived in Brooklyn

Sheet No. 16. 310 B. Sq., 86 B. Sp., APO 520, c/o Postmaster, New York City, N.Y.

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for a number of years, and who was both the envy of and spokesman for the natives of the neighborhood. She expressed to us what seemed to us to be the general sentiment and attitude of the Italian people when she told us that Mussolini had been a great man, had given the Italian people good roads, new buildings, health clinics and modern conveniences, and that the people were 100% for his program, and that his only mistake was teasing up with Hitler in a war against the United States. The rape of Ethiopia seemed logical and sensible enough to this old lady, and the subjugation of other races justifiable in view of the crowded condition of Italy, but the unpardonable sin was Mussolini's decision to fight America, which to the average Italian mind was an impossible gesture. Not over 100 yards from where we stood, overlooking the Mediterranean, two small children were blown to bits yesterday by one of the mines planted by the Germans. Talking to a Major in the Engineers, we passed along the information as to where the mine field lay, which the elderly Italian lady had carefully pointed out to us. The Major thanked us and explained a little of his work. From what he said, the Engineers are a tough bunch. Their greatest danger seemed to be in the wooden Italian land mines which could seldom be detected by the Engineers mine detectors. Frequently these infernal machines resulted in death to our personnel.

26 One of our flights today completely demolished a large fuel dump and bivouac area on the North coast of Sicily, in a close air support mission for the ground forces, who had had difficulty in advancing in the area. Impartial observation and report received indicated that the terrific explosion of the fuel dump sent debris skyward for hundreds of feet, and completely cleared the way for the ground troops to advance. This mission is typical of the job our plane is designed to do. The road from here to Licata is still lined with traffic. All along the road are evidences of the elaborate defense system set up along the South coast of Sicily. What looks like a well-kept bungalow of four or five rooms, with wheat fields, straw stacks and other things having the appearance of farm implements, invariably turns out to be a gun emplacement surrounded by cardboard walls, fake windows and roofs, inside of which is a heavy cement installation with guns ready to be fired out of the dummy windows. In camouflage, we have found the nazis to be artists, and upon seeing these installations, we immediately recall reports of the pilots back in Korba, of seeing nothing except farm buildings and peaceful surroundings. One of the things our pilots were at a loss to understand in the initial phases of the invasion was intermittent firing from farm houses apparently occupied by natives, while the natives out in the fields and on the road waved to them as they passed in friendly fashion. Now that they have seen these phony farmhouses they understand the situation. There seem to be hundreds of these camouflaged houses all over the hills in this region.

27 Today Mussolini resigned. Our first impulse was to think the war in Italy was over and that the devastation of Italian cities, railroads, etc. would immediately cease. Upon reflection, however, we knew that this was not so, and that the battle against the Germans would continue unabated. The church bells in Gela rang long and loudly. People all over the streets were running their fingers across their Adam's apple, significantly indicating the eclipse of Il Duce, and invariably such a gesture was accompanied by a statement that "Il Duce: brutabestia" or "Mussolini no bono - mort." At Licata, great numbers of Italian prisoners, ragged, dirty and haggard looking, were being collected and being allowed to go home in many instances. Mothers, sweethearts and wives would wait solemnly outside the barbed wire fences until their loved ones received proper clearance. Many of the Italian

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Sheet No. 17. War Diary. 310 E. Sq., 86 E. Gp., c/o Postmaster, New York, N.Y.

Month of July, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st. Lt., 310 E Sq. 86 E. Gp.

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soldiers have already asked to be allowed to join the American forces.

