

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Sheet 92. War Diary. 526th Fighter Sq., 86th Fighter Gp., APO 650, N.Y., N.Y.
 Month of July, 1944. Prepared by Charles P. Voller, 1st Lt., above named Sq.

WAR DIARY

to be able to take the airplane back to the States for display and advertising purposes. Captain Murphy, Squadron Surgeon, brought news that Lt. Journell would be in the hospital for approximately six weeks. Lts. Benear and Archibald joined him a few days ago. The former with a serious case of G.I.s and the latter for an unknown reason. Ten more new pilots today. The number of pilots assigned to the Squadron exceeds all previous numbers. The "show" in France must surely going to be a large one. The laundry and price of laundry situations are rapidly coming to a climax. Lt. Kritz and Nordell went into Bastia today to pick up their laundry and after arguing with the natives for some time they started to turn away in disgust when one of the natives, a sixty year old man, ran into the house and grabbed a shot gun. His family prevented him from getting out of the house with it. We shall soon be doing our own laundry. Flew three missions today, one bombing mission, one escort mission, and one two ship search mission.

- 26 Captain Saunders and Sgt. Bushey went into Bastia today to attempt to reason with some laundry people. In the ensuing melee the Provost Marshall and two M.P.'s were called upon to aid in settling the dispute. The matter never was satisfactorily settled and only two out of five bags of laundry were procured. A theft of a goodly portion of the week's P.X. was discovered late this evening. Lt. Benear returned from the hospital. The Squadron flew two missions today.
- 27 The morning mission was particularly successful. Despite poor weather conditions, the target, a bridge North of Galliete, Italy was rendered unserviceable by hits on the North approach. Prior to going into the dive Captain Lucas and Captain Saunders had sighted three J.U. 52's on an airfield approximately ten miles North and slightly East of the target. After completing the bombing mission the flight made a wide sweep and strafed the airplanes thoroughly, all three of them were left burning. Captain Lucas set two of them afire and Lt. Bartlett left the third one blazing. Part of the flight strafed and damaged barracks and administration buildings on the field. On the afternoon mission Lt. Taylor was forced to bail out approximately three to five miles South of Portofino, Italy being hit by anti-aircraft fire when he dove on the target. One flight circled him and gave him cover until he was picked up by Air Sea Rescue and taken to Pionbino, Italy and from there brought back to the Squadron. Major Harry W. "Doc" Dorris, one of our original pilots and former C.O. visited us today. After he had completed his tour here he transferred to the Fifteenth Air Force and he has just now completed a tour there. His stories of fights with enemy planes kept us spellbound all through the noon meal. "Doc" has always been a favorite of the Squadron. The men and officers alike were glad to know that he was going home after completing two tours, downing five enemy airplanes, winning the D.F.C., the Silver Star, and the Air Medal with several clusters. He has certainly done his fair share in the war. Our A-36 was flown to Naples today in exchange for a P-47. That is the last of the A-36's in the Group.

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- 28 More trouble today. Captain Saunders crashed into a truck while taking off losing about three feet of his left wing. He was able to keep his aircraft airborne and make a circle of the field to land safely. This is the third such accident all caused by carelessness of someone leaving a vehicle either on or near the runway. For the past two days all of our missions have been flown in the morning.
- 29 The mission today is one that will be talked of for some time to come. After bombing and hitting the primary target, a bridge in the Novara-Milan area, the flight attacked airdromes in the same area. Making four or five passes at five different airdromes they destroyed 23 and damaged at least 10 aircraft of all types including ME-109's, Focke Wulfe 190's, JU-52's and four four-engine airplanes. Also four motor vehicles filled with personnel were destroyed. Two of our planes were hit by flak. Group Operations is attempting to arrange a strafing mission in this same area for tomorrow morning.
- 30 The morning mission proved that the Germans lost no time in moving most of their serviceable planes from the fields that we attacked yesterday afternoon. The pilots bagged two JU-52's on the ground. The engineers' started work on the runway this afternoon and the field will be closed for three or four days while they lay steel matting the entire length of the runway. The trek to town started about 3:00 o'clock. The object was the bar in the Officers' Club. By 7:00 o'clock most of the officers were present and most of those present were in various stages of enebriation. The only casualties of the evening were two of the Group Officers who were subjected to a verbal barrage mainly because they were Group Officers.
- 31 As a result of last night's "blow off" the Intelligence Officers of each squadron were called together and given a lengthy discussion on awards. The object of the discussion was to show that Group was not at fault because the awards were not being granted. The discussion in the Bastia Officers' Club did bear some fruit. Captain Williamson, Lt. Beebe and Lt. Nordell left for Foggia this morning to get their orders to go home. They were accompanied to Foggia by Captain Henriod. The party spirit continues to gain momentum and approached a climax tonight. The Officers' Club in Bastia was again crowded by Officers of this Squadron. Two new pilots were assigned to the Squadron today.

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526th Fighter Squadron
Outline History, August 1944

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HEADQUARTERS 526TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
86TH FIGHTER GROUP, A.P.O. 650, N.Y.

31 August 1944

AG 314.7

SUBJECT: Historical Records.

TO : Commanding General, XII Tactical Air Command, A.P.O. 574.

