

WW II HISTORY

**86th Fighter-Bomber Group Headquarters
(For 525th, 526th & 527th Squadrons)**

February, 1942 – October, 1945

6481-82
10 22 42

WAR DIARY OF 86th Fighter-Bomber Group

- Group Headquarters -

10 February 1942

86th Bombardment Group (L) was activated at Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma, with four squadrons: 309th, 310th, 311th and 312th.

19 June 1942

Enlisted personnel and officers transferred to the 312th Bomb Group (L) stationed at Hunter Field, Savannah, Georgia.

7 August 1942

Actual training program begun at Key Field, Meridian, Mississippi. Group made up of cadre from the 312th Bomb Group (L), and the 48th Bomb Group (L). Aircraft flown were A-20B, A-20C, and DB 7.

10 September 1942

Unit designation was changed from light to Dive Bombardment Group. A-20 aircraft were replaced by A-24, and A-31 type aircraft, and most of the twin engine pilots were transferred to the 27th and 47th Bomb Groups.

20 November 1942

A-36 type aircraft began to arrive. One of the first orders cut by the 23rd Provisional Training Wing prohibited acrobatic missions and forbid use of dive flaps and dive in excess of 30 degrees. This order was strictly enforced throughout the entire training period. Maximum emphasis was placed on logging excessive hours on aircraft.

19 March 1943

Heavy training period completed and Group left Key Field via train to Camp Kilmer, N. J. for staging for overseas shipment.

21 April 1943

Embarkation on John Erikson, leaving New York Port of Embarkation at Staten Island, via army transport in convoy of approximately 30 ships.

11 May 1943

Arrived at Mers El Khobir, former French Naval Base at Oran, Algeria, after uneventful crossing. Set up at La Senia airport, some 12 miles SW of Oran.

6481-82

18 May 1943

Flying personnel arrived at Mediouna airport, near Casablanca, for training under the Fighter Training Command. Most of ground personnel remained at La Senia. One complete squadron, 309th, went to Marnia airport near Oujda, French Morocco, for one week's training, but returned to Tafaraoui Air Base on 13 June, to join remainder of Group. At Tafaraoui, three weeks of intense training prepared the organization for the combat that was soon to follow.

20 June 1943

311th Squadron transferred from the Group and moved to Sale, near Rabat, French Morocco.

6 July 1943

Flying personnel of all squadrons and ground personnel of 310th and 312th squadrons arrived and began combat flying from Korba base, on Cap Bon, Tunis. 309th Squadron and Group Headquarters in staging area at Carthage for preparation for embarkation for Sicily.

14 July 1943

Advanced echelons arrived in Sicily; set up at Comiso airport. Ordered to Gela West, a newly prepared strip one week later.

21 July 1943

309th Squadron and Group Headquarters advanced echelons arrived Gela West in time to set up for immediate operations of flight echelon which arrived this same day.

22 July 1943

First mission flown from Sicily. Remainder of campaign consisted of strenuous activity in close support of the II Army Corps, working with the 1st Division.

17 August 1943

Messina fell - 86th Bomb Group flew 2375 combat sorties during five weeks of combat, bombing with decisive results at Troina, Randazzo, Milazzo, Cesaro, Messina, and also attacking withdrawal activities along the southern Italian coast.

27 August 1943

Group moved to Barcellona Base, near Milazzo. From here missions were flown against Italy mainland, and air support for Allied landings at Salerno was direct from this point for the Group.

8 September 1943

Designation of 86th Bombardment Group (D) was changed to 86th Fighter Bomber Group, and squadron designation was changed from 309th, 310th and 312th to 525th, 526th and 527th.

10 September 1943

"D" day for in the invasion at Salerno. Advanced Headquarters echelon and complete 527th Squadron, less pilots, arrived at Milazzo staging area for preparation for Italian invasion.

