

SECRET

g. Operations:

- (1) Campaign: Italian.
- (2) Nature of operations: Combat missions by flights of A-36A type aircraft, on dive-bombing, strafing, rhu barb and patrol, particularly in close support of ground troops, and principally of dive-bombing type.
- (3) Number of missions and sorties for period: 288 sorties; 31 missions.

(4) Results of the most important missions:

(a) Mission: 7 April 1944: Mission flown in extremely inclement weather to bomb railroad at Attigliano, Italy, one element of the flight being unable to reach the target because of the weather. 1) The Germans were using this rail yard extensively for transportation of supplies; 2) probability of successfully completing mission was small due to 9/10 overcast; 3) our own forces greatly aided by destruction of many enemy rolling stock; 4) which were destroyed by bombing, together with a railroad station, railroad tracks; the other element bombing a group of imposing buildings at the mouth of the Tiber causing great damage thereto, also destroying or damaging an enemy command car, six personnel tents, and two motor trucks, 5) causing extreme damage and loss to the enemy.

(b) Mission: 12 April 1944: 12 planes in b d weather dropped 14 bombs on a bridge at A-6925, 1) which the enemy was using extensively for transportation of supplies, 2) bad weather and terrain making mission exceptionally difficult, 3) destruction of bridge denying the enemy use of rail facilities to bring supplies to the front for use against our troops, 4) caused by said destruction, 5) seriously crippling enemy transportation.

(c) Mission: 16 April 1944: 8 planes dropped 8 bombs in the mouth of a railroad tunnel near A-727167, 1) which the enemy was using extensively, 2) mission being difficult due to haze and broken terrain, 3) preventing material to be brought to the front, 4) the tunnel being blocked, 5) and the enemy's rail transportation being crippled.

h. Commanding officers important missions: None to report.

i. Losses in action: officers and men. Mission) 16 April 1944: Capt. Stanley G. Wright did not return from mission bombing trucks near Capranica, Italy, seen bailing out and landing safely at F-5988, near Lake Bracciano. Carried as missing in action.

j. Former and present members who have distinguished themselves in action:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| (1) Major Harry W. Dorris | Awarded D.F.C. |
| (2) 1st Lt. Charles W. Place | Awarded Silver Star |

2. Inclosed is War Diary, 526th Fighter Bomber Squadron, for the

SECRET

SECRET

SECRET

Period 1 April to 1 May 1944.

For the Commanding Officer:

Frederic M. Merrick

FREDERIC M. MERRICK
Capt., A.C., S-2 G.
526 Y.S. Sq., 80 F.S. Gr., APO 650

Incl: War Diary orig & 2.

SECRET

S E C R E T

SECRET

Sheet No. 03. War Diary. 520 F-B Sq., 80th F-B Gp., APO 050, New York, N.Y.

Month of April, 1944. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, Capt., above-named sq.

DAY

WAR DIARY

fall, little suspecting the true reason. Everybody has eight or ten visitors every day, which makes the hospital a delightful place to swap yarns, tell dirty jokes, and become embarrassed at a bit of profanity unconsciously uttered as a nurse whisks by. This visiting also provides a golden opportunity to remake one's bed after each visit. Most of the visiting, I believe, is to see the nurses rather than the patient -- and all this panderonium while patient and sympathetic Dr. Henry daily examines each pulse, eyeball and fracture. Life dulls progressively -- and I'm getting out of here my first opportunity.

- 3 One mission flown today. The 525th Squadron lost two boys today.
- 4 One mission flown today.
- 5 One mission flown today. The weather has been poor and it has been difficult for the pilots to reach their targets, resulting in many bombs being brought back or dropped on alternate targets.
- 6 One mission flown to the railroad yards at Capranica. The "itch" which many of the boys have had has now been definitely diagnosed as scabies or the Seven Year's Itch. We discovered that treatment for it is a bath, application of benzyl benzoate solution, wait a day, apply again, wait a day and take a bath. It works, although there is considerable conjecture as to why there is no bath in between the first and second applications. Lt. Chandler came back from Foggia today. The movie "A Guy Named Joe," showed ocn at Marigliano and the hospital today.
- 7 One mission today. Vesuvio has completely calmed down, as has the activity around Cassino and the Anzio beachhead. Trucks, tank trailers and hundreds of other vehicles, however, are speeding up and down the highways. Huge stores of ammunition, bombs, belly tanks and other materiel are piling up alongside the roads. Naples harbor is very active, and from where we are, nine miles away, we can keep score of the shipping in the harbor by watching the number of the barrage balloons which float over Naples.
- 8 One mission today to knock out a bridge. Bridges have been the chief target lately. Riding up and down the highways around here provides considerable amusement. Every jeep and other vehicle has a name. The huge British tank carriers have groups which use only one letter in the alphabet to begin their names, some interesting names in the "C" group being "Cock Robin," "Cock Sparrow" and "Cockroach." Others in the "L"

SECRET

S E C R E T

SECRET

Sheet No. 04. War Diary. 520th F-3 Sq., 80th F-3 Gp., APC 650, New York, N.Y.
 Month of April, 1944. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, Capt., above-named sq.