1. Outline History of the 526th Fighter Squadron for the period 1 August to 1 September 1944.

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

b. Changes in organization:

- (1) Changes in designation: None.
- (2) Disposition of echelons and subordinate units: Same.
- (3) Changes in Commanding Officers: None.
- (4) Changes in Staff Officers: None.

c. Strength, commissioned and enlisted men:

- (1) Month of August 1944.
 - (a) At beginning: 58 officers; 247 E.M. assigned.
 - (b) Net increase: None ; None
 - (c) Net decrease: 4 officers; 6 E.M.
 - (d) At end: 54 officers; 241 E.M. assigned.

d. Stations: Poretta Air Base, Corsica.

e. Movements: None.

f. Campaigns: Continued Italian and Southern France Campaign.

g. Operations:

- (1) Campaign: Italian, Southern France.

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(2) Nature of operations: Combat missions by fighters of P-47 type aircraft, on dive-bombing, strafing, harassment and patrol, particularly in attacking enemy communications, and principally of dive-bombing and strafing type.

(3) Number of missions and sorties for period: 69 missions, 462 sorties.

(4) Results of important missions:

(a) Mission: 15 August 1944: Four planes bombed highway bridge in Southern France, 1) which was being extensively used by the Germans in defense against American landings in Southern France, 2) the weather being hazy and probability of success being fair. 3) Near misses were scored after which 4) 42 enemy motor vehicles and artillery pieces were destroyed. 7) railroad cars strafed and many destroyed, 5) seriously interfering with the enemy's conduct of its defense.

(b) Mission: -16 August 1944: Armed reconnaissance by eight planes in the Toulon-Avignon, France area, 1) where the enemy was using the roads to transport vital supplies and men in defense of Southern France against our landings there. 2) Probability of success was not very good for the mission since the weather was extremely hazy and visibility almost nil. 3 & 4) Nevertheless, a 15 car troop train was destroyed, a small electric train strafed out of commission, and at least 25 motor vehicles destroyed. 5) seriously crippling the enemy's materiel, manpower and avenues of ingress and egress.

(c) Mission: 16 August 1944: Eight planes on an armed reconaissance mission in the Toulon-Avignon area, 1) where the enemy was using the highways and railroads extensively to bring up men and materiel, 2) hazy weather making probability of a successful mission only fair. 3) Disregarding the weather, the mission was completed with great success. 4) the flight destroying a large tank, three motor vehicles and at least 40 oil cars and railroad cars. In addition, three enemy planes were seriously damaged, one completely collapsing, 5) all of which inflicted heavy loss on the enemy.

(d) Mission: 17 August 1944: Twelve planes strafed 1) an extensively used enemy airdrome at Orange-Caritat, France, 2) in hazy weather where chance of success was not good 3 & 4) 5-10 enemy JU-88s on the ground, a dinky train, several motor vehicles, and a large number of railroad cars were destroyed by strafing, one ammunition car blowing up, and many cars loaded with airplane parts and equipment being among those destroyed, 5) all of which were highly damaging to the enemy during the critical period when American troops were pouring into Southern France.

h. Commanding Officer's important missions: None to report.

i. Losses in action: Flight Officer Reginald M. Jorgenson was lost seen at N-9090, Southwest of Savigliano, Italy, 20 August 1944

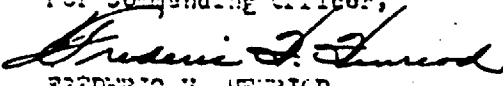
j. Former and present members who have distinguished themselves:

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(1) The following oficers received the Distinguished Flying Cross for extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight.

- Capt. Vernon A. Williamson
- 1st Lt. Fort (MI) Benear
- 1st Lt. Paul R. Cordell
- 1st Lt. Herbert C. Estep (MIA)
- Capt. Stanley G. Wright (PCW)
- Capt. Eugene E.M. Schmitt
- 1st Lt. Robert E. McClintock
- Capt. Robert B. Fleming
- Capt. Roy (MIA) Schiller
- 1st Lt. William G. Russell
- Capt. Jackson (MI) Saunders
- 1st Lt. Charles C. Meyer (MIA)

2. Inclosed is War Diary, 526th Fighter Squadron, 36th Fighter Group, for the period 1 August to 1 September 1944.

For Commanding Officer,

 FREDERIC H. MERRICK,
 Capt., A.C., S-2 Officer,
 526th Ftr. Sq., 36th Ftr. Gr.

Incl: War Diary orig. & 3.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Sheet No. 94. War Diary. 526th Fighter Sq., 86th Fighter Gp., APC 650, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of August, 1944. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, Capt., above named Sq.

WAR DIARY

1 August dawned on this Isle, hot and sultry and dusty. Even so, it is not nearly so hot as it is in Naples for example. There is generally a slight breeze blowing off the Mediterranean from the East which lends some relief in the afternoon. Capt. Williamson, Lts. Nordell and Leebe, went to XII TAC in Naples with Capt. Henriod, to obtain their papers to go home and to attempt to obtain their awards. Not only the Squadron, but people in Naples are still talking about the great mission flown by our Squadron on July 25th in which at least 25 German planes were destroyed. There were no missions flown today for the reason that operations have ceased pending installation of a steel mat runway. A Group party was staged in the evening in Group Headquarters to announce the release of Col. Kofahl from further command of the Group, and the substitution of Col. Bates in his place, effective tomorrow. There was considerable drinking, and considerable ribbing of various personalities, including both Colonels.

