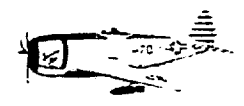




86th Fighter Bomber Group Association
526th Fighter Bomber Squadron



WORLD WAR II DIARY

526 FIGHTER SQUADRON

86TH FIGHTER GROUP

FEBRUARY, 1942 – OCTOBER, 1945

O. H. ad. to 30 Sept '42

526 F-B Sq., 86 F-B Gp., APC
520, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.
Office of the Intelligence Officer.

26 October 1943.

SUBJECT: Squadron History.

To: Intelligence Officer, 86 Fighter-Bomber Gp., A.P.O. 520, New York, N.Y.

1. Following is an outline history of the 526 Fighter-Bomber Sq., 86 Fighter-Bomber Gp., A.P.O. 520, c/o Postmaster, New York City, New York (formerly the 310th Bomb Sq. (D), 86th Bomb Gp. (D), APO 3659, c/o Postmaster, New York City, N.Y.; and APC 525, c/o Postmaster, New York City, N.Y.) as per request.

Frederic H. Henriod
Frederic H. Henriod, Capt. A.C. 0917801.
526 F-B. Sq., 86 F-B. Gp., APC 520, NY, NY.

Incl: 2 cy outline hist

OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE 526 F-B SQ., 86 F-B GP., APC 520, NEW YORK CITY, N.Y.

A. ORIGINAL UNIT:

1. Designation: 310th Bomb. Sq. (L), 86th Bomb. Gp. (L).
2. Date of Organization: 10 February 1942.
3. Place of Organization: Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
4. Authority: General Order No. 5, Hq. Third Air Force, Tampa, Florida.
5. Personnel: Obtained from the 57th Bomb. Sq. (L), 43th Bomb. Gp. (L), AFCC.

B. CHANGES IN ORGANIZATION:

1. On 19 June 1942, the personnel of the organization were transferred from the 310th Bomb. Sq. (L), 86th Bomb. Gp. (L) AFCC to the 387th Bomb. Sq. (L), 312th Bomb. Gp. (L) AFCC, per Special Order 149, dated 19 June 1942, Hq. Army Air Base, Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
2. On 4 August, 1942, 126 men (entire strength) transferred from 387th Bomb. Sq. (L), 312th Bomb. Gp. (L) AFCC, to A/C unassigned and departed from Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma, for Key Field Air Base, Meridian, Mississippi, where they arrived on 7 August 1942.

3. On 7 August 1942, 126 E.M. assigned and joined organization, from A/C unassigned. 23 E.M. from Hunter Field, Savannah, Georgia, assigned and joined organization.

4. On 11 August 1942, all personnel of organization transferred from the 587th Bomb. Sq. (L), 312th Bomb. Gp. (L) AFCC to 310th Bomb. Sq. (L), 86th Bomb. Gp. (L) AAF, per Par. 5, Special Order No. 188, Hq. Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma.

5. On 1 September 1942, new Table of Organization assigned Squadron. Organization changed from Light Bombardment Squadron to Dive Bombardment Squadron, and authorized A-31 and A-24 type aircraft.

6. On 1 June 1943, Fighter Table of Organization assigned to Squadron, superseding Dive Bombardment Table of Organization.

7. On 11 September 1943, Designation of Organization changed from 310th Bomb. Sq. (D), 86th Bomb. Gp. (D) to 526th Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 86th Fighter-Bomber Group., per General Order 49, Hq. 12th Air Force, dated 5 September 1943.

C. STRENGTH OF ORGANIZATION:

1. At beginning of period, 1 officer and 32 enlisted men assigned, Special Order 18, Hq. II A.S.C., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, dated 3 February 1942.

2. Monthly Strength:

a. 28 February 1942,	1 officer assigned	32 E.M. assigned
b. 31 March 1942		36 E.M. assigned
c. 30 April 1942		36 E.M. assigned
d. 31 May 1942		44 E.M. assigned
e. 30 June 1942		84 E.M. assigned
f. 31 July 1942		126 E.M. assigned
g. 11 August 1942	11 officers assigned	197 E.M. assigned
h. 30 Sept. 1942	23 officers assigned	211 E.M. assigned
i. 31 October 1942	27 officers assigned	254 E.M. assigned
j. 30 November 1942	27 officers assigned	267 E.M. assigned
k. 31 December 1942	32 officers assigned	270 E.M. assigned
l. 31 January 1943	32 officers assigned	253 E.M. assigned
m. 28 February 1943	33 officers assigned	254 E.M. assigned
n. 31 March 1943	31 officers assigned	256 E.M. assigned
o. 30 April 1943	32 officers assigned	253 E.M. assigned
p. 31 May 1943	32 officers assigned	253 E.M. assigned
q. 30 June 1943	48 officers assigned	255 E.M. assigned
r. 31 July 1943	47 officers assigned	246 E.M. assigned
s. 31 August 1943	46 officers assigned	244 E.M. assigned
t. 30 September 1943	44 officers assigned	253 E.M. assigned

D. STATIONS: (Permanent or temporary) of unit or parts thereof.

1. Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 10 February 1942 to 4 August 1942.

2. Enroute to Key Field, Meridian, Mississippi, from Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, via train, 4 August 1942 to 7 August, 1942.

