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 15 Jan. 1941 -
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BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF THE 14TH FTR GROUP

15 Jan. 1941 - 2 Oct. 1949

5-1503-2

HISTORICAL DATA
PERTAINING TO THE 14TH FIGHTER GROUP-TWIN ENGINE
15 JAN 1941--2 OCT 1949

PREPARED BY: 2ND LT ELIJAH L. FISHELSON
GROUP HISTORIAN, 14TH FIGHTER GROUP
Ethan Allen Air Force Base
Winooski, Vermont
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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Material in the following pages has been drawn, for the most part from the histories of the 14th Fighter Group and its components, the 37th F.S., 48th F.S., 49th F.S. and from records of the 305th Wing.

This organization was activated as the 14th Pursuit Group but was redesignated 14th Fighter Group (Twin Engine) about 28th May 42 per AG 320.2 (12 May 42) MR-M-AF dtd 15 May 42.

The designation of the 14th Fighter Group (Twin Engine) changed to 14th Fighter Group (Two Engine) about 8 Mar 45. No authority found for this change.

The 14th Fighter Group reactivated 20 Nov 46 per G/O H99, Headquarters Air Defense Command, dtd 11 Dec 46. It was still active per Army Directory Jan 49. No records on file subsequent to 2 Oct 1949.

LOCATIONS: USA 15 Jan 41 - 5 Aug 42
 England 18 Aug 42 - 1 Nov 42
 North Africa 12 Nov 42 - 12 Dec 43
 Italy 12 Dec 43 - 9 Sep 45
 Dow Field, Bangor Maine, USA, 20 Nov 1946- 1 Dec 1948
 Inactivated 2 Oct 1949

Records from 1 Dec 1948 until deactivation may be found at Kansas City Record Depot, 601 Hardstey Ave., Kansas City, Mo., ATTN: Mr. Patroski.
 Unit Insignia and Colors may be acquired through: Director of Research and Development, Headquarters, USAF, ATTN: Insignia Section, Washington 25, D. C.

AN OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF THE FOURTEENTH FIGHTER GROUP

JANUARY 15, 1941 - 49th Pursuit Squadron, first increment of the 14th Fighter Group activated at Hamilton Field, California. Strength: 35 men. CO: 2nd Lt James K. Dowling.

JANUARY 18, 1941 - 48th Pursuit Squadron activated. Strength: 35 men. CO: 2nd Lt. William E. Fulmer.

APRIL 18, 1941 - Major Thayer S. Olds assumed command of 14th Fighter Group.

APRIL 30, 1941 - 1st Lt. Arman Peterson assumed command of 49th Sq.

MAY 4, 1941 - 2nd Lt. Troy Keith assumed command of 48th Sq.

JUNE 10, 1941 - 49th Sq departed for first permanent change of station, March Field. 49th aircraft strength; 3 PTS, 1 BT, 2 F-40's.

JUNE 10, 1941 - 48th ordered to March Field. Strength: 8 Officers and 191 EM. Aircraft strength: 2 PT-17s.

NOVEMBER 8 - 21, 1941: 49th Sq training under combat conditions at Muroc Lake, California. Sq flew assortment of P-38's, P-40's, P-66's.

DECEMBER 7, 1941 - 12 Officers and 102 EM of 49th Sq arrived on the 7th at North Island, San Diego for manouvers. With news of Pearl Harbor attack, Sq restricted and placed on 24-hour alert. 49th Sq ships used for patrol duty immediately.

DECEMBER 12, 1941 - Personnel of 49th departed for Terminal Island for additional training in combat tactics and patrol operations.

DECEMBER 22, 1941 - 48th ordered to Terminal Island for patrol and alert duties.

DECEMBER 23, 1941 - 49th departed for Long Beach. 12 P-38Ds assigned.

FEBRUARY 5, 1942 - 48th continued patrol and alert duties at North Island Navy Air Station.

FEBRUARY 8, 1942 - 49th departed for Mills Field, California. Aircraft brought up to strength.

APRIL 30, 1942 - 50th Sq activated at Hamilton Field; trained at Hamilton Field and March Field.

MAY 3, 1942 - Major Arman Peterson relinquishes his Command of 49th to Captain Kenneth S. Wade.

MAY 9, 1942 - 49th departed for Hamilton Field for intensive training for probable overseas duty.

JUNE 3, 1942 - 48th returned to March Field. Organization brought up to full strength in P-38s and completely outfitted for overseas duty.

JULY 1, 1942 - Air echelon left Pacific coast, shortly thereafter arriving at Bradley Field, Connecticut.

JULY 16, 1942 - Ground echelon left Hamilton Field.

JULY 23, 1942 - Ground echelon arrived at staging area, Fort Dix, New Jersey.

AUGUST 4, 1942 - Ground echelon boarded USS Westpoint at Staten Island.

AUGUST 6, 1942 - Convoy arrived at Halifax, N. S. for a layover. Additional ships picked up for convoy. Course set and convoy embarked.

AUGUST 18, 1942 - Ground echelon debarked at Liverpool, England. A 60 mile train trip brought the ground echelon to an airfield 4 miles outside Shrewsbury in the English midland. Training resumed at Atcham airfield.

LATTER PART OF AUGUST 1942 - Air echelons of 48th and 49th arrived at Atcham Field. One P-38 lost enroute to Greenland. One C-47 crashed into a mountain in northern England with a loss of 10 lives. Air echelon of 50th Squadron assigned to duty in Iceland on arrival which permanently severed their connection with the 14th Fighter Group.

OCTOBER 1 - 20, 1942 - 14th's P-38's (each from 48th and 49th) detached to West Hampnett and Ford fields in Southern England engaged in a number of practice sweeps over the channel in conjunction with British squadrons. Other training consisted of gunnery off the northwest English coast, simulated attacks on bomber formations, high altitude rendezvous, instruction by British operations and intelligence officers and practice with British radio procedure.

OCTOBER 24, 1942 - Ground echelon alerted for movement.

OCTOBER 28, 1942 - Ground echelon boarded the USS Brazil and USS Uruguay at Liverpool port.

OCTOBER 31, 1942 - Weighted anchor and proceeded to vicinity of Glasgow where they joined the main convoy.