2 Col. Earl E. Bates, Jr., took over the command of the Group, and Col. Kofahl went to the 37th Fighter Wing preparatory to being rotated back to the States. Many of the pilots are taking advantage of the five or six day stand down to re-visit Rome, the now famous Riviera Hotel, which has been universally nicknamed the Marina Hotel. Others spend considerable time in Bastia, where the people remain sullen, and the liquor bad. The Senegalese, Frenchmen and Slavs still roam up and down the one highway along the road building sides. There are very few English on the Island compared with what we have had at other places. The Slavs are a contingent which the Italians originally brought here as prisoners, putting them to work as laborers, and they have stayed on as members of the Allied Forces. They are supplied with U.I. clothing and equipment, as are the French - Many of whom believe that the U.I. is wearing French equipment. Our bivouac area is not bothered much by itinerant "Frogs" as we were by the Italian "Guineas", and what few wander through the place are not seeking work or wash, but usually want to buy shoes, watches or other commodities. Shoes will sell for any price between twenty and fifty dollars, and a \$17.00 watch will bring \$100.00. On the other hand, it costs five or six dollars for a small wash, and it is said that the ladies of remunerative sin don't but an eye when they demand from twenty to thirty dollars. As a result, the venereal rate has gone down, the blood pressure up, and virtue has its own reward in at least a small measure, - economically speaking.

3 Spt. James B. Angel, probably the tallest and leanest man in our outfit, left today for Sagnoli Personnel Center # 6, where he will be rotated back to the United States. The Airdrome here (Poretta) was opened for an hour or so today, but was closed again, and no missions flown. P-T boats nightly slip quietly out of Bastia Harbor and make the trip to the Southern French Coast. Some of them even venture into the harbors. They claim their percentage of kills runs about 60%, which simply means that out of nine P-T's in a mission, there will be an enemy vessel sunk on at least 60% of the missions. Some of our pilots have been on missions with them and proclaim it an adventure which all should not behind. In Naples, the harbor is clogged with shipping. The invasion of

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Sheet No. 95. War Diary. 526th Fighter Sq., 86th Fighter Gr., APO 670, N.Y., N.Y.

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WAR DIARY

Southern France or wherever it will come cannot be far in the offing. The stalemate in Italy before the Gothic Line seems to be merely the calm before the storm, and the favorite tactic of the Allies to date--that of punching on one front, relaxing, then punching on another--is being carried out.

- 4 Sgt. Virgil Hagans was tried and convicted by General Courts Martial in Naples today and sentenced to two years on a statutory charge. News came today that the doughfeet in Normandy have broken through today and ended the temporary stalemate in that sector. The stand down is still providing an opportunity for the officers and men to visit Bastia, Corto and even Ajaccio. At Bastia there is an Officer's Club, consisting of what was formerly a sumptuous sea-side home of some twelve or fifteen rooms, about a mile North of Bastia. There is a good bar where Cap Corse, Cognac, Vermouth and one or two other drinks can be purchased. A veranda overlooks the sea, and comfortable chairs provide a place to relax, look out over the sea toward Elba, and drink whatever is purchased. Sand has been hauled in to form a comfortable beach at the North of the Club, and a diving board is in process of construction. Local beauties sun themselves in the afternoon, and kids sans clothing unshockingly plunge into the brino in front of the equally unshocked Corsican belles. Some nights a small orchestra, featured by a crooked fingered accordionist, plays "Violetta" and "It's Love, Love, Love" and whatever other bits of music it has at hand. The enlisted men can enjoy themselves in the Red Cross in Bastia, which serves ice cream twice a week and provides a pleasant lounging place overlooking the sea in front of the only park in Bastia, presenting a welcome contrast to the dust of our cork forest bivouac area.
- 5 Last night one of our planes flew transition night flying for the first time since we left the States. This portends some long escort missions.
- 6 The writer obtained Capt. Williamson's and Lt. Nordell's Distinguished Flying Crosses at Foggia and delivered them via a Catalina Flying Boat to these pilots who are still at Bagnoli waiting for a boat home. Col. Kofahl is at the personnel center also, awaiting shipment home. He also obtained a D.F.C., much to the irritation of the pilots in our Squadron who haven't been so rewarded although having flown many more missions. Our Squadron started flying again, flying four missions, taking off on the new steel mat runway, which all the pilots have stamped with their approval.
- 7 Destroyed all Intelligence and Operational Summaries for months past by burning. One mission flown today, bombing a railroad track. Col. Eates seems to be doing a good job as C.C. He was formerly Commanding Officer of the 79th Group, which is also stationed here in Corsica. There have been no changes in Group personnel as yet. The Squadron Officer's Club is generally lively at nights where drinks of real American whiskey can be purchased, while they last, at forty cents a throw. The place gets noisy at times, as attested to by the enlisted men the next morning by their sly reminders of inability to sleep on account of strange nocturnal noises. Unfortunately the Kisson Hut which houses the

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the Officer's Club happens to be in the close proximity of a number of the enlisted men's pyramids. Poker sessions are nightly affairs. The walls are lined with bamboo poles, a red bar adorns one end, camouflage netting provides and ugly, but the only available substitute for ceiling streamers. All day long a portable phonograph whines out canned tunes provided by the Special Services Department of the Army. Such tunes as "Charlaine" and "Sleep Kentucky Babe" have enjoyed a renewed Squadron popularity since the phonograph's arrival. Pin-up girls adorn whatever space on the walls that is not absorbed by the bamboo poles, running the gamut from nudity to a disgusting surplusage of clothes from the hips down. Occasionally someone is interested in a crossword puzzle. The enlisted men generally have a radio somewhere in the vicinity and a bottle of vino or medicinal alcohol nearby, although there is surprisingly little drunkenness in the Squadron. The proportion is greater among the officers than among the enlisted men.