- 3. Key Field, Meridian, Mississippi, 7 August 1942 to 19 March 1943.
 - a. 22 officers and 98 E.M. on D.S. to Keesler Field, Biloxi, Mississippi, from 3 February 1943 to 17 February 1943.
- 4. Enroute to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey from Key Field, Meridian, Mississippi, via rail, 19 March 1943 to 21 March 1943.
- 5. Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, 21 March 1943 to 27 April 1943.
- 6. Enroute to New York City P.of E. from Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, via rail, 27 April 1943.
- 7. Enroute to Mers El Kabir, Algeria, North Africa, from New York City P. of E. via water, army transport "John Ericson", 27 April 1943 to 11 May 1943.
- 8. Enroute to La Senia Air Base, near Oran, Algeria, North Africa, 11 May 1943.
- 9. La Senia Air Base, Algeria, North Africa, 11 May 1943 to 11 June 1943.
 - a. D.S. Medioune, Morroco, North Africa, Flight Echelon, 17 officers and 21 enlisted men, 15 May 1943 to 9 June 1943.
- 10. Tafaraoui Air Base, Algeria, North Africa, 11 June 1943 to 7 July 1943.
 - a. D.S. to N. Korba L/G, Tunisia, North Africa, from Tafaraoui Air Base, Flight Echelon, 12 officers and 129 enlisted men, 2 July 1943 to 12 July 1943.
- 11. Enroute to N. Korba L/G, Tunisia, North Africa, from Tafaraoui Air Base, Algeria, North Africa via rail and motor transport, 7 July 1943 to 12 July 1943.
- 12. N. Korba L/G, Tunisia, North Africa, 12 July 1943 to 21 July 1943.
 - a. D.S. W. Gela L/G, Sicily, Flight Echelon, 39 officers and 30 enlisted men, 20 July 1943 to 31 July 1943.
- 13. Staging area, Bizerte, Tunisia, 21 July 1943 to 27 July 1943.
- 14. Enroute to W. Gela L/G, Sicily, from staging area at Bizerte, Tunisia, North Africa, via L.S.T. 388, 27 July 1943 to 31 July 1943.
- 15. W. Gela L/G, Sicily, 31 July 1943 to 1 September 1943.
 - a. D.S. to Barcellona, Sicily, Flight Echelon, 10 officers and 68 enlisted men, 27 August 1943 to 1 September 1943.
- 16. Barcellona L/G, Sicily, 1 September 1943 to 21 September 1943.
 - a. D.S. to Sele L/G, Italy, 3 officers and 0 enlisted men, September to 30 September 1943.
 - b. D.S. to Sele L/G, Italy, 33 officers and 99 enlisted men, 16 September 1943 to 30 September 1943.

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17. Staging area at Milazzo, Sicily, 21 September 1943 to 22 September 1943, Area #151.

18. Enroute to Sele Air Field (Salerno Area), Italy from staging area at Milazzo, Sicily via L.S.T. from 22 September 1943 to 23 September 1943.

19. Sele Air Field, Italy, 23 September 1943 to 30 September 1943 (end of report period).

E. CAMPAIGNS:

1. Sicilian Campaign:

a. First Squadron sortie flown by Lt. Wilson E. Gilliland, who accompanied the 27th Bombardment Group on an LST mission over Southwest Sicily.

b. First Squadron mission flown on 7 July 1943, by Commanding Officer, Capt. Reginald D. Winters, Capt. Stell, 1st Lt. Harry W. Dorris and 1st Lt. Wilson E. Gilliland, strafing and bombing the railway station, warehouse and factories at Mazara, South of Marsala, Sicily, in which mission, Capt. Stell was attacked by three enemy aircraft, receiving serious damage to his plane and being himself wounded by enemy aircraft fire.

c. The Squadron continued from 7 July 1943 to 18 August 1943 (date Sicily completely occupied by Allied forces), to perform strafing, bombing and reconnaissance missions over Sicily and Italy, executing 84 completed missions during that period in support of the ground and naval forces, and on independent targets designed to soften the enemy in the rear.

2. Italian Campaign:

a. The first Squadron mission over Italy was flown on 4 August 1943, consisting of a twelve aircraft bombing mission over the railroad yards at Rosarno, Italy, in which Lts. Estep, Oman, Cook, Ferguson, Claus, Klass, Fisby, Trapman, Orr, Greer, Kones and Capt. Stout participated, with Lt. Fager as a spare, causing serious damage to the marshalling yards at the above mentioned place.

b. The Squadron continued flying missions over Italy from 4 August 1943 to 30 September 1943 (end of report date), consisting of strafing, bombing, patrol and reconnaissance sorties, executing 76 complete missions (averaging approximately 10 aircraft each) between 18 August 1943 and 30 September 1943, which number is included in 112 completed missions flown by the Squadron between the 4 August 1943 and 30 September 1943. The total number of completed missions flown by the Squadron from its inception into combat on 7 July 1943 to 30 September 1943 amounted to 160, with a total of 1407 sorties comprising said missions.

c. The Squadron moved to Italy as mentioned above and continued operation from Sele Air Base, Italy, particularly in close support of ground forces, from that date until the 30 September, 1943, during the critical stages of the Salerno Area battles.

F. COMMANDING OFFICERS IN IMPORTANT ENGAGEMENTS:

1. Capt. Reginald D. Winters commanded the Squadron during the Sicilian

Campaign, up to and including 10 July, 1943, on which date he was killed in action or missing in action, not returning to base from a mission on that date. During his command, Capt. Winters displayed unusual and outstanding and bravery, and particularly on 7 July 1943 when he drove off three enemy aircraft who were attacking Capt. Glenn A. Stell, who was wounded and who was to later be appointed commanding officer in the place of Capt. Winters.

2. Major Glenn A. Stell as Operations Officer and senior officer in command at the time, temporarily assumed the office of commanding officer of the Squadron on 10 July 1943, and on 13 July 1943 was permanently appointed Commanding Officer of the 525th F-B. Sq. (then the 310th Bomb. Sq.), which office he held at the date of the end of this report, 30 Sept. 1943. Prior to and during the time Major Stell has been Commanding Officer of the Squadron, he has highly distinguished himself as a superior pilot, whose courage and bravery have won for him the highest praise from those working under him, together with that of his superior officers in the Group. Particularly, on 7 July 1943, Major Stell was attacked by three enemy aircraft, and after having his plane seriously damaged to the extent that altitude and speed control were lost, he flew his plane at dangerously low altitude from Sicily across the Mediterranean to Korba, Tunisia, at a dangerously low air speed, successfully bringing himself and his plane back to base, although he had been wounded in the encounter. His record from the inception of combat service to date is replete with similar performances of heroism, courage and leadership.

G. LOSSES IN ACTION:

1. Sicilian Campaign.

a. Wounded:

1. Lt. Charles E. Place, wounded in hip, arm and shoulder by enemy anti-aircraft fire on 18 July 1943, at which time, although suffering from serious loss of blood and shock, he brought his plane back to base without throttle, which had been destroyed.