Dai

WAR DIARY

- group for example, have "Loch Lomond," etc. The jeeps, like aeroplanes, are the source of the funniest names, such as "Cesspool Sadie," Seven Copies, "Texas, by God," "Long Dick," "Styx Ferry" and "Juicy Lucy."
- 9 As a result of sundry indiscretions committed by some officers of the squadron, the squadron has been dubbed "Major Dorris' School for Wayward Boys," a name suggested when Capt. Calamai, one night liquefied, repeatedly confronted his C.O. with a demand to know if that was what he was running. There is now a suitable plaque hanging in the Officers' Mess with this title emblazoned on it with Capt. Murphy designated as Dean, Capt. Calamai as Superintendent and Capt. Henriod as Head Coach. The last title resulted from the encounter with the Italians which landed him in the hospital. Today is Easter Sunday and the natives are streaming out into the roads wearing the best clothes they have, which are frequently nothing but rags. Tomorrow, however, is a bigger "feast" for them, and they will take food and gifts to a shrine in Pomigliano at the Church. Thousands of soldiers are pouring from Naples northward on trains, trucks and afoot. There are Englishmen, Americans, Gmukas and all other types. Major Dorris went to the Anzio beachhead today under a plan to exchange pilots for army personnel for observation purposes. One mission flown by the squadron today.
- 10 The Italians are really celebrating Easter today. Large groups of native men, women, girls and boys, barefooted and dressed in white pajama-like clothes with red sash and shoulder straps, are running up and down the highways. We have heard that these people are supposedly miraculous cures and are annually showing their gratitude and present health by conducting a sort of alms gathering marathon. Major Dorris received a Distinguished Flying Cross today and Lt. Place received the Silver Star, thus augmenting the already enviable number of awards and decorations of our squadron.
- 11 One mission today in inclement weather. Lt. Russell returned from Cairo today. Lt. Nordell and others came home from Capri which is still thriving as an alleged rest camp for the Air Force. There was an air raid alert about 3:00 a.m. There is still an amazing amount of military traffic up and down the highways. Joe E. Brown is showing for the boys at the Marigliano Theatre. Considerable thunder and lightning today but no rain.
- 12 Our boys went out on a mission today, and after reaching the beachhead, returned to base on account of bad weather. Lt. Col. Blend, group operations officer, apparently irritated because of the failure of the

SECRET

S E C R E T

SECRET

Sheet No. 05. War Diary. 520th F-3 Sq., 80th F-3 Gp., APO 050, New York, N.Y.
 Month of April, 1944. Prepared by Frederic H. Anriod, Capt., above-named sq.

DAY

WAR DIARY

squadron to reach the target, refused to give the boys credit for a sortie. This caused the boys to be irritated and provoked no end of caustic criticism by the pilots who particularly complained that the group officers for one reason or another, would not fly the planes themselves. The criticism, though perhaps exaggerated, is at least justified by the record. Things have not been going so well, apparently, as evidenced today by a visit by General Cannon of XII A.F., who reportedly did not spare the horses. The traditional Army custom prevailed when Col. Kofahl came down to the squadrons and, in Army parlance, "chewed their asses out." Col. Kofahl rode as observer on the second mission, and after some criticism of our squadron's conduct of the mission in comparison with the other squadron that went, became convinced that our squadron scored direct hits on the target while the other squadron missed the target, although due to no one's fault in particular. Everything seemed to turn out all right, however, since everyone was shaking hands with everyone else. Our guess, however, is that we haven't heard the end of it. A lot of the boys have been seeing Irving Berlin in person at the San Carlo Theatre in Naples where he is being starred in the hit show "This is the Army." Old Berlin ballads punctuate the show, which is strictly G.I. from cast to the burlesque jokes. It is first class entertainment. Even the lineys seem to enjoy it. A P-40 pilot made one of the most beautiful and spectacular belly landings that we've seen. He didn't scratch a wing and hardly bruised the prop. A 2nd Lt. at that.