- 8 One mission flown today. The pilots are liking their P-47s better every day. The mechanics on the line don't like to work on them as much as they did on the A-56s, saying that gadgets are harder to get at, etc. Lt. Benear is insisting on painting his plane to appear like a shark. How he can do this with the cigar-shaped P-47 is something of a mystery and we are sweating out the picasso result.
- 9 Joe Louis, heavyweight champion, is with the Group today, having his picture taken with various Group Officers, being shown around the field, and taking a swing or two at a knitted golf ball. He is scheduled to give an exhibition tomorrow night. However, a downpour tonight makes the scheduled exhibition a matter of conjecture. This is the first rain we have had since we came to Corsica and it served as a welcome relief to the clammy heat that has hung low over this part of the beach for the past few days. The pilots flew one twelve plane mission tonight, bombing a bridge with good results.
- 10 Joe Louis' exhibition was of course the highlight of the social day. He and his troupe of course made local aspirants look like amateurs, but one has to admire the guts of some of these boys who are willing to get in and mix leather with the Brown Bomber Sergeant. Due to inclement weather the only flight of the day was unable to reach the target. Despite the weather there have been hundreds of heavies and mediums winging their way over our field today on their way toward Southern France with their cargoes of death. It looks like the prelude to something big. A lot of the fellows count them going over and more eagerly count them coming back, and the grins on their faces when the count tallies up indicates a silent, unexpressed satisfaction that these G.I.s have when they know their "big friends" haven't lost a plane. If all the G.I.s of all Squadrons are like those in our Squadron, we've got the bitchingest Army in the world with the biggest hearts in the world.
- 11 Today marked a day of variety in the way of targets. One mission attacked a gun emplacement, another attacked a Seektakt Station and another a Wurzburg radar station. This is another little indication that the invasion is now only

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hours away, since destruction of radar equipment and gun emplacements in the past have been the overture to the powder opera. All in all our boys flew 36 sorties, which simply means that's a lot of sorties and a lot of work for the linemen who will work into the wee hours of the morning if necessary to get the ships in condition for another heavy schedule tomorrow. Today we had a field day on medals. Our Squadron obtained 7 Distinguished Flying Crosses - for Schmitt, Fleming, Russell, Schiller, McClintock, Wright, and Estep, making nine in the last few days. Besides these, we were awarded a bunch of air medals and clusters. This puts us far in the lead of other Squadrons. A rocket shell with English markings landed on the South end of the runway during the night with a terrific explosion that woke everyone up. No one knows its source or the reason for it's being dropped there. Everyone in the Squadron thought the invasion would come off today from all indications and rumors, but it didn't. Betting is running high as to when the date will be, and there are numerous number pools about the Squadron as to the exact date of invasion.

12 Some of the officers and men went to the Red Cross dance in Bastia in the evening, where the 86th orchestra played. Four of the members of this orchestra hail from our Squadron - Gill, Knecht, Turley and Rosen. One mission was flown, attacking a gun emplacement near the Southern Coast of France. The P-T boats in Bastia harbor are all shined up, loaded with brassy looking torpedoes, with steam up, ready to go as soon as the order is given.

13 There is a stand down all day today for maintenance. Our planes have been operational for a good many days and have taken a beating both with operational hours and rick holes. Col. Bates told the C.O. and Intelligence Officers the plan of the Invasion which is forthcoming. It appears to be better planned and more detailed than any other we have been on. A stack of directives two inches thick constitutes the S.O.P. for this show, and if planning has anything to do with the success of a venture, this Southern France drama will be tops. Lt. Benear obtained his D.F.C. today, which runs our week's total to 10.

14 Major Weigle briefed the officers on D-Day and the invasion, and Capt. Henriod briefed the enlisted personnel later in the evening on the same subject. There is a stand down today in order to get all planes ready for the Invasion of Southern France, which starts at 0800 hours tomorrow morning, after a parachute invasion four hours prior thereto. There has been occasion for greater secrecy on this invasion, since reports indicate that the Germans have already picked up the convoy, know the invasion is coming, but don't know exactly where. The enlisted men were visibly interested in the news and just as visibly relieved to know that another step toward home was being taken. Hundreds of heavies and mediums are again flying over the field today, as they have been doing the past ten days, on their way to soften up Southern France.

15 "D" day dawned bright and clear and our first mission took off in the dark at 0515. Our pilots flew a record number of missions - nine in all, the last one

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returning at 1935 hours. A lot of the personnel did not go to bed at all last night, in preparation for invasion day. From all reports sifting in, the Invasion Forces did better than expected and met less resistance than anticipated. Most of the missions were attacks on coastal gun positions in close support of the landing forces. A total of 36 sorties were flown. On one of the missions, Lt. Williams and Lt. Sturmen collided in midair over the French coast, resulting in the bailing out of both pilots, Lt. Williams behind enemy lines, and Lt. Sturmen in the water offshore, where he was picked up by one of our boats. The last mission of the day knocked out 42 enemy mechanized vehicles on a strafing job. One of the pilots in one of the other Squadrons crashed at the North end of the runway today and miraculously escaped with an injured nose after his plane burst into a ball of flame. Col. Bates was lead-off man on the first mission. The sky has been black with our own planes flying to and from the Invasion Beachheads, which were principally around St. Raphael, St. Tropez, C. Negre and the islands of St. Cros and Levant. The French Forces of the Interior (FFI) have been doing a good job of clearing places for the advance. Everyone here is now eager to get to the mainland, principally because most of them do not like the island, and also because everyone is anxious to get a glimpse of the fabled Riviera.

