

86th Fighter Bomber Group

**1944
1945**

ADDENDUM



Group picture at Poretta. First Row, sitting: Lts. Grantham Flake, Finlayson, Botten, Moyle, Aegerter, Mather, Mauk, Capt. Covington; Second Row, Kneeling: Lts. Anderson, Jenkins, Lochowitz, Marsh, McClees, Jordan, Whyte, Wilson, O'Rourke, Capt. Relyea, Lt. Joslin; Back Row, Standing: Lts. Davis, Curtin, Karrels, McEmber, Capt. Blackwell, Capt. Purdum, Lts. Leahy, Burkey, Connors, Oldham, Dwver.

86th Fighter Bomber Group

1944
1945

This is the result of a P-47 tangling with the top of a large tree that, unfortunately, was right under my nose where I couldn't see it. I had seen a convoy of German trucks "hiding" on a small road in a pine forest. I put the flight in the strafing formation and headed down on my strafing pass. I no more than started down when I was met with a tremendous amount of 20 mm ground fire. This was no doubt not a casual stopping place, but a well fortified daytime parking place. (The Germans did most of their traveling at night). Normally, when we finished our run, we would pull up and circle around for a second pass. Because of the heavy ground fire, I radioed the flight to stay on the tree tops when they finished their attack until they cleared the area, which I was doing. We could then reorganize and see if another pass was needed. Unfortunately, I suddenly I felt this "whap" and my engine quit. I had to pull up to get all the altitude I could, and, fortunately the German gunners were so busy with the incoming planes they didn't see me. To keep my speed up, I had to start gliding back down at a scary rate. There was no place to belly the plane in, and I was fast approaching the minimum altitude to bail out. (When I thought about it later, bailing out wasn't much of an option. I would have no doubt ended hung up in the trees and been captured by the very people we had been strafing). Fortunately, at the last minute, I got the engine started. All thoughts of a second pass were gone with the engine my main concern and staying airborne until I could get back to our base. After I got back, it was determined that the engine problem was caused by pine needles blocking the air intake.



Cuts along the leading edge of the wing



The lower cowling, behind the propeller - and there was no damage to th prop.

THE 525th SQUADRON "CLASS OF JULY 1, 1944"

Excerpt from the Squadron Diary, Orbetello Airfield, Italy, July 1, 1944

Twenty three new pilots were assigned and reported to the Squadron today. Second Lieutenants Carl C. Baranek, Walter M. Bieber, John P. Botten, John E. Brink, Lee D. Burkey, John V. Conner, William P. Curtin, Bennie G. Flake, George D. Frey, Croft Grantham, Marion L. Green, Carl P. Hernandez, John C. Jacoby, Russell E. Jefferson, John C. Jenkins, John V. Jordan, James R. Joslin, Clifford A. Karrels, Glenn C. Moore, Richard B. Moyle, Robert D. O'Rourke, Riley E. Stewart, Eugene R. Whyte, and William A. Wozniak

Note: Actually, there were 24 new pilots.

STATUS AS OF MAY, 2005

Killed in Action (5)

John V. Conner
Carl P. Hernandez
Russell E. Jefferson
James R. Joslin
Riley E. Stewart

Deceased (6)

Lee D. Burkey
John C. Jacoby
John C. Jenkins
John V. Jordan
Richard B. Moyle
Robert D. O'Rourke

Active in The 86th Fighter Bomber Group Association (12)

Carl C. Baranek
Walter M. Bieber
John P. Botten
John E. Brink
William P. Curtin (no recent communication)
Bennie G. Flake
George D. Frey
Croft Grantham
Marion L. Green
Clifford A. Karrels
Glenn C. Moore
Eugene R. Whyte

Inactive in The 86th Fighter Bomber Group Association (1)

William A. Wozniak

A few post WW II photos



Carl Baranek 2001



Walter Bieber 1997



Jack Botten 1996



John Brink 1996



Bennie Flake 2001



George Frey



Glenn Moore & Eugene Whyte 1997

This is what 50 years will do



Jim Covington



Jack Botten



Guests of Jim Covington at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club in March of 1996



John Brink

THE FINAL APPROACH RESTAURANT - COLUMBIA S. C.



86th Fighter Bomber Group, 525th Fighter Squadron



Captain John P. (Ole Baldy) Botten
Stationed in the European Theatre of Operations 1944-45
Now residing in the Cleveland, Ohio area

ANOTHER DISPLAY FOR THE WALLS OF THE RESTAURANT



86th Fighter Bomber Group

1944
1945



"Ole Baldy" was a P-47D-27-RE flown by Capt Botten of the 525th FS.
(picture Thunderbolt Squadron/Signal)

-Ben Flake: *Jack Botten was called "Baldy". When promoted to Captain HE was "Ole Baldy". I don't remember the replacement or serial numbers.*

This is a photo that Benny Flake had and was given to Durastanti Alexandre of Corsica who was doing a history of all of the many, many airfields that were on Corsica during the war. (I think he was a commercial airline pilot).

At the end of the war, some of our planes were replaced by some earlier models so ours could be saved for other service. I lost my #27 at this time and inherited #39. However, the "Ole Baldy" cowling was saved. This change in planes is why at times I am listed as flying #39 during the war.

