

e. CALPAIGNS: Operations continued over Italy, otherwise no additions.

f. COMMANDING OFFICERS IN IMPORTANT ENGAGEMENTS: No additions.

g. LOSSES IN ACTION:

1. 1st. Lt. Robert D. Lundberg, bailed out East of Rome, Italy, 11 November 1943, seen to land safely and run from plane.

h. MEMBERS WHO HAVE DISTINGUISHED THEMSELVES IN ACTION.

1. Capt. Michael R. Yannell, who completed his tour of duty consisting of 80 combat missions, on 8 December 1943, the first A-36A pilot to complete his tour of duty, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross personally by General Henry Arnold, at Romigliano Airfield, Italy, in the presence of Group and Squadron officers, and Generals Spaatz, Cannon and House, after a brilliant flying career, with two enemy aircraft victories to his credit.

2. 1st. Lt. Robert J. Frisbey, who was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for bravery and achievement in aerial flight.

3. 1st. Lt. Alfred R. Bolch, awarded the Purple Heart for injuries suffered while on combat mission.

4. 1st. Lt. Robert R. Hood, awarded a cluster to the Purple Heart, for additional injury while in line of duty.

5. 1st. Lt. Maurice W. Griffin, completed 80 missions and his tour of duty.

6. 1st. Lt. Walter L. Gibson, completed 80 missions and his tour of duty.

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11-1-43

Sheet No. 33 War Diary. 526 F-B. Sq., 26 F-B. Gp., APO 520, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of November, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Merriod, Capt.

DAY

EVENTS

- 1 Under a policy of allowing the men a few days off, many of them have been going to Naples and Capri. The boat leaves for Capri on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 8:30 A.M. and returns the same afternoon. It is a small Italian fishing craft. The men find Capri pretty much as advertised - untouched by the war, immaculately clean and a happy contrast to what they have seen of other Italian villages and cities. Various commands have taken over the better hotels and there are several rest camps on Capri. Our squadron ran two missions today. Naples was heavily bombed in the evening and from our apartment in Pomigliano, it appeared that heavy damage was done. We were able to see a number of the German planes in the searchlight cones, and the curtain of flak that was sent up seemed to indicate direct hits on one or two of the planes. We were later told that there were three downed. Large orange flashes of flame appeared to be direct hits by the German bombs on ammunition dumps or oil tankers in the harbor. There are numerous boats of all kinds in Naples, which seem to be poorly dispersed. The town is getting back to normal, and the people have come back and the streets are crowded.
- 2 Lt. Ferguson left today for Tunis where he will appear before the Medical Board for an order to go back to the states. Lts. Price and McKendrick left for the rest camp at Palermo, Sicily. One mission of twelve ships was flown today. We are getting short on planes and at the present rate of planes going out of service for one reason or another it should not be long before the squadrons will be inoperational for lack of planes.
- 3 Lts. Hedrick, Lane, Hill and Klass left for Tunis and the states today. On a mission North of Rome, the boys barely got back to base safe, on account of lack of fuel. Lt. Williams ran out of gas before he arrived at the runway and was forced to belly land at the P-40 field (324th Gp) at Cercola, two or three miles from here. Lt. Rice, on landing from the mission, nosed his plane over so that we now have two fewer planes to operate with.
- 4 Only one mission today. Gretchen and Sue, the two Red Cross girls, were our guests at dinner tonight. Lt. Reid came home from the mission with a flak hole in his right flap. Our own troops fired on the flight, undoubtedly by mistake.
- 5 Only one mission again today. One of our planes came home with cal. 50 holes in the wing. The Army Ordnance Department finished clearing the butterfly bombs from our field. They would gather 40 or 50 in a pile, put sandbags around them and detonate them with an electric charge, which made an explosion and noise about as intense as an exploding 500 pound bomb. At night there was another heavy raid by the Germans on Naples. Some of the German planes buzzed over our own field and dropped three bombs with delayed ac-

Sheet No. 34 War Diary. 526 F-B Sq., 86 F-B Gp., APO 520, N.Y., N.Y.

Month of November, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, Capt.