- 13 No mission today on account of bad weather. Col. Bland received the Purple Heart today and the pilots are now complaining about the award, since rumor has it that Col. Bland was not injured. The complaint was not lessened by the fact that yesterday they were denied a sortie when they felt they were entitled to it. Adding to the pilots' discontent is the fact that Command has adopted a new policy concerning the award of Air Medals and clusters, tightening up on the requirements so that now it is very difficult to get an Air Medal. Formerly the Air Medal and clusters were awarded automatically on the basis of ten sorties per cluster. Many pilots have gone home with the Air Medal and seven or eight clusters, which fact seems to make palpably unfair the new system -- at least the pilots are so commenting. Everything has turned green and the leaves are out. Hundreds of native carts with sleepy drivers hollering "Caw" which is Italian for "Giddap," still present the greatest traffic hazard. Eight new replacement pilots were assigned to our squadron today, and they look like a fine, eager bunch.
- 14 Things are still stirring in the group. General Saville came to the field today and made it clear that conditions would have to change or else. The mortality in pilots has been high and their morale is very low. Everyone was vaccinated for typhus today, and everyone is putting

SECRET

S E C R E T

SECRET

Sheet No. 60. War Diary. 520th F-B Sq., 80th F-B Gp., APO 650, New York, N.Y.

Month of April, 1944. Prepared by Frederic H. Harriod, Capt., above-named sq.

DAY

WAR DIARY

up a mosquito net preparatory to the coming of the noted little insects. Outdoor movies have been inaugurated at the athletic field on the Alfomeo factory grounds adjacent to the airfield. AMG is moving the natives out of our apartment building to make room for Army personnel and also to get rid of a nuisance. The natives loaf around the entrances and beg or steal anything they can lay their hands on. They have cut the leather out of the seats of our vehicles and have even stolen the seats themselves. They have proven to be nothing but bums in this part of Italy.

15 One mission was flown today. Lts. Schiller, Ray and Culbertson returned from a two-week rest at Cairo, Egypt today. The 527th Squadron lost a pilot today. The boys saw Judy Garland in "Presenting Lily Mars" at the Marigliano Theatre today. We have two P-38 pilots from England here taking notes and flying with our squadron.

16 Early this morning about 5:00 a.m. there was a heavy raid on Naples, with an undetermined amount of damage. For one reason or another, these raids are apparently not published. We lost Capt. Wright in a mission north of Rome. He was seen to have bailed out safely after being struck by enemy flak. On the same mission, Lt. Col. Bland, flying his first mission under the new group policy of having a group man go along each day, also bailed out after his plane was struck by flak. Losing these two men has not helped the situation in the group any and we are looking for some kind of a shake-up. The morale of our pilots hasn't been heightened by the events of the past couple of months.

17 Major Kirach of the 527th was appointed group operations officer to replace Col. Bland. Major Dorris reputedly talked to Col. Kofahl and asked to be transferred out of the group. Dorris returned from the Anzio beach-head full of yarns. He accompanied the foot soldiers on night patrol over No Man's Land, and had a talk with General Frederick. One mission was flown today.

18 The 525th Squadron lost another pilot today. The boys were treated to an exceptionally fine movie titled "Battle of Russia," at the Marigliano Theatre. Its gruesomeness was impressive and a testimonial to the tenacity of the Russians. A companion showing was "Stormy Weather," with Lena Horne. The G.I.'s have stopped their usual practice at the theatre of blowing up condoms and letting them sail about in the theatre.

19 No missions today on account of the weather. The 525th lost another pilot which brings the mortality in the past two or three weeks to a staggering and discouraging total. Major Dorris went to Caserta and talked with General Saville about conditions in the squadrons and group, and returned expressing the view that he would probably be transferred.

SECRET

S E C R E T

SECRET

Sheet No. 07. War Diary. 520th F-3 Sq., 6th F-3 Gr., APO 050, New York, N.Y.

Month of April, 1944. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, Capt., above-named sq.