16 The Invasion is still going ahead of schedule. It now appears that this "Dragon" operation will go down as one of the most important of the Invasions. Five missions and 52 sorties were flown today, with highly successful results, knocking out planes on the ground, gun emplacements, enemy trains and trucks. The beach safe line expanded so quickly that most of the maps intended for use for the next few days were not large enough to hold it. An A-20 crashed and burned on the field today, but the crew got out safely. The pilots were shown movies in the evening of their strafing and bombing results on one of the missions they flew. Mail has practically stopped on account of the Invasion.

17 Lt. Helms crashed early this morning near the South end of the runway, his plane bursting into flame. He managed to get out with minor burns and a small break in his left hand when he fell on the wing in his haste to get out of the inferno. One of our new pilots, Di Tom, on his first mission, strafed and blew up an ammunition car in the Caivillon marshaling yards, which put a hole 25 yards square in the yards, and blew railroad ties 200 feet in the air, through which several of our pilots had to fly on their bomb run. Lt. Sturmen returned to the outfit after having returned by boat from his bail-out on the Southern coast of France. The beachhead has already expanded to a depth of 15 miles. Falaise in Northern France was taken, and our troops are only 55 miles from Paris. Communications Reports Nos. 204 to 209 were destroyed by burning. Word was also received that Lt. Williams had made his way safely through the German lines to the beachhead, which gave occasion for a party at the Officer's Club in the evening.

18 Our forces in Normandy are reported to be at Versailles, 12 miles from Paris.

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Today an hour long hurricane came up, blowing down half the tents in the area and drenching everyone and his personal equipment. The place is a miniature lake and the canals are swollen to overflowing. The beautiful screened Officer's latrine was the subject of a protracted search by the Squadron carpenter after the gale had taken it to parts unknown. Before the storm, the pilots managed to get in an 8 plane mission in the nick of time, bombing a railroad bridge. The roads from the area to the line are submerged mudholes and considerable time is being spent by drivers of one vehicle pushing or pulling another out of the mud.

- 19 Four missions were flown today, in one of which Lt. Benear bagged an ME-109 in the air and probably another, in an aerial battle in which he took on three of the German planes. One which got on his tail managed to shoot Benear's plane up pretty badly, but not sufficiently to prevent him from coming home safely. In the four missions flown, the boys had a field day with German mechanized equipment, knocking out tens of trucks and other vehicles. Another P-47 crashed on the steel runway today, but the pilot walked away from it. Lt. Chinzi returned from Rome where he has been to rest camp.
- 20 The Invasion is still the principal topic of conversation in the Squadron, and the betting is now turning to the day when the Germans will capitulate. This form of gambling equals the wagers which have been placed on the St. Louis Browns. Five missions today. Lt. Williams arrived back from the beach-head, where he had a thrilling story to tell about his bail out and return to friendly lines through the mountains. Capt. Saunders received his Distinguished Flying Cross for it had run the gamut of approval by Group, disapproval by General Saville, who changed it to a cluster to the Air Medal, and a re-instatement by XII Air Force, who disagreed with General Saville with respect to the grade of the award earned. It is rumored that our new Commanding Officer will invoke a policy of having the pilots fly more than 35 missions. Although he has taken the lead himself and now has ninety some odd missions to his credit, the rumor and the initiative have made the pilots none the less restless and critical. Lt. Setterlund was transferred to Group today, and Lt. McKendrick to the 27th Squadron. Lt. Donald A. Lewis was assigned to our Squadron. Flight Officer Jorgenson bailed out over enemy territory.
- 21 Lt. Williams has gone on D.S. to the XII Air Force to tell his story to A-2 Section, to determine if he is to be sent home or shall remain in the theater. He is anxious to remain. Two missions flown today. On one of them the pilots accounted for six destroyed vehicles, strafing airdrome installations and leaving a three engine enemy plane afire. The Ghoums have taken an active part in the hills North of Toulon and Marseilles, which remind one of the Sicilian situation where Headquarters kept track of these strange fighters by getting reports from irate fathers or brothers that their daughters or wives had been raped, the site of the informer's farm being immediately ascertained and plotted on a map, which was established as the position of the Ghoums. The fellows in this Squadron are eager to leave this island and get on the mainland. According to the schedule, we are supposed to leave on

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the 29th. There have been rumors that we would leave earlier. However, the last rumor is that we will remain in Corsica longer than anticipated and then move directly to the Paris area, if the Southern and Northern forces join.