DAY

EVENTS

tion fuses on the north end of our airfield. Our ordnance officer removed them, and there were no casualties. The concussion from the falling bombs in Naples could easily be felt here, six or seven miles away. The big guns near our apartment shot at the German raiders numerous times, and made considerable noise. These air raids seem to be terrifically frightening to the natives who get in air raid shelters promptly. About half of our own men take shelter and the other half stand outside and watch the fireworks. Many don't even bother to put on their helmets. Occasionally one can hear the stray shrapnel whiz close by during these raids, but thus far we have had no injuries.

- 6 Two missions, both of which were very successful, were run today. The weather is continuously threatening. The activities up on the front seem to have bogged down and our forces are not moving ahead as rapidly as they were. Many reports indicate that the Germans are moving a lot more personnel into Northern and Central Italy for a determined stand, including a lot of Goering's crack Panzer troops.
- 7 One mission flown today, bombing movements along the Gagliano River. Our enlisted men have an Italian photographer in the basement of our apartment, whom they keep busy developing their films. This activity is more or less sub rosa and probably violative of the censorship regulations, but most of the pictures the fellows take are of a personal and non-military nature. The photographer takes fairly good portraits and the boys are busy getting "shot" for pictures to send home for Christmas. A few Christmas packages have already started to arrive, and a lot of the men have packed trinkets and presents for which they were generally overcharged by the natives here, for mailing back home.
- 8 The colors on the slopes of Mt. Vesuvius are changing and starting at the top it has taken on a dark brown hue, which is slowly moving down the crater into the valley below. Occasional dead leaves are falling from the trees, but there is no real sign of winter here as yet, except the chilly mornings and some ground fog. The natives still walk around barefoot. The road to and from Naples is crowded with military vehicles, native trucks and hundreds of native carts. The native trucks are loaded with human cargo to the point where one wonders how the axles and springs hold up.
- 9 Two missions flown today. Due to the comparative inactivity of the squadron on account of inclement weather, the enlisted men and officers are taking advantage of the lull to go to Naples. The officers may stay at the 86th Group hotel, which is the Albergo Lago Maggiore. There is no restriction on the place, and the officers who care to, take Italian girls into the hotel and stay all night with them. There is a shower in the hotel, and the rooms and linen are fairly clean and acceptable. There has been some trouble in the cases where some of the officers have left their bed partners in the morn-

Sheet No. 35 War Diary. 526 F-B Sq., 86 F-B Gp., APC 520, H.Y., N.Y.

Month of November, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, Captain.

DAY

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ings and gone to the fields. These girls who are left in the rooms insist on stealing the linen and other articles in the rooms.

- 10 One rhubarb mission South of Rome into the center of Italy was flown today, with good results. The natives are beginning to knock holes in the wire fence around the field. There are colored troops stationed at all the gates, but this does not seem to do any good in keeping the natives out. They insist on getting into the field where they either beg or steal tin cans, bomb covers, gasoline and oil.
- 11 Lt. Lundberg, on a mission South of Rome, had his plane hit by small arms fire, and he bailed out in enemy territory. He was seen to land safely and run with his parachute for cover. However, the spot where he bailed out was infested with German anti-aircraft units, and he was probably taken prisoner immediately. Today was Armistice Day, but with the majority of the personnel it passed unnoticed. Large convoys of men and materiel are still passing northward through Fomigliano and Acerra. Early this morning a huge naval convoy of 50 or 60 ships steamed into Naples Harbor, which seems to be already crowded with boats.
- 12 In the only mission flown today, Lt. Hansen bagged a German JU-88, and Lts. Koeltz, Fox and McClean, between them, bagged another, which raises our squadron score to 14 planes destroyed in flight, without loss to our own squadron. Twelve of more FW-190s raided our airdrome today, dropping numerous anti-personnel bombs which injured a few personnel, damaged a F-38 and a transport, and riddled a few tents. There was one of the raiders shot down by anti-aircraft fire. The raid came at British tea time, and a lot of the British who man the ack-ack on our field, failed to get the covers off the guns before the raiders were gone. Some of the bombs dropped are still lying on the field unexploded. There was an air alert tonight, but nothing happened. The 525th squadron lost another pilot today.
- 13 One mission only today. Lts. Griffin and Gibson, who had previously gone to Tunis to appear before the Medical Board preparatory to going home, returned today, stating that the Board was of the opinion they could fly another 10 or 15 missions before completing their tour of duty.
- 14 It rained most of the day, and consequently no missions flown.
- 15 Rain again today and no missions. Lt. Chandler got back from Capri where he has visited a few days.
- 16 Lts. (now Capt.) Dorris and Orr arrived back from Cairo. Capt. Dorris had a lot of strange tales to tell about Kenya Colony, Khartoum, lion hunts, and eager and promiscuous women. He stated

