

S E C R E T

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:

- (a) Missions: 98.
- (b) Sorties : 551.

(4) Results of important missions:

(a) Mission: 14 December 1944. Four aircraft, P-47 type, were ordered to attack 10 "Nebels" which had been causing the Fifth Army a good deal of trouble and which our own artillery couldn't seem to hit. All bombs were dropped on target and interrogation indicated that all mortar positions were knocked out.

(b) Mission: 16 December 1944. Four pilots flying P-47 type aircraft, were ordered to bomb the town of Tossignano as elements of the Sixth British Armored were cut off there. All bombs were on the target demolishing buildings and starting fires. Word was recieved from Army that it was a good show and also a commendation for the good work done.

(c) Mission: 31 December 1944. Eight aircraft were ordered to attack Calcenato railroad bridge and crane which was being used to carry supplies to front line troops and to carry supplies out of Italy. The crane was used to swing a part of the bridge out during the day and then to replace the span during the night making it appear from a daylight view that it was unserviceable. Interrogation disclosed that the crane was destroyed and bombing also accounted for one locomotive and three cars. One other set of bombs hit the east approach to the bridge, cutting the tracks and damaging the bridge. As a result of this mission, the flow of vital supplies and equipment was slowed down depriving the German frontline soldier these much needed supplies.

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

i. Losses in action:

(1) CHARLES E. WILLIAMS, 0759143, 1st Lt., failed to return from mission, 10 December 1944. Two eyewitnesses are of the opinion that he went in with his plane at G-1428, Italy.

(2) ARTHUR E. JAMES, 0722096, 2nd Lt., failed to return from mission, 17 December 1944. He was seen to bail out of his plane and land safely in enemy territory at P-5550.

j. Former and present members who have distinguished themselves:

- (1) RAYMOND J. HUFF, 1st Lt. Silver Star
- (2) DONALD J. KLIMENT, 1st Lt. 1st OLC to DFC
- (3) WILLIAM P. BENEDICT, Maj. 2nd OLC to DFC

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- (4) SANBORN B. HUTCHINS, 1st Lt. DFC
- (5) RICHARD D. LAWRENCE, 1st Lt. DFC
- (6) HARRY A. MASTER, 2nd Lt. DFC
- (7) THOMAS G. ARCHIBALD, Capt. DFC
- (8) WALTER C. TAYLOR, JR., 1st Lt. DFC
- (9) ROBERT J. TAFT, Capt. DFC
- (10) JOHN M. LEPRY, 1st Lt. Soldier's Medal
- (11) CLAYSON S. GARBER, 1st Lt. Soldier's Medal
- (12) WILLIAM LIND, Sgt. Bronze Star

2. Inclosed is War Diary, 526th Fighter Squadron, 86th Fighter Group, for the period 1 December 1944 to 1 January 1945.

For the Commanding Officer:

Howard C Wolf
 HOWARD C. WOLF,
 1st Lt., Air Corps,
 Unit Historian.

1 Incl: War Diary.

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Sheet No. 115. War Diary. 526th Fighter Sq., 86th Fighter Gp., APO 650, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of December 1944. Prepared by Howard C. Wolf, 1st Lt., above named Sq.

WAR DIARY

- 1 The Group officers held a dance and the dearth of women is comical. One put in an appearance. The Group theater ran a Benny Goodman film much to everyone's satisfaction. Three projectors were used before the picture was finished. The Squadron ran six missions. The 527th Squadron caught a JU-88, the first seen in some time. Armament and Ordnance sections bought a 200 pound hog for \$171.05 and had a barbecue for themselves in the evening.
- 2 Flew seven missions totaling 32 sorties, one in the area of Brenner Pass. PX rations, sans beer, were drawn. We got 15 packages of cigarettes for 15 days and rumor has it that the present quota may be reduced. Maybe the Senatorial Inquiry in the States will ease the smoking situation. As it is the non-smokers are taking care of those addicted.
- 3 Stood down due to bad weather. All three poker tables and the dice table in the enlisted men's day room were crowded with plenty of "sweaters" waiting to take the place of the unfortunates who went broke.
- 4 Flew three missions today. Lt. Leader was shot up on a close support show and bailed out safely in friendly territory. A signal reads that he was given first aid for an injury to his leg but nothing serious.
- 5 Stand down until afternoon because of weather. Got one mission off. We hear we are getting more replacements, the second batch within a month. Major Benedict is going home for 30 days after four or more years overseas. Group theater crowded to capacity as all the personnel of the Group were compelled to attend the showing of some training films.
- 6 Flew one mission before being stood down for the day. A good many of the enlisted men made their initial appearance at the local Red Cross Club, recently established in Piss, and reports are that the coffee and cakes are well worth going after. The enlisted men's club continues to have dances four times a week, well attended by local signorinas and GI's.
- 7 Flew two missions, one a special by Colonel Bates, after being stood down in the morning. Captain Kuhl and Lt. Lepry departed today for the Capri Rest Camp expecting to be gone seven days.
- 8 Meeting of the enlisted men. Major Benedict imposed bed-check in an effort to bring the VD rate down in the Squadron. Stood down all day due to weather.
- 9 Five new pilots assigned to the Squadron. Dance at the Officer's Quarters, no women as usual. Flew three missions in dubious weather. The Squadron Basket Ball team won the championship of the XII AAF Command in one of the tightest games of the tournament. Brigadier General Chidlaw, XXII TAC Commander, presented the team, McGoldrick, Bennet, Hetrick, Pucket, Miller, and Ripkin, and runner-ups with team trophies and medals.
- 10 Flew five missions today and lost two pilots. Lt. Williams was seen to go in with his plane south of Padua and Lt. Lawrence said he was bailing out near the front lines. There is much hope that Lt. Lawrence will be back

*Eff. 12/3/44
G.W. Wolf promoted from
1st Lt. to 1st Capt. &
Promoted to 1st
Sgt. 9/1/45*

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Sheet No. 116. War Diary. 526th Fighter Sq., 86th Fighter Grp., APO 650, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of December 1944. Prepared by Howard C. Wolf, 1st Lt., above named Sq.