- 28 Lt. McCarroll was lost today. He was seen to bail out near Cesaro, in enemy territory. We are all hoping that he was uninjured and that he may be able to get back to our lines. Many G.I.s have been reported injured by land mines. There is one thing that military orders cannot cope with, and that is the insistence on the part of the average American soldier in collecting souvenirs, even at the expense of wandering into highly dangerous areas.
- 29 We had a stand-down today and flew no missions. It came as a welcome relief to the fast pace that the pilots and ground crews have been maintaining. Many of the men went sight-seeing, and all of the equipment of the Squadron was being used. There have been a few movies given by the Service Squadrons, which have been held down on the field near the airplanes. Ever since leaving the states we have had periodic opportunities to see movies, but invariably they have been of ancient vintage. The movie industry's claim of great sacrifice for the boys overseas certainly does not mean to include the issue of current films for distribution to the men abroad. The films, however old, are really welcomed by our boys and the shows are well attended. This is in sharp contrast to the criticism of the Red Cross by most of the enlisted men, who, in their letters, are advising their folks back home never to contribute to the Red Cross again. The general impression among the men, whether right or wrong, is that the Red Cross is a racket that absorbs the gifts of the American public in creating soft jobs for administrators, and providing amusement for field directors and Red Cross girls in base sections.
- 30 President Roosevelt spoke over the radio today (3:30 A.M. our time ~~xxxxxxx~~ in the morning). Many of the personnel stayed up all night to hear the President tell the American public, among other things, that the rationing on coffee had been lifted. The rear echelon of our Squadron, which has been at the staging area in Bizerte, arrived today. As a result, we moved our bivouac area to a larger place, about 200 yards away, near a large two-story house, where we installed an Orderly Room, office for the Adjutant and one for the commanding officer, and an Officer's Club upstairs. The officers and men are all eating together out of mess kits as we have been doing for several weeks. The food is principally C-rations, K-rations 5-in-one, and some eggs and vegetables which our Mess Officer buys locally.
- 31 We had two more very successful missions today in the Randazzo-C. Milazzo-Messina area, where the boys are encountering some of the heaviest flak they have seen in the war. Barbers, peddlers, farmers, kids and everybody else wanders all over our airfield. This presents an almost humorous contrast to the carefully guarded airfields in the United States, where even an officer was required to show his AGO pass to get through the gates. It has been our experience that the closer we get to the front lines, the more lax the security situation becomes. Already on this field we have found huge boulders lying on the runway which, if allowed to remain, represent a death trap for landing planes. These facts have been reported to higher authority, but nothing seems to be done about it, and the natives continue to wander about the field, shaving the men, selling melons and grapes, and even sitting on the wings of the planes in some instances. An effort is made in the Squadron to keep them out, but the area is so large, and the fact that is unfenced, makes it impossible to clear the natives out.

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Sheet No. 19. War Diary. 310 E. Sq., 86 E. Sp., APC 520, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of August, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st. Lt. 310 E. Sq., 86 E. Sp.

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on all sides of Mt. Etna except the Northeast side, where the Germans are making a stand. The Third Air Defense Wing has opened an Officer's Club in a building back of the Church in Gela, which is elaborately furnished. They have a wide assortment of liquor at reasonable prices. There is an old fashioned phonograph in the place with a long horn on it, and there are plenty of old editions of various magazines and newspapers for the officers.

8 Flew only one mission today. The enlisted men are having a good time in the vicinity drinking a little wine and seeking the company of some of the native girls. There have been several instances of intimacy with them in the area, according to reports, which is not uncommon among the enlisted men. A singular and striking observation however, is the complete absence in our Squadron or any others we have seen in the Army, of sexual perversion, as might be expected in large groups of men so pretty largely isolated from civilization. Sociologically, all indications are to the effect that our men are the finest soldiers in the world.

9 Some of our officers set out today to look for Lt. Campbell, and the trip took them to Catania, which was taken two days ago. Contrary to the reports we had heard, the people were not singing in the streets or dancing for joy upon the occasion of the entry of the Allies into the city. This may have been the situation day before yesterday, but not today. On the contrary the people were looking very solemn with a characteristic hopelessness written on their faces. There were not a few hisses after we had passed some of the groups huddled in the streets which were a mass of debris. The airport at Catania was a study in total destruction, with burnt-up and destroyed FW-190s, Me-109s, JU-88s, Macchi-202s and others strewn all over the field and in the large stone revetments that circle the field. The hangars and administration buildings were gutted skeletons. Two G.I.s were the only signs of life on the field which still smelled of unburied dead. These fellows were replacing an engine damaged by a booby trap left by the Germans, in an almost new JU-88, which the G.I.s were going to repair to use as a transport plane in their squadron. Today was one of the heaviest our pilots have had to date. They flew four missions, totalling forty sorties, causing considerable damage in the Milazzo-Messina area.