NOVEMBER 1, 1942 - Date of departure. Destination unknown.

NOVEMBER 10, 1942 - Arrived in blocked harbor of Oran, North Africa.

NOVEMBER 12, 1942 - Hiked from Oran harbor to La Senia airport on the outskirts of the city.

NOVEMBER 13, 1942 - Ground echelon transported to Tafaouri field about 12 miles south of La Senia.

NOVEMBER 15, 1942 - 48th Air echelon arrived Tafaouri. Enroute on C-47 forced down about 8 miles from Gibraltar due to gas shortage. No personnel lost.

NOVEMBER 18, 1942 - Ground echelon of 48th with own P-38 escort departed to Maison Blanche. That night 48th experienced their first enemy attack, fighters and bombers strafing and bombing the field. Hangers were badly damaged and eighteen ships were solidly hit, including seven P-38s of the 48th. Several casualties, mostly British.

NOVEMBER 18, 1942 - 49th air echelon arrived at Maison Blanche after a two day stop-over at Tafaouri.

NOVEMBER 22, 1942 - Ground echelon of 49th departed Tafaouri via 40-and-8 box cars.

NOVEMBER 22, 1942 - Pilots and ships of both squadrons accompanied by 48th air echelon departed Maison Blanche for Youks les Pains and proceeded to fly three strafing missions the same day. Bomber escort and strafing missions flown on successive days until a one day respite was possible on December 8th.

NOVEMBER 24, 1942 - Ground echelon of 49th reached Maison Blanche.

DECEMBER 14, 1942 - Hq and 49th ground echelons arrived at Youks les Pains via rail. Now, for the first time, all components of the 14th Fighter Group were on one field.

DECEMBER 14 - January 9, 1943 - Group based at Youks les Pains throughout this period. Missions flown on all but 8 days when the ships were grounded by weather or muddy fields. As many as 8 missions were flown in a single day for bomber escorts, strafing or reconnaissance. From November 29 to December 27, the 94th Squadron of the 1st Fighter Group operated from Youks in conjunction with our ships. P-40's of the 33rd squadron also operated from Youks les Pains for a short period during December. Altogether a total of 184 missions were flown from Youks with an aggregate of 881 sorties. These missions covered an area from Tripoli in the south to Bizerte in the north. These operations were accomplished by the original fifty-four pilots of the 48th and 49th squadron to which were added 20 replacements toward the end of the 14th Fighter Group tenure at Youks . . . The Group worked alternately under British operational control and under XII Fighter Command, the latter having headquarters at Tebessa. Liaison was established with both French and English, from whom much intelligence was forthcoming. A French liaison officer was attached to Group headquarters who assisted materially as an interpreter and in connection with French aircraft warning system. . . . Five enemy raids were experienced while at Youks les Pains. The first was a single JU-88 which circled the field in broad daylight, turned in and dropped a string of bombs from 1,000 feet. The intended target was a group of A-20's of the 15th Bomb Squadron which was parked adjacent to our landing strip. No material damage was done, but one enlisted man from this group was killed by shrapnel. The heaviest single

raid was on the night of January 4 at about 0610 hours. At least 8 JU-88's came over, having waited until our last patrol had landed. The first string of bombs scored hits on a silver French monoplane, adjacent to which were a gasoline dump and ammunition boxes. The resulting fire illuminated the entire field and with their target in full view, the JU-88's circled and dropped their loads on various parts of the field as well as in a French ammunition storage depot two miles distant. During the afternoon of January 4, General Doolittle and crew flew to the base, the General going on to Tebessa while his co-pilot, and three enlisted men, all members of his Tokyo expedition, remained with the ship. As the raiders came over, the co-pilot jumped into the bomber to man a machine gun as the three remaining crew members made for the nearest fox hole. A direct hit in the fox hole killed all three of the men but the co-pilot escaped injury. Aside from the three lost by a direct hit, 14 men were treated at our field hospital for minor injury and shock.

JANUARY 9, 1943 - Group departed Youks les Bains for Bertaux, some 5 miles east of Telergma. Despite the two moves, operations continued as usual and missions were flown practically every day.

JANUARY 9 - JANUARY 28, 1943 - 23 missions and 232 sorties were flown during this period. Thirty-nine pilots out of the original fifty-four who came to Africa with the Group---including Col. Olds, CO, departed via transports to the US. The supply of operational ships had dwindled to 12 and these together with newer pilots remaining, were assigned to the 82nd Fighter Group, then at Telergma. Prior to departure, command of the 14th was turned over to Lt. Col. Troy Keith.

OPERATIONAL SUMMARY OF GROUP FROM NOVEMBER 18, 1942 - JANUARY 28, 1943 - 207 missions and 1,113 sorties flown. 24 pilots MIA. 62 enemy aircraft destroyed, 7 probably destroyed and 17 damaged. Unnumbered ships were destroyed on various enemy airfields likewise many tanks, armored cars, trucks and etc were destroyed or put out of commission. Not a single bomber was lost while being escorted by the 14th during this period.

FEBRUARY 28, 1943 - Group---without pilots or aircraft---departed for Medouina airport, about 18 miles southeast of Casablanca. Departments and sections immediately activated. Training program carried out.

MARCH 29, 1943 - By the 29th all ships, pilots, ground personnel and equipment of the 37th Squadron had arrived at Medouina to become an integral part of the 14th Fighter Group.

MAY 5, 1943 - Air echelon with 90 P-38's, 105 pilots and other essential personnel aboard 20 transport planes arrived at Telergma.

MAY 6, 1943 - First mission flown under 5th Wing. 36 P-38's escorted 15 B-25's to Cape Serrat and set course to the Egadi where 6 E-boats ten miles west of Maretimo were sighted. At least two of the merchant vessels were hit; one exploded and sank immediately.

JUNE 6 - JUNE 11, 1943 - 14th engaged in playing its role in the softening up process which preceded the fall of Pantelleria on the 11th.

JUNE 12 - JUNE 22, 1943 - 14th Fighter Group engaged in escort, dive-bombing and strafing missions to Sicily, Sardinia and the Italian mainland.

