

HEAD QUARTERS  
 FIRST TACTICAL AIR FORCE  
 European Theater of Operations  
 Public Relations Section

17 May 1945

<u>NAME</u>	<u>DUTY</u>	<u>HOME ADDRESS</u>	<u>NO. OF SORTIES</u>
1. Lt. Col. George T. Lee	Group C.O.	26 Rock St., Norwood, Mass.	258
2. Maj. William B. Colgan	C.O. Sq. 525	412 Ronshart St., Waycross, Ga.	208
3. 1st Lt. John G. Weiner	Flt. Ldr. Sq. 526	1225 16th Ave., San Francisco, Calif.	148
4. Capt. Eli J. Setencich	Flt. Ldr. Sq. 525	436 18th St., Oakland, Calif.	142
5. Capt. Graydon S. Brown	Flt. Ldr. Sq. 525	RD #2, Seneca Falls, N.Y.	139
6. Maj. John H. Dolny	C.O. Sq. 527	5137 15th Ave., Minneapolis, Minn.	134
7. Capt. James R. Whiting	Flt. Ldr. Sq. 527	1320 N. 11th St., Waco, Tex.	123
8. Capt. James E. Schiro	Flt. Ldr. Sq. 527	10126 Wallece Ave., Chicago, Ill.	123
9. Capt. Lloyd K. Babcock	Flt. Ldr. Sq. 526	739 Manzinita Dr., Laguna Beach, Calif.	123
10. 1st Lt. Carl C. Baranek	Flt. Ldr. Sq. 525	Carrolville, Misc.	121
1st Lt. John E. Erink	Flt. Ldr. Sq. 525	742 Berkshire, Grosse Pointe Park, Mich.	121

2. None of the above pilots has gone home.

Respectfully submitted

*James P. Fabick*

JAMES P. FABICK  
 Public Relations Officer  
 86th Fighter Group

SECRET

CIP-86-141  
APRIL 1945

162

HEADQUARTERS 86TH FIGHTER GPO F AAF  
Office of the Group Intelligence Officer

- D-V-3

A7 304.7

11 May 1945

SUBJECT: Historical Records.

TO : Commanding General, First Tactical Air Force (Prov)  
Attention: Historical Section

1. OUTLINE HISTORY, Hq. 86th Fighter Group, period 1 - 30 April 1945.
  - a. Present designation: Hq. 86th Fighter Group AAF, XII Tactical Air Command, APO 374, U.S. Army.
  - b. Changes in organization: None.
  - c. Changes in designation, assignment, or attachment: None.
2. Subordinate units: None.
3. Changes in Command: None.
4. Changes of Staff officers: 1st Lt. G. H. Fry appointed Asst Sp. Operations Officer on 4 April 1945. 1st Lt. G. P. Maple transferred Hq. and appointed Asst Air Inspector, on 6 April 1945. Major W. P. Benedict relieved as Air Inspector and transferred to 1st T.A.C.I.A.F. Service Command, on 24 April 1945.
5. Changes in T/O: None.
  - d. Strength: 28 Officers, 1 Warrant Officer and 60 Enlisted Men.
  - e. Present Station: Y-72, Braunschweig, Germany, 18 April 1945.
  - f. Campaigns: Sicilian - 6 July 1943 to 17 August 1943.  
Naples Foggia - 18 August 1943 to 21 January 1944.  
Rome Arno - 22 January 1944 to 21 February 1945.  
Southern France - 15 August 1944 to 26 September 1944.  
German - 25 February 1945 - still in progress.
  - g. Operations:
    - (1) Nature of Operations: Bombing and strafing attacks on enemy communication targets, rolling stock, occupied areas and strongpoints, patrol, escort and close support with the ground forces.
    - (2) Number of Missions and Sorties:
      - a. 225 Missions
      - b. 2,359 Sorties

163

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- (3) Outstanding missions: See Sq. Histories.
- h. Leaders of outstanding missions: See Sq. Histories.
- i. Losses in action: None for Headquarters.
- j. Awards received during period: See Incl.