WAR DIARY

with us. Lt. Williams will be sorely missed. S/Sgt. Joseph Brennan was reduced to the rank of Sergeant.

11 Stood down due to weather. Some of the enlisted men of the Squadron have taken in every performance of "Panama Hettie" playing for the last time tonight at the Air Corps theater. The ingenuity of the GI has again contributed to the comfort of the enlisted men of the Squadron. An improvised plumbing system has been installed in the latrines of the building. The hot water heating system, so far, has been a total flop due to lack of sufficient power to operate the pumps. The home-made oil drum stoves are still the standby of the GI. Morale, which has not been as it should be for some time, dropped to a new low today when it was found that new replacements in the Squadron with as low as six months overseas time were going home on furlough. An orientation meeting at the mess hall was well commented on and cleared up a number of points about the Italian Front about which the men were either doubtful or had no knowledge of whatsoever.

12 Stood down in the morning for repairs on the field. The field was opened again at noon but no missions were flown due to weather. Lts. Garber and Lepry were awarded the Soldier's Medal for participating in the rescue of several old and feeble people trapped in a home in Grosseto during the flood.

13 Word was received that Lt. Anderson, a pilot who went down on his initial flight, was in Florence. Seven missions flown today.

14 Five missions today. Returning from one of the missions after having his plane hit by flak, Lt. Sewell was unable to lower his left landing gear or raise the right one and chose to bail out in the sea at Marina di Pisa. He was picked up immediately by a boat and in a short while was back in the area suffering no ill effects. Lt. Clayson S. Garber was transferred to the 527th Squadron S-2 per S.O. 220, par. 1, Hq. 86th Fighter Group and Lt. Howard C. Wolf was transferred to this organization on the same order.

15 Major Benedict and Captain Setencich left for the States on a thirty-day furlough. Major Benedict was transferred to Hq. 86th Fighter Group. Major Taylor joined this organization and assumed the duties of C.O.

16 Weather curtailed the activities of the Squadron for the day. However three missions were flown before weather closed in and forced a stand down. Reports from Command indicated that elements of the Sixth British Armored were cut off at Tossignano. A special BSL was given the Group and our Squadron managed to get one mission in, in spite of weather. Word was received from the Fifth Army that target was well hit.

17 Once again, weather stepped in and the Squadron was stood down after two missions were flown. Lt. James was forced to bail out over enemy territory and was observed to land safely. Word was received from Command that Lt. Lawrence, who was lost on a mission a short time ago, is safe and in Partisan hands. It is said that he will be returned in three days.

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Sheet No. 117. War Diary. 526th Fighter Sq., 86th Fighter Gp., APO 650, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of December 1944. Prepared by Howard C. Wolf, 1st Lt., above named Sq.

WAR DIARY

18 Only two missions were flown today as the weather closed in here at this field and the Squadron was stood down for the afternoon. The ping-pong table which was recently installed in the Intelligence room seems to grow in popularity and the new C.O., Major Taylor, turned out to be an experienced player. The Stars and Stripes, our reliable (?) newspaper, announced the complete capture of Faenza but a message received from the Fifth Army by our good friend Captain Keatch tells us that the northern end of the town is far from clear. The Germans are determined to hold on as long as possible as the loss of this town is a serious blow to their defense of the Po Valley. Clare Luce, who is seeing Italy, ate dinner at the Officer's Mess and was accompanied by General Darcy.

19 Weather continued bad again today and although two missions managed to get off, the Group was stood down for the rest of the day. PX supplies were issued today and once again "no beer". Enlisted men are sure they have been sold short and that now that election is over, there will be no more beer. However, reports indicate that there is plenty of beer to be had but shipping space at present is overcrowded. The Thunderbolt theater presents a USO show tomorrow and from all accounts, should be good. Late run of pictures at our show seem to be better but there is still lots of room for improvement. Oh well, as we say in French "C'est la guerre".

20 Weather looked operational today but only one armed reconnaissance was flown. The USO show at our theater was very good and the officers and men both were delighted at seeing once again some specimen of American women which seem much more beautiful than the women over here. The situation in Belgium continues severe as determined Germans press home their late but effective counter-offensive. News is at a minimum but late news flashes say that the Yanks have somewhat stemmed the rolling tide. One hundred and fifty Yanks were slaughtered by the Huns and news flashes say that the Yanks are the maddest they have been so far in the war and woe to the Germans that fall into their hands. He will get his opportunity to die for the "Fatherland". Five enlisted men and one officer departed for the 7th Replacement Depot on the first leg of their journey to the States. One enlisted man is on permanent rotation while the others will return after a thirty day furlough in the States.

21 Weather once again prevented the Squadron from completing a full day of scheduled missions. Pilots are bitching that at the rate they are getting sorties these days, it will be late next summer before they get home. The field was closed at noon to all planes as the Engineers were working on the runway. Word was received that Lt. Klamme, who bailed out some time ago, was safe and in Partisan hands. News like this seems to have a good effect on the morale of the pilots and enlisted men. Lets hope that we have lots more of that kind of news. Just for the record, today was supposed to be the shortest day of the year but it didn't seem any shorter or any longer than another day. One day is just like another over here in good (?) old Italy.

22 Today was the busiest day this Squadron has seen in quite some time. The

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Month of December 1944. Prepared by Howard C. Wolf, 1st Lt., above named Sq.