11 Several of our ground officers and pilots went today in search of Lt. McCarroll who is missing, and after talking to natives in the vicinity Southwest of Cessaro, found Lt. McCarroll's plane and definitely established that he had made a hazardous but safe belly landing on the side of a hill, had attempted to escape, but was captured, after a native family had given him help and directed him to what they thought was the best channel of escape. For this assistance, two of the natives were shot by the Germans. Randazzo fell to the Allies today, breaking the last line of resistance to Messina.

14 A little friction arose today between our flight leader, Lt. Dorris, and assistant Operations Officer of the Group, Capt. Stout. Lt. Dorris at a briefing told Capt. Stout that he did not intend to use dive brakes on his flight, whereupon a discussion ensued, eventually ending in Capt. Stout's reporting Lt. Dorris as displaying an attitude of refusal to comply with orders. The assertion made by the operations officer that Col. Paul had given orders to use dive brakes turned out to be wrong.

15 Ran three missions of twelve planes each today to North coast of Sicily and West coast of Italy.

Sheet No. 20. War Diary. 310 B. Sq., 86 B. Gp., APO 520, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of August, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st. Lt., 310 B Sq. 86 B Gp.

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- 16 No missions were run today or on the 17th, presumably because the occupation of Sicily was virtually complete, and our Allied ground forces were so close to Messina that air-ground support was not feasible or advisable. Sgt. Jarrell was injured by an Italian land mine between our area and the beach. All personnel had been notified in writing on the bulletin board that the area was prohibited, but Sgt. Jarrell and another enlisted man disregarded this notice.
- 18. Messina fell to the Allies today. One of our enlisted man suffered an injury to his hand when a souvenir Italian pistol which he had obtained, went off. During the period from "I" Day to the ultimate occupation of invaded Sicily, two of our pilots had been killed, two were definitely known to be prisoners of war, one had been so badly injured that he will never be able to fly again, four of our enlisted men had been killed, one injured so badly he was sent back to the states, one injured by land mines, one injured by a pistol, one in a motorcycle accident, and three seriously injured in an airplane accident. A long flight over Italy today resulted in one pilot having to land on another field because of lack of fuel.
- 19 No missions today. Most of the fellows have gone to neighboring towns to get souvenirs, principally to Licata, Vittorio and Comiso. The Sicilians have learned the value of the American soldier's spending characteristics, and as a result prices have gone sky-high. We have seen practically no looting by the American soldiers. Occasionally when one knows that a price is out of line, he will give the natives what he considers an article worth and walk out, in which case an excited vendor goes through a lot of motions but doesn't do much about the situation. The officer's club which we have upstairs over the Orderly Room usually is the scene of a poker or bridge game in the evenings. Our Mess Officer sees to it that there are hard boiled eggs, grapes, almond nuts or some other knick-knacks around.
- 20 A pickup orchestra consisting of Mavity on the mandolin, Knecht on the clarinet, Dorris on the Trumpet and Lundberg on a wooden box drum have been entertaining the area in the evenings with hot music, every third tune of which is "The Shiek of Araby".
- 21 We are all expecting to move soon, with an invasion of the Italian mainland in the offing. When and where this will take place is a matter of conjecture.
- 22 Today we had a big day with the planes. While flying escort for a B-26 formation over Salerno, Italy, our boys were jumped by about 20 ME-109s, and in the ensuing battle, our boys bagged three of the enemy ships without loss to us, and chalked up 2 probables. The victories went to Capt. Gilliland, Lts. Fager and Wright, and the probables went to Lts. Pennal and Frisby. These victories were the first of the squadron or the group since entering combat. Up to date there has been a noticeable lack of enemy planes and practically none have been encountered by our pilots.
- 23 Kharkov reported taken by the Russians. We have been eating a lot of eggs lately which taste might good. There are a lot more of this commodity here than there was in Africa.
- 24 The pilots flew an escort mission over Sapri, Italy, today, escorting a 24 plane formation of A-36s that bombed this place. In the evening Capt. Stell opened up 7 bottles of Seagrams he had obtained somehow from the Quartermaster, and we had a real old fashioned party.