13 September 1943

Advanced echelons arrived in Salerno beach-head - set up at Sele airport, amid constant threat of enemy in close vicinity.

15 September 1943

First mission flown by Group from Italian soil. Aircraft were not kept at Sele airport overnight, but flown back to Barcellona.

22 September 1943

Remaining squadrons arrived at Sele after considerable difficulty in landing, due to enemy shelling of beaches.

10 October 1943

Group Headquarters and 527th Squadron moved to Serretelle Base, near Battapaglia, while 526th and 527th Squadrons moved to Fonigliano airport, near Naples.

13 October 1943

First mission flown from Fonigliano airport.

15 October 1943

Officers' club, bar and mess opened at Serretelle airbase in tobacco factory.

18 October 1943

Negotiations completed for rental of Naples Hotel for use of Group Officers on overnight trips.

29 October 1943

Beginning this date, and for 8 days following, 12 French officers visited the Group in operation at Fonigliano.

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WAR DIARY of 86th Fighter-Bomber Group AAF

- Group Headquarters -

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1 November 1943

William Strand (Chicago TRIBUNE) visited group and wrote stories on this group's activities.

2 November 1943

Set up war room for Capt. Burton of British 10th liaison section, 15th Army Group, and Maj. Ford, liaison officer for Air Support Control of 5th Army Headquarters.
George Carter, North American Aviation representative, took pictures of aircraft and crews on 100 missions.
Sgt. Everett, 12th Air Support Command, received story from Capt. Ring on this date's mission planes.

10 November 1943

Visited by Ken Dixon, Associated Press.
Meeting was held in war room to determine food dropping to our troops on front lines.

19 November 1943

Visited by George Wicks, Plus Network.
Forward and rear echelons combined as of this date.

22 November 1943

This group was relieved from 64th Fighter Wing.

23 November 1943

Visited by Correspondent Gordon Gammack of Des Moines REGISTER, who interviewed Lt. Anton.

25 November 1943

Air Marshal Cumingham visited operations and war room - also gave a talk to pilots.

28 November 1943

Capt. John C. Agnew of Air Support Control of 5th Army relieved Maj. Ford.

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WAR DIARY of 86th Fighter-Bomber Group AAF

- Group Headquarters -

1 December 1943

Capt. Vessels and Sgt. Everett PRO. visited.

2 December 1943

Lt. Col. Yancey Tarrant group executive officer transferred to the 64th. Fighter-Wing.
Seven missions were flown on enemy installations.

3 December 1943

Col. Robert C. Paul, group commanding officer, was transferred to the (XII) Air Support Command, being succeeded by Lt. Col. Harold E. Kofahl.

4 December 1943

Lt. Col. Kofahl, took over command of this group.
Representative of (XII) Air Support Command visited here for a spread on A36's for the Air Force magazine.

5 December 1943

Food dropping missions performed.
Mr. Geo. Hicks, Blue Network, made Xmas record for U.S. Airforce magazine, also took pictures of A36's in all phases of operations.
Maj. Glenn A. Stell appointed group operations officer.
Capt. Paul E. Verseput, appointed group P.R.O. in addition to his duties as Asst. group Intelligence Officer.

6 December 1943

Maj. Charles F. Cassidy, appointed group executive officer.

7 December 1943

Col. Isarel, Commanding Officer, 62nd Fighter Wing visited.
Capt. Vessels of (XII) Air Support Command P.R.O. and Sgt. Poisis, of Stars and Stripes, visited and received story on food dropping missions.

8 December 1943

Lt. Col. Woods, Capt. Vessels and eleven Dominion correspondents visited here to observe diving tactics of four A36's over this field.

WAR DIARY of 86th Fighter-Bomber Group AAF

- Group Headquarters -

10 December 1943

General Henry H. Arnold, Chief of the Army Air Forces, at a special ceremony on the line personally awarded the D.F.C. to Lt. Yannel, who completed his 80th mission.