22 A 527th pilot crashed in the trees on the North side of the field today and died on his way to the hospital. On the Borgo Airdrome early this morning a Beaufighter crashed and exploded, and another repeated again tonight. On a mission which was not due to return until after dark, one of our pilots, Lt. Ingley, either bailed out or was killed when his plane, nearly over the field, sped earthward at 800 miles an hour and buried itself in the ground with a huge explosion. An object was seen to land nearby seconds after, and we are hoping that it will prove to be Lt. Ingley and that he is safe. We called the Air Sea Rescue, Movements and the Ack Ack outfits for news of the flier, and several searching parties were organized to traverse the swampy land in which he is believed to have crashed. Major Weigle, Capt. Saunders and Lt. Welp and Watson all left for Cairo today for a two weeks sojourn in accordance with Col. Bates' new policy of giving the boys a rest at Cairo and having them fly missions in addition to the 85 which has been sort of an index in the past. Capt. Saunders objected to the trip but went along.

23 Paris and Marseilles are reported to have fallen today. As a result, the quaint town of Bastia is smothered with the tri-color, which is strung across every street, in every store and every house. The people have been out in the streets all day, and are the gayest we have seen them since we have been here. A few were seen to actually smile. Visited with Lt. Ingley, who was located this morning at 0330 by Capt. Lucas and Lt. Sellers, mired up to his armpits in the mud in the swampland East of the field. His chute failed to open and he plummeted to earth and fell in the swamp, the only small area on this whole island where he could have had even a faint chance to survive. He was alive and a good going over indicates that there is nothing serious wrong with him and that no bones are even broken - this, despite the fact that he fell 11,000 feet straight down, without benefit of parachute. It appears to be the most miraculous survival and rescue of the war in this theater, and no one can believe it. Many eyewitnesses bear out the fact that his chute did not open, and his survival is the source of the utmost amazement to all of us. We can hardly believe this strange miracle. The story has gone the rounds, and should make the New York Times. We're hoping that the information we gave the Group will be properly disseminated. Lt. Ingley's hair raising experience is the talk of everyone, and has caused us to overlook the fact that the small towns all over the Corsican hills are tonight throwing up fireworks and shooting off guns in celebration of the Paris capitulation.

24 According to the radio and official reports, the reports that Paris and Marseilles fell were false, and the Germans still occupy the capital. The explanation was that the Germans failed to live up to some sort of armistice,

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Sheet No. 101. War Diary. 526th Fighter Sq., 86th Fighter Gp., APC 650, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of August, 1944. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, Capt., above named Sq.

WAR DIARY

which sounds rather superficial. At any rate the people of Bastia and the other towns around here have taken the flags down quite as quickly as they put them up when they heard that Paris was freed. Their smiles have turned to frowns and looks of disappointment. Grenoble has been taken, however. Two missions were flown today.

- 25 According to the night radio and official reports, Paris and Marseilles have fallen, and we are now wishing someone would make up his mind about this matter. The Bastians are going crazy putting up and taking down flags, and the guys in the Squadron are paying back bets they thought they had won, which is not only economically disturbing but psychologically irritating. We have had two instances in the Squadron where it appears that planes coming to us evidenced sabotage activities - in the one instance a little wire was lodged in the prop control socket, and in the other, a large amount of waste material was found in the radiator cooling pipes. Reports were made to the Group S-2 with respect to both of these findings. A pilot of the 525th Sq. was killed today in a crash. Lt. Kritz' landing gear collapsed and he crash landed his plane on returning from a mission. He was unhurt.
- 26 Lt. Journell returned to the Squadron from the hospital after fully recuperating from minor injuries suffered when he crashed his plane some time ago. Word that Rumania has capitulated and has turned its guns on the Germans, occupying Bucharest, is cheering today and leads to wild speculations as to when the war in Europe will end. Cannes was completely occupied yesterday. Three missions flown. We have been told that we would be alerted next Tuesday for movement within 24 hours notice. Some are starting to pack already.
- 27 A letter was received from Capt. Fleming, former crack pilot of the outfit, who is attending armament school, at Buckley Field, Colorado. A card from Lt. Chandler informs us that he is working in Intelligence Headquarters in the Pentagon building, Washington, D.C. During one of the missions today, one of the pilots expressed doubt as to whether he had strafed one of our own trucks or not, and a report came in later in the evening that three Allied soldiers were killed and 8 injured in the general vicinity by six F-47s. However, since there were bombs involved and our fellows had no bombs at the time, and since it was some 25 miles away, we are satisfied our flight was not responsible for this very unfortunate incident.
- 28 Each of the three Squadrons lost a plane today on or near the field. The 525th lost one South of the field when it bellied in after a bad takeoff. The pilot was uninjured although his plane burned. The 527th lost one which almost spelled disaster for 40 or 50 of our Squadron's ground personnel who were working in a large farmhouse quartering the engineering Dept., Communications, etc. The plane, damaged by flak was unable to land and it crashed inches from some of our men and 20 or 30 feet from the farmhouse. The plane broke into three pieces, pinning the pilot, McPherson under the

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Sheet No. 102. War Diary. 526th Fighter Sq., 86th Fighter Gp., APC 650, H.Y., H.Y.

Month of August, 1944. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, Capt., above named Sq.

WAR DIARY

aircraft. From all reports he will recover. In the third crackup, Capt. Kuhl of our Squadron, escaped injury when a tire blew on takeoff and he careened off the runway, wrecking the landing apparatus. Many of the men of the Squadron took in the movies, which are held every other night in an open field near the 525th Squadron area. We were told that we would move Wednesday morning. Some of the tents were taken down - only to have the order rescinded shortly thereafter. As a result a lot of the men will sleep in the open tonight - with rain forecast.