WAR DIARY

planes were off with the first light of day and down with the last rays of the sun. For some reason we had the first and last mission of the day. There were no extraordinary missions during the day and most of the close support jobs were bad due to inclement weather. Only three days until Christmas now but at the present time this country doesn't seem to even know it's coming. There isn't any of the gay holiday spirit such as you see back home. But then the people over here have nothing and they are lucky if they get enough to eat from day to day. Our theater has been collecting money for the children of Pisa and that, combined with the money collected by the Air Corps theater, should make some children a little warmer on Christmas day. The situation in Belgium is still very serious and Stimson said, "This is an all out effort by the Germans to give the German people a victory and thus boost their morale". Lt. General Bradley commented that the counter-offensive could lengthen or shorten the war by as much as 90 days. Arrival of numerous packages from the States has tended to inject the Christmas spirit in the enlisted men of the Squadron and they have taken it upon themselves to decorate their rooms and plan for Christmas Eve parties. Some fellows have even managed to get a Christmas tree.

23 An order was published by the Twelfth Air Force confirming the General Court Martial sentence requiring Major Benedict, our former Squadron Commander, to pay a fine of \$150.00 per month for ten months on charges of stealing an easy chair and two matching stools from a native Italian. Major Benedict was court martialed on the 11th of November 1944. Another day of good weather and the Squadron flew until the last light. Intelligence reported a concentration of 1,000 railroad cars on the line between Milano and Brescia. Two armed reconnaissance missions were flown and weather over the target prevented the flight from getting there. However they found some activity on the way to the target and succeeded in destroying and damaging some locomotives and cars. News broadcasts late tonight stated that the German counter-offensive is starting to slow down. The situation is still serious but as one British Commentator put it, "The Yanks have regained their confidence and are sure that there can only be one outcome to the battle and that is victory for the Allies."

24 Stand down for the day. Overcast skies kept the entire Group on the ground. The day before Christmas and everyone seems to be either going to church or getting ready for a big night. There is to be a dance at the Officer's Club and also at the enlisted men's club. Some of the officers have gotten an early start and have started to "spin in" already. All indications point to a big night and if there is any flying on Christmas day some of the pilots will need a lot of urging to get out of bed. Church Services will be held tonight at seven o'clock in the enlisted men's mess hall. After that there is a fellowship hour at the AFGD # 6 building.

25 CHRISTMAS DAY: Good weather today and the Squadron taking advantage of it, flew four missions. This is the second Christmas day overseas for the Group.

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Sheet No. 119. War Diary. 526th Fighter Sq., 86th Fighter Gp., APO 650, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of December 1944. Prepared by Howard C. Wolf, 1st Lt., above named Sq.

WAR DIARY

Everyone hopes that this will be the last one overseas and next year at this time we'll all be home. However as for food, there were no complaints. Turkey with all the trimmings, as much as you wanted, in both the officers' and enlisted men's mess. Some of the men gave out candy and food that they had received from home to the children of Pisa and their cries of "grazia" could be heard all over town. On the Fifth Army front there was plenty of snow and the fellows up there had a "White Christmas", also a cold one. At the Officer's Club Tom and Jerries were served "on the house", bringing back memories of the good old Day. Word was received that Lt. Lawrence was safe in Florence, having returned from enemy territory. Lt. Wolf was promoted to 1st Lt.

26 Good flying weather again today enabled the Squadron to get in five missions. Group Intelligence reported a large cruiser in La Spezia harbor so a special mission was flown to try and get it. However it turned out to be a false alarm so the pilots bombed the harbor and came home. The German counter-offensive in Belgium, although it looks better, is still serious. Good weather allowed the Air Force to get in some telling blows. However the decisive battle is still to be fought and the results may have a great effect on the length of time before this war ends.

27 Good weather today and the Squadron had a busy day. Lt. Lawrence who was lost on a previous mission was back with the Squadron today. He has his orders to go home and he really has an interesting tale to tell. The USO show which was supposed to show was cancelled as the Master of Ceremonies was sick.

28 The Squadron had one of its biggest days in a long time. Six missions, totaling 35 sorties, were flown and most of them were against occupied houses in the Castel Nuovo area. Intelligence has received a report that the German counter-offensive on the Fifth Army front might possibly break through and attempt to capture Leghorn and thus deprive us of a base of supply. In the event of a breakthrough this Group will fight a holding action until all military equipment is evacuated. Word was received from XXII TAC that due to the present tactical situation, all personnel will carry arms. There is nothing to unduly alarm anyone at the present time but it is better to be prepared in case something should happen. On the first mission this morning Lt. Wagler had quite an experience. The good Lt. went into his dive on his bomb run and on the way down he was slipping from side to side and kicking his rudder attempting to evade flak. However the "bubble" jobs have an undesired characteristic that is termed "rudder lock" and that is what Lt. Wagler got. With the rudder locked the plane went into a spin after first flopping over on its back. Lt. Wagler thought his time had come but luckily he managed to right the plane at about three hundred feet altitude, drop his incendiary bombs, and proceed on with the rest of the flight. All Lt. Wagler had to say was "After getting out of that spin I was so relieved that I was almost happy to see flak". Quite

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Sheet No. 120. War Diary. 526th Fighter Sq., 86th Fighter Gp., APO 650, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of December 1944. Prepared by Howard C. Wolf, 1st Lt., above named Sq.

WAR DIARY

an experience and one that should prove of value to pilots on future missions. On thumbing through the November issue of the Overseas Edition of the Saturday Evening Post, much to my surprise, I found a picture of our former C.O., Major Benedict, staring me in the face. There was quite an article on the Major and it appears that what he didn't know about "midnight requisitions" and "scrounging" just wasn't to be known. The article, entitled WHERE'S THAT BOMBER? IT WAS HERE JUST A MINUTE AGO, was taken from "Mediterranean Sweep", a book published by Duell, Sloan and Pearce, of New York, and written by Major Richard Thruelsen and Lt. Elliot Arnold. However, from good sources it is understood that as crime, "scrounging" does not pay. Word was received today that Lt. Arthur E. James, who was lost on a previous mission, is alive and safe in enemy territory. The pilots had a meeting last night and Lt. Lawrence told the complete story of his bail-out and escape through enemy lines to Allied territory. He had quite an experience and he says that a few cigarettes and some razor blades go a long way in making good contacts. He gave the pilots some good advice on what to carry with them on missions and in the future any pilot who shows up for a mission improperly dressed will be sent back to the barracks and a replacement sent in his place.