12 December 1943

Al Crocker, St. Paul-Dispatch, (Ridder Op. Pioneer Press).
Tom Henry, Wash. Star, (North American National Alliance).
Tom Treanor, Los Angeles-Times, (United Press).
visited here and received story.

13 December 1943

Capt. H.G. Oldman, Air Liaison Officer, 10th Air Liaison Section 15th Army, this date joined this group and assumes duties in the War-Room relieving Capt. Burton.

16 December 1943

This group has reached the 10,000 combat hour mark.

17 December 1943

Capt. A.J. Fama, Asst. G-2, Fifth Army visited here to discuss damage and assessments.

18 December 1943

Flight Officer Reeves, Fifth Army, P.R.U. visited here to inquire about photos, use and needs.

27 December 1943

Gordon Gammack, De Moines Register, visited here spending three days with us.

30 December 1943

Lt.Col. Sheean, visited and left instructions for group synopsis to present to General Spaatz.

Headquarters 86th Fighter-Bomber Gp.

Outline History Jan. 44

S E C R E T

By Auth CO

Hq. 86th FB Sq

31 Jan 44

Initials FW

HEADQUARTERS 86TH FIGHTER-BOMBER GROUP AAF.
APO 650. U.S. ARMY.

31 January 1944

AG 314.7

SUBJECT: Historical Records.

TO : Commanding General, XII Air Support Command, APO 374.

1. Outline History of Headquarters 86th Fighter-Bomber Group for the period 1 January 1944 to 1 February 1944.

a. Present Designation: Headquarters 86th Fighter-Bomber Group, XII Air Support Command.

b. Changes in Organization: 1st Lt. John F. Dwyer, transferred from Hqs. assgd to the 525th Sq. as Assistant Intelligence Officer on 14 January.

Maj. Glenn A. Stell and Maj. Justus C. Gunnison completed operational tour.

Maj. Jay R. Stout, appointed Group Operations Officer.

Capt. Robert Hood, appointed Asst. Group Operations Officer.

Mr. Hicks, left for the States to attend O.C.S.

c. Strength, commissioned and enlisted:

(1) Month of January 1944

(a) At beginning: 23 officers, 49 E.M. assigned.

(b) Net increase: 1 officer, 2 E.M.

(c) Net decrease: 3 officers,

(d) At end : 20 officers, 51 E.M. assigned.

d. Stations: No changes.

e. Movements: No changes.

f. Campaigns: Continued Italian Campaign.

g. Operations: (See Squadrons).

h. Commanding officer in important missions: Lt. Col. Harold E. Kofahl flew five missions this month. On one day that we were called upon to exert extra effort, he flew three missions.

i. Losses in action: (See Squadrons).

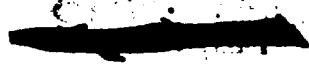
j. Former and present members who have distinguished themselves in action: (See Squadrons).

2. Inclosed are War Diary, Headquarters 86th Fighter-Bomber Group, for the period 1 January to 31 January 1944.

For the Commanding Officer:

William A. Barrett, Jr.
WILLIAM A. BARRETT, JR.,
Major, Air Corps,
Intelligence Officer,
Hq. 86th Fighter-Bomber Group.

Incl:
War Diary orig & cv



WAR DIARY of the 86th Fighter-Bomber Group AAF

- Group Headquarters -

1 January 1944

Corp. Coes of XII Air Support Command PRO visited this group with two WAC's and took pictures on armoring A-36's on our field.

Maj. Vessels, PRO, and Mr. Ken Dixon, AP, visited here and received story.

Commandant Curtillet and party of three officers, three enlisted men, and three nurses from the 401 Evacuation Hospital, stationed at Acerra, visited here and watched A-36's take off.

10 January 1944

Ernie Pyle visited here and spent two days at the 525th Sq.

19 January 1944

Ernie Pyle visited Headquarters and had lunch at our group mess with Capt. Verseput, Group PRO.