Sheet No. 36 War Diary. 526 F-B S., 86 F-B Gp., APO 520, N.Y., N.Y.
Month of November, 1943. Prepared by Frederic H. Henriod, Captain.

DAY

EVENTS

that the people there were enthusiastic about the few Americans who get down there; that there is a United States training command flight into this country which he believes to be useful only to protect Pan American post-war air routes; that the U. S. sells gas to the British in this area for 10¢ a gallon, and buys it back for \$1.70; that there are huge numbers of military vehicles and wag troops in the vicinity, and that the whites who are called into service may satisfy the English requirements by sending a wag who may be his personal servant, consequently there being large numbers of young civilians out of uniform.

- 20 No activity from our field on the 17, 18 and 19, on account of rain. None again today for the same reason. There is a sea of mud all around us. The 525th Squadron and Group Headquarters moved here from Serretelle.
- 21 Stand down again today on account of rain. Our enlisted men have a fine club in one of the basement rooms of our apartment, flush with fine furniture that they brought with them from Barcellona, Sicily, and complete with up to date bar. Pop Grice is in charge of the club, which is exclusively for enlisted men. We had a turkey dinner today, with all the trimmings, including dressing and giblet gravy, together with pumpkin pie.
- 22 One mission of twelve ships flown today, bombing the docks at Civitavecchia. Lt. Willard left today to assume new responsibilities as Engineering Officer of the 33rd Group near Capua.
- 23 No missions flown today on account of rain.
- 24 One mission flown today in bad weather with an overcast. At the target at S. Pietro the formation found a hole in the clouds and in the process of going down were jumped by Spitfires, resulting in complete failure and part of the ships bringing their bombs back.
- 25 Thanksgiving Day today, and the Squadron had turkey for dinner, complete with dressing. In the afternoon, Air Marshall Cunningham visited the Group and talked to the pilots. He stated that the 27th & 80th Groups had done a grand job, and that they were to be commended. Also, that the ground troops were stalemated and had to now look to the Air Corps to loosen up the enemy, and that our groups were the most valuable asset the forces had for this work. He stated that the Spitfires, who had up to now been the "prima donnas" of the air would have to come down and do some bombing and strafing, and that they were being processed for this work in missions over Jugoslavia. He further commented that there were to be 1000 four engine bombers in Italy by March 1st, and that Germany was going to get 12,000 tons of bombs daily, and that the bombing of Germany was not only to assist in destroying from the present 7% up to 20% of their war industry, but to discourage any attempt at warfare 25 years from now.

Sheet No. 37 War Diary. 526 F-B Sq, 36 F-B Gr, APO 520, N.Y., N.Y.

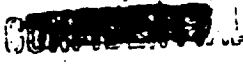
Month of November, 1943. Prepared by Frederic M. Henriod, Captain.