2. Lt. Robert F. Hood, wounded on leg on 16 July, 1943, when he bailed out near Canicatti, Sicily, after having been hit by anti-aircraft fire.

3. Major Glenn A. Stell, wounded by enemy aircraft fire, in the leg, in encounter near Marsala, Italy, 7 July 1943.

b. Missing in Action:

1. Lt. John P. Torland, seen to bail out near Tricina, Sicily, on 18 July 1943, after having been struck, apparently, by enemy anti-aircraft fire. Eyewitnesses reliably reported that he was taken prisoner by German officer and enlisted men.

2. Lt. Francis D. McCarroll, seen to bail out near Regalbuto, Sicily, eyewitnesses reliably reporting that he was seen to land safely and become a prisoner of war at the hands of German and Italian personnel.

3. Lt. Walter I. Kones, killed in action one mile West of Mazzarino, Sicily, on 27 August 1943, mechanical failure of aircraft, while fifteen miles from base on return trip of bombing mission over Sibari, Italy.

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4. Lt. Harold Sittler, killed in action at Maso, Sicily, on 1 August 1943, after engaging in a strafing mission. Cause of death unknown.

5. Lt. George W. Campbell, reliably reported to be a prisoner of war, after bailing out near Mt. Etna, Sicily. Cause of bailout unknown.

2. Italian Campaign:

a. Wounded in Action:

1. None.

b. Missing in Action:

1. Lt. Herbert C. Estep, Jr., failed to return from mission on 12 September 1943, cause unknown.

H. MEMBERS WHO HAVE DISTINGUISHED THEMSELVES IN ACTION.

1. Lt. Harold V. Sittler, leading a twelve aircraft flight over Messina Harbor on 24 July 1943, one of the heaviest defended flak areas known, scoring direct hits on enemy cruiser and 2 destroyers, for which, among other things, Lt. Sittler has been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

2. Lt. Charles E. Place, who, after having been seriously injured by enemy flak, and whose plane was damaged to the extent that there was no throttle control, successfully brought his plane back to base, making a successful landing after being required, while suffering severe shock and great loss of blood, to reach across his body with an uninjured arm and cut the switch, for which feat, among other things, he was awarded the Purple Heart and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

3. Lt. Robert F. Hood, who, after having been wounded and his plane seriously damaged by enemy flak, bailed out, landing on the ground between friendly and enemy lines, being held up and robbed by an Italian officer, eluding capture with the help of friendly troops, for which feat, among others, he has been recommended for the Distinguished Flying Cross, and for which engagement he has been awarded the Purple Heart.

4. Major Glenn A. Stell, commanding officer, who has been awarded the Purple Heart for wounds received in combat with enemy aircraft in flight on 7 July 1943.

5. Lt. Jewell G. Dyer, who has been awarded the Soldier's Medal for heroism over and above duty while attempting to rescue personnel near a burning plane on 10 July 1943 in the vicinity of live bombs which exploded.

6. S/Sgt. Jay M. Biesecker, who has been awarded the Soldier's Medal for heroism in rescue work near a burning, exploding aircraft on 10 July 1943.

7. Sgt. John J. Gaffney, who has been awarded the Soldier's Medal for heroism in rescue work near a burning, exploding aircraft on 10 July 1943, in which he was seriously wounded.

8. Sgt. Clifford R. Young, who has been awarded the Soldier's Medal for heroism incident to rescue work near a burning aircraft at Korba, Tunisia, 10 July 1943.

9. Cpl. Clifford E. Herman, who has been awarded the Soldier's Medal for heroism incident to rescue work at Korba, Tunisia, in the vicinity of a burning, exploding aircraft.

10. Pfc. Carmon Palmieri, who has been awarded the Soldier's Medal for heroism incident to rescue work at Korba, Tunisia, in the vicinity of a burning, exploding aircraft, in which Pfc Palmieri received serious injuries.

11. The following officer pilots, who have been recommended, and their applications forwarded to higher authority, for the Distinguished Flying Cross, based on their unusual bravery and heroism during aerial flight over enemy territory; and for individual feats of courage and bravery over and above their line of duty:

- 1. Major Glenn A. Stell, Capt. John G. Claus, Capt. Wilson B. Gilliland, 1st. Lt. Joseph F. Campagna, 1st. Lt. Harry W. Dorris, 1st. Lt. Herbert C. Estep, Jr., 1st. Lt. Everett E. Fager, 1st. Lt. Harold H. Hill, 1st. Lt. Robert F. Hood, 1st. Lt. Hugh A. Pennal, 1st Lt. Michael P. Yannell, 1st. Lt. Robert J. Frisby, and 1st. Lt. Dale R. Garrels.

✓ 10 Feb 1943 -
C.F. 1743

526 F-2 Co., 86 F-2 Gp., APO
520, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.
Office of the Intelligence Officer.

1 November 43.

SUBJECT: Squadron History.

To: Intelligence Officer, 86 Fighter-Bomber Gp., A.P.O. 520, New York, N.Y.

1. Following is monthly supplement to Outline History required by AII ABC directive and as requested by you, covering the month of October, 1943.

Frederic H. Henriod
Frederic H. Henriod, Capt. 0917501,
526 F-2 Sq. 86 F-2 Gp. APO 520, NY, NY.

Incl: 1 cy outline history mo Oct 43

OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE 526 F-2 SQ., 86 F-2 GP., APO 520, NEW YORK CITY, N.Y.

A. ORIGINAL UNIT: See original outline.

B. CHANGES IN ORGANIZATION:

1. On 12 October 1943, the advance party of the Squadron moved to Pomigliano, Italy, together with the planes.

C. STRENGTH OF ORGANIZATION:

1. Monthly Strength:
a. 31 October 1943 officers assigned E.M. assigned

D. STATICS: (Permanent or temporary) or unit or parts thereof.

1. Advance party enroute Sele River airport, Italy, to Pomigliano, Italy, via motor transport, 12 October 1943.

2. Rear echelon enroute Sele River Airport, Italy, to Pomigliano, Italy, via motor transport, 23 October 1943.

E. CAMPAIGNS: Operations continued over Italy, otherwise no additions.

F. COMMANDING OFFICERS IN IMPORTANT ENGAGEMENTS: No additions.

G. LOSSES IN ACTION:

1. Italian Campaign:

a. Capt. John G. Claus, missing in action near Civita Castellano, Italy.