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Sheet No. 22. War Diary. 310 B. Sq. 86 E. Gp., APO 520, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of September, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st Lt, 310 B Sq, 86 E Gp.

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- 1 We travelled all day by motor convoy through mountains, detours past knocked-out bridges, arriving at the Barcellona airport in the dark about 11 P.M. The pilots flew their planes to the landing field earlier in the day. Many of us did not have time to prepare bunks, and we simply slept for the night in or on what we had at the moment. The people along the North coast of Sicily appear to be cleaner than those on the Southern coast. No missions today.
- 2 We flew three missions off our new field today. It consists of a long dirt runway dragged out of a grape vineyard. At one end is a stone fence about six feet high which represents a hazard in takeoffs and landings. People live all around the field, and can be seen carrying large baskets of grapes on their heads up and down the narrow, winding roads that go in and out of the vineyards. The women appear to do all the work, and at the present time they are making wine, which is apparently a simple process, consisting of dumping a basketful of grapes on a concrete floor and then stomping in them with their bare feet. We have bivouacked in an orange grove at one end of the runway, and on the takeoff the planes zoom over our bunks less than 50 feet, with two 500 pound bombs hanging to the wings. From a security standpoint, it is an unhappy choice, but the only available place. In the evening everyone watched the artillery fire at Messina, which is about 12 or 15 miles on the other side of a mountain. Large flashes of orange light made it appear that ammunition dumps might be exploding. Today Sgt. Clifford Young and Clifford E. Herman were awarded the Soldiers Medal for unusual bravery at Korba.
- 3 The British invaded the Italian mainland today, across the straits from Messina, principally at Reggio Calabria, and met with very little resistance. Messina is a picture of almost total destruction. About 20,000 people who are homeless are living outside the city in a makeshift camp, where health conditions are deplorable. A pestilence is feared by the authorities. Some of our men have visited Messina and have told of the horrors that exist there. We are pretty well settled in our new area, and everyone has his mosquito netting up and his foxhole dug. We are still simply putting our cots under a tree with our shelter halves strung above from the limbs of the trees. We are about 200 yards from Mediterranean, along whose shores there are fine homes. The homes are also of good and modern construction, scattered throughout the vineyards which surround our field. We have taken over a vacant seaside villa for an Officer's Club and for the purpose of quartering some of the pilots. Another one further up the beach has been requisitioned for an enlisted men's club. It is elaborately furnished and provides a wonderful place for the enlisted men to relax, play cards, read books or drink vino during their off hours and in the evening. Each one has electric lights furnished by a small generator unit. No missions today.
- 4 Had a mission over the Catanzaro area, Italy, today, where heavy concentrations of flak have been reported. Considerable damage was done to a road junction, a bridge and numerous motor trucks of the enemy. Our present area is the most comfortable and pleasant we have struck since leaving the States. The weather is warm in the daytime, but broken by a sea breeze, the swimming is ideal and the headquarters in modern, up to date buildings being all that we could ask for.

