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History, 1/41-12/44

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**RESTRICTED**37TH FIGHTER SQUADRON  
14 FIGHTER GRPHISTORYJan. 15, 1941, to Apr. 30, 1943TO BE RETURNED  
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File No.

The 55th Pursuit Group was activated January 15, 1941, composed of the 37th, 38th and 54th Squadrons. Personnel of this Group was formed from the 35th Pursuit Group at Hamilton Field, California. The 37th Squadron was one of the Squadrons of the newly formed 38th Group. 1st Lt. H.D. Aynesworth was the first Commanding Officer of the 37th. He was Commanding Officer for only a few months during which time the Squadron had no planes. Then 1st Lt. Jack S. Jenkins was appointed Commanding Officer. Lt. C.N. Heitz was Operations Officer and Lt. W.J. Kelley and Lt. F.H. Butler Flight Leaders. Lt. Robert E. Romine was Adjutant and Lt. Gordon Hall was Supply and Mess Officer; which comprised the officer personnel of the Squadron. The enlisted personnel was made up of a peace time quota with 1st Sgt. Green, M/Sgt. Glendening as Line Chief, M/Sgt. Stanton Engineering Chief, M/Sgt. Miazga as Inspector and Sgts. Slechts, Conine, Marlin Richardson, Reed Richardson and many more men who have remained in the Squadron to date. These pilots and ground personnel built up an efficient and aggressive Squadron, and established principles of organization that have meant much towards the successful outcome of the Squadron.

In May, of 1941, the 37th Pursuit Squadron moved from Hamilton Field to Columbia Air Base, Portland, Oregon. At this time the airplane status consisted of 4 P-43s. The strength of the Squadron was bolstered in September by the incoming of 21 new trainee pilots from class 41-G. At the same time the ground personnel was enlarged considerably and 20 more P-43s were received by the Squadron. It became the task of the old pilots to whip into fighter pilots the new trainees. Lt. Jenkins left the Squadron to report for special duty at Washington, D.C., and was replaced by Captain Kenneth S. Wade who later became Commanding Officer of the 81st Group. With our declaration of war on December 7, 1941, the 37th Squadron was alerted and sent to Paine Field, Washington, where it stayed until December 24, 1941. On this date the Squadron was stationed at Olympia, Washington. The Squadron stayed at this Base until alerted for foreign duty, December 26, 1942. After moving to Olympia the following officers were assigned to the Squadron: Lt. Estes, Engineering Officer, Lt. Ives, Armament Officer, Lt. Anderson, Communications Officer. Lt. Jenkins returned as Commanding Officer and Captain Wade was transferred to Group. In February, 1942, the P-43s were replaced by P-38s in the Squadron and the unit became known as the 37th Fighter Squadron instead of Pursuit Squadron. None of the pilots had ever flown a P-38. Two officers came up from March Field and gave each of the pilots a few rides in a C-40 to give them the feel of two engines. The pilots were given about five hours cockpit time. They then started flying P-38s and learned things the hard way but were free of fatal accidents the first two months. The pilots were instructed that a P-38 would fly and land on one engine but that was all they knew about it. It was not until about two months had passed when Captain Kelley landed one day and informed the pilots that he had feathered one engine and the ship performed fine. Thereafter each of the pilots were directed to go up and feather one engine.

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When the pilots first started in P-38s they were very disappointed as they looked on the P-38 as a bomber and figured their pursuit days were over. After a very short time, however, the pilots realized the P-38 was a great ship and were happy to be flying it.