11-1-43

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
Redesignated 526 37r Bomba Sq.

SQ - FI - 526 - H
27 APR 43 - O.S. 1943

Sheet No. 1 War Diary, 310 B. Sq., 86 B. Co.,

Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

Month of April, 1943. Prepared by Frederic E. Henriod, 1st Lt., 310 B. Sq. 26 B Co.

DAY

EVENTS

- 27 The Squadron entrained at Camp Kilmer at night, and left for the Port of Embarkation at Staten Island, with drawn curtains in the coaches. The coaches were piled with men, B-4 bags, guns, bed rolls and other equipment, so that it was impossible to walk down the aisles. The slow trip to New York saw some of the men playing chess, others sleeping on the back of their necks, and most everyone "bitching" about something. It was insufferably hot in the closed in coaches. Sometime in the morning hours, about 1 A.M. we left the train and carried our B-4 bags, and full equipment about half mile to the waiting ferry where we finally arrived exhausted. Almost in silence we watched the darkened buildings of New York City grow dimmer in the chill sea air and finally arrived at the docks where we boarded the "John Ericsson" (formerly the Kungsholm), after waiting for what seemed like hours, and after walking another quarter of a mile to the gangplank.
- 28 Remained aboard ship all day preparatory to departure, during which time the officers and enlisted men, comprising some three hundred men in our outfit, prepared for the sea voyage. In this early stage we had already heard rumors that we were to dock at Oran, Algiers, North Africa. Precautions against secrecy had been lax all along the line, and both officers and men had their wives in hotels in New Brunswick or New York while we were at the staging area. We never did discover how everyone seemed to know where we were going before we got started. During the day the enlisted men were trying to make themselves as comfortable as possible on the open deck where they slept during the voyage. Some were quartered in cramped, three deck bunks inside, where the air soon became stale. We soon found that bathing or shower facilities were highly unsatisfactory.
- 29 About 9 A.M. our ship pulled away from the docks and set out for Oran. Aboard to were about 1500 negroes, an engineers outfit, a contingent of Army nurses, and several other contingents. The/shone all day on a calm sea. We followed the coast South, zig-zagging as we went. During the first two days out, the enlisted men quickly learned that one of the few pastimes on a boat loaded with soldiers, was poker. Games flourished, and thousands of dollars passed hands during the voyage. Some played pinochle, others just wanded around.
- 30

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Sheet No. 2. War Diary, 310 B. Sq., 26 B. Op. APO 3659, c/o P-master, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of May, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st. Lt. 310 B Sq. 26 B Op.

1 The sea remained calm throughout the entire voyage of 12½ days, during which time to we were advised that submarines had been near on several occasions, and that two 11 had been destroyed by the naval escort. These were unauthenticated "latrine" rumors and we never did find out just what happened. As we were about to pass North of Casablanca, half of the convoy split off and went to that city, while the remainder of us continued on to Oran. During the trip many of the boys who had never been on the water before, became sick, which added to the general discomfort. A good number of them had the ~~flu~~ flu. Significantly, there was no segregation in the ship hospital of whites and blacks. Due to the lack of bathing facilities and scarcity of water, the men became dirty and unshaven. The evenings and nights were cold and there was considerable uncomfortableness on the open decks where the men slept. The officers were allowed on the upper deck where the Air Corps and Engineers officers spent considerable time with the nurses on board. This association continued into the night throughout the voyage. A ship Chaplain named Parker did considerable preaching over the loudspeaker system, and there was considerable music also. In the evenings, there was usually a movie of ancient vintage in the overcrowded, overheated Officer's Lounge, which rendezvous was a misnomered, large room with wooden benches, a ping pong table, officer's bunks on either side separated by partitions. The food on the ship was excellent. Highlight entertainment values were furnished by colored jam sessions that seemed to just appear around the piano. On the lower deck, an equally hot white band, consisting of guitar, trumpet, clarinet and drums, amused a good many of the soldiers and seamen. One afternoon about dusk we approached and passed Gibraltar, which to most everyone on the boat was a spectacle of awe. Most of the boys had never been away from home until the war started, and this was their first view of foreign soil. Coming into the harbor at Oran proved equally as interesting, and we docked at about 4 P.M., shortly after an announcement on the radio announced the capture of the last elements of the Axis forces in Tunisia. After waiting on board all afternoon, we finally left the ship with our equipment and marched a mile or so along the quay, where waiting trucks took us through the crooked streets of Oran to a field near the airdrome at LaSenia. The night was black as pitch, and the enlisted men managed somehow to pick a bare spot and wrap themselves up in blankets for a restless night. The officers were taken to a barracks building across the road, where they slept for the first time on French beds consisting only of two inch wide slabs of steel. This first night proved to be one of the roughest we had encountered.

12 The officers and men pitched in and arranged a bivouac area in what looked like a corn or wheatfield, with rough furrows. The night before, we had heard the children in the streets hollering for "bon Bon" and "cigaretta" and this constant plea followed us the next day and as long as we were in Africa. The natives gathered around and begged for anything they could get. They are filthy and appear to be infested with vermin, and it is not unusual to see them relieving themselves alongside the roads and streets, or even in the streets. The children appear to be small and undernourished. They all go barefoot and wear nothing but rags. The thing that interested most of the men was the fact that the women went about with what looked like a white sheet wrapped around them, covering their heads, with one eye poking out of a small aperture in the sheet which was folded and held together by the women at nose level.

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CONFIDENTIAL

Sheet No. 3. War Diary, 310 P. Sq., 86 P. Co. APO 3659, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of May, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st Lt., 310 P. Sq., 86 P. Co.