- 29 Another good day for the Squadron. Targets were once again highway bridges and railway lines. The Fifth Army front is still quiet and the 92nd Division reported only patrol activity. Captain Keach reports all quiet but whether that is a good sign or a bad sign is not known. Whether Jerry is wise to the fact that we are laying for him where he intends to attack and has decided to attack somewhere else or whether he is just waiting for a more favorable opportunity is something we don't know. The situation on the Western Front sounds better this morning and the counter-offensive of the Germans might turn into a victory for the Allies. However it is still serious and anything can happen.
- 30 A flight led by Lt. Taylor, 13 December, against Sebbioni (M-069262) was highly successful. A PW report from Thirteenth Corps reported four Krauts killed and target well hit. Another good day of flying weather and the Squadron, taking advantage of it, had a busy day. Lt. Welch, returning early from a flight due to the fact that his plane had a runaway prop, staged a one man show. He attacked an ammunition dump. His bombs fell short but he strafed and was rewarded with two large explosions from the dump. The dump had been attacked the day before and missed and Jerry might have had time to remove some of the ammunition before Lt. Welch pulled his solo act. Lt. Leader who bailed out in friendly territory some time ago and then who came down with scarlet fever a little while after, has now returned to the Squadron. He has had quite a few amazing experiences. He was wounded once by a 50 caliber bullet which just grazed his neck then he made a couple of emergency landings and last but not least he bailed out, injuring himself on landing. However he's back for more which just goes to show you, you can't keep a good man down. The German counter-offensive which started in the Castel Nuovo area, has been stopped and the enemy admitted there were just local gains. Whether he will attempt another one a little later remains

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Sheet No. 121. War Diary. 526th Fighter Sq., 86th Fighter Gp., APO 650, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of December 1944. Prepared by Howard C. Wolf, 1st Lt., Above named Sq.

WAR DIARY

to be seen but from all reports the Allies are ready. The situation on the Western Front has improved considerably and Lt. General Patton's 3rd Army is doing a great job. A great many Germans have been cut off and the situation is viewed much more favorably.

31 The last day of the Old Year and all hopes now turn toward the New Year and the possible ending of the war. One year ago today the Squadron was wondering where they would be in December 1944 and now they are wondering what December 1945 will bring. Good flying weather again today and five missions totaling 28 sorties were flown. A gay time was had in the Officer's Club last night and Colonel Bates presented several awards to the pilots. Lt. Lawrence received a Purple Heart and some of the pilots received clusters to their Air Medals. The town of Barga has been reoccupied by the Allies and some of the ground which was lost to the Germans in their counter-offensive down the Castel Nuovo Valley has been regained. The situation in Belgium also looks much better and high ranking officials say the decisive battle is yet to be fought. Tomorrow is the big football game at Florence between the Twelfth Air Force and the Fifth Army and rumor has it that there will be more fights among the spectators than on the field. Spitfires will fly protective cover for the huge crowds which will gather there, in case some Jerry gets a "bright idea". Both teams have All American players and the starting lineup contains some people who would bring joy to the heart of some college coach. All in all it promises to be an exciting contest and a good many men will get a chance to see it as the Transportation Officer notifies us that there will be transportation available to and from the game.

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R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS TWELFTH AIR FORCE
AFC 650

GENERAL ORDER)

17 December 1944

NUMBER 271)

E X T R A C T

SECTION III - AWARDS OF DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS (MISSING IN ACTION)

Under the provisions of AR 600-45, as amended, and pursuant to authority contained in Circular 89, Hq. MATCUSA, 10 July 1944, the Distinguished Flying Cross is awarded to the following named personnel, Air Corps, United States Army, who are missing in action, citation and next of kin as indicated.

SAMBORN B. HUTCHINS, 0822329, 1st Lt., 526th Fighter Sq., 86th Fighter Gp. For extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as pilot of a P-47 type aircraft. On 14 December 1944, when extremely adverse weather forced the cancellation of all tactical missions, Lt. Hutchins volunteered to fly in a four plane flight on an armed reconnaissance mission over enemy communication lines in Northern Italy. Skillfully maneuvering through heavy cloud formations upon the approach to the target area, Lt. Hutchins sighted a large train at Albenga. Immediately diving in attack in the face of intense anti-aircraft fire, Lt. Hutchins and his comrades repeatedly strafed the train, destroying the locomotive and damaging twenty railroad cars. Continuing in search of further enemy targets, Lt. Hutchins and his comrades strafed several other trains and a motor convoy in the area, destroying six locomotives, four gasoline trucks, and five motor vehicles, and damaging more than twenty railway cars before returning safely to base. On more than fifty combat missions, his outstanding proficiency and steadfast devotion to duty have reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States. Mr. Allan S. Hutchins, (Father), 45 Richards Avenue, Paxton, Mass.

SECTION V - AWARDS OF DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Under the provisions of AR 600-45, as amended, and pursuant to authority contained in Circular 89, Hq. MATCUSA, 10 July 1944, the Distinguished Flying Cross is awarded to the following named personnel, Air Corps, United States Army, citation and residence as indicated.

RICHARD D. LAWRENCE, 0824514, 1st Lt., 526th Fighter Squadron, 86th Fighter Group. For extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as pilot of a P-47 type aircraft. On 13 October 1944, Lt. Lawrence flew in a seven plane formation of fighter-bombers carrying gasoline incendiary bombs attacking enemy defense positions near Bologna, Italy. Courageously diving to minimum altitude in the face of intense enemy ground fire, Lt. Lawrence released his bombs with devastating effect upon this vital objective. Drawing away from the target a direct hit from enemy fire pierced

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(GO 271 continued)

his auxiliary gas tank and severed the exhaust line. Despite the danger of the exhaust igniting the gasoline, Lt. Lawrence courageously remaining at the controls, piloted the stricken P-47 safely back to base. His outstanding proficiency in combat and steadfast devotion to duty have reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States. Los Angeles, Calif.