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Sheet No. 23. War Diary. 310 B Sq. 86 E Sp. APC 520, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of September, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st Lt, 310 B Sq, 86 E Sp

- 5 No missions today. It appears that the ground troops are meeting little or no resistance in Italy, and there is no particular need for air ground support today. The natives around here wander all over the field and it is a job to keep them off the runway. At one end of the field we have a British anti-aircraft unit which is prepared, along with others to defend the airport against air attack. We can see Mt. Etna in the distance smoking. Spitfires from the Milazzo field and A-36s from the 27th Group further up the coast generally keep the skies filled with aeroplanes, along with ours. Group Headquarters is located back of us, over on the beach, in a two-story structure, on top of which is a hastily constructed control tower.
- 6 No missions today. Today is Labor Day in the States. We are conscious of the fact that something is going to happen in the way of an invasion further up the coast of Italy. We have not been advised exactly where as yet, but one of the native women who lives on the seashore, confided in one of our flying officers that it would be on Thursday, Sept. 9, at Salerno. We tried to find out where she got her information, but she refused to divulge the source, except to say that she had merely heard people guessing about it in Barcellona. She told him a week ago.
- 7 Our commanding officer called the officers together tonight and told us of the Invasion Plan, which was to be at Salerno beaches on the 9th, just as the Sicilian woman had told Lt. Yannell a week ago. We flew a mission from Nicastro to C. Conafati, with excellent results.
- 8 Italy surrendered late today. We were advised, however, that the invasion would go on as scheduled and that tomorrow we would have a heavy day. A mission is to take off from this bumpy field every half hour to patrol the Salerno area to cover the landing forces.
- 9 We started early in the morning on our missions. The planes were equipped with belly tanks to provide sufficient fuel to make the long trip and complete the hour patrol over Salerno. Four of these missions were run. On the first mission the boys encountered enemy aircraft, and shot down a FW-190 and a Fiesler Storch, making five to our credit to date.
- 10 Four more missions flown today. Major Tarrant's plane ground-looped on the field, but no one was injured. A Spitfire was demolished on the field as it made an emergency landing, missing Lt. Claus' ship which was landing, by inches.
- 11 Four more missions today. We have had a heavy schedule this week. The Italian fleet showed up at Malta today and surrendered. On one of our missions, one of our boys had to land in the dark on the 27th Group field a few miles from here.
- 12 Four more missions today. Lt. Estep failed to return from one of these missions, his plane having been apparently hit by flak. The crash was either near Casalbuono or Legonegro, Italy. We don't know whether he was able to bail out or not. Some of our boys have already landed at the strip at Sele, on the Salerno beaches, but had to leave due to the close proximity of the enemy.
- 13 We are supposed to take off by transport for Italy today. However, it was postponed because we received word that the enemy had counter-attacked and were so close to the field that it was impossible to land.

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Sheet No. 24. War Diary. 310 B Sq. 86 B Gp., APC 520, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of September, 1943. Prepared by Frederick H. Henriad, 1st Lt, 310 B Sq 86 B Gp.

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14 Today we were advised that our official title had been changed from the 310 Bomb Squadron (D), 86th Bomb Group (D), to the 526th Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 36th Fighter-Bomber Group, to more nearly conform to a description of the type of plane we use and to differentiate it from the P-40s and other fighters. We all packed and waited for the transport planes to take us to our new base in Italy. About noon, twelve of them took off loaded with mess equipment and other material and a large contingent of personnel. When they were about to land at Sele, on the field on the beach South of Salerno, a large land signal told them to return to their base, and as a result they all returned and unloaded. The transports had dropped their wheels preparatory to landing on the new field when they were sent back. They had to fly through flak and lobbing shells which were going in both directions from the German guns toward the boats offshore and from the hundreds of boats toward the German concentrations inland two or three miles. Lt. Cook nosed a plane over on the new field and is stranded there with Lt. Willard. Group headquarters are there and are perilously close to the enemy lines. Several shells landed near the headquarters, and air raids have been numerous there. 2 of our planes which landed there had to remain on account of having been hit by flak.