DAY

EVENTS

- 13 Continued our bedding down process. The weather has been ideal since we left the States, with no sign of rain. Our Orderly Room is now functioning, and everyone is pretty much unpacked, with pup tents in neat rows marking our outfit. The dust is terrific and the wind is blowing making it impossible to keep clean. Our men have seen the LaSenia airport, where all kinds of planes seem to be stationed. The hangars are gutted from the pounding received by the Allies in November, 1942. The runway is good and serviceable, and many four-motored planes are on the field.
- 14 Many of the men went to Oran and saw the ancient city, with its colorful uniforms among the crowded streets. There are soldiers from all parts of the world. The people speak French, Spanish and Arabic, and the city has many more European nationals than the rural districts, where the Arabs are numerous. The general theme among the men is the beauty of the French girls, with their tuxon breasts which most everyone calls buckets. Our G.I.s are having difficulty getting these girls to warm up to them, and they keep a respectful distance. There seem to be few, if any brothels. However, there is a G.I. brothel run by the M.P.s, with a supervised prophylactic station across the street. The water here is terrible, and unpalatable. There is a lot of wine which the men have learned to call "Veeno", floating about, and already we have had numerous cases of drunkenness among both the officers and enlisted men. A peculiar characteristic of this beverage is it's delayed action and complete effectiveness once it strikes.
- 15 The veterans of Faid Pass, El Quetta and the Kasserine Pass are pouring into Oran - principally men of the 1st Division. They are a hardy looking lot. Most of them have only the clothes they are wearing, and these are dirty from the recent battles they have been through. They have some hair-raising tales to tell. Most of them say the casualties were terrific in Tunisia. German and Italian prisoners are arriving daily in trucks and over the dinky railroad that passes by our camp. These prisoners are a sorry looking lot. For the most part the Italians seem to be glad the war is over for them. The Germans remain sullen and silent, and conversation with them indicates that they still believe in Hitler and his ideologies. Most of them cannot be convinced that the fortunes of war are going against the Reich, and many of them refuse to believe a person when he tells them that New York and Chicago have not been razed by German air power.
- 16 There are large concentrations of men and materiel here, and numerous airborne troops are stationed near here and more arriving daily. From the activity it appears that invasion is a certainty. The 1st Division boys are virtually tearing the town apart, and the Continental Hotel, which is a sort of gathering spot for everybody, has had to close down its sidewalk bar at 5 P.M. At 5 each day, colored American troops stage a small parade down the main street of Oran, accompanied by a brass band, where they stop in a large square and put on a band concert, followed by Retreat. The odors in Oran are not inviting, and one can smell cheap wine everywhere. The people walk in the street as well as on the sidewalks. Lazy or sick Arabs sleep standing up against a building. Many beg. Many more are blind, and some have their faces eaten away by syphilis. The boys have been told that in a square between LaSenia and Oran, the Arabs sell women. Several state that they have seen this bartering. We have no showers except in salt water, which leaves one's hair sticky and stringy. The water makes washing of clothes almost impos-

CONFIDENTIAL

Sheet No. 4. War Diary. 310 E. Sq., 86 E. Co. AIC 3659, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of May, 1943. Prepared by Frederick H. Henriod, 1st Lt., 310 E. Sq., 86 E. Co.

DAY

EVENTS

- 16 sible. The flies and mosquitoes are thick, and everyone sleeps under mosquito netting. The food has been good since we arrived here. Electric lights are unknown, and we really don't need them, since it is 9 or 9:30 before the sun goes down, and everyone is ready for bed. We are merely marking time, waiting for our airplanes to get to us. Everyone is seeing the countryside and the towns around. The fields seem to be very fertile and as far as the eye will reach there are grape vineyards, with huge clusters of grapes hanging on the vines, about half-ripe. Native two-wheeled carts jerk down the road, drawn by sorry-looking diminutive donkeys. Frequently the donkeys are as small as their drivers. They are a nuisance on the highways but the Allied command apparently has no policy of keeping them off the highways.
- 19 Oran suffered an air raid tonight, and from LaSenia we watched the tracer bullets filling the sky. It was our first experience with an air raid. Everyone put on his steel helmet and got in slit trenches, which the men have been digging for the past week. A boat was bombed in the harbor and another bomb went through a building used for a warehouse. Several were killed. The things we have missed most up to date are Coca Colas and Scotch whiskey. Little wooden sidewalks are appearing in our area, where enterprising G.I.s are building miniature houses out of lumber that has been "policed" up, which is the polite G.I. way of describing finding, buying or stealing articles.
- 20. Another air raid tonight, about half as long and of apparently less intensity. The full moon is ideal for enemy bombers. Lts. McCarroll, Smith, Hill, Hood and Stell, left here for Casablanca where they expect to do some transition flying in the ships we are about to get. The mail from home is beginning to trickle in. The boys have found a good beach, and a truck leaves every day for a refreshing swim in the Mediterranean. The native kids beg the leavings out of the enlisted men's mess kits, and frequently can be seen eating the slop from the cans where the scrapings from the kits are thrown. Dogs seem to be everywhere, and the natives, for some reason or another, take greater pride, show more affection and value these animals more than they do their own children.
- 22 We are still marking time, waiting for our planes. In the meantime, we are gathering maps and equipment for our further activities. The docks at Oran are a confusion, and almost anyone goes there and takes anything he wants or needs. This sort of policing exists in most of the units here, which results in other units going short on various items. There seems to be no adequate means of checking the equipment in or out. The fellows are still drinking vino and generally regretting it. Many of them have bought chickens, eggs, goats and other victuals which they cook over a small campfire in the early evening or morning. The water problem and the dust, wind, mosquitoes and flies are our worst problems.
- 23 The mail is coming in faster, and the boys, who have had nothing much to do but see the sights and go swimming and make a small shanty town with their shelter halves and boards, are writing letters by the hundreds. They all have a sense of humor under the most trying conditions, and many of them in their letters have told the stock story going the rounds that the mosquitoes here are so discriminating as to look at the dog tags before taking a bite to make sure they get the proper blood type.

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Sheet No. 5. War Diary. 310 E. Sq., 86 E. Gp. APO 3659, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of May, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st Lt. 310 E. Sq., 86 E. Gp.