SECTION VI - AWARDS OF OAK-LEAF CLUSTER TO DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Under the provisions of AR 600-45, as amended, and pursuant to authority contained in Circular 89, Hq., NATCUSA, 10 July 1944, the Oak-Leaf Cluster (as indicated) in lieu of the Distinguished Flying Cross is awarded to the following named personnel, Air Corps, United States Army, citation and residence as indicated.

FIRST CLUSTER

DONALD J. KLIMENT, O766559, 1st Lt., 526th Fighter Squadron, 86th Fighter Group. For extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as pilot of a P-47 type aircraft. On 7 October 1944, when extremely adverse weather forced the cancellation of all tactical missions, Lt. Kliment voluntarily flew in a four plane flight on an armed reconnaissance over enemy communication lines in Northern Italy. Skillfully maneuvering through heavy cloud formations upon the approach to the target area, Lt. Kliment sighted two large trains at Tacconigi. Immediately diving to minimum altitude in attack, Lt. Kliment released his bombs with precision accuracy upon the objective, setting off a tremendous explosion which completely demolished both trains and heavily damaged the railroad station and a number of other buildings in the town. Continuing in search of further enemy targets, Lt. Kliment and his comrades strafed several railroad trains and a motor convoy, destroying or damaging four locomotives, a number of ammunition cars, and four motor vehicles, before returning safely to an advanced friendly airfield. On more than sixty-five combat missions, he outstanding proficiency and steadfast devotion to duty have reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States. Alhambra, Calif.

SECOND CLUSTER

WILLIAM P. BENEDICT, O884138, Major, 526th Fighter Squadron, 86th Fighter Group. For extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as pilot of a P-47 type aircraft. On 7 October 1944, when extremely adverse weather forced the cancellation of scheduled tactical missions, Maj. Benedict volunteered to lead a four plane flight on an armed reconnaissance mission over enemy communication lines in Northern Italy. Displaying superior flying ability and determined leadership as he skillfully maneuvered through heavy cloud formations upon the approach to the target area, Major Benedict sighted two fifteen car railroad trains at Racconigi. Immediately diving to minimum altitude in attack, Major Benedict's perfect run over the objective enabled

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(GO 271 continued)

his P-47's to score direct hits setting off a tremendous explosion which destroyed the two trains, station installations, and many buildings in town. Continuing in attack, Major Benedict strafed several railroad trains and a motor convoy in the area, destroying four locomotives, four motor vehicles, a number of ammunition cars, and damaging more than twenty freight cars. On more than 170 combat missions, his outstanding proficiency and steadfast devotion to duty have reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States. San Quentin, Calif.

By command of Major General CANNON:

CHARLES T. MYERS,
Brigadier General, USA,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

WILLIAM W. DICK,
Colonel, AGD,
Adjutant General.

CERTIFIED A TRUE EXTRACT COPY

Howard C Wolf
HOWARD C. WOLF,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Unit Historian.

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS TWELFTH AIR FORCE
APO 650

GENERAL ORDER)
NUMBER 268)

14 December 1944

E X T R A C T

SECTION II - AWARD OF DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS (POSTHUMOUS)

Under the provisions of AR 600-45, as amended, and pursuant to authority contained in Circular 89 Hq., NATCUSA, 10 July 1944, the Distinguished Flying Cross is awarded posthumously to the following named officer, Air Corps, United States Army, citation and next of kin as indicated:

HARRY A. MASTER, O823112, 2nd Lt., 526th Ftr. Sq., 86th Ftr. Gp., For extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as pilot of a P-47 type aircraft. On 26 September 1944, Lt. Master flew in a six-plane formation of fighter-bombers attacking enemy gun positions defending a railroad bridge at Ostiglia, Italy. Displaying great courage and superior flying ability as he pressed his attack at minimum altitude in the face of intense and accurate anti-aircraft fire, Lt. Master repeatedly strafed the area, silencing a number of guns and inflicting many casualties upon enemy personnel. Continuing in attack, Lt. Master and his comrades strafed a railway station at Poggiruaoco, destroying three locomotives. His outstanding proficiency in combat and steadfast devotion to duty have reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States. Mrs. Lucille S. Master (Wife) 14655 Robson St. Detroit, Mich.

By command of Major General CANNON:

CHARLES T. MYERS,
Brigadier General, USA,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

WILLIAM W. DICK,
Colonel, AGD,
Adjutant General.

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Howard C. Wolf
HOWARD C. WOLF,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Unit Historian.

R E S T R I C T E D

GENERAL ORDER)
:
Number 253)

30 November 1944

EXTRACT

SECTION I - AWARD OF SILVER STAR (MISSING IN ACTION)

Under the provision of AR 600-45, as amended, and pursuant to authority contained in Circular 89, Hq. NATCUSA, 10 July 1944, The Silver Star is awarded to the following named personnel, Air Corps, United States Army, who are missing in action, citation and next of kin as indicated.

RAYMOND J. HUFF, 0766535, 1st Lt., 526th Ftr. Sq., 86th Ftr. Gp. For gallantry in action. On 24 October 1944, while flying in an attack upon enemy communication lines in Northern Italy, Lt. Huff sighted a concentration of enemy rolling stock near Padova, Italy. Immediately pressing repeated strafing attacks in the face of intense anti-aircraft fire, Lt. Huff destroyed two locomotives, damaged a number of railroad cars, and inflicted many casualties upon personnel before exhaustion of ammunition forced him to return to base. Quickly returning to the area as leader of another flight, Lt. Huff destroyed a locomotive before shell fragments from continued enemy ground fire wounded him in the neck and heavily damaged his aircraft. Despite the intense pain, Lt. Huff maneuvered his crippled P-47 into position and escorted another stricken P-47 safely back to base. His gallant devotion to duty and outstanding proficiency in combat reflect great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States. Mr. Raymond J. Huff (Father), 14165 Twenty-fifth St., SW, Seattle, Wash.