DAY

EVENTS

- 26 There was a heavy air raid in Naples this evening. A number of the fellows were in town when it started around six o'clock. The tracers made a red curtain in the sky, and the shrapnel falling on the stone streets looked like fireflies. A Colonel who flew from Foggia to Caserta told them that a large plane filled with high ranking German officers had landed there for re-fueling, on their way to a conference, presumably with Allied leaders. Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin are reported to be in Cairo for a conference. The Squadron flew one mission today.
- 28 Pilots from the 525th Squadron, who were down at Montecorvino, told us that an ME-210 landed there, and that the two German pilots stepped out and told the personnel at the field that they could have the plane - that they were through with the war. The sun shone all day today for the first time in many days. Two outstanding missions were flown today, doing terrific damage to the enemy. Lt. Yannell came home with flak holes in his wing, and Lt. McClintock flew through a high tension telephone line, damaging the spinner and wings of his plane, requiring it to be taken to the service squadron for repairs.
- 29 On the only mission flown, Lt. Wright got lost in bad weather and finally landed his plane at a small grassy field near Benevento. He landed safely. The plane will probably be grounded there for some time. We just got word that Lt. Hill, who went home a few weeks ago, is to be married on December 4th.
- 30 Another highly successful mission was flown today in support of the ground troops that have been stalemated not far from Venafro, opening what appears to be a determined drive on Rome. Many of the men in the squadron have spent a good deal of time in Naples the past month, and tell strange tales about the place. The most common complaint is that the Italians persist in upping prices, knowing the willingness of the American soldier to spend. Naples appears to be an unique city in many respects. The women seem to be unconscious of any sex morality, and hundreds of moppets and old and middle aged men constantly approach the soldiers soliciting business for a "signorinna". Small brothels are to be found all over town. Singularly enough, our squadron has had but one case of venereal disease since we have been in Italy, which speaks highly of our men. One can see anything on the Neapolitan balconies from crawling bambinos to chickens and the people have a novel delivery system, lowering baskets on ropes to the streets below, where they make small purchases from street vendors. Cameos, fountain pens, highly colored bedspreads and dictionaries have taken the place of leather wallets which we found in Africa. Many fatalities take place on the streets of Naples due to the heavy traffic. The people still seem to be underfed, and still walk around with practically nothing on in the coldest of weather. The airrome is a sea of mud.

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Sheet No. 38. War Diary. 526 F-5 Sq., 86 F-5 Gr., APO 520, N.Y.

Month of December, 1943. Prepared by Frederic M. Henriod, Capt.

DAY

EVENTS

- 1 One mission was flown after several days of inactivity. 16 planes took part in aid of ground troops, bombing and strafing enemy troop concentrations and gun emplacements near Rocca, Italy. There have been rumors of changes in the group and the various squadrons.
- 2 Two missions were flown in aid of ground troops who are making a determined push in the Verniro area, where there has been a stalemate for some time due to mud and bad weather and perhaps the appearance of larger concentrations of enemy materiel and personnel on this so-called "winter front". Col. Yancey Tarrant, popular Group Executive Officer, was transferred to the 64th Fighter Wing today, while on leave in Cairo, raising considerable speculation as to future policy and personnel of the group and the squadrons.
- 3 Col. Robert C. Paul, group commanding officer, was transferred to the XII Air Support Command, being succeeded by Lt. Col. Harold E. Kofahl. One two plane mission was flown by Lt. Yannell and Capt. Dorris on an armed reconnaissance mission near Cassino. Lt. Yannell came back with flak in his plane. The weather continues to be poor and the field continues to be muddy.
- 4 No missions flown today on account of bad weather. There are the usual first of the month poker and black jack games going on in the area with a lot of money changing hands. After about a week, most of the players are eliminated and the money is concentrated down into a few hands. Roosevelt and Churchill are said to be in Cairo for a conference. It is also reported that Von Ribbentrop has flown there. Col. Kofahl took over command of the Group. Our own commanding officer, Maj. Glenn A. Stell, who has commanded since we were at Korba, Tunisia, Africa, after the death of Capt. Reginald D. Winter on July 10th, 1943, has been transferred to the Group and will act as Operations Officer. Maj. Marsh, formerly a pilot of the 527th Squadron, and possessor of the Distinguished Flying Cross, has been named Maj. Stell's successor. Most of the pilots already know him and he seems to be well respected in the Squadron.
- 5 The group officers had a party at the hotel in Naples, in honor of Col. Paul and Col. Kofahl. Lts. Fite, Forster and Beebe were assigned to the Squadron. Two missions were flown today, one of which was dropping food to stranded troops on a hill near the front line.
- 6 Three missions dropping food to front line troops were flown today. The Group held its first Special Courts Martial since it was organized, today, in the Officer's Mess Hall of our Squadron. Lt. Col. Kofahl, who was President of the Court Martial, was disqualified since he had become commanding officer of the Group, and therefore, the reviewing authority, and he was substituted by Maj. Charles Cassidy.