DAY

EVENTS

25 The most important event of the day was dinner with ice cream, which we had obtained through the Red Cross from an ice cream factory in Oran. We traded them the ingredients for the manufacture. The weather is still hot, and no rain. The soldiers and equipment from everywhere seem to stream through Oran. The Officer's Club in Oran, operated by the Red Cross, does a thriving business ; 2 every day, when we can get sandwiches and coffee. For the service we contribute what we think it is worth in a box marked "2 Francs if-you think it is worth it". The club sponsors dances each week, and a G.I. band from an available unit furnishes the music. French girls are brought in, properly escorted by their mothers or older sisters. In spite of the strict chaperone system, many have been known to become intimate with the soldiers without benefit of chaperone.

26 Our Squadron's tent city has become the pride of the vicinity. Clean, well-kept small side-walled tents have been erected by the men, with built-up bunks, a drainage trench around the whole thing, and frequently there are sturdy double-deck bed arrangements that make it possible for four men to live comfortably under two shelter halves with wooden sides. One ingenious group has even rigged up a washbowl system with running water, constructed of G.I. cans. The water is still unpalatable. One man wrote to his folks that it tasted like someone had already drunk it.

27 We haven't heard from our pilots who left some time ago for Casablanca. We are still doing the town and countryside and waiting for the day we will move up to the front. The kids are still swarming about the camp. Typical of their ambitions is a statement made by a little French boy today, who speaks a little English, when he said that after the war he intended to go to America and marry an American girl with long brown hair.

28 A lot of English airborne troops have arrived in the area. We don't know their destination but have heard that they are going about 60 miles up the coast toward Mostaganem. The American and English soldiers seem to hold a respectful distance. The average American soldier seems to dislike the British and thinks and states that Lend-Lease is a joke, and that the Americans are really financing the War.

29 Many of the officers frequent the Florida Club in Oran, where a poor French orchestra tries to gain the favor of the patrons by playing American tunes. The 1st Division boys are trying to convince the 9th Division fellows that the First won the Tunisian Campaign, and vice versa. The result is numerous bloody noses and broken heads on the streets of Oran. These boys who have been doing the heavy fighting are relaxing in a big way, and a lot of drunkenness exists.

30 The morale of the boys is waning a bit on account of inactivity. Many of them frequent a French garrison about half mile away, where they swap yarns with the French and drink the poor grade of wine that the French soldiers give them. As a result, some of the boys come in at all hours of the night, singing and causing some confusion. The English who are camped close by have their tea religiously about four times each day. They have no hesitancy in coming into our area and asking for a spot of milk for their tea. The G.I., biggest hearted in the world, give it to them, as they do bon bon and cigarettes to the youngsters.

31 Pay day today and a rush for town. One of the favorite pastimes here is buying

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Sheet No. 6. War Diary. 310 E. So., 26 E. Co. APC 3559. c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of May, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st Lt. 310 E. So., 26 E. Co.

DAY

EVENTS

31 souvenirs and trinkets to send home to the folks. The principal commodity for sale, it seems, is the red, blue, black or tan wallet. Leather goods are everywhere. The natives have already learned that the American soldier spends freely and have jumped the price of everything. All during the month there has been practically nothing in the store windows except these articles. The country around is in full bloom with tomato plants, grape vines, olive trees and grain everywhere. All of the biscuits and maltose and dextrose tablets that have been issued in the K-ration packages have been given away. Nobody eats them, and they represent a 90% waste to the government. The roads are a mass of military traffic, and large tanks and pieces of equipment seem to be moving westward from Tunisia either to or through Oren. The harbor is usually filled with boats of various kinds. Convoys come every few days, at which time, the mail comes in and the boys spend many hours answering mail from home. The general tenor of the mail from home is that the home folks are willing to sacrifice anything in order to finish the boys overseas with what is necessary to win the war. The boys overseas, likewise, are wondering how the folks back home are, and how things are going. The waste around here is terrific, and one can hardly think, after seeing the huge dumps of gasoline and tires, that at home both of these commodities are rationed. A Non-Commissioned Officers Club has been opened near here, where the boys can go and play various games, drink the local wine, and pass pleasant evenings. It is open to all the enlisted men. The officers have a club on the second floor of the administration building in the barracks adjoining the field, which are modern up-to-date buildings of concrete finish, painted red. The men were amused at the sign on one of the doors in these buildings which had a sign reading "Douche", until they discovered this was the French word for showers. At the officer's club, there is a bar that serves wine and lemonade only. In the evenings one of the enlisted men entertains the officers with selections on an accordion. Occasionally some outfit reserves a large room downstairs for a dance, at which function French girls are brought from Oren. It is also attended by nurses camped nearby - the same unit that came over on the boat with our Squadron. Compared with the United States, the morals of this part of the world are low. Every urchin on the street solicits the soldiers, and everywhere can be heard the well known Fucky-Fuck which the soldiers have taught the youngsters. Frequently these kids pander for their older sisters. The honorarium runs anywhere from a package of cigarettes to a dollar.

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Sheet No. 7. War Diary. 310 E. Sq., 86 E. Co., APO 3659, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.
Month of June, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st Lt. 310 E. Sq., 86 E. Co.