DAY

WAR DIARY

- Our new replacement pilots spent the day flying transition. There is a lot of grumbling and criticism and mental attitudes have hit a new low. It is one of those times experienced by every unit when everyone seems discouraged. Some say the condition is probably due to the type of missions our pilots have been required to fly: long sorties north of Rome, attacking rails and roads, quite different than the close support type missions the pilots were accustomed to and which they feel our plane was designed for. Lt. Col. Cassidy was transferred from group.
- 20 Major Dorris was today transferred to the XII A.F. and Capt. Graham Weigle of the 525th was appointed to succeed him as squadron commander. Capts. Hood and Schmitt and Lt. Russell went to Foggia to determine their status with respect to going back to the States. Two missions flown today.
- 21 Hood, Schmitt and Russell returned from Foggia. Schmitt is to go home. Russell is to continue combat flying and Hood has been grounded and will be transferred to a ground position, probably at Caserta. All were disappointed except Schmitt. The activity on the highways portends something big in the offing. Two missions flown today, continuing the policy of attacking railroad tracks north of Rome.
- 22 The group shake-up which was expected and which started with the elimination of Col. Cassidy, was continued today, when suddenly Major Barrett, group intelligence officer, Major Stern, group engineering officer and Capt. Valukonis, group communications officer, were transferred. It came as a greater surprise to the officers concerned than anyone else. Capt. Versept was appointed to replace Maj. Barrett and Capt. Hendrickson to replace Stern. Capt. Schmitt left today for the Port of Embarkation to go home. Major Dorris and Lt. Chandler went to Foggia. The topic of conversation today is the general shake-up. A lot of other officers are wondering, but few seem worried about the possibilities. One mission was flown today, but the boys were unable to reach the target on account of bad weather.
- 23 Had two missions today, one at dawn and the other almost dusk. They were reminiscent of Sicily when day after day we had an early and late mission with general loafing in between. Although everything is quiet at Anzio and Cassino, there seems to be something big in the air.
- 24 Flew two more missions again today. The 527th Squadron lost another boy today, which makes our operations for the last month very discouraging. Naples had a big air raid tonight and most everyone watched the fireworks. An estimated forty German planes took part, for about an hour. Opl. Hare and Ripkin indulged in a few fisticuffs today, one receiving a black eye and the other a badly skinned face.
- 25 Two missions flown today in continuation of the policy of attacking rail communications.
26. 0 missions were flown today on account of rain. The enlisted men of the

SECRET

S E C R E T

SECRET

Sheet No. 08. War Diary. 520th F-5 Sq., 80th F-5 Gr., APO 050, New York, N.Y.

Month of April, 1944. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, Capt., above-named sq.

DA:

WAR DIARY

squadron had a party tonight at the group officers' club and the affair was a huge success. There were dozens of WACs and nurses present, and liquor flowed freely. Although many were obviously under the influence, it was a well-behaved party and everybody had a good time. The party was topped off with real ice cream and chocolate cake. The group orchestra, consisting of about twelve pieces, compared favorably with any in the vicinity. A highly unusual and amusing incident arose when one girl present swore so profusely that some rough G.I.s got embarrassed and had to admonish her to temper her language.

27 There were the usual headaches this morning, and fortunately for many of the fellows there were no missions because of rain. The consensus of opinion was that the party was a huge success. It is the first real squadron party we have had since Camp Kilmer, a year ago. In the evening the fellows were treated to a piano concert by Capt. Rubenstein, an accomplished concert pianist, followed by a movie.

28 Today the Group started a five day stand-down period for tactical training and formation flying for the new pilots.

29 One year ago today we left the United States on our way overseas. A lot of water has run under the bridge since then. We have lost a lot of men, but in exchange the Germans have lost a hundred or more to one besides losing an astronomical number of guns, vehicles, railroad cars etc. In the afternoon we were advised we were going to move to a new base at Marcianese, Italy. This did not prevent us from having the regularly scheduled Group Anniversary party at the Officer's Club, which was a howling and silently wet success. The enlisted men spent the afternoon packing. One year overseas saw us still on the move.

30 The fellows flew their planes to the new field, about 2 1/2 miles South of Caserta. The rest of the personnel loaded trucks, jeeps and even motorcycles and moved. It was a bitter cold day, but the boys did a beautiful job of unpacking, pitching tents, etc. We are bivouacked in a grove, the enlisted men on one side of a narrow country road and the officers between two rows of tall trees on the other side. Singularly enough, we didn't lose a meal on schedule, and by the time all the personnel had arrived, by dinner time, our portable, screened-in mess kitchen was functioning as usual, and we had a hot meal--a welcome relief to the cold wind that was blowing. Our new field is part asphalt and part steel mat, and there is a slight rise or bump in the middle. About 9 P.M. a Beaufighter crashed on the field and sent two or three fliers to a terrible burning death. The flames shot a hundred feet in the air and tracers were shooting in all directions for 15 or 20 minutes. In contrast to this inferno, most of the men almost froze during the night. After nearly seven months of quartering in buildings, we are now again out on damp, colder Earth, in

SECRET

S E C R E T

SECRET

Sheet No. 09. War Diary. 526th F-B Sq., 86th F-B Gp., APO 050, New York, N.Y.

Month of April, 1944. Prepared by Frederic H. Henricd, Capt., above-named sq.