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Sheet No. 39. War Diary. 526 F-3 Sq., 86 F-B. Gr., APO 520, N. Y.
Month of December, 1943. Prepared by Frederic M. Henriod, Captain.

DAY EVENTS

- 7 Two food missions flown today, dropping food to stranded troops 2 miles west of Mignano, on which missions the writer went as observer in the radio compartment. A third mission bombed Civitavecchia.
- 8 Lt. Suhn transferred from the Squadron. Major Marsh, at the meeting of the Squadron, formally introduced himself as the new commander. Lt. Yannell flew his 30th mission today, being the first pilot of an A-30A type aircraft to have completed his tour of duty in any theatre. There was an air alert in Naples and Romigliano.
- 9 Two missions flown today, one being exceptionally effective, in which railroad cars, trucks, gun emplacements, supply dump, high tension line, radio stations and considerable personnel destroyed.
- 10 Generals Arnold, Spaatz, Hoose, Cannon and others made a special trip to Romigliano today for the purpose of decorating Lt. Michael S. Yannell with the Distinguished Flying Cross. The writer was arrested in Naples for having his hand in his pocket, the case section tightening up on military discipline in that city.
- 11 Two missions flown today, one bringing its entire bombload back on account of bad weather. The weather has become increasingly cold and has made it difficult for our ground personnel working on the planes. Each morning when the men go to work, fires can be seen all over the airdrome where the men have built gasoline fires to provide some degree of warmth. Some of the fellows manage to brew a little coffee in the mornings on the line. It is difficult to get coal in this vicinity, with the result that each morning sees some of the ground officers or men or the pilots wielding an ax on tree stumps or boards to provide fuel for the G.I. stoves we have in the tents on the line.
- 12 A mission designed for Civitavecchia had to return early on account of bad weather. The V and VII Armies have moved but little the past two months and continue to hold their present positions against increasing German resistance.
- 13 One successful mission flown to Civitavecchia today. The sun has finally started to shine today and the weather is good.
- 14 To give bombing missions today, on one of which the writer went in the ~~the~~ radio compartment as observer. Three of the twelve planes were hit by flak. The mission was reported by the ground troops as having been highly successful.
- 15 One bombing mission at Soru, Italy, today. In the evening the enlisted men had a party in the S.L. bar, and had several young women in to entertain, including strip tease, bathing under the snows and some degree of public intimacy.

Continued on next page

Sheet No. 40. War Diary. 520 F-B Sq., 80 F-B. Gr., A.F.C. 520, N.Y.
 Month of December, 1943. Prepared by Frederic ... Harriod, Captain.

DAY

EVENTS

- 16 Lt. Carrels left for North Africa today, from whence he will continue to the United States. The writer, while at Bari, saw the sunken boats in Bari harbor - 18 in all, sunk by German planes on Dec. 2nd, which loss has not as yet been reported in the press or radio. Civitavecchia was again bombed today by our Squadron. This has been a target so frequently, that our pilots no longer require any briefing on these missions. A three ship convoy was attacked and two probably destroyed, when our pilots observed them to list badly, personnel jumping overboard.
- 17 The officers and men have been getting large numbers of Christmas packages from home. Some turn out to be very humorous, containing life savers, gum, tooth brushes and razor blades, things we have had in abundance. Some have even received cans of Spam, which is, of course, the last straw. It is reminiscent of the time in Barcellona, or Cella, Sicily, when our Mail Orderly, who slept under an almond tree, where he could reach up from his bed and pick ripened almond nuts, received a large package of almonds from his wife in the United States.
- 18 We received word today of the discovery of the last remains and the plane of our former commanding officer, Capt. Reginald J. Winter, near Carratracca, Sicily. It was further reported that he had been properly buried and a suitable marker placed on his grave. The mission was flown to the forward slope of Mt. Trocchio, where an effective pattern bombing was the result.
- 19 Lt. Griffin flew his 30th mission today, thus completing his tour of duty. He is the second in the Squadron to complete the tour.
- 20 A talk was given to the pilots on capture and escape. Two missions were flown. The men in the outfit are still receiving Christmas packages.
- 21 The officers were called into a meeting in the evening to vote on the question whether they were in favor of the Group continuing the hotel in Naples, with a monthly fee of \$1.00 per officer, under the condition that there would be women periodically examined by the Group physician, available for any of the officers who cared to patronize them. The vote was in favor of continuing the hotel under these circumstances.
- 23 Our Squadron Bar opened today, in the basement of our apartment building with a good stock of liquor, the room being gaily decorated for Christmas under the able supervision of Lt. Beebe. Sgt. Hushney is the bartender. In the evening most of the Squadron went to Marigliano and saw an excellent stage show featuring Humphrey Bogart and his wife, Mayo Methot. No missions account of rain.