In April of '42, Lt. Heitz was killed in a crash and Lt. Butler became Operations Officer. Shortly thereafter the Squadron lost five pilots, Lts. Hodges, Long, Crow, Hasenfus and Steland, who were sent to Alaska as part of the 54th Squadron of the 55th Group. Then Lt. W. A. Smith was sent to China, and Lts. Parsons, Malzahn, Halman, Osher, Killie and Hillie were sent to the 1st and 82nd Groups. Lts. Hillin, Caldwell and Guisti were sent to the 81st Group. In May of '42, the Squadron was brought up to Table of Organization strength by new pilots coming in from classes of 42-B, C and D. In June, Major Jenkins went to Group as Executive Officer, being succeeded by Captain Kelley as Squadron Commander. The Squadron lost Lts. Monahan, Stroop, Migil, Glass and Butler to the 329th Group. Captain Butler became Commanding Officer of the 330th Squadron in that Group. The older men left in the Squadron at this time were Captain Kelley, as Commanding Officer, Lt. Kitzman, Operations Officer, Lt. Barker and Lt. Jones, Flight Leaders. More new pilots were assigned to the Squadron in June and July and several were sent out into the African and Pacific theatres.

During the year of 1942, Lt. Maxwell and Lt. John D. Barker were Flight Surgeons. In September, 1943, Captain John J. McCarthy was assigned to the Squadron as Squadron S-2 Officer, Lt. Young succeeded Captain Romine as Adjutant, Lt. Koons succeeded Lt. Hall as Mess Officer, Lt. Bell came in as Supply Officer, Lt. Stitt succeeded Lt. Estes as Engineering Officer, M/Sgt. Harper replaced W/O Miazga as Line Chief and Sgt. Alessio replaced Sgt. Plemens as 1st Sgt.

The Squadron was required to keep a flight on alert from dawn to dusk and several times was called off by Controller to intercept unidentified A/C. However, at no time was a hostile A/C intercepted.

It appeared as if our Squadron was destined to be a training Squadron as pilots were from time to time being sent as replacements for combat duty overseas. During 1942 quite a number of the enlisted men received appointment to O.C.S and Cadet schools.

In December, 1942, Captain Kelley informed the personnel that the Squadron had been alerted for movement overseas. Everyone was happy about it but there were fears that the Squadron would be sent to Alaska which really chilled things off. When the word finally came out that the Port of Embarkation would be Brooklyn, New York, that seemed to suit everyone.

The Squadron moved to McChord Field, Washington, on January 8, 1943, where it remained until January 19, 1943. On January 18, 1943, Captain Kelley crash landed just off the field and was taken to the hospital. Examination showed that he would be in the hospital for some months. This meant the Squadron lost its very popular and very capable Commanding Officer. The Squadron suffered another blow the next day, January 16th, when Captain Kitzman, Operations Officer, was rejected for foreign duty by the Medical authorities.

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Major John G. Bright, former AVG pilot with several Jap planes to his credit, replaced Captain Kelley as Commanding Officer and Captain Palmer became the new Operations Officer.

On January 18, 1943, at 2355 hours, the Squadron boarded the train at McChord Field, Washington. The strength at the time was 38 officers and 277 enlisted men. Before leaving the officers had a great party at the Officers Club. Major Keating, Group C.O., and Major Jenkins, Group E.O. and former C.O. of the 37th, along with many other officers of the 55th Group, gave the 37th a good send off. The Squadron arrived at Camp Kilmer, N.J., on January 24, 1943, and remained there for two weeks. The Squadron was confined to Camp the entire time which seemed unfair as many thought they should be allowed to visit relatives or to have a last fling before leaving for foreign duty. On February 7th the Squadron left Kilmer and went aboard the H. F.. Alexander, (formerly the Great Northern) and sailed out to sea about five o'clock the next morning. As have all soldiers who have left the same harbor, they watched the Statue of Liberty fade fast away. On the 10th, we were issued booklets on North Africa, clearing all minds as to the destination. The crossing took fourteen days and the meals were excellent, although unfortunately about ten per cent of the personnel were little interested in food most of the voyage due to seasickness. There were many Red Cross girls and Nurses aboard and they helped a lot to make the voyage a very pleasant one. On Sunday, 21 February 1943, just two weeks to the hour, men started walking off the gangplank at Oran Harbor. By trucks they were taken to the railroad station, tossing small change and bon-bons to the yelling natives who had learned of the spend-free Americans. The antique train carried them to St. Barbe, some twenty miles from Oran. Here the tiresome seven miles hike began to what is known throughout North Africa as Mud Hill. Immediately upon arriving, the rain began, adding to the already muddy hillside where pup tents were set up. Everyone was tired, dirty and hungry and were given their introduction to English rations. These had to be eaten cold and they didn't make much of a hit.