SECTION IV - AWARDS OF DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Under the provisions of AR 600-45, as amended, and pursuant to authority contained in Circular 89, Hq. NATCUSA, 10 July 1944, the Distinguished Flying Cross is awarded to the following named personnel, Air Corps, United States Army, citation and residence as indicated:

THOMAS G. ARCHIBALD, 0665157, Capt., 526th Ftr. Sq., 86th Ftr. Gp. For extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as pilot of a P-47 type aircraft. On 24 October 1944, Capt. Archibald flew in a four-plane flight attacking enemy communication lines in Northern Italy. Flying at minimum altitude through most adverse weather, Capt. Archibald sighted a large concentration of enemy locomotives and railroad cars near Padova. Immediately pressing a vigorous attack in the face of a heavy barrage of anti-aircraft fire, Capt. Archibald repeatedly strafed the area, destroying five locomotives and

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more than forty railroad cars loaded with ammunition and other vital military supplies. Although his plane was nearly rocked from his control by the tremendous explosion, Capt. Archibald skillfully maneuvered the P-47 into level flight and returned safely to base. On more than seventy combat missions, his outstanding proficiency and steadfast devotion to duty have reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States. Aliceville, Ala.

WALTER C. TAYLOR, JR., O821561, 1st Lt., 526th Ftr. Sq., 86th Ftr. Gp.. For extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as pilot of a P-47 type aircraft. On 17 November 1944, after completing a successful attack upon an enemy rail line running between Guastalla and Suzzera, Italy, Lt. Taylor's controller ordered him to reconnoiter enemy communication lines near Brescia. Skillfully maneuvering over the designated area at minimum altitude, Lt. Taylor sighted a concentration of rolling stock. Immediately leading his flight in repeated strafing attacks, Lt. Taylor destroyed twenty-two railroad cars loaded with explosives, eight oil tankers, and damaged sixty railroad cars. The tremendous explosion resulting from the attacks tore up the rail line and cratered the road bed. Enroute back to his base, Lt. Taylor strafed and destroyed two locomotives and damaged seven railway cars. On more than sixty-five combat missions, his outstanding proficiency and steadfast devotion to duty have reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States. Newark, N. J.

By command of Major General CANNON:

CHARLES T. MYERS,
Brigadier General, USA,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

WILLIAM W. DICK,
Colonel, AGD,
Adjutant General.

CERTIFIED A TRUE EXTRACT COPY

Howard C Wolf
HOWARD C. WOLF,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Unit Historian.

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS TWELFTH AIR FORCE
APO 650

GENERAL ORDERS)
NUMBER 275)

21 December 1944

E X T R A C T

SECTION II - AWARDS OF DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Under the provisions of AR 600-45, as amended, and pursuant to authority contained in Circular 89, Hq MATCUSA, 10 July 1944, The Distinguished Flying Cross is awarded to the following named personnel, Air Corps, United States Army, citation and residence as indicated:

ROBERT J. TAFT, 0758883, Capt., 526th Ftr. Sq., 86th Ftr. Gp. For extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as pilot of a P-47 type aircraft. On 14 October 1944, when extremely adverse weather forced the cancellation of all scheduled tactical missions, Capt. Taft volunteered to fly in a four plane flight on an armed reconnaissance mission over enemy communication lines in Northern Italy. Skillfully maneuvering through heavy cloud formations upon the approach to the target area, Capt. Taft sighted a large train at Albenga. Immediately diving in attack in the face of intense anti-aircraft fire, Capt. Taft and his comrades repeatedly strafed the train destroying the locomotive and damaging twenty railroad cars. Continuing in search of further enemy targets, Capt. Taft and his comrades strafed several other trains and motor convoy in the area, destroying six locomotives, four gasoline trucks, and five motor vehicles, and damaging more than twenty railroad cars before returning safely to base. On more than sixty-five combat missions, his outstanding proficiency and steadfast devotion to duty have reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States. Oakland, Calif.

By command of Major General CANNON:

CHARLES T. MYERS,
BRIGADIER GENERAL, USA,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

WILLIAM W. DICK,
Colonel, AGD,
Adjutant General.

CERTIFIED A TRUE EXTRACT COPY

Howard C. Wolf
HOWARD C. WOLF,
1st Lt. Air Corps,
Unit Historian.

S E C R E T

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

31 January 1945

AG 314.7

SUBJECT: Historical Records.

TO : Commanding General, XXII Tactical Air Command, APO 650, N. Y.

1. Outline History of the 526th Fighter Squadron, 86th Fighter Group for the period 1 January 1945 to 1 February 1945.

a. Present designation: 526th Fighter Squadron, 86th Fighter Group, XXII Tactical Air Command.

b. Changes in organization:

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

HAILES assumed the duties of Assistant Operations Officer, replacing Capt. ROBERT J. TAFT, rotated to the States.

c. Strength, commissioned and enlisted men:

(1) Month of January 1945.

- (a) At beginning: 62 officers; 252 E. M. assigned.
- (b) Net increase: None ; None
- (c) Net decrease: 2 officers; 4 E. M.
- (d) At end : 60 officers; 248 E. M. assigned.

d. Stations: Pisa Air Base. Pisa, Italy.

e. Movements: None.

f. Campaigns: Continued Italian Campaign.

g. Operations:

(1) Campaign: Italian.

(2) Nature of operations: Combat missions by flights of P-47 type 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:

- (a) Missions: 99.
- (b) Sorties: 482.