JUNE 23, 1943 - 14th FG arrived at new base - El Pathan landing ground, three miles south of Djeida.

JULY 4 - JULY 10, 1943 - All 14th FG missions directed against Sicilian targets.

JULY 10, 1943 - Group placed temporarily under the NATAF and set up for coordinated attack with ground forces on Sicily. Many shuttle missions were run each day during invasion period - dive-bombing and staffing sorties to targets of opportunity in advance of the ground forces.

JULY 14, 1943 - Group returned to service with the Strategic Air Force and continued with escort missions to various strategic targets, principally on the Italian mainland - Vibo Valentia A/D, Naples RR, Ciampino airdrome, Salterho railway yards, Aquino, etc.

JULY 25, 1943 - Group arrived at St. Marie du Zit.

AUGUST, SEPTEMBER 1943 - At St. Marie du Zit the Group occupied a landing strip formerly used by the Germans. After leaving Telergma, the 14th came under the direction of the 2686 (Provisional) Wing so remaining for approximately four weeks when again they came under the direction of the 5th Wing, meanwhile removed to a headquarters near Diepenne. The field at St. Marie was by no means comparable to that at El Bethan, yet the Germans had done considerable work building revetments and otherwise converting the erstwhile wheat field into one of their strongest and most active airdromes prior to the fall of Tunis.

Two DS's were accomplished from St. Marie, one to Gambut in the vicinity of Tobruk and the other to Sicily. While at Gambut and enemy convoy was successfully blasted in the Mediterranean. The Sicilian mission found the Group participating in its second invasion. The air echelon leaving St. Marie September 6th operated with the tactical air force while they were based at Lentini (East) in Sicily.

To summarize the second period of operations at this point, the following statistics are given: One hundred and fourteen aircraft had been destroyed, twenty-six probably destroyed and fifty-four damaged. Many direct hits were made on dive-bomb targets, particularly at the Pantelleria and during the invasion of Sicily. Tanks, half-tracks, armored vehicles, trucks and motorcycles are difficult to estimate, though known to be in large figures. A direct hit was scored on a 250 foot merchant vessel off the coast of Sardinia which was later beached. A direct hit was also scored on Tirso dam in Sardinia when a powerhouse on the downstream face was destroyed.

Thirty-one additional pilots had been assigned to the 14th Fighter Group making a total of one-hundred and thirty-six which had flown with the various squadrons since May 5, 1943. Of these, forty had been lost in action or were missing in action, three pilots killed in operational training and test flights, one at base during a mission take-off and two in an automobile accident. Thirty-nine pilots had completed their allotted combat

time and several additional about to complete their time.

During the period from May 6 to September 5, 138 missions had been flown with a total of 3090 sorties. As many as seventy-two P-38's had participated in a single mission. Eight-hundred and ninety sorties were flown with 1,000 and 5,000 bombs.

Col. Cliver B. Taylor assumed command of the Group September 26, replacing Col. Troy Keith who with fifty missions behind him returned to the States. Col. Taylor became the third commanding Officer of the 14th since its activation.

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 1943 - During this period of transitions following the Sicilian campaign and the subsequent invasion of the mainland of Southern Italy, the 14th continued to escort the 17's and 24's in their peppering of Italian Targets. Cities that were later to become familar targets for three-day passes---Rome, Foggia, Naples---were now targets for the heavies. Our ships were engaged in patrolling convoys in the vicinity of Rhode Island. P-17's were escorted to Terni, Orvieto, Grosseto, Maribor, Torino, Civitavecchia, Bolzano, Ajaccio, Rimini, Verno, Reggio Emilia. P-24's were escorted to Salon, France, 17's to Toulon and Marseille, France and to Bastia, Corsica.

DECEMBER 2, 1943 - First ground echelon left St. Marie du Zit for Foggia No. 7 at Tricolo, Italy.

DECEMBER 27, 1943 - By this date all the 14th had safely arrived at Tricolo.

MONTH OF JANUARY 1944 - Of the 24 missions flown during January 1944, 21 were high escort, mostly targets at Wiener-Neustadt, Klagenfurt (2), Sofia (2), Piraeus, Mostar, Salon airdrome and Istres le Tubes airdrome, these covering a wide range to the west, north and southeast. Po Valley targets, east and west, as well as points south to the bomb line were also hit. During January the Group destroyed 20 enemy aircraft in the air.

JANUARY 10, 1944 - 8 enemy aircraft destroyed during the attack on Sofia, Bulgaria.

JANUARY 15, 1944 - Group celebrated its third year of activation.

MONTH OF FEBRUARY 1944 - February was noteworthy for the 14th as during this period began the mass scale co-ordinate attacks by the 8th AF in Britain and the 15th AF in Italy. For the first time in history the organizations' young pilots tangled with a preponderance of twin-engined enemy fighters. Four of the five victories claimed during this 28-day period fell into this category. For the first time, too, the Group escorted great numbers of P-24's rather than P-17's with which they had been working for well over a year. This was sign of the growth of the 15th Air Force. Escorts were flown to Florence area and the Verona marshalling yard and from Steyr and Regensburg.

February had found the Group somewhat lacking in airplanes and grounded a good deal of the time due to non-flying weather, yet there was tension and a feeling of things-to-come as the 15th Air Force filled the sky with its growing force.

MONTH OF MARCH 1944 - March was not an outstanding month for the 14 FG from the point of view of combat with the enemy, but significant trends were apparent. Most important of all was the arrival of replacement aircraft in substantial numbers. The new P-38Js meant longer range and closer support for the bombers at targets which were previously out of range. The weather started to clear up the latter part of the month, the fighters taking the air thirteen times in the last seventeen days in the month. The most notable performance by the 14th was the fighter sweep of the Udine area its concentration of enemy fighters. This mission was led by Lt. Col. William L. Leverette and the final score was five victories and no losses.