Incl. Ser Diary

PAUL E. THOMPSON,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Group 1-2.

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164

R E S T R I C T E D  
HEADQUARTERS  
XIV TACTICAL AIR COMMAND

APO 374, US ARMY,  
9 April 1945.

GENERAL ORDERS )

NUMBER 33 )

Award of Bronze Star Medal.....I  
Award of Oak Leaf Cluster to Bronze Star Medal.....II

SECTION I -- AWARDS OF BRONZE STAR MEDAL.

By direction of the President, under provision of AF 400-45, as amended and in accordance with authority delegated by First Tactical Air Force (Provl), the Bronze Star Medal is awarded the following named personnel, Air Corps; United States Army, for meritorious service in direct support of combat operations against the enemy between the dates indicated, residence as indicated:

JAMES K. THOMAS, 0917908, Lieutenant Colonel, 86th Str. Gp., from 6 July 1943 to 15 March 1945. -Charleston, W. Va.

PERCY C. RANKIN, 0552776, Major, 86th Str. Gp., from 6 July 1943 to 15 March 1945. Portland, V.D.

PAUL E. WADSWORTH, 0562252, Major, 86th Str. Gp., from 22 April 1944 to 15 March 1945. Grand Rapids, Mich.

JACK W. GROSS, 0561160, Captain, 86th Str. Gp., from 6 July 1943 to 15 March 1945. Harrisburg, Pa.

WILSON W. ROBERTSON, 0561920, Captain, 86th Str. Gp., from 30 December 1943 to 15 March 1945. Negaunee, Mich.

\* \* \*

By Command of Brigadier General BARNES:

GEORGE L. HART, JR.,  
Colonel, G. S. C.,  
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

/s/ W. M. Reese  
W. M. REESE,  
Major, A. G. D.,  
Adjutant General.

A TRUE EXTRACT COPY:

DONALD L. WHITNEY,  
Captain, Air Corps.

165

S E C R E T

WAR DIARY OF THE 86TH FIGHTER GROUP, AAF

D-V-3

- Group Headquarters -

Braunschardt Airbase, Germany

April

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1. Easter Sunday. A dance was held at the enlisted men's club. The Girls came from Nancy and the surrounding villiages dressed up in their Sunday best. To have seen this one would never think that there was still a war going on, as everyone had a very good time.

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  2. Weather hampered the activity of the day yet all in all there were very good results when the final tally was made. A new member to Headquarters, 1st. Lt. R.B. Royle was assigned today in the capacity of Ass't. Air Insp.

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  3. Bad weather curtailed activity for the day. 1st. Lt. G. J. Frey was transferred to Group Headquarters in the position of Ass't. Operation's Officer.

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  4. Today's major effort was directed against the enemy in Gloge Support missions, with very good results. For the first time this year Group Headquarters E.M. had their spring workout in baseball.

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  5. Information and Education forms were distributed to the men of the Group for a survey which is being conducted in order to determine the various courses of instruction to be held after V-E Day.

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  6. The film presented at Group theatre was "Roughly Speaking", with Rosalind Russell and Jack Carson. The book of the same name had been read by many and therefore the film made quite a hit with many of the men. Now that the push into Germany is going on, many of the Pilots can be seen driving German captured vehicles which were secured from the 7th Army.

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  7. In today's missions we had two contacts with enemy aircraft - strikes were scored and both enemy formations were broken up.

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  8. A wave of excitement prevailed when a P-51 attempted to land and was caught in a cross-wind and ran off the runway. Seeing that he was going to run into the 527th Intelligence area he hit his brakes and nosed over. The pilot was reported alright and the plane was damaged slightly.