RESTRICTED

S E C R E T

(4) Results of important missions:

(a) Mission 981. On 11 January 1945, Lt. Glen Bishop led eight planes on a bombing and strafing attack upon an alcohol and fuel refinery at Piacenza, Italy. The refinery was being used to supply the needs of the enemy in his motor transport to help him keep up his already hard pressed supply lines. It was known that there were flak guns at the target and that, although in all probability the mission would be successful, there was a good chance that losses would be suffered. The flight, coming in at tree-top level, dropped all their "fire" bombs squarely in the target area. No losses were suffered and the refinery was severely damaged. This loss added more strain to the enemy's already weakened fuel supply.

(b) Mission 1018. On 27 January 1945, Lt. George E. Wood led a four plane formation on an armed reconnaissance of the Po Valley between the coastline and Bergamo, Italy. This flight was made in accordance with orders from higher headquarters to determine whether or not the enemy was attempting any large scale movement of men and supplies. Cloudy weather and poor visibility made the possibility of a successful mission poor. The flight nevertheless was able to get through to the assigned area. Railroad tracks were bombed, in spite of a barrage of light anti-aircraft fire, and two rail cuts were effected. The flight then strafed and damaged or destroyed three locomotives, two motor transport, and eighteen railroad cars, depriving the enemy the use of this available means of transportation.

(c) Mission 1019. On 27 January 1945, Lt. Wallace A. Hortiozer led a formation of P-47 type aircraft consisting of four planes, designed to cut rails and destroy enemy rolling stock. Cloudy and hazy weather enroute to the target made the chance for a successful mission only fair. On reaching the assigned area the flight found the weather good and bombed twenty rail cars, effecting one rail cut and destroying five rail cars. The flight also strafed and destroyed or damaged nine motor transport and two trailers. This weakened considerable the enemy's already battered supply lines.

h. Commanding Officer and important missions:

(1) Commanding Officer: Major RICHARD TAYLOR.

(2) Important missions: None to report.

i. Losses in action:

(1) Kenneth D. Bostad, O-710056, 2nd Lt. failed to return from mission on 6 January 1945. Was seen to bail out over water at P-3328. MIA.

(2) Lester L. Eastburn, O-793085, 1st Lt., failed to return from mission on 15 January 1945. Plane was seen to crash and explode at H-0871. MIA.

j. Former and present members who have distinguished themselves:

S E C R E T

WALLACE A. HOFTIEZER, 1st Lt.	Distinguished Flying Cross
JACK L. HELMS, 1st Lt.	Distinguished Flying Cross
JOHN C. WEINER, 1st Lt.	Distinguished Flying Cross
GEORGE T. SEWELL, 2nd Lt.	Distinguished Flying Cross
FRED WILSON, T/Sgt.	Bronze Star

2. Inclosed is War Diary, 526th Fighter Squadron, 36th Fighter Group, for the period 1 January to 1 February 1945.

For the Commanding Officer:

Howard C Wolf
 HOWARD C. WOLF,
 1st Lt., Air Corps,
 Unit Historian.

- 4 Incls: 1. War Diary
 2. GO 11, Extract, Wallace A. Hoftiezer
 3. GO 11, Extract, Jack L. Helms
 4. GO 16, Extract, John C. Weiner
 George T. Sewell

S E C R E T

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS TWELFTH AIR FORCE
APO 650

GENERAL ORDERS)
NUMBER 16)

26 January 1945

E X T R A C T

SECTION II - AWARDS OF DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Under the provisions of AR 600-45, as amended, and pursuant to authority contained in Circular 89, Hq. NATCUSA, 10 July 1944, the Distinguished Flying Cross is awarded to the following named personnel, Air Corps, United States Army, citation and residence as indicated:

JOHN C. WEINER, 0759132, 1st Lt., 526th Fighter Sq., 86th Fighter Gp. For extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as pilot of a P-47 type aircraft. On 10 January 1945, Lt. Weiner led an eight plane formation of fighter-bombers in an attack upon an enemy oil storage depot at Milan, Italy. Displaying great courage and superior flying ability as he skillfully maneuvered through a heavy overcast over heavily defended enemy territory upon the approach to the target, Lt. Weiner's perfect run over the objective enabled his P-47's to score direct hits, inflicting great destruction and damage upon this vital military installation. Continuing his attack in the face of heavy enemy ground fire, Lt. Weiner repeatedly strafed other targets in the area, destroying or damaging one locomotive, more than thirty freight cars, and large quantities of military supplies. On more than eighty-five combat missions, his outstanding proficiency and steadfast devotion to duty have reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States. San Francisco, Calif.

GEORGE T. SEWELL, 0711034, 2nd Lt., 526th Ftr. Sq., 86th Ftr. Gp. For extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as pilot of a P-47 type aircraft. On 14 December 1944, Lt. Sewell flew in a fighter-bomber attack upon a railroad at Padova, Italy. Upon the approach to the target, shell fragments from intense anti-aircraft fire heavily damaged and set fire to his airplane. Despite the crippled condition of his aircraft, Lt. Sewell determinedly maintained his position in formation and released his bombs with precision accuracy, heavily damaging one approach to the bridge. Although his aircraft continued to stream flame and smoke turning away from the target, Lt. Sewell courageously remained at the controls and piloted the P-47 to friendly territory. When his attempts to lower the landing gear failed as he approached his base, Lt. Sewell flew the stricken plane out to sea, parachuted safely into the water, and was picked up a short time later by an Allied rescue craft. His outstanding proficiency in combat and steadfast devotion to duty have reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States. Roanoke Rapids, N. C.

R E S T R I C T E D

By Command of Major General CANNON:

CHARLES T. MIERS
Brigadier General, U.S.A.
Chief of Staff

OFFICIAL:

WILLIAM W. DICK,
Colonel, ASD,
Adjutant General.

CERTIFIED A TRUE EXTRACT COPY

Howard C Wolf
HOWARD C. WOLF,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Unit Historian.