MONTH OF APRIL 1944 - The month of April was outstanding from the stand point of victories over the enemy, a total of 55 fighters having been destroyed in combat with 12 probably destroyed and 22 damaged. April the 2nd was the big day with a record number of 20 destroyed, 3 probables and 4 damaged without a loss to the 14th. On the 21st of April, 11 enemy planes were destroyed and one damaged. Our price: one pilot missing. With a full quota of P-38's and vastly improved weather conditions, operations reached their highest peak of activity since September 1943 during the landings at Salerno. However, the type of missions was very different as they were the most difficult ever undertaken by the 14th, being of long duration against fierce enemy opposition. Our planes ranged from Toulon in the West, to Bucharest in the East and to Vienna in the North, meeting every type of aircraft the enemy could muster, everything from the latest model twin-engine fighters to Fiat G050's. The intensity of combat is reflected in the final score---55 fighters destroyed.

MONTH OF MAY 1944 - During May the Group continued to operate at a very intense pace, exceeding April figures by a considerable margin. Targets were principally of two types. First were the distant strategic targets such as Floesti, Bucharest, Weiner Neustadt and Lyons. Second were those communications targets in Northern Italy which were of direct assistance to the offensive launched by the 5th and 8th armies. Operations different greatly from the previous month in that the Luftwaffe was scarce and, when present not aggressive. In spite of this, 61 enemy aircraft was destroyed by the Group with 7 probables and 38 damaged ships. From a historical point of view, May was a month of anxiously waiting. The offensive in Italy was begun, finally uniting the main-front with the Beach-head, but the fall of Rome was yet to come. Invasions from Britain were still the principal subject of conversation and betting, as was a new offensive on the Russian front. The only mission of unusual interest was the one to Lyons, France, when the 15th Air Force penetrated 190 miles into France without meeting any opposition whatsoever. This fact was of particular significance as it seemed to indicate that at last the Luftwaffe's strength was dwindling so rapidly that it could no longer defend vigorously more than a few targets and then only spasmodically. This was heartening proof of the success of previous months of intense combat and bombing of the aircraft production centers of Germany.

MONTH OF JUNE 1944 - Operations against the enemy were carried out with the same intensity during June as in the two previous months. All missions except three (to northern Italy) were to distant strategic targets, with the greatest penetrations to Guirgiu, Roumania on the East, to Sete, France

on the West, and Vienna, Austria, to the Northeast....the longest mission was the one to Sete, France, some 610 miles from base. The three missions to Northern Italy, while still of the strategic type, were in direct support of the rapidly advancing 5th and 8th armies. Again, as in May, the Luftwaffe was conspicuous by its absence. In the entire twenty missions during June pilots reported that none of the enemy aircraft encountered was particularly aggressive or eager for combat. Twenty-two enemy aircraft were destroyed, five probably destroyed and seventeen damaged. Flak at all the major targets continued to be generally moderate to intense. Nine of our pilots failed to return...The month of June brought two great events which had long been awaited by everyone: the fall of Rome together with the subsequent push north in Italy and the invasion of the Normandy coast of France. Air power contributed conspicuously to the success of the Italian campaign, the Allies enjoying total air superiority both strategic and tactical. The almost complete stoppage of rail traffic in Italy finally forced the Germans into full retreat along the entire front. The failure of the Germans to whole-heartedly defend in the the air more than a very few of their important oil, communications and aircraft manufacturing centers gave further proof that the Luftwaffe was unable to replace their dwindling reserves.

MONTH OF JULY 1944 - July operations were noteworthy from three points of view. In the first place, a record number of missions and sorties were flown indicating a substantial growth of the 15th Air Force in recent months. The attack had been carried deep into enemy territory with a consistently increasing number of bombers and fighters, the tonnage of bombs likewise reached record proportions. The accuracy of the bombers was noteworthy as were the low number of planes lost to enemy fighters. The latter can be attributed not only to the waning strength of the Luftwaffe, but also to the continued excellent support afforded by the fighters of the 306th Wing. The consistently good weather was also an important factor in the high rate of operations....A new tactic, the dropping of chaff bombs by fighters in front of the leading bomber formation just before reaching the target was inaugurated during July with the 14th Fighter Group chosen to do this most important job. Preliminary reports indicated a successful tactic had been introduced as later results were to prove. Flak directed at the lead group was unusually inaccurate and losses were low whereas previously such a formation had the highest losses to flak over the target....The third noteworthy operational event for the 14th during July was the shuttle mission to Russia---all three missions being successful.

By July 1944 the Group had rounded out two years of successful and active overseas duty. During those two years of active combat, the 14th Fighter Group had accounted for 384 enemy aircraft destroyed in the air, 91 probably destroyed and 198 damaged. Many hundreds of aircraft, tanks, trucks, locomotives were destroyed on the ground. 643 missions and 13013 sorties were flown.

MONTH OF AUGUST 1944 - Going into the First month of its third year in active combat, August found the Group participating in its fourth invasion--that of Southern France. The 14th Fighter Group left its home base at Triolo Italy on August 10, 1944 for Aghione airdrome, Corsica. It was attached to the 87th Fighter Wing for operations during the period 13

August - 20 August for a period of 8 days during which our ships flew 63 assorted missions, totaling 460 sorties. Our aircraft gave direct support of the invading 7th Army, dropping more than 92 tons of high explosive and incendiary bombs. Gun positions, bridges and communication targets received the brunt of this effort. The 63 missions which comprised the group operation consisted of patrol, dive-bombing, dive-bombing and patrol, armed reconnaissance, visual reconnaissance with passenger and strafing. Strafing results were impressive---many locomotives, railroad cars, motor car and various other vehicles were destroyed and damaged. (August 17 witnessed the greatest disaster involving enlisted personnel to befall the Group. The 14th's P-17 coming in for a landing from Triolo with men and rations crashed and burst into flame on the runway at Aghione. Thirteen lives were lost.) Despite hardships, operational conditions at the forward base, take-offs and landings during the early morning darkness and landing in the evening twilight a minimum number of aircraft were lost. Total operational losses due to all causes were 17. Eleven pilots were lost during these operations---two later returned to base. The three outstanding missions of the month might be identified as the strafing of Valence - La Tresorerie airdrome on the 13th and the armed reconnaissance missions of the 18th and 19th when extremely valuable information was obtained regarding enemy troop movement and severe damage was inflicted through strafing. Maximum number of missions flown in a day were 18--these accomplished on D day. Minimum number of missions flown was one in which 40 aircraft were airborne to strafe Valence-La Tresorerie airdrome and Orgne/Plan de Dieu airdrome in France on the 13th of August. All in all the two weeks in Corsica were exciting and the hard work produced results which the Group will always remember with great pride.