WAR DIARY

DAY

pyramidal tents--and strangely enough, most of the men welcome the change. The natives here are just as dirty and bothersome, but apparently not so numerous, since the village is further removed than at Fomigliano. No one wants to go to Caserta, since we've heard that the F.B.S. officials and M.P.s have recently come to town, and rightly or wrongly, hardly a man in our outfit has any use for this bunch, who, safely behind the front lines, impose what we think are rather childish regulations about military courtesy and proper dress. We prefer to be ordinary G.I.s out in the dust, trying the best we know how to win the war without being subjected to the impositions of chair sitting F.B.S. April is gone. Admiral Nimitz was wrong in his predictions and more and more it appears that General Eisenhower's statement that the war would end in '44 is equally erroneous. Anything may happen in an election year, and even the Good General may err.

SECRET

SECRET

526th Fighter Bomber Squadron

Outline History, May 44

SECRET

By Auth. OC.
526th FB Sq.
31 May 44
Initials _____

HEADQUARTERS 526TH FIGHTER BOMBER SQUADRON
86TH FIGHTER BOMBER GROUP, A.F.C. 650, N.Y.

31 May 1944

AG 314.7

SUBJECT: Historical Records.

TO : Commanding General, XII Air Support Command, A.F.C. 374.

1. Outline History of the 526th Fighter Bomber Squadron for the period 1 May to 1 June.

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

b. Changes in organization.

- (1) Changes in designation: None.
- (2) Disposition of echelons or subordinate units: Some.
- (3) Changes in commanding officers: None
- (4) Changes of staff officers: None.

c. Strength, commissioned and enlisted men.

(1) Month of May 1944.

- (a) At beginning: 49 officers; 230 E.M. assigned.
- (b) Net increase: 7 officers; 22 "
- (c) Net decrease: None.
- (d) At end: 57 officers; 234 E.M. assigned.

d. Stations: Marsianise, Italy.

e. Movements: None.

f. Campaigns: Continued Italian Campaign.

g. Operations:

- (1) Campaign: Italian

SECRET

SECRET

(2) Nature of operations: Combat missions by flights of A-36 type aircraft, on dive-bombing, strafing, rhu barb and patrol, particularly in close support of ground troops and principally of dive-bombing type.

(3) Number of missions and sorties for period: 361 sorties; 71 missions.

(4) Results of most important missions:

(a) Mission: 5 May 1944: 3 planes flew in hazy weather to strafe enemy airdromes. 1) These fields were used extensively by enemy fighters to harass our air activities; 2) probability of success was poor due to haze and enemy anti-aircraft fire; 3) our aircraft was being harassed by enemy fighters operating from these fields and our bombing ended this pressure; 4) our attack damaged planes and revetments; 5) eliminating future threat of interception from these fields.

(b) Mission: 6 May 1944: 12 planes bombing and strafing railroad Montefiascone to Viterbo. 1) The enemy was using this railroad extensively to transport supplies. 2) Probability of success was almost nil due to almost complete cloud cover. 3) Elimination of these rail facilities eased the pressure on our ground troops. 4, Numerous box cars and oil cars were damaged by strafing and the tracks seriously damaged. 5) crippling enemy transportation in this area.

(c) Mission: 9 May 1944: 12 planes in almost solid overcast bombed and strafed rail facilities in (vte area, 1) being extensively used by the enemy, 2) the overcast making probability of a successful mission almost nil. 3) However, the mission was completed denying the enemy the use of these facilities, 4) the tracks being cut and destroyed in several places, numerous railroad cars being destroyed, 5) effectively crippling enemy rail organization in this area.

(d) Mission: 13 May 1944: 8 planes bombing enemy highway bridge, 1) which was being used by the enemy to transport supplies and personnel to the front. 2) In 6/10 a ver, in which probability of success was only fair, 3) the mission destroyed the bridge, 4) effecting a road block, 5) denying the enemy the use of this highway. The Squadron received the following message from (11 ASC: "Your mission A15 caused road block. Traffic piling up. Good work."

(e) Mission 19 May 1944: 8 planes on armed reconnaissance Highway # 7, 1) which was being extensively used by the enemy in bringing reinforcements to the front. 2) The weather was bad and probability of success almost nil. 3) Nevertheless, the mission was completed through almost solid overcast and 4) a road block effected in Terracina, 5) denying the enemy the use of this road, the mission also accounting for 5-10 enemy trucks destroyed as many damaged. The following message was received from the V Army: "Congratulations on your work today."

(f) Mission: 24 May 1944: 12 planes on armed reconnaissance front line area, 1) where fighting was on a see-saw basis and