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  9. This was Flag day for the "Invaders", namely the most successful day in the Group's History against enemy aircraft. The Grand Total: Destruction of 3 FW-190's and 2 ME-109's in the air, 2 ME-109's on the ground, in addition to the damaging of 8 more FW-190's (5 on the ground, 3 in the Air) and one ME-262 in the air. 1 locomotive, 16 R/R cars, 20 M/T, 5 buildings, 2 tanks were destroyed, 2 locomotives, 12 R/R cars, 10 M/T, 32 buildings, 2 AFWS damaged and had a tendency to make the cheese more binding -- Congratulations are in order.
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10. The following members of this Group have honored themselves by receiving the Bronze Star Award on General Order #63, dated 9 April 1945, 12th T.A.C.:

Lt. Col James K. Thomas	0917908	Charleston W. Va.
Major Paul E. Verseput	0512252	Grand Rapids Mich.
Major Percy C. Fauskin	0559776	Portland N.D.
Captain Julius D. Robertson	0561920	Negaunee Mich.
Captain Jack B. Gross	0561160	Harrisburg Pa.

The Group's total missions and sorties increased heavily today with the addition of 12 Missions and 137 Sorties to the total.

11. The Group flew 9 missions and 107 sorties today. The effort directed chiefly against enemy strongpoints and the town of ODHelm with the ultimate result in claims most satisfactory. Major Verseput and an enlisted man of his section left for the new field at Gross Gerau, Germany, to start the ball rolling and to expedite the Group's next move, the first one into Germany. The general feeling among the men regarding the proposed move to Nazi land is not of elacriety but perhaps one of curiosity. The prohibition of fraternization definitely cuts out the so successful dance of both officers and enlisted men's club -- Oh Well!!! C'Est La Guerre!!!

12. Col. Lee, Captains Relyea and Gross flew to the new field today to join Major Verseput primarily to check on housing and mess facilities for officers and enlisted men, designate areas for the line and various section, dispersal areas, etc. and check the general conditions of the field. Here at good Ol'e Tantonville the usual signs of hustle and bustle so common prior to moving are taking form, including (lest and but not least) the "Parting is such sweet sorrow" scenes between the men and their respective Mademoiselles, Rough!!! Especially considering the imminent move is to Germany where "Hands Off" is and must be the policy.

13. Friday the thirteenth, fortunately was uneventful with respect to "Old Man Hardluck", with no operations due to inclement weather. Advance parties of various sections have begun to leave for Germany and the new field. Reports drifting back (via the old "Grapevine") tell us the new locality is ideal for operation. Elevation of 350 feet with a East to West runway of approximately 5,600 feet, steel matting in the center with concrete on both ends. A great improvement over the virtual ski jump we have here in Tantonville. The new field we hear also boasts of approximately 75 dispersal areas on our side of the runway with approx. 40 on the other side which shall be used by the 415th Night Fighter Sq.

14. As it stands now, a goodly percentage of the group should be in Germany by Monday evening. Rumors have it, that as of now it shall be Lt. Col. Kirsch, Major Core, Major Bullard and Captain Meyle. Speaking of promotions, our ubiquitous S/Sgt. Anthony Sacco should be advised of being upped one grade to T/Sgt., also Cpl. Danny Sheerin of the Code room to Sgt. and Dick Williams of the power to Corporal. Congratulations to the well deserved promotions. Here come the cigars, if there were cigars.

15. Still operating out of Tantonville. Tomorrow will probably be our last day of flying from this field, and then to the land of the Tedeschi.

167

This brings to mind our slogan way back in Gela, Sicily, "Thanksgiving in Rome, Christmas at home!". That was 1943. On well, at least the end of this theatre is now definitely imminent, and after that; who knows?

---

16. Wound up our last day of operations from Tantonville, France flying 8 missions and 88 sorties. Our move to the new field is now in full swing via motor transport and B-25. With the exception of the few necessary rear parties the group as a whole should be in Germany by Wednesday. Many of the men drew their last P.X. rations from this area in lieu of the potential possibility of no P.X. for awhile.