Maintaining the tempo against the enemy, the Group flew nine escort missions in ten days after returning from Corsica, a record number of missions and sorties for a month was thus established which reflects great credit upon the entire personnel of the Group for the outstanding job done under severe handicaps and constant pressure.

MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 1944 - Operations during the month of September were noteworthy for the fact that not a single enemy aircraft was seen or encountered in the air in the course of the eighteen missions flown during the month over Yugoslavia, Italy, Hungary, Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Greece. This is especially noteworthy as many of the missions penetrated not only to Vienna-Budapest area but considerably deeper into Germany and Czechoslovakia. This was the very area that the enemy had tried to defend with such determination in the past. During the month the intensity of Operations was considerably reduced over past months because of the deterioration in the weather, particularly after the equinox, no mission being flown during the last week in the month...Assignments for the 2nd and 3rd proved the most interesting. On the 2nd of the month twenty-nine P-38s flying through heavy flak strafed the highway and railroad from Bela Palanka to Nis Cuprija, Yugoslavia. Twenty-one locomotives were destroyed and three damaged. Seventy-one motor transports were destroyed plus two damaged. Six gasoline trucks and one trailer were destroyed plus two damaged. Eighty-two freight and passenger cars were left in flames. One Me-210 was destroyed on the ground...On September 3rd, twenty-two Lightnings dive-bombed ferry boats at the north terminus of the ferry at Smederevo, Yugoslavia. Twelve went on to strafe Kovin airdrome. Twenty-nine enemy planes were destroyed on the ground, of these

Twenty-one were JU-52s and it was apparent some of them were "bombed up" for a mission as severe explosions were evidence. Three F-38s ran across some twenty-six camouflaged and well-dispersed aircraft on an airdrome at Pavaniste. Making four to five passes they destroyed ten aircraft and registered another probable. These were JU-52s for the most part...The remaining sixteen missions were confined to escort work and "window" bombing. Targets attacked by the bombers were almost entirely of two types. First and foremost was the continued pounding of Axis oil production, refineries and stores. Second were the numerous communications targets of direct support to the Russians advancing from the East and Marshal Tito's forces which steadily increased their pressure on the German troops in the Yugoslavia area....Flak was encountered on all missions. It ranged from scant to intense and accurate in most cases.

The first F-38L aircraft was received during the month. The two major changes---dive flaps and servo boost on the ~~airframe~~^{ALSERONS}---were received enthusiastically by the pilots as it would now be possible for us to stay with the enemy when he attempted to split-ess to break off combat.

MONTH OF OCTOBER 1944 - October afforded the Group little opportunity, the weather skidded from bad to worse and targets dwindled as the days dragged by. Seventeen missions totaling 549 sorties were flown, the greater number to transportation hubs, oil storages, ordnance and tank factories of the large German cities of Munich, Vienna, Flechhammer and Regensburg. Two strafing attacks ripped trains and locomotives in Northern Hungary contributing to the disruption of Axis supplies. A third strafing attack on the Salonika airdrome in Greece resulted in the destruction of many enemy aircraft...For the second month the Group failed to encounter a Flying Dutchman in the air, thus, our pilots battered enemy planes on the ground. The score: 31 destroyed, 26 damaged; 8 locomotives destroyed, 10 damaged; 7 tanks cars were accounted for plus additional damage to 17 freight cars....Target area and weather were two prime factors that had to be faced during the winter. With the liberation of France and the advance of the Russians into the plains of Hungary, only a small arc remained, running from Switzerland to Vienna. Inasmuch as any flight in this section is forced to cross the Alps, it can be appreciated that weather was a very major factor bearing on the frequency of operations during the balance of the winter months ahead.

The single all-out strafing of the month---October 6---proved successful. Thirty-five F-38s strafed the airdrome at Salonika/Sedes and Salonika/Megalo Mikra, Greece. Eighteen assorted enemy aircraft were destroyed on the ground - plus damage to nine others. One flak boat was destroyed. Much flak and small arms fire was encountered at both airdromes.

Another outstanding mission of October, that of the 13th, witnessed forty-two F-38s escorting bombers to Flechhammer, Germany where they pounded oil refineries. The Lightnings returned via Szombathely airdrome, Hungary, strafing enroute. When the smoke had cleared the final tally was: five locomotives destroyed, some seven other damaged, twelve assorted aircraft destroyed, thirteen damaged, one hanger set afire, one armored tank destroyed, one oil tank car destroyed, some twenty freight cars destroyed or badly damaged. Five trains and the airdrome provided real meat for the

fighters on their trip to base.

MONTH OF NOVEMBER 1944 - Despite a record rainfall in Italy, November provided the Group with approximately half again as many missions as were flown each of the two previous months and further witnessed renewed engagements with the Luftwaffe after more than sixty days had passed without an aerial encounter. Nine enemy aircraft were destroyed in the single dog-fight of the month. Twenty-nine missions were recorded during the thirty-day period, the majority of these being escorted for the heavies attacking the Munich and Vienna area. **Straffing**, dive-bombing and two new types of missions completed the part the Group played in the assault against the enemy this month. One of the two new types of missions for the Group was providing escort for several photo reconnaissance missions over targets within the Munich area. The other type of missions for this outfit was high-level bombing in Yugoslavia, led by a "Droop Snoot" (or guide F-38 bomber) of the 82nd Fighter Group...Jet propelled aircraft were encountered for the first time on the 22nd of the month while providing chaff cover for the 304th Wing at East Munich marshalling yard. The jets abandoned the encounter upon the arrival of a number of reinforcement F-38s.

One of the most lucrative missions of November developed on the 5th when thirty-six F-38s provided the chaff dispensing force for the 5th and 47th Wings at the Florisdorfer Oil Refinery, Vienna, strafing north of the city on the return route. Four locomotives and some ten to twelve tank cars were destroyed. A number of box cars and passenger cars were also accounted for, other being left damaged. Three motor transports were destroyed and a large camp consisting of four or five-story brick barracks and fifteen large wooden barracks were severely strafed along with a power station. No enemy aircraft was encountered.