At Mud Hill the Squadron were men of leisure, playing baseball, etc, until February 27th when trucks arrived and carried the Squadron to La Senia Airport, just outside Oran.

The Squadron was very happy to be at a flying field again. New planes were brought up from the docks and the Squadron set up an assembly line. The Squadron soon made a reputation for assembling planes and there was a nasty rumor spread that the Squadron was going to be given the job of assembling all P-38s at the field. The Base did take away 10 P-38s the Squadron assembled but after 27 more were assembled and tested the pilots flew them down to Mediouna, one flight at a time, the first flight leaving March 17th and the last of the ground echelon arriving March 29th.

The 37th, by letter order, Headquarters North African Training Command, dated 15 March 1943, was made a part of the 14th Fighter Group, the other two Squadrons being the 48th and 49th. Lt. Col. Troy Keith was C.O. of the Group. Intensive training to fit the Squadron for combat was initiated. Formation flying of twelve to thirty six ships, speeding up take-offs and landing, aerial gunnery, high altitude flying, interceptions, etc, were stressed.

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About six weeks of this training keyed the pilots up to a high pitch. They were eager for actual combat and were confident that with an even break of luck they would give a good account of themselves.

On April 26 the first truck convoy left for Telergma Air Base and the rest of the ground personnel followed by truck, train and air. The strength of the Squadron was 33 pilots, 10 ground officers and 276 enlisted men.

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## 37TH FIGHTER SQUADRON

HISTORYMay 1 to Dec. 31, 19431. Strength report by months.

	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Enlisted Men</u>
Strength May 1, 1943	43	276
Net increase during May	2	0
Strength May 31, 1943	<u>45</u>	<u>276</u>
Strength June 1, 1943	45	276
Net Decrease during June	7	4
Strength June 30, 1943	<u>38</u>	<u>272</u>
Strength July 1, 1943	38	272
Net Decrease during July	1	0
Strength July 31, 1943	<u>37</u>	<u>272</u>
Strength August 1, 1943	37	272
Net Increase during July	14	
Net Decrease during July		11
Strength August 31, 1943	<u>51</u>	<u>261</u>
Strength September 1, 1943	51	261
Net Decrease during September	9	20*
Strength September 30, 1943	<u>42</u>	<u>241</u>
Strength October 1, 1943	42	241
Net Increase during October	3	5
Strength October 31, 1943	<u>45</u>	<u>246</u>
Strength November 1, 1943	45	246
Net Increase during November	0	0
Strength November 30, 1943	<u>45</u>	<u>246</u>
Strength December 1, 1943	45	246
Net Increase during December	1	
Net Decrease during December		5
Strength December 31, 1943	<u>46</u>	<u>241</u>

\*Per Special Order 103, Par. 1, Hq. 14th Fighter Group, dated September 10, 1943, the Ordnance Department was transferred out of the Squadron.

