

**86th Fighter Bomber Group**

**1944  
1945**

# **ADDENDUM**



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

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



Cuts along the leading edge of the wing



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

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

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

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

Note: Actually, there were 24 new pilots.

### STATUS AS OF MAY, 2005

#### Killed in Action (5)

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

#### Deceased (6)

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

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

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

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

William A. Wozniak

### A few post WW II photos



Carl Baranek 2001



Walter Bieber 1997



Jack Botten 1996



John Brink 1996



Bennie Flake 2001



George Frey



Glenn Moore & Eugene Whyte 1997