The assignment for November 26 produced much activity plus the initial re-appearance of the Luftwaffe since August. Thirty-nine F-38s set out to strafe parked aircraft at Seregalyes airdrome in Hungary. **Straffing** at the target was not accomplished. Coming in at tree-top level over the airdrome, ten enemy aircraft were observed in a traffic pattern at 300 to 500 feet. There were six JU-87s, three JU-52s and one ME-109. The lead squadron of thirteen F-38s attacked, destroying six JU-87s and the single ME-109. A five passenger cabin-type plane and a FW-190 were destroyed. Four F-38s failed to return to base, presumably due to ground fire. None were observed shot down during the dog-fight. Sixty to seventy planes were dispersed at the airdrome. There were three fires on the drome and a large explosion occurred during the general melee. Other strafing results: two locomotives destroyed, one electric locomotive damaged; some fifty freight cars plus six box cars and four flat cars were damaged; one motor transport destroyed and two damaged; one tank car damaged and one horse drawn vehicle damaged; gun positions three miles east of the airdrome were strafed. The mission was costly yet the results can be considered quite good---bagging the first nine Jerries seen in the air in two months.

The only other straight strafing mission---that of the sixteenth---confined to roads running from Sarajevo to Vizegrad, Prijepelje to Sjenica and Novi Pazar, Yugoslavia, saw twenty-seven F-38s of the Group do a good job. Four motor and two ammo trucks were destroyed while several more were damaged and personnel casualties were suffered.

On the first of the month thirty-one aircraft provided target cover and chaff for the Fifth and 47th Wings, at the South Vienna Ordnance Depot and the South Vienna Goods Siding. Strafing on the return route, results were excellent; nine locomotives destroyed and nineteen tank cars, fifteen to twenty tank and passenger cars damaged. One of our aircraft failed to return to base.

Forty P-38s and three "Droop Snoot" of the 82nd with their bombardiers and bomb sights successfully conducted a high-level 1,000 pound bombing attack at Podgorica, Yugoslavia on the Seventh of the month. Concentrations of hits were observed at a bridge, the railroad and highways, but the bulk of the bombs hit in the south and southeast part of the town. A similar mission of Vizegard, Yugoslavia on the sixteenth resulted in no bombing due to the weather.

For the most part escort missions were to the Munich - Vienna areas. Others included Dresden, Sofia, Augsburg, Prux, Donnaworth, Penzing, Flechhammer and the Sarajevo-Noví Pazar area.

MONTH OF DECEMBER 1944 - Operations for the month of December were intensified despite adverse weather conditions. The marked increase in missions flown over a similar period last year is due entirely to the use of HFF bombing methods which enable the bombardier to hit the target regardless of cloud cover. Fifty-two missions were successfully completed making December one of the most active months of the year. The preponderance were bomber-escort. Oil targets were again top priority as they had been for the past six months and the damage inflicted upon the enemy's entire war machine. Marshalling yards, railroad bridges, and transportation centers such as Bratislava, Hegyes Helom, Linz, Innsbruck and the Brenner Pass were attacked in direct support of the Allied Armies on the Eastern and Southern Fronts.

Possibly the outstanding mission of the month was that of the eleventh when Lt. Colonel Thomas P. Whitehouse, then Deputy Group Commander, led fifty P-38s on an escort and chaff dispersal assignment for the 5th Wing to Moosebierbaum Oil Refinery. Arriving at the IP on schedule, the fighters made futile R/T attempts to contact the bombers who were nowhere to be seen. Colonel Whitehouse, finding that the target which was visible in the distance had not been bombed, decided it best the Group afford chaff coverage for B-24s of the 47th Wing who were swinging into the IP at this point. Upon completion of bailing their "window" bombs, the chaffers broke both to the north and south of the target. Fifty-four chaff bombs had been dropped in four minutes, paving a perfect highway for the Liberators. None were lost due to flak. It was later noted that the Fifth Wing formation began bombing thirty-seven minutes late. Enroute to base thirty-seven P-38s strafed and simonized the countryside with much gusto and good results. Eleven locomotives were destroyed; a radio station was damaged, three JU-52s were destroyed, another damaged plus four more unidentified aircraft damaged and one glider type; some eighty troop and box cars were riddled. Our losses were nil.

On the receiving end of the synthetic oil refinery escort assignments were such old acquaintances as Flechhammer, Regensbery, Prux, Linz, Odental Moosbierbaum and Florisdorf.

Another noteworthy mission of the month was that of the 10th. The assignment was to provide close escort on penetration for the 49th and 304 Wings at the Prux synthetic oil refineries. The weather was so bad that the Group flight leader was forced to take off on instrument one half-hour earlier than the others to find a clear area to form the Group. The flight leader successfully formed the Group of **thirty-six** aircraft below the overcast and climbed through on instruments, breaking out on top at 29,000 feet. In the meantime the bombers were recalled because of the inclement weather, but the escort failed to receive the message. The flights split into groups and with only three P-38s Captain Harvey Honeycutt of the 37th Fighter Squadron flew directly to the briefed R/V and on toward the target hoping to intercept the heavies. Unable to locate any bombers, the escort turned back, staying at approximately 10,000 feet due to turbo trouble in one of the 38s. Near Chiem Lake, Captain Honeycutt spotted a train with his wingmen destroyed a locomotive and several box cars. Despite the difficult weather conditions again encountered south of Ancona and with their fuel supply almost exhausted, he led the formation under the 500 foot ceiling directly to base. The entire trip was over twelve-hundred miles and required more than six hours.

On the seventeenth of the month thirty Lightnings covered the 49th Bomber Wing penetration at the Odertal oil refineries. Escorting the bombers to approximately the IP at 1148 hours some seventy to eighty enemy aircraft, mostly FW-190s, were seen sailing southeast making a one-hundred and eighty degree turn to bring them to the bombers from a six o'clock level. The Lightnings engaged some fifteen or sixteen of the enemy planes in an all-out skirmish, blistering the sky from 29,000 feet down to the deck. When the contrails cleared about a half hour later, five FW-190s had been knocked for a faretheewell, one probably eclipsed and four royally damaged. Two P-38s failed to return to base.