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SP-F-504-41
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526th Fighter-Bomber Squadron.

Outline History Jan 44

S E C R E T

By Auth CC

526th FB Sq

31 Jan 44

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HEADQUARTERS 526TH FIGHTER-BOMBER SQUADRON,
86TH FIGHTER-BOMBER GROUP, A.F.O. 650.

31 January 1944

AG 314.7

SUBJECT: Historical Records.

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

1. Outline History of the 526th Fighter-Bomber Squadron for the period 1 January 1944 to 1 February 1944.

a. Present Designation: 526th Fighter Bomber Squadron, 86th Fighter-Bomber Group, XII Air Support Command.

b. Changes in Organization: No changes.

c. Strength, commissioned and enlisted.

(1) Month of January 1944.

(a) At beginning: 46 officers, 220 E.M. assigned.

(b) Net increase: None

(c) Net decrease: 6 officers, 2 E.M.

(d) At end: 40 officers, 218 E.M. assigned.

d. Stations: No changes.

e. Movements: No changes.

f. Campaigns: Continued Italian Campaign.

g. Operations.

(1) Campaign: Continuing campaign in Italy, consisting of combat missions by flights of A-36A type aircraft, on dive-bombing, strafing, rhubarb and patrol, particularly in close support of ground troops, and principally of dive-bombing type.

(2) Nature of operations: See Par. (1)

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S E C R E T

(3) Number of missions and sorties for period: 399.

(4) Results of the most important missions:

(a) Mission: 2 Jan 44 - 12 aircraft A-36A type, responding to an urgent request from ground command, to bomb gun emplacements on reverse slope of Mt. Chiaia, Italy, which was 1) a hazardous enemy strong defensive point, 2) penetrable by bombing since artillery had been unable to dislodge the guns, 3) requiring close air support to ground troops, 4) interrogation indicating that practically all bombs struck the pinpoint target, creating huge clouds of smoke and silencing the guns.

(b) Mission: 5 Jan 44 - 12 A-36A aircraft, responding to request from ground command, bombed and strafed gun emplacements on Mt. Forchia, Italy, which were 1) deadly impediments to our ground troops' advance, 2) impenetrable by artillery, 3) requiring close air support, 4) the mission being highly successful, effective and destructive, as evidenced by official commendation and congratulations from ground forces headquarters received before the flight returned to base.

(c) Mission: 6 Jan 44 - 8 A-36A aircraft, responding to request from ground command, bombed and strafed enemy personnel and gun positions at the base of Mt. Trocchio, Italy, which for weeks 1) had been a deadly hazard to ground forces which the latter had been unable to dislodge with artillery or ground troops, 3) requiring close air support of ground personnel, 4) this mission being outstandingly successful, causing great damage and destruction to the enemy, evoking 5) high praise officially communicated by ground headquarters stating that this mission was "very effective".

(d) Mission: 7 Jan 44. 20 sorties of A-36A aircraft flown on three missions during the day, in close support of and at urgent request of ground troops in the Mt. Trocchio and Aquino, Italy, region, where 1) advances of our troops had been slow for several months, the Germans having dug in in such 2) fashion that they could not be dislodged by ground troops or artillery, 3) requiring assistance from the air corps in close support, 4) in which three missions tremendous damage was done and inestimable assistance given to ground troops, evoking official commendation from ground headquarters in the following language: "Close support bombing today highly successful. Army delighted. Enemy casualties two days 150. Counter attacks today all successfully beaten off."