15 After having had to return from Sele in the transports without landing, we unpacked and began awaiting further orders. Most of the squadron did not re-pitch their ~~mess~~ shelter halves. At 2:30 we were awakened and advised that our advance party would make another try to land at Sele and to be ready to take off at 8 A.M. There were seven missions flown yesterday, some from Sele where some of the pilots had landed and some from Barcellona. When the records were finally gathered in and straightened out, Lt. Garrele was shown to have hit an ME-109, knocking off the canopy, and hitting two FW-190, knocking off the canopy of one of these. Results otherwise were unknown, but both of these were certainly probable. Five missions were flown today.

16 Our advance echelon got off on the transports, loaded with men, mess equipment, jeeps and every other kind of paraphernalia, at 10:30 A.M. and without incident, except that one of the transports caught in a prop wash almost crashed, we landed at Sele airport. We hadn't unloaded over thirty minutes when 8 Focke-Wulf 190s raided the harbor and field and everyone ducked for a ditch or foxhole. This happened three times during the day. Three of the enemy planes were bagged by the hundreds of boats sitting offshore. The big 155s a few hundred feet from our camp are pounding all day with a roar, and our squadron and others are getting ready to give some real close air-ground support to the U.S. forces which are only three or four miles from our field slugging it out with the Germans. For several days, including today, it has been nip and tuck, and nobody has felt certain who the airfield belongs to, us or the Germans. Everyone is confident, however, but we are ready, if necessary, to take to the beaches and swim for it if necessary, or take a pot-shot at anyone who looks suspicious. There is an O.P. (observation post) in our backyard, with 5 enlisted men attached to the artillery who told us their only job was to sit there and watch and report if and when any German tanks or men started coming across the field toward them. Several cubs are flying around spotting targets of the enemy for our artillery. They are temporarily stationed in a bumpy wheatfield of small dimensions, camouflaged by getting under and in between the trees along the side of the field. These cubs have been worth their weight in gold so far, and talking to the artillery boys

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Sheet No. 25. War Diary. 326 F-B Sq. 86 F-B Gp., APC 520, New York, N.Y.

Month of September, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st Lt, above Sq.

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this afternoon, they tell us that these cubs have eliminated a lot of expensive and laborious spotting devices and effort. They are hard to hit by opposing aircraft, and they can cruise just out of range of enemy fire, and watch the enemy with field glasses and determine their every move, and where their installations are. Relaying this information by radio to the artillery it is only a matter of seconds until heavy artillery is trained on strategic targets, and the observers (2) in the cub circle about and watch the result, and report by radio immediately the target is hit. They have become the seeing eye of the artillery, and these boys have been the unsung heroes of the war. Their small craft is highly maneuverable, cruises around at about 70 or 80 miles per hour, and several of them have actually claimed victories over German fighters, by luring them into the small plane, which may be close to a mountain, and at the appropriate time, turning into the enemy craft, which cannot turn at speed, and which crashes into the mountain. These cubs are a weapon the enemy has been unable to defend against. We found a ten-wheel truck today, which had been strafed yesterday, killing three men. Most of the tires had been knocked out, the body, cab and gas tank pierced, but we managed to re-tire it, and fix it up so that it represents a valuable addition to our transportation, which has been vitally short recently. In Sicily we acquired two Italian trucks from the Amgot authorities, which we are using, but which are slow and cumbersome.