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS TWELFTH AIR FORCE
APO 650

GENERAL ORDERS)
NUMBER 11)

18 January 1945

E X T R A C T

SECTION II - AWARDS OF DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

WALLACE A. HOFTIEZER, 0704347, 1st Lt., 526th Fighter Squadron, 86th Fighter Group. For extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as pilot of a P-47 type aircraft. On 13 November 1944, while leading an eight plane formation of fighter-bombers in an attack upon enemy communication lines in northern Italy, Lt. Hoftiezer sighted a large railroad train near Verona. Immediately pressing a vigorous attack at minimum altitude in the face of a heavy barrage of enemy ground fire, Lt. Hoftiezer enabled his P-47's to score direct hits destroying or damaging the locomotive and thirty-five cars and cutting the rail line. Then reforming his flight, Lt. Hoftiezer strafed other enemy targets in the area destroying or damaging a locomotive and thirteen cars before returning his formation safely to base. On more than eighty-five combat missions, his outstanding proficiency and steadfast devotion to duty have reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed

By order of Major General CARRON:

CHARLES T. MYERS,
Brigadier General, USA,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

WILLIAM W. DICK,
Colonel, AGD,
Adjutant General.

CERTIFIED A TRUE EXTRACT COPY

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

R E S T R I C T E DHEADQUARTERS TWELFTH AIR FORCE
APO 650GENERAL ORDERS)
NUMBER 11)

18 January 1945

E X T R A C T

SECTION II - AWARDS OF DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Under the provisions of AR 600-45, as amended, and pursuant to authority contained in Circular 89, NATCUSA, 10 July 1944, the Distinguished Flying Cross is awarded to the following named personnel, Air Corps, United States Army, citation and residence as indicated:

JACK L. HELMS, O-820492, 1st Lt., 526th Fighter Squadron, 86th Fighter Group. For extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as pilot of a P-47 type aircraft. On 22 November 1944, while leading a four-plane flight of fighter-bombers in an attack upon enemy communication lines in Northern Italy, Lt. Helms sighted a large railroad train near Cremona, Italy. Immediately diving to minimum altitude in attack, Lt. Helms' perfect run over the objective enabled his P-47's to score direct hits, destroying or damaging the locomotive and twenty freight cars and cutting the rail line. Continuing in search of other enemy targets, Lt. Helms strafed a concentration of rolling stock destroying or damaging three locomotives and more than ten freight cars. On more than eighty combat missions, his outstanding proficiency and steadfast devotion to duty have reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States. Rockymount, Va.

By order of Major General CARRON:

CHARLES T. MYERS,
Brigadier General, USA,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

WILLIAM W. DICK,
Colonel, AGD,
Adjutant General.CERTIFIED A TRUE EXTRACT COPY*Alexander Louis*
ALEXANDER LOUIS,
Capt., Air Corps,
Intelligence Officer.R E S T R I C T E D

S E C R E T

Sheet No. 122. War Diary. 526th Fighter Sq., 86th Ftr. Gp., APO 650, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of January 1945. Prepared by Howard C. Wolf, 1st Lt., above named Sq.

WAR DIARY

- 1 Well, the first day of the New Year and as far as missions go it was a light day. Only three missions, totaling 16 sorties, were flown and a flight led by Captain Taft on a coastal gun at Massa proved to be a good show. Rover Joe called them and thanked them for a good show. Several of the pilots are walking around in a daze from the effects of the "night before". A big time was had at the Officers' Club and Lt. Hall, whose birthday fell on January 1st, received a few good "paddles" from well wishers. The 527th Squadron ran into some bad luck and the Operations Officer, Captain Chambers, hit a high tension wire while strafing and crashed and burned. The much vaunted football game between the 12th Air Force and the Fifth Army was played today with the birdmen coming out on the short end. The game ended 20-0 and, although it was cold, there was a huge crowd in attendance and a good time was had by all.

- 2 The weather was good again today and the Squadron took advantage of it and flew from first light to dark. A total of five missions of 25 sorties were flown. The missions were equally divided with two of them on a rail bridge, two on close support, and one flown by Colonel Bates, an armed reconnaissance. A good close support mission, well executed, raises the morale of the doughboys more than anything else. In some instances they (the doughboys) have stood up and cheered after a well staged assault on enemy fox holes or positions. It takes careful and well planned flying to pull off these shows as the bombing and strafing is done so close to our own troops that a little carelessness might result in a number of casualties among our own troops. PX supplies were issued today and once again beer was lacking. Officers and men both are going around with their tongues hanging out offering to trade almost anything for a swig of the brew. We are all wondering if now that the election is over, beer is no more. Well, time will tell. A working restriction was imposed on the enlisted men of the Group in an effort to curb the high rate of venereal disease reported in the last couple of months. The only places "on limits" in Pisa to personnel of the Group are the Red Cross Club, the two theaters, and the Enlisted Men's Club.

- 3 Well the weather which has been good lately, remained good and four missions of 35 sorties were flown today. All close support missions were put aside for the day and an all out effort on bridge busting was made. Command believes that if the rail cutting and bridge busting is continued it will force Jerry to move his supplies by motor transport and they are fair game for our planes. The missions today were successful and in some instances it was ordered to bomb the bridges even if they were already out and thus stop any repair work which might have been started. Major Taylor, our CO, while up on a test hop came across an interesting sight. The Major was flying just west of Via Reggio when he spied what appeared to be some minesweepers and PT boats heading north toward La Spezia. The Major decided to take a look and dropped down closer. To his surprise he spied nine submarines at periscope depth protected by seven minesweepers and minelayers. Just about that time some Spitfires who, it seems, were guarding the convoy spied Major Taylor and turned into him so the Major took off from there but stayed a good distance away and followed it for about three-quarters of an hour. Whether this means an attempt is to be made to land troops above Massa or what it means, no one really knows. However everyone has their own idea and in a few days perhaps we will know. Lt. Lawrence left