29 Bulgaria capitulated yesterday, with a strong statement from Russia that she would have to cooperate and not merely declare a state of neutrality. Three missions were flown today. The Americans are now 100 miles East of Paris, having taken Soissons. The Rhone valley is being systematically cleared. Rumors are springing up that we are to be sent to the C.B.I. theater instead of to France, which has created a disillusionment among the Squadron. Lt. Sellers went to the X-1 T.A.C. on the Southern coast of France for a special assignment teaching dive bombing tactics. The past week has been sultry and hot, and the dust and slight wind have added to the discomfort.

30 Operations for the past week have been largely in the Po valley district in Italy. The front is so fluid in Southern and Central France, and the range of our planes such that it is now impractical to fly missions from here to France. We have been told that we will definitely leave here for France in about a week. Although rain has threatened, there has been none, and as a result fellows sleeping in the open haven't gotten wet yet. The Russians have taken the Ploesti Oil Fields and are well on their way toward Bucharest, while the Americans are well beyond Soissons and Rheims, and the German coastal installations North and East of the Seine, including the flying bomb sites are now being threatened. The P.X. in Bastia got in a new shipment in which is included beer and coca cola, plus chocolate bars. The Red Cross Officer's Club serves ice cream twice a week, and coffee, cookies and sandwiches daily. It is situated on the third floor of a building overlooking the park. Last night we were entertained by a U.S.O. show. Three missions flown today, all in Italy.

31 Three more missions flown today. Looking back on the past month, it has been one of the most eventful since we've been overseas. Paris, Marseilles, Toulon, Cannes, Bordeaux, Soissons, Bucharest and Florence have been captured. The German Army has been put to rout. An attempt was made on Hitler's life, and dissension is cracking open the Reich. Inroads have been cut deeply into the Japanese line of defense. A wave of optimism has swept civilian United States. The fall of Paris looked pretty much like a stage play to strengthen De Gaulle's Committee, and a report of it's capture by F.F.I. was premature. There is a strong almost unanimous desire in the Squadron to leave the island and get a glimpse of Southern France and the Rhone valley. We have had numerous crackups during the month, but no casualties, with the exception of Flight Officer Jorgensen who is believed to have bailed out

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Sheet No. 105. War Diary. 26th Fighter Sq., 36th Fighter Gp., APO 630, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of August, 1944. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, Capt., above named Sq.

WAR DIARY

safely in Italy. We have a new Commanding Officer, a number of our pilots have gone home, and a number are almost ready to go home. By past standards they should have gone by now, but a new policy requiring the flying of more missions has not only kept them here longer, but has precipitated a belligerency on the part of many of the pilots who believe they should receive the same consideration as those who have preceded them, and has created a sort of belligerency and depressive spirit among some of the pilots that constitutes an unhealthy morale factor at the present time. Drinking during the month has increased. There is a noticeable let-down on training and eagerness. One of the miracles of the war occurred during the month when Lt. Insley fell 11,000 feet into a swamp, and lived to tell about it after his parachute did not open. Several of our pilots have walked away from death during the month when their planes crashed. Another miraculous escape from death occurred when Lts. Sturman and Williams collided in mid-air over enemy territory and bailed out - both returning to tell about it. There has been no dull moment during the month on this little island, which, to look at, appears to be about the most peaceful spot on earth, incapable of being the situs of anything more exciting than a sleepy afternoon over a glass of Cap Corse. As we look back in retrospect, we find no month more filled with exciting world happenings and personal excitement than the past month, unless it be the month or so we were at the Sole River where we lived for a few days under an umbrella of friendly and enemy gunfire.

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526th Fighter Squadron

Outline History, September 1944.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

By Auth. C. O.

526th Ftr. Sq.

30 Sept. 44.

Initials: *Wm P. B.*HEADQUARTERS, 526TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
86TH FIGHTER GROUP, A.P.O. 650, N. Y.

30 September 1944

AG 324.7

SUBJECT: Historical Records.

TO : Commanding General, XII Fighter Command, A.P.O. 650.

1. Outline History of the 526th Fighter Squadron for the period
1 September 1944 to 1 October 1944.a. present designation; 526th Fighter Squadron, 86th Fighter Group,
XII Fighter Command.

b. Changes in organization:

(1) Changes in designation:

(a) 9 September 1944. Changed from 526th Fighter
Squadron, 86th Fighter Group, XII Tactical Command, to 526th Fighter Squa-
dron, 86th Fighter Group, XII Fighter Command.

(2) Disposition of echelons and subordinate units; same.

(3) Changes in Commanding Officers; 11 September 1944, Major
William P. Benedict assumed command, replacing Major Graham Weigle, trans-
ferred. S. O. 157, Hq. 86th Fighter Group, 11 September 1944.(4) Changes in Staff Officers; 22 September 1944, Capt.
Alexander Louis and 1st Lt. Clayson S. Garber assumed duties as Intelli-
gence Officer and Assistant Intelligence Officer, respectively, replacing
Capt. Frederic H. Henriod and 1st Lt. Charles P. Voller, transferred.
Squadron Order 31, Hq. 526th Fighter Squadron, 21 September 1944.

c. Strength, commissioned and enlisted men:

(1) Month of September 1944.

(a) At beginning: 57 officers; 241 E.M. assigned.