Besides the 49 escort missions there were two air sea rescue assignments and the visual recon detail bringing the total for 52 missions for the month.

Seven locomotives were destroyed on the 26th and another eleven on the 28th by the 14th---Lt. Col. Hugh A. Griffith of the 48th Squadron, netting six on the latter date---as the Group strafed on each occasion returning from escort duty to Regensburg.

MONTH OF JANUARY 1945 - The month of January was an extremely dull one from an operational standpoint. The weather was miserable---there being constant rain and snow storms. This not only prevented the aircraft from taking off, but also rendered the field almost unserviceable. Italian Alpine troops assisted our Engineers in a program of better drainage to reduce the floods and excessively deep quagmires of mud. The **twenty-nine** missions flown were, as a whole, very uneventful. Bombing was accomplished by PFF and, with the absence of enemy opposition, weather was our worst foe. Only on six missions during the month was a sizeable force of this Group's potential used as escort to P-17s or P-24s. Of the total of 399 sorties, 243 sorties were flown in support of the heavies to six targets at Dojob, Yugoslavia, Linz, Austria, Vienna and Moosbierbaum. One high-level bombing mission of 55 sorties was flown against the Cismon railway bridge, Italy. The remaining sorties on twenty-two missions were flown as photo-recce or supply dropping escorts. The pilots of this group were eager to carry the war to the Hun at every possible moment as was evidence by the destruction of sixteen locomotives

and one freight car. Six locomotives and seventy freight cars were claimed as damaged. Despite the failure of the GAF to contest our attacks, flak and training missions took their toll in pilots and aircraft. Five of our pilots were MIA and seven F-38s were classified as LIA.

The Russian winter offensive began and shortly robbed the 15th Air Force of several of its primary oil targets in the Flechhammer area. Also during the month, the RAF made an unusually successful attack against the Frux Oil Refineries. As a consequence current targets were principally communications centers and, it would seem, attacks in the future would be concentrated on them in direct support of the various Allied fronts in Italy, Yugoslavia, Germany, Austria, Hungary and Silesia.

MONTH OF FEBRUARY 1945 - In sharp contrast to last month's effort against the enemy, the 14th February operation record was a foreshadow of the eventual disaster that lay in wait for the Hin. In not one instance did the enemy attempt to contest our escort on bomb attacks against oil and communication targets at Regensburg, Munich, Linz, Vienna, Augsburg and Verona. Though only three regularly scheduled strafing missions were flown during the month, the 14th distinguished itself in this sphere of activity by attacking communications and rail targets generally while enroute to base after the primary mission of escort and chaffing had been accomplished. In addition to the three regularly scheduled strafing missions on the 16th, 22nd and 28th of February, the Group executed strafing attacks on nine other occasions after their primary function had been fulfilled. Though these attacks by fighters whose principal role is escort protection to bombers may not, in any given attack, represent substantial destruction of enemy communications, their cumulative effect in motive power and transportation delayed and denied to the enemy is unquestionable. In the short month of February, the 14th Fighter Group destroyed more than one hundred locomotives, fourteen freight cars, two passenger cars and sixty-three oil and gasoline tank cars. In the damaged column are no fewer than seventy-three locomotives, three hundred and ninety-nine freight cars, ninety-five passenger cars and eighteen oil and gasoline tank cars.

Perhaps the most successful operations of the month was that flown on the 25th. The field order of that date assigned the Group to dive-bomb the St. Veit marshalling yards and to strafe railroad targets from Ljubljana to Villach. The 37th Squadron achieved the largest total of destruction with lion's share of it attributed to Lt. Col. Chitty. Final assessment placed the Group score at twelve locomotives, two trucks, one tank car and three passenger cars destroyed. Fifteen locomotives, twelve electric locomotives, six trucks, four tank cars, one hundred and twenty-eight freight cars and forty-five passenger cars were damaged.

Despite the high success achieved by the Group during the month, losses were suffered. During this operational period six pilots were reported as MIA, two of whom were later returned to duty.

MONTH OF MARCH 1945 - During the month of March the cumulative effect of Allied operations for the past two years revealed itself increasingly as the enemy military situation became in fact a debacle. Allied aircraft roamed almost at will over the Reich. Heavy bombers striking inexorably at strategic targets while escorting fighters strafed lines of communications, oil storages and ammunition dumps displayed very clearly the

the enemy's inability to stem or even contest our military efforts. Von Runstedt's December offensive in the West seemed puny when contrasted to the situation that in the month of March made itself evident to the Nazis. A recital of the names of German cities and towns which came under Allied control during March left little doubt as to the eventual outcome. The 15th Air Force after destroying German oil targets at Moostierbaum and Kagren made its deepest penetrations by striking at Ruhland oil refineries only seventy-five miles from Berlin. Only two efforts were necessary to cancel Ruhland's potential from the German Oil larder thus leaving enemy oil refining capacity at a sorry minimum. As if further evidence was necessary the 15th Air Force struck at tank manufacturing plants in Berlin itself. From north to south, from west to east the air investment of the Reich was a painful fact.

During March the 14th Group flew eleven-hundred and forty-six sorties in twenty-six operational days. The forty-eight missions which comprised this total were classified as follows: thirty-eight escort, four dive-bombing, four chaff and escort and two sweeps. Insofar as this Group is concerned, in not one instance did the enemy choose to contest its effort in the air. That this was true is borne out by the fact that during the month only three enemy aircraft were destroyed in the air.

While the 14th Fighter Group did not draw any straight strafing assignment during the month it nevertheless manage to pile up an enviable record of results in this branch of warfare. Totals for the month are impressive and still they do not betray the emulative that this type of attack produces. The enemy's inability to cope with this situation by repairing the damage done to his much harrassed war effort is all too plain. During the month the Group destroyed no fewer than one hundred and **sixty-eight** locomotives and damaged one hundred and thirteen. In the rolling stock category a telling blow was struck by the destruction of one-hundred and thirteen tank cars loaded with gasoline or oil while one hundred and five tank cars were placed in the damaged category. Other claims as the result of strafing attacks are fourteen box-cars damaged, one hundred and eighty-two box cars damaged and eighteen passenger cars damaged.