The 27th Fighter-Bomber Group moved to our field.

22 January 1944

Mr. Gordon Gammack, DES MOINES REGISTER, visited here and received story.

24 January 1944

Maj. Vessels, PRO, and Mr. Ken Dixon, AP, visited here and received story.

31 January 1944

Lt. Kanelly from MAAF and Mr. Lynn Heinyelering, AP, visited here and received story from one of the A-36 crew chiefs.

Classification changed to

unclassified

By auth
Command
Army Air Forces:

BY: *[Signature]*

DATE:

1 Dec 44

CONFIDENTIAL

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SP 86- H1
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Hq. 86th Fighter-Bomber Group
Outline History February 1944

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By Auth CO
Hq. 86th Ftr.-Bmr. Gp.
29 February 1944
Initials _____

HEADQUARTERS 86TH FIGHTER-BOMBER GROUP AAF
APO 650

29 February 1944

AG 374-7

SUBJECT: Historical Records.

TO : Commanding General, XII Air Support Command, APO 374.

1. Outline History of Headquarters 86th Fighter-Bomber Group for the period 1 February 1944 to 29 February 1944.

a. Present designation: Headquarters 86th Fighter-Bomber Group, XII Air Support Command.

b. Changes in organization: Change in T/O.
New T/O 1-12 29 December 1943.
In place of old T/O 1-12 1 July 1942.

Capt. Wood, Robert O-663731 transferred from Sp to 526th Sq. where he assumes the duties of Operations Officer

1st Lt. Relyea, Vincent K. O-429443 new Asst. Sp. Oper. Officer.

1st Lt. Fine, William W. O-562999 Asst. Special Service Officer

Capt. Shaw, Jesse W. O-422956 Group Surgeon

T/O Schenk, Earl L. W-2130849 Gr. Engr. Inspector

Maj. Stansbury, Frederick C. O-395924 Transferred from Sp. to Command

c. Strength, commissioned and enlisted.

(1) Month of February 1944

- (a) At beginning: 22 officers, 51 enlisted men assigned
- (b) Net increase: 3 officers, 2 enlisted men
- (c) Net decrease: 3 officers
- (d) At end : 22 officers, 53 enlisted men assigned

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- d. Stations: Pozigliano d'Arco Airdrome, Italy, 1 Feb-29 Feb 1944
- e. Movements: No changes.
- f. Campaigns: Continued Italian campaign.
- g. Operations: The group has flown 104 missions and 787 sorties from 1 February to 29 February 1944.
- h. Commanding officer in important missions: None.
- i. Losses in action: Major Howe, Justus W. O-24030. Killed while in experimental flight testing new type bomb.
- j. Former and present members who have distinguished themselves in action: Lt. Col. Cassidy, Charles F. O-432047 received the Distinguished Flying Cross. On a dive-bombing mission, after dropping his bombs, he returned and strafed gun positions, knocking out same.

2. Inclosed are War Diary, Headquarters 86th Fighter-Bomber Group, for period 1 February 1944 to 29 February 1944, and group newspaper.

For the Commanding Officer:

WILLIAM A. PARROTT, JR.,
Major, Air Corps,
Intelligence Officer,
Hq. 86th Fighter-Bomber Group.

Incl: --
War Diary orig & copy
INVADEPS' INVENTORY-NEWS 3 copies

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WAR DIARY of the 86th Fighter-Bomber Group AAF.