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Outline History (cont'd)

- (b) Net increase: None ; 6 E.M. assigned.
- (c) Net decrease: 8 officers; None.
- (d) At end ; 49 officers; 247 E.M. assigned.

d. Stations: Porretta Air Base, Corsica; Grosseto Air Base, Italy.

e. Movements: 15-23 September 1944. Moved from Porretta Air Base, Corsica, to Grosseto Air Base, Italy.

f. Campaigns: Continued Italian Campaign.

g. Operations:

(1) Campaign: Italian.

(2) Nature of operations: Combat missions by flights of P-47 aircraft, on dive bombing, strafing, and escort, particularly in attacking enemy communications, and principally of dive bombing and strafing type.

(3) Number of missions and sorties for period: 77 missions, 460 sorties.

(4) Results of important missions:

(a) Mission: 11 September 1944. Armed reconnaissance by eight planes southwest of line between Modena and Piacenza and east of line between Genoa and Milan, Italy. Roads were being used extensively by the enemy to bring up men and supplies vitally needed in defense of the Gothic Line. Cloudy weather and poor visibility making the possibility of a successful mission poor, the flight nevertheless was able to effect a road block by bombing and to destroy 19 large trucks with trailers loaded with ammunition and three oil trucks by strafing, all of which were left burning. In addition 8 to 10 trucks were believed to have been damaged, but did not burn. This loss added more strain to the enemy's already weakened communications system.

(b) Mission: 12 September 1944. Eight plane bombing and strafing mission designed to cut rails and destroy enemy rolling stock being extensively used by the enemy to transport men and material in support of the Gothic Line. Cloudy and hazy weather making the possibility of a successful mission only fair, the flight nevertheless managed two rail cuts by direct bomb hits and destroyed, by strafing, two steam locomotives and one electric locomotive and an oil dump consisting of 12 forty-foot tanks which were set afire. Several railroad cars were also reported damaged by the attack.

(c) Mission: 13 September 1944. Four planes bombed and strafed an extensively used enemy marshalling yard. In cloudy weather where chances of success were none too good, the flight destroyed six railroad cars by bombing, the bombs also effecting a rail cut. Two locomotives, one pulling a 30-35 car train, were destroyed by strafing and four fires

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Outline History (cont'd)

were started among the cars, one fire enveloping three cars. All of this added strain to an already battered enemy communications system.

(d) Mission: 18 September 1944. Eight planes strafed and bombed an important enemy marshalling yard at Cremona, Italy, in cloudy weather where possibility of a successful mission was only fair. Notwithstanding the weather, the flight destroyed three hot locomotives and at least 17-20 railroad cars by bombing. In addition, one locomotive was destroyed by strafing, a fuel line was hit causing a large fire, and three motor vehicles were destroyed, depriving the enemy the use of this valuable means of transportation.

(e) Mission: 19 September 1944. Eight planes bombed and strafed an enemy ammunition train in the Suzarra, Italy, yards. In weather consisting of 10/10 cloud cover from 6,000 to 12,000 feet, the flight successfully destroyed two engines and left the cars, loaded with ammunition, burning and exploding, thus depriving the enemy the use of these explosives vitally needed in the defense of the Gothic Line.

h. Commanding Officer's important missions:

(1) Mission: 16 September 1944. Major Benedict led an eight plane reconnaissance mission in the Genoa-Milan-Turin, Italy, area, where in hazy weather where visibility was only fair, the flight effected a rail cut, knocked out a rail bridge, hit a merchant vessel in Genoa harbor, and damaged several railroad cars by bombing. Continuing on at tree top level, the flight strafed and destroyed two ammunition trucks with trailers, both exploding, one oil truck which was left burning, two motor transports, three hot locomotives and several cars and a gasoline dump. Four locomotives with no steam were strafed and damaged along with a number of railroad cars. This weakened considerably the enemy's battered supply lines.

i. Losses in action:

(1) 1st Lt. Richard F. Marcy crashed behind enemy lines at K-2510, Italy, 11 September 1944.

(2) 2nd Lt. Lewis K. Foster was last seen 1½ miles north-east of Nordighera, Italy, 12 September 1944.

(3) 2nd Lt. Harry A. Partridge, Jr., was seen to crash at J-9760, Italy, 14 September 1944.

(4) Capt. Jackson Saunders was last seen at J-2625, Italy, 22 September 1944.

(5) 2nd Lt. Ardell Klemme was seen to bail out and land safely at J-7830, Italy, 22 September 1944.

(6) 1st Lt. James F. Sturman's aircraft was seen to crash and explode at approximately F-7725, Italy, 26 September 1944.

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Outline History (cont'd)

(7) 2nd Lt. Lawrence L. Johnston was seen to bail out and land safely at F-6147, Italy, 30 September 1944.

j. Former and present members who have distinguished themselves.

- (1) 1st Lt. Lloyd E. Dixon DFC
- (2) 1st Lt. George Krutz DFC
- (3) Capt. Carol J. Michaud DFC
- (4) 1st Lt. William L. Sellers DFC
- (5) Capt. Ross C. Watson DFC

2. Inclosed is War Diary, 526th Fighter Squadron, 86th Fighter Group, for the period 1 September to 1 October 1944.

For the Commanding Officer:

Alexander Louis
 ALEXANDER LOUIS,
 Capt., Air Corps,
 Intelligence Officer.

Incl: War Diary, orig. & 3.