MONTH OF APRIL 1945 - Dwindling German opposition during April in the Mediterranean Theatre made it appear doubtful if the Italian Campaign would last the month out. Pomblines and location of Allied forward elements changed so rapidly that areas for bombing and strafing were established to prevent aerial assault on our own ground units. In the latter days of the month these areas of action had also to be discontinued due to the rapid advance of our ground forces in these only remaining hunting grounds in Italy. Tactical instead of the usual strategical operations high-lighted the months activities. As the Allied Armies pinched off target after target in their drive through German-held territory, the Group turned its attention from escorting bombers to direct support of the Allied offensive in the Po Valley of Northern Italy. During the month the Group stood down on the thirteenth and twenty-seventh and had its mission cancelled on the sixteenth. Otherwise twenty-seven days were taken up flying 1,241 sorties in accomplishing sixty-seven missions. Of these missions forty were escort, fifteen dive-bombing, one strafing, one fighter sweep, one chaff and nine armed reconnaissance. The results of these missions wreaked further havoc on enemy communications and transport. The fact that only one enemy aircraft was shot down by the

group indicated the freedom from air opposition that existed on this front. Eleven motor transports were destroyed and thirteen damaged. The big bag was in enemy railroad rolling stock. One hundred and eleven locomotives were destroyed, twelve damaged; sixty-nine oil cars were destroyed and twenty-four damaged; five freight cars were destroyed and fifty-two damaged. One passenger car was damaged. Before the month ended a halt was called in attacks on railroad rolling stock that was not in motion or on the track with steam up. This was prompted by the fact bridges and rail lines were so badly damaged that rolling stock was bottled up and our ground advance was so rapid that the destruction would be detrimental to our future advances.

The price paid for these victories consisted of one pilot killed, nine missing in action. Fifteen P-38's were lost to enemy action and thirty-seven were damaged.

11 April 1945 was a red letter for the Group. One of the four missions sent out on that date consisted of forty planes on a strafing mission over the Southern Reich. The hunt was a fruitful one netting eight, four locomotives destroyed, four damaged, forty three oil cars destroyed, three damaged, five freight cars destroyed and thirty damaged. This is probably the greatest day in destruction of locomotives for any one group in any Air Force. The loss of but three pilots missing in action and three P-38s demonstrates the high state of team work that existed in the 14th Fighter Group.

During the month of April, the world heard some very heartening news heralding the nearness of the end of the war in Europe, and received the tragic news of the death of the President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt. The death of our Commander in Chief came just as the allied forces throughout the globe were on the verge of victorious drives toward establishing the peace he so unselfishly labored for, working with such patience and diligence under a terrific strain which undoubtedly contributed to his untimely death. This calamity came as a personal loss to every member of the 14th Fighter Group causing a solemnness which was evident for days after the shocking announcement.

On the brighter side of things, the Allies tremendous might drove the cringing Kraut deeper into what was left of Germany. April brought announcement from the Commander of the 15th Army Group in Italy declaring that German Armies in Italy were crushed. Berlin, the Capital of Naziland, was four-fifths occupied by the Russians; Munich, the shrine of the Nazis, was also captured, the welcome news of Mussolini's assassination by the people he had run roughshod over for so many years was indeed happily received.

MONTH OF MAY 1945 - The month of May brought the great event toward which everyone in the ETO had been working---the final collapse and complete unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany. From the first of the month on, German Commanders hastened to climb on the band wagon as the Allied Armies knifed their way through the Fatherland almost at will.

Because of the rapidly diminishing targets and uncertain ground situation which registered great hourly changes, only two missions were run by the Group and only the first of these was an offensive mission. On 1 May forty-four P-38's provided escort to P-17's bombing Salzburg, Austria, the mission being without event except that flek was noticeable by its total absence. On 4

May 1945, eight F-38's provided escort for a photo plane to the Klagenfurt-linz, Austria, the last accredited mission on European soil for the 14th Fighter Group during World War II. Even a fighter sweep in the surrounding area failed to stir up any opposition.

Then on the 7th of May previous rumors of the final capitulation were confirmed by the Germans and Allies together and VE day had arrived. The official celebration took place on the 8th of May and the Group participated in a grand air armada over Bari where all units of the 15th Air Force passed in review as a final "Grand Mission".

20 Nov 1946 to 30 June 1947, 14th Fighter Group, Dow AFB, Bangor, Maine *(See footnote)
On 20 November 1946, the HQ, 14th Fighter Group was activated per letter, War Dept, TAGO, Subject: Activation of the AQ, 14th FTR GRU: Redesignation reorganization and inactivation of certain other Army Air Force Units, dated 20 Nov 46. The organization was activated under T/O and EL-12R, 5 March 1945, with changes 1 as modified by the activation orders.

Pursuant to the Activation Order cited above, the 37th, 48th and 49th FIS (Jet propelled) were assigned to the 14th Ftr Gru 1 Jan 1948 to 31 March 1948.* Footnote 2

On 2nd Jan 1948 the 14th Fighter Group (jet propelled) was transferred to the Dept of the Air Force per transfer Order #1 National Military Establishment, dated 26 Sep 1947.

1 April 1948 to 30 June 1948 * Footnote 3

During the period covered by this History, the 14th Fighter Group underwent a new TO/E change. The new TO/E (1-1212) has lowered the authorized strength of the Group to eleven officers and twenty-five Airmen.

1 July 1948 to 1 Dec 1948 * Footnote 4

During the period covered by this History the 14th Fighter Group had a few TO/E changes, mostly in the Armament Sections of the various Squadrons. It was deemed as inadequate to have only eleven armors in each squadron so a total of thirty four was proposed.

2 Oct 1949 the 14th Fighter Group was inactivated per letter Dept of Air Force Washinton 32(AFOOR2234F)
2 Sep 1949

- FOOTNOTES: 1. Information taken from GP 14-41 (Fighter)
Research Studies Institute USAF Historical Division Activities Branch.
2. GP 14-41 (Fighter)
 3. GP 14-H1 (Fighter)
 4. GP 14-H1 (Fighter)