Group Headquarters

3 February 1944

19 missions were flown this date, first time that we have had two plane missions, were highly congratulated by Command, as to the success of these missions:

9 February 1944

Lt. Col. Leaby, visited this group:

10 February 1944

Lt. Ornstine and officers of a French Gas Supply Unit visited:

24 February 1944

Col. Whitney, A2 of 87th Wing visited:

15 February 1944

Correspondents from two London newspapers, Mr. Emory Pearce, of the Daily Herald, and Mr. James Cooper of the Daily Express, visited here and received stories from Capt. Versepout, group Public Relations Officer:

17 February 1944

Sgt. Everett and Corp. Coe, of the XIII ASC-P.R.O., visited and received story:

18 February 1944

MAAF photographers took photos of Lt. Col. Kofhal, group Commander and Squadron Commanders:

Major Barrett, group S-2, left for Africa, to attend Aircraft Recognition School for instructors:

19 February 1944

Capt. Shaw, of the 27th Bomb Group and Lt. Fine of 57th Fighter Group, were transferred to this group:

Capt. Shaw, assumes the duties as group surgeon, relieving Major Stansbury, who was transferred to XIII Air Support Command:

Lt. Fine, assumes the duties as assistance Special Service Officer:

Major Thomas, Major Stout, Capt. Versepout and Capt. Ring, attended Major Home's funeral:

20 February 1944

Twenty new pilots were admitted to this group:
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WAR DIARY of the 86th Fighter-Bomber G. P. AAF.

Group Headquarters

22 February 1944

Sent first monthly consolidated, Purse and Food Kit, report to XII ASC:

MAAF Photographers, took photos of the Group Commander, Squadron Commanders and Flight Leaders, on the Groups 900th Mission:

23 February 1944

A lecture by Capt. Ring, on Briefing and Interrogation, was held at the Officers Club, Capt. Versepud, discussed Escape Procedure, this lecture was held mostly for the benefit of the new pilots assigned to this group:

26 February 1944

The group had a Standown, due to bad weather:

28 February 1944

Lt. Bradly, called Maj. Stout, Group Operations Officer, in regards to Escape Data:

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Hq. 86th Fighter-Bomber Group
Outline History - March 1944

Hq. 86th Fighter-Bomber Group

HEADQUARTERS 86TH FIGHTER-BOMBER GROUP AAF
APO 650

AG 314.7

31 March 1944

SUBJECT: Historical Records.

TO : Commanding General, XII Air Support Command, APO 374.

1. Outline History of Headquarters 86th Fighter-Bomber Group for the period 1 March 1944 to 31 March 1944.

- a. Present designation: Headquarters 86th Fighter-Bomber Group, XII Air Support Command.
- b. Changes in organization: Major Jay R. Stout, Group Operations Officer, transferred to XII Air Support Command.
Lt. Col. Edwin A. Bland, Jr., transferred from 525th Sq. to Group Headquarters, where he assumes the duties of Group Operations Officer.
Lt. Robert C. Townsend, Hq. XII Air Support Command, transferred to Group Headquarters, where he assumes the duties of Cryptographic and Security Officer.
- c. Strength, commissioned and enlisted:
 - (1) Month of March 1944:
 - (a) At beginning: 22 officers, 1 warrant officer, 51 enlisted men.
 - (b) Net increase: 1 warrant officer, 2 enlisted men.
 - (c) Net decrease: 1 officer, 6 enlisted men.
 - (d) At end : 21 officers, 2 warrant officers, 47 enlisted men.

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- d. Stations: Pomigliano d'Arco Airdrome, Italy.
- e. Movements: No changes.
- f. Campaigns: Continued Italian campaign.
- g. Operations: The group has flown 83 missions and 862 sorties.
- h. Commanding officer in important missions: None.
- i. Losses in action: None.
- j. Former and present members who have distinguished themselves in action: None.

2. Inclosed are War Diary, Headquarters 86th Fighter-Bomber Group, for period 1 March 1944 to 31 March 1944, and group newspaper.

For the Commanding Officer:

William A. Barrett, Jr.
WILLIAM A. BARRETT, Jr.,
Major, Air Corps,
Intelligence Officer,
Hq. 86th Fighter-Bomber Gp.

Incl:
War Diary orig & copy
INVADERS' INVENTORY-NEWS 5 copies