17 During last night there were air raids. The artillery pounded all night. Fires were started all around, and explosions could be heard everywhere. We had 3 air raids during the day. No one was injured, but sharpnel whizzed by now and then and thudded into the ground nearby, one of it falling on the tile roof of the farm building that we took over for quarters. This building is a two-story, large structure, of white stucco, with a large carriage room on the west, rooms in the middle, a tall silo next to the rooms, a garage space next to the silo and rooms, and a huge dairy barn attached on the east, making one large structure. Our orderly room is one of the downstairs room, our kitchen in in the carriage barn, officers sleep in the rooms and in the silo, which has a movable metal ceiling, and some of the enlisted men, the supply room and the butcher shop are in the dairy barn, which has a concrete floor and concrete stalls, which are convenient for packing boxes and parachutes. We have hooked up electric lights throughout. Some of the fellows have pitched pyramidal tents around the building, pretty well dispersed, and two large haystacks are near, from which we have taken bales of straw to make floors for our intelligence and operations tent on the line, and to fill mattress covers. Today we had ~~three~~ ^{four} missions. One in particular was both interesting and highly successful. Our target was a tobacco factory in Battipaglia, a small town about ten or twelve miles north of here, where the Germans have headquarters of some kind. The ground forces requested the mission. Battipaglia has changed hands several times in fierce and bloody fighting. Out of 24 bombs dropped, fourteen were directly in the tobacco factory and all the rest were near misses. In a message from the ground forces, it was reported that 14 direct hits were made, wiping out the headquarters, and leaving nothing but the four walls of the building standing.

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Sheet No. 26. War Diary. 526 F-B. Sq., 86 F-B. Gp., APC 520, New York, N. Y.
 Month of September, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Menriod, 1st. Lt., above Sq.

DAY

EVENTS

- 18 We have been living pretty much on C-rations since we arrived here. Our rear echelon is still back at Barcellona, probably moved to the staging area at Milazzo for transportation by boat. Today, however, a group of us went a half-mile or so up the pike and killed a water buffalo and brought it back on the bomb truck, and expect to have steak tomorrow. One of the boys on a mission, hit an ME 109 near Calabutto, with unknown results.
- > 19 Today we had steak for the first time for a long time, thanks to the cow we killed yesterday, which looked something like a water buffalo. The Group has lost three pilots the past two days. The flak north of Salerno is heavy and accurate. The big 155s which have been around us since we got here, pounding away every day, are moving out today, which is a good sign that our ground forces have pushed the Germans back sufficiently to warrant shifting of the big guns. The boats are still offshore near the beaches, with lots of barrage balloons filling the sky. Battapaglia was retaken by our forces today after having gone back to the Germans a few days ago. This town is in utter destruction, and not a building is left. Our engineering officer has rigged up a shower bath back of the mess hall, complete with hot water, which is heated under a G.I. car stove with coils. Threemissions today.
- > 20 The army gave us a pinpoint target to hit today, where the Germans were massing troops and materiel for a big counter-attack. Our boys dive-bombed and strafed the pinpoint target. As they were being interrogated, and after they had reported that they had bombed where told, but had seen no signs of activity, the army called on the phone and reported that the mission was a complete success and that the enemy had been wiped out at this point.
- 21 All day long boats have been arriving and unloading on the beaches a couple of miles from here. The ducks, or amphibious vehicles of the army, along with the cubs mentioned, are doing a whale of a job. They run up alongside a freighter and load quickly, and proceed immediately at comparatively great speed to the beaches, roll up onto the beaches, without stopping, continue onto the highways and up to ammunition or fuel dumps or directly to the front line where necessary. All day long countless infantrymen in long lines marched from the beaches up the road, with full packs, dirty and grimy, up to the highway that leads to Battapaglia and on up toward this town. This incessant marching continued far into the night. The dust from the ducks and trucks and planes sends large clouds into the air. Cigarettes are getting scarce and the rations are not going around. Our mess officer is making an effort to remedy this situation.
- 22 The men and supplies still choke the roads near our bivouac and all day they moved up to the front as they did yesterday from the boats. A B-24 which had gotten lost on a mission over Sardinia, landed here today, with one engine out. A B-26 made a forced landing, dropped almost vertically, ran off the end of the runway, nosed over and burst into flame, and burned all afternoon. The crew managed to get out safely. Major Gunnison, 309th C.G. bailed out near Capri, after having had his plane damaged by an ammunition train explosion which he had been strafing. Lt. Thornton of the 312th returned today with a thrilling story of having his wings knocked off about ten days ago over enemy territory, bailing out, being captured for three days by the Germans, escaping, living disguised as a native for four days and making his way back to friendly lines, almost exhausted.

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