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17. Our first mission from German soil off at 0620 hours, inaugurated with a day of air cooperation with VI Corps flying Armed Recces. The total for the day was 10 missions, and 92 sorties. Of necessity our initial menus consisted of "C" rations, but fortunately the new variety, which are definitely a big improvement, complaints - Nil. The setup here is most satisfactory. The villages of Gross Gerau and Buttelborn border the field. The bivouac area for the enlisted personnel is located in a beautifully wooded area bordering the South end of the field. The Group and Squadron Ops, and Int., Group Engineering, Armament, Ordnance and Communications Sections all line the edge of this wooded area. Running West to East adjacent to the runway are the line sections of 527 - 525 - 526 respectively. Group S-1 and S-4, enlisted mess and I and E are also situated in the wooded area. The officers are quartered in requisitioned houses in Gross Gerau. For the mess the local "Gasthaus" though partially damaged by artillery fire is being utilized to good advantage. A former cafe and pastry shop (replendent with outdoor terrace) serves as the officers club. Those officers who were fortunate enough to have been here last evening, enjoyed the privilege of participating in the informal opening and imbibing in local beer and the usual hard stuff. A partially destroyed photo shop will serve as the Group's photo shop. The town of Gross Gerau boasts of a good sized outdoor swimming pool (slightly damaged) on which repairs have already begun and which will afford many hours of relaxation for the men in the near future.

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18. The men have all been sweating out K.P. duty, but lo and behold our good mess sergeants have acquired some brawny Russian lads to do the kitchen chores. A sign of relief is in order. An effort is being made to set up a barber shop, and none too soon as everyone is badly in need of tonsorial work. Looks as though everyone and his brother will have a civilian car of his own, but rumors have it, that Command will shortly call in all requisitioned cars. Well, it's fun while it lasts.

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19. To date no regular P.X. has been established in this neck of the woods. However one package of cigarettes and one chocolate bar (tropical type) is the regular daily issue, in addition to tooth powder, soap, matches and gum. No complaints about chow these days, what with fresh meat once a day, fresh eggs several mornings during the week, and potential deer hunters already on the loose with promises of venison steaks any day now. The officers club is now in full swing and plans are being made to get the enlisted men's club going.

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20. In addition to his other duties, 1st. Lt. James F. Short O-5, 0228 has been appointed base engineering officer, effective as of even date. Quartermaster called inquiring as to whether we'd care for a few kegs of beer. Would we??? Well, it was enjoyed by all! Our mess also acquired quite a cache of captured pickles and hors d'ouvres.

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21. One of the local Burgermeisters was over today relative to obtaining permission for the farm workers to enter the field to work at their crops. Naturally for security reasons permission was not granted. Radio reports Bologna, Italy has been liberated, and the advance on Berlin is continuing at a steady pace. Good Snow...

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22.

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23. A meeting of the board of the enlisted men's club was held to discuss plans for the coming anniversary party, and to decide upon suitable location. The 527th bivouac area has been tentatively chosen. Everyone is looking forward to the coming celebration.

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24. Chalk up two more ME-109's (in the air) during today's dusk patrol. Credit... 526th Squadron. The Group was fortunate in requisitioning a large assembly hall (former Nazi Versammlungs Saal) in the local canning factory. The swimming pool is ready for use, however the weather is still unseasonably on the chilly side

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25. From the standpoint of morale this was V-day. The officers club furnished ice cream for men chew and for dinner the hunters came through and our appetites were satiated with delicious venison steaks and ice cream topped this grand meal. The day wound up with the showing of the riotous comedy "Follow the Waves" with Bing Crosby and Betty Hutton. Rough day, What??

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26. As suspected, the boys have been notified to turn in all captured cars by noon today. Naturally there was plenty of the expected griping. The numerous cars gave one an idea of what the "Big Parade" of World War #1.

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27. The popular subject for discussion these days is what the fate of the 86th will be after Germany surrenders. The optimists have hopes of going to the states, but generally the men expect C.B.I. The area in front of the groups OPS and INT sections reminded one of the parking lot at a Sunday ball game. Everything from two cylinder jobs to the expensive Mercedes Benz was parked there to be later turned over to Command.

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28. Final preparations are being made for the big celebration tomorrow commemorating two years overseas. The group band will furnish the music, and from all reports there should be an abundance of food and drinks, but unfortunately no girls.

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