(e) Mission: 12 Jan 44. 12 A-36A aircraft, in response to advice that German headquarters existed in town of Villa Latina, Italy, and requesting close air support to destroy these headquarters and the town, 1) this target being of extreme importance due to its command post nature, 2) the town being small and near several excellent checkpoints, insuring accuracy in bombing, 3) ground forces desiring a knock-out in this area, 4) the whole town being obscured by smoke and dust from 19 direct hits.

(f) Mission: 14 Jan 44. 8 A-36A aircraft, responding to a request for close air support by ground headquarters, bombed a pinpoint target being the town of Picinisco, Italy, which 1) had for a long time been a dangerous enemy strong point extremely harrasing to our ground troops, 2) the mission having a high probability of success because of terrain and check point advantages,

- 3 -

S E C R E T

4) the bombing and strafing being highly effective as evidenced by an official statement forwarded by ground headquarters stating that there was "notable slackening of enemy pressure following attack", 5) indicating great destruction of enemy installations and personnel, both of which had been extremely active immediately prior to the bombing and strafing.

(g) Mission: 19 Jan 44. 12 A-36A aircraft, in response to ground headquarters request to attack important town of Velletri, Italy, 1) a highly strategic town in which many roads merge, near the Anzio beachhead which was to be occupied two days later, 2) the town being easily seen and easy to find from the air, 3) the mission being in aid of the beachhead invasion, 4) the whole town being covered with smoke and dust after the bombing and strafing, 5) causing considerable damage to enemy communications and probably effecting a road block, assisting in preventing enemy movement to the beachhead, and 5) delaying activity of the enemy in his resistance to our invasion forces.

(h) Mission: 25 Jan 44. 8 A-36A aircraft, in response to request from ground forces, to bomb intersection at Velletri, Italy, 1) highly strategic enemy point due to its communication center, near the Anzio invasion beachhead which had been occupied by our forces three days prior, the 2) town being easily seen and easy to find from the air, 3) this mission being in close support of the above mentioned invasion, 4) 16 bombs scoring direct hits on or near the intersection in the middle of town, 4) causing huge clouds of black smoke to arise from the center of town, 5) crippling enemy transportation for an undetermined length of time, preventing the arrival of reinforcements to the enemy defensive stations in the beachhead area.

h. Commanding officers in important missions.

(1) Major John W. Marsh, C.O. led squadron flight on mission (b) above, mission (c) above, mission (f) above, and (g) above.

i. Losses in action: officers and men.

(1) Mission: 22 Jan 44, 1st Lt. Herbert W. Street, did not return from a bombing and road reconnaissance mission at Palestrina, and from Valmontone to Ceprano, he having last been seen at approximately G-3456, cause for failure to return unknown - carried as missing in action.

(2) Mission: 22 Jan 44, 2nd Lt. Gerald E. Walsh, did not return from a bombing and road reconnaissance mission at Palestrina, and from Valmontone to Ceprano, he having been seen to bail out safely near Ferentino, Italy, his plane crashing at G-3843, presumably after being hit by enemy flak, Lt. Walsh being carried as missing in action.

(3) Mission: 28 Jan 44, 2nd Lt. William J. Leep, did not return from a bombing mission South of Lago Di Nemi and road junction at Falcognana, Italy, cause for failure to return unknown, - carried as missing in action.

j. Former and present members who have distinguished themselves in action.

(1) Nothing additional to report.

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SECRET

2. Inclosed are War Diary, 526th Fighter-Bomber Squadron, for the period 1 Jan 44 to 1 Feb 44.

For the Commanding Officer:

Frederic H. Henriod
Frederic H. Henriod, Capt.,
Intelligence Officer,
526 FB Sq., 86 FB Gp., APC 650.

Incl: War Liary orig & cv

Sheet No. 42. War Diary. 526 F-B Sq., 86 F-B Gp., APO 650, N.Y.
Month of January, 1944. Prepared by Frederic M. Herliod, Captain.