DAY

EVENTS

- 1 We are hearing rumors of leaving this area. The food continues to be good, al-
though the Base Section seems to have a priority on the luxuries. We have a
6 small PX in the officer's club, where we can get a ration of 1 carton of cigar-
ettes, 1 box of Chuckles, tooth paste, brushes, hair brushes, soap, etc. for
very reasonable prices. There is also an Officer's store in Oren where one can
get almost anything, including a blouse, if necessary. The natives around here
will pay almost anything for a pair of shoes, a barracks bag or mattress cover.
Some of the enlisted men have been known to get as high as \$18 for a mattress
cover from the Arabs. The people in town seem to be living on a diet of fish
and tomatoes. The first week of June saw a rush of goods to Oren. The stores
all nopped out with new things for sale, including women's dresses, shoes and
hats. Nobody seems to know where this comes from. Questioning the natives does
no good, for they won't tell where it came from. My best guess is that a ship
from the continent arrived, and was allowed to slip through by the Axis and the
Allies by some kind of agreement.
- 7 We are scheduled to move tomorrow or the next day, so everyone is getting ready.
Fellows are gathering in their laundry from nearby towns, Arabs and French women.
Although they were cautioned not to take their laundry to these places, they per-
sist in doing so.
8. Orders flew thick and fast today. We have been ordered to move. As a result,
all of the tents are coming down, packing boxes are being nailed down, and the
equipment is getting a last greasing and tightening up. We are not sure where
we are going but believe it to be Tafarouin. All of the equipment, boxes, etc.
was either loaded on trucks or taken to the railroad depot. At 10:30 P.M. we
got another order not to move, and everyone was immediately "blased off" in
the G.I. vernacular. Cursing followed, but everything was unloaded, and men
were working all night without any sleep in such unloading. It seems that the
rail transportation ran into a bottleneck or a priority. The result: we don't
know whether to re-pitch the tents or sleep on the ground until the next order
comes through.
- 9 We found out why the unpacking. We were scheduled to go to Gujan, and those in
our Group Command objected so strenuously that someone higher up was convinced
that we should be sent elsewhere. We spent the day living out of barracks bags
and continuing the cursing which started last night.
- 10 No one dare go to town or anyplace else because of the order to be on the alert
to move at an hour's notice. We are "sweating out" these orders. As a result
there is a lot of letter writing, checker playing, and considerable poker playing.
- 11 Word came that our destination would be Tafarouin, so we are starting to pack all
over again.
- 12 Part of the Squadron moved to Tafarouin today. This airrome has the only con-
crete runway in Africa, we understand, so we are well pleased to be able to start
our overseas training on such a field. There is an English Spitfire outfit on
the field, and also a contingent of Lockheed-Hudsons. The English occupy all the
buildings and we are to bivouac across the field in a grain patch. We started
breaking ground and pitching tents in the afternoon, as well as dig foxholes.

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Sheet No. 8. War Diary. 310 B. Sq., 86 B. Gp., APO 3659, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of June, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st Lt., 310 B. Sq., 86 B. Gp.

DAY EVENTS

- 13 Spent the whole day pitching camp and assisting in getting straightened out. The weather is exceptionally hot today. We set up tents and headquarters for the squadron on the line and started to work. The pilots are eager to continue flying their planes which have been assigned to them, and which they have been flying at Cujda and Meddouina. The natives are selling chickens, eggs, etc. to the enlisted men. Several of them barbecued a goat.
- 14 Many of the men in the squadron saw the King of England today at LaSenia airport. He arrived in a huge four-motored Manchester. He looked a little tired and worn. The roads are jammed with military traffic, and every once in a while a convoy of trucks will pass with German and Italian prisoners of war. The Germans have to be guarded pretty well, but the Italians need no guard and seem to be glad they are captured. A story is told of one of the 1st Division enlisted men who locked up thirteen Italian captured prisoners at night and the next morning he counted 28. One of them had escaped and brought 15 more of his buddies back. We went to the docks in Oran today and got several more tents that we needed.
- 15 Troop trains pass by LaSenia airport daily loaded with Italian and German prisoners. They stick their heads out of the small windows of small cars that are no bigger than our G.I. trucks. At our former camp at La Senia, this dinky railroad had to go up about a 5% incline to go over a road, and the boys would grease the tracks with G.I. soap, and the helpless little train would spin its wheels, back up to get a better start, and finally, after spending much effort and time, would make the grade. Tonight we had a Group party, where beer and cream puffs were served. A few of the Officers brought a group of nurses bivouacked about six or seven miles away.
- 16 Many of the squadron have found a reservoir where they go swimming. It is an ancient dam built of stones, holding back the water from a small stream, and forming a lake about half mile wide and four or five miles long, with a depth of approximately 100 feet. It is up in the hills about ten miles away. It is the first fresh water we have seen for days. The pilots are doing some patrol work over the Mediterranean. The 311th Sq. is slated to leave our Group next Friday. Lts. Koness, Greer and Ferguson came into our Squadron from the 311th. One of our truck drivers killed an Arab between Tafarouia and LaSenia today, when the old fellow moved directly into the path of one of our trucks.
- 17 The pilots were advised as to the danger areas over which they could not fly, which included the city of Oran, Spanish Morocco, and the dry lake south and west from LaSenia. Orders have been given to shoot any plane down that enters these areas. Reports indicate that the Axis have sympathizers in Spanish Morocco who have shot down some of our planes when they came too close to the border.
- 18 We obtained the call signs for the various airports in Africa, from Operations in LaSenia today. Our mess hall is feeding the Group headquarters. The food has been very good lately. The natives continue to insist in coming into the area and over the field. It is almost impossible to keep them out.
- 19 We instructed the men on the S.O.P. for alert. The pilots are flying daily and our Operations section is and has been operating daily. We were told that the

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Sheet No. 9. War Diary. 310 B. Sq. 86 B. Gr., APO 3659, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.
Month of June, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st Lt., 310 B. Sq., 86 B. Gr.