DAY

EVENTS

- 1 A lot of the boys in the Squadron spent most of the day nursing headaches after their celebration last night. The headaches are not as violent here in Italy as they were in Africa, however, since what liquor there is - mostly cognac, vermouth, etc. is generally better than that obtainable in Africa. The native Italians are celebrating today as the big day. There was a stand-down today and no missions were flown. Most of the officers, both pilots and ground officers, have had a week at the Capri rest camp, in connection with a policy adopted some time ago. The Morgano-Riberio Hotel was requisitioned for the AII ASC, and is one of the nicest hotels on the island. The policy adopted has proven a good one, since most of the officers returning from rest camp look much better than when they left.
- 2 Two 12-plane missions were flown today in close support of ground troops, in an effort to destroy an enemy strong point at Mt. Chiaia. Both missions were highly successful. The weather is fairly good but quite cold, particularly in the mornings. Lt. Gibson, after having completed his tour of duty - 80 missions - left for home today.
- 3 One mission flown today to bomb the railroad yards at Colliferro. The poker sessions are beginning to appear on the scene again, a sure sign that the boys have got a little extra money. Some of them circulate among the natives and buy eggs, potatoes and an occasional chicken. Most of the apartments where we live are equipped with a G.I. stove, over which there is considerable cooking done in between meals. The food at the regular mess has been consistently good, but some of the officers patronize the Officers Mess of the 41st Service Group, which is just around the corner.
- 4 There are either picture shows or stage shows put on by the Special Services branch, at the church in Romigliano, or at the theatre in Marigliano, two or three times a week, so that the fellows are not lacking in entertainment. The enlisted men's bar has shown a consistent profit, and generally speaking, it is run in an orderly dignified manner. Card games of various kinds go on in the Officer's bar each night, but there has been little or no drinking since New Year's Eve. One mission was flown today, which was unsuccessful on account of inclement weather.
- 5 One very important mission was flown today, being a 12 plane bombing and straring mission to Mt. Porchia, which has been a stumbling block for Allied advance in the Cassino region for many weeks. Before the boys landed their planes, the ground forces command had called in with a highly congratulatory message. A number of our pilots have been hospitalized with venereal disease. There is

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infection does not seem to be eliminated by periodic weekly examinations. There is some talk of dispensing with this institution, especially in view of the fact that a typhus epidemic has broken out among the native population of Naples. The inoculations of the men in the forces seem to have proved 100% effective with respect to this disease, and there are no reported cases in the army here.

11 There was a stand-down again today on account of the inclement weather. There has been considerable traffic on the road past Romigliano, going both ways. It appears that there is something in the air with respect to increased activity. Some of the units in the Naples area have been quietly packing up and moving out. There are many boats of all kinds in Naples harbor, but strangely enough the Germans have either overlooked this target or don't wish to risk their airforce on it, since Naples has experienced an air raid for quite some time. Life in Naples itself, and the surrounding towns is getting more and more back to normal and larger crowds of natives can be seen on all the streets. The native carts on the road are somewhat of a problem, and present not only a traffic hazard, but a delaying element with respect to the transportation of our men and material up and down the roads. Nevertheless, the authorities give the natives complete freedom of use of the highway. Orange peddlers are all over, as are peanut vendors. Prices are terrifically high, and inflation has taken place in this country. There is an uncontrollable black market situation in this country, and with respect to this phase, Allied Military Government authorities have been unable to cope with the situation.

12 One B-24 plane mission flown today, to bomb a small town, Villa Latina, in which German headquarters are reported. Pilots reported back that most of the bombs scored direct hits and that the whole town was mantled with a thick cloud of black smoke and dust. Strict censorship regulations have been in effect in this area for a period dating almost from the time we arrived at Romigliano. The men can't say very much of anything, which creates considerable comment, gives rise to many questions - but cuts down on the amount of writing necessary to censor.

13 Two missions flown today, one an armed reconnaissance from Cassino to Valmontone, the other a bombing mission to the railroad yards southwest of Frosinone. Lt. Williamson's plane's engine cut out on the takeoff and landed up in a ditch at the north end of the runway - almost a total wreck. Fortunately, Lt. Williamson had no greater injuries than some frayed nerves.

14 A B-24 plane mission, bombing the town of Picinisco, was so effective today, as to draw another official congratulatory response from the ground forces.