DAY EVENTS

- 19 Scotch guards who are stationed with the British on the other side of the field had chased several German spies through the hills to the west of here, and had run them into the arms of a French Garrison back in the hills, where they were taken prisoner. We are also told that this area is infested with German spies and saboteurs. One of the pilots flew aloft and shot down an escaped barrage balloon which had got away. All around we see the evidences of the invasion of November. The dry lake has grounded planes and trucks in it, the buildings and hangars around LaSenia and on the road from Oran to LaSenia and Tifarouia are pocked with bullet holes. Today Capt. Ayers, with the NATC, who has been intelligence officer with an outfit at the front in Tunisia for many months, spoke to us today about operations in his theatre.
- 20 Capt. Ayers gave a talk on aircraft identification and its importance in combat. We get a kick out of kidding Chaplain Fischer, a preacher from Texas. Lt. Morris entertained most of the Squadron area with his trumpet in the evening. The pilots have been very busy the past week with their planes. Some of the boys go back to LaSenia in the evening to get a hot shower at the barracks.
- 21 Another talk by Capt. Ayers on aircraft identification. More convoys of German and Italian prisoners are passing each day. The Arabs still trade with the enlisted men and are doing a thriving business in pocketbooks.
- 22 Lt. Col. Dixon gave us a talk on anti-aircraft and radar activities in combat. What with all these talks, it appears that we are slated for combat within a short time. Lt. Barber, our statistics officer, is now at Mostagenem in the replacement pool, having been transferred there at his own request. A large British Halifax, four motored plane landed on the field today, fresh from England via Gibraltar. It had developed oil leaks and was forced down here. It was interesting to talk to fellows who had been in London just a few hours before.
- 23 Another talk by Capt. Ayers on Dive Bombing tactics. Capt. Murphy, our Squadron physician, has ordered the boys not to swim in the reservoir, for fear of infection causing sleeping sickness.
- 24 The heat is still terrific, and we still have had no sign of rain since we left the states. Capt. Ayers gave another talk on Air Sea Rescue, telling us about the Malrus rescues, how the Germans and the Allies had religiously lived up to the rules of fair play in air sea rescue work.
- 25 Destroyed classified documents which had accumulated at Key Field, Meridian, Mississippi, for which we had no further use. We now have a screened in, wooden walled mess hall, with a dining hall built for our officers and the Group officers. We have strengthened the guard about the field because of reports that paratroopers have been landing within fifteen miles of the field. A number of them have been captured in various parts of Africa.
- 26 Lt. Baer of the 312th Sq. forgot to put his wheels down and as a result made a belly landing in an A-36, on the concrete runway. It made considerable noise, and caused considerable smoke and dust, but he was uninjured. It is the first instance we know of where an A-36 has made such a landing. A beautiful formation of 50 B-24s crossed over Oran today on an unknown destination. They landed at the

Sheet No. 10. War Diary. 310 B. Sq. 86 B. Gp., APO 520, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of June, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st Lt., 310 Sq. 86 B. Gp.

DAY

EVENTS

- 27 Some of the fellows in the squadron observed the belly landing of a B-17 on the LaSenia airdrome, with a full crew. The pilot brought the big ship in without a quiver, and from all outward appearances the only thing that was damaged were the propellers and the underside of the fuselage. All of the occupants were uninjured. Lt. Chandler and Lt. Henriod went to Casablanca this afternoon on a blue Navy transport complete with plush seats. From LaSenia to Casablanca the whole countryside was covered with ripened grain, and small circular spots looking like craters in which ants were crawling around, turned out to be native threshing patches, where the farmers were either throwing the beaten grain into the air for the wind to blow the chaff away, or a farmer was driving a horse or camel in a perpetual circle stomping the grain out of the husks.
- 28 Rumors are flying that we are about to move to Tunisia. Consequently everyone is doing a little packing preparatory to a sudden move.
- 29 Group headquarters and part of the ~~xxxxx~~ squadrons left today for Korba, Tunisia, Africa, on advance echelons to our new base, where we are slated to operate over Sicily.
- 30 The squadron spent all day tearing down tents and packing boxes preparatory to going to Korba, Tunisia. Everyone seems to want to be on his way to the combat area. We hate to leave the showers that Lt. Calamai has rigged up out of a water trailer, pipe and cans.

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Sheet No. 11. War Diary. 310 P. Sq. 86 B. Sp., APO 3659, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.
Month of July, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, 1st Lt., 310 P. Sq. 86 B. Sp.

DAY

EVENTS

- 1 Lts. Chandler & Henriod left in staff car for Korba, Tunisia.
- 3 Lt. Wilson B. Gilliland was the first 310th pilot to fly a combat mission. He flew with the 27th Group on a mission over Sicily, to bomb and strafe a Panzer unit between Marsala and Menzara, Sicily.
- 4 Camp has been set up in an olive grove near a wheat field at Korba, north. It is about two miles from the sea, and the dust rises in great clouds whenever an airplane engine is started. The boys go swimming daily in the sea, which is a beautiful blue. At night the phosphorous makes a pretty sight in the water. We see hundreds of heavy and medium bombers flying daily overhead on their way to Sicily and Italy. Our airdrome seems to be directly on the route. Our airfield was dragged out of a wheatfield by the Engineers and consists of a flat dirt runway that is mostly dust. Our Group headquarters is on a hill overlooking the field and about a quarter of a mile away. It is about a mile west of what looks like some ancient ruins. The Red Cross girls come daily and furnish coffee and donuts to the pilots only. We are about 18 miles north of Hammamet, Tunisia, on the Gulf of Tunis. The Prince of Wales is reported to have a villa in Hammamet.
- 5 We have been spending a lot of time throwing natives out of our cactus fenced olive grove. They live all over and all around the airfield and it seems impossible to keep them out. Capt. Winter and Capt. Stell arrived here today from Taffrouia.
- 7 Capts. Winter & Stell went on a mission over Marsala, Sicily, where Capt. Stell was jumped by three ME-109s, his ship being riddled. Capt. Winter helped drive them off, and Capt. Stell, injured, manouevered his plane back to base after having his speed control effectively knocked out, flying his plane a few feet above the water across the Mediterranean.
- 8 Capt. Stell was given a wonderful writeup by the Public Relations department of the 12th ASG, which writeup was promptly cabled to the States. One of the boys in the 27th Group, which is on a field adjoining ours, was killed in action over Sicily today. Our Squadron ran two missions today, near Canicatti and Licata, where locomotives, radio station, bivouac area and trucks were effectively strafed, the mission encountering light flak, and observing many movements of the enemy which were promptly reported. A bomb from a friendly plane dropped near here today, about 50 feet from a gun emplacement. Fortunately no one was injured. One of the enlisted men had his tent burned up in the middle of the night, and bullets he had there were whistling all around the area as the heat set them off.
- 9 Capt. Stell was awarded the Purple Heart for injuries received in his mission over Sicily on July 7th.
- 10 Today is "D" Day. Night before last Capt. Winter, our commanding officer, told the officers of the Squadron, in detail, about the plan for the invasion which was to begin on the Southern shores of Sicily on July 10th. Last night he told all of the enlisted men about the plan, pointing out to them on a map the course that would be taken, the number of naval and ground units involved, etc. "D" Day for our Squadron spelled "Disaster". After an early morning mission by pilots of our Squadron, where enemy roads and installations were seriously damaged, eleven of