U.S. AIR FORCE - 15 British

2. Stations

(a) Permanent:

MEDIOUNA AIRDROME, CASABLANCA, MOROCCO  
Date of Departure - 4 May 1943

TELERGMA, DEPARTMENT OF CONSTANTINE, ALGERIA  
Date of Arrival - 5 May 1943  
Date of Departure - 3 July 1943

EL BATHAN, TUNISIA  
Date of Arrival - 4 July 1943  
Date of Departure - 26 July 1943

STE. MARIE DU ZIT, TUNISIA  
Date of Arrival - 26 July 1943  
Date of Departure - 11 December 1943

TRIOLO LANDING GROUND, FOGGIA SATELLITE #7, ITALY  
Date of Arrival - 12 December 1943  
Date of Departure - Present Station

(b) Temporary:

LENTINI EAST, SICILY  
Date of Arrival - 7 September 1943  
Date of Departure - 16 September 1943  
Only part of unit - 41 officers and 81 enlisted men

GAMBUT SATELLITE #3, LIBYA  
Date of Arrival - 4 October 1943  
Date of Departure - 14 October 1943  
Only part of unit - 31 officers and 80 enlisted men

FOGGIA SATELLITE #1, ITALY  
Date of Arrival - 23 October 1943  
Date of Departure - 25 October 1943 - officers only.  
Only part of unit - 25 officers and 17 enlisted men  
Enlisted Men remained until 7 November 1943.

FOGGIA SATELLITE #3, ITALY  
Date of Arrival - 1 November 1943  
Date of Departure - 3 November 1943  
Only part of unit - 19 officers.

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3. Roster - Officers and Department Heads at date of commencement of combat operations on May 6, 1943:

Commanding Officer                      Major John G. Bright  
Operations Officer                      Capt. Sam L. Palmer  
Ass't Operations Officer - 1st Lt. Hubert M. Blair

"A" Flight

Capt. Forrest H. Barker  
1st Lt. James H. Goff  
1st Lt. Robert D. Keel  
1st Lt. William M. Collins  
2nd Lt. Thomas E. Kearns  
2nd Lt. Kenneth L. Waldron  
2nd Lt. James J. Toth Jr.  
2nd Lt. Lloyd C. Hendrix  
2nd Lt. Boone A. Haddock  
2nd Lt. Dewey F. Varndell, Jr.

"B" Flight

Capt. Carl F. Rudder  
1st Lt. Ryan M. Moon  
1st Lt. Richard A. Campbell  
1st Lt. Leonard L. Conkle  
2nd Lt. Robert E. Gardner  
2nd Lt. James M. Hollingsworth, Jr.  
2nd Lt. Robert T. Thayer  
2nd Lt. Robert E. Glendening  
2nd Lt. John J. Garbett  
2nd Lt. John D. Joyce

"C" Flight

1st Lt. Robert H. Wilson  
1st Lt. Harry G. Grim, Jr.  
1st Lt. George D. Wightman  
1st Lt. Charles J. Crocker  
2nd Lt. John C. Henry, Jr.  
2nd Lt. Marcus C. Linn  
2nd Lt. Robert L. Carey  
2nd Lt. Marion E. Strong  
1st Lt. Reed C. Owens

Department Heads

1st Sgt.	- 1st Sgt. Warren G. Willis
Line Chief	- M/Sgt. Augustus A. Harper
Eng. Chief	- M/Sgt. Christopher C. Stanton
Arm. Chief	- M/Sgt. Myron L. Scharn
Comm. Chief	- T/Sgt. Adolph V. Schlecta
T/Supply	- T/Sgt. Thomas F. D'Alfonso
Sgt. Major	- Sgt. Robert E. Stoddard
Mess Sgt.	- T/Sgt. Francis E. Whipple
Adm. Supply	- T/Sgt. Charles E. Bradbury
Transportation	- S/Sgt. John J. Barringer
Intelligence	- Sgt. Rex H. Bird
Operations	- S/Sgt. Chester F. Roohr
"A" Flight Chief	- T/Sgt. William E. Shehan
"B" Flight Chief	- T/Sgt. Frank Brdaley, Jr.
"C" Flight Chief	- T/Sgt. Marlin Richardson
Medical	- Sgt. Wardo J. Morago
Chemical	- Sgt. Russel E. Lawler
Ordnance	- T/Sgt. Frank A. Lopez

Ground Officers

Adjutant	- 1st Lt. Alexander S. Young, Jr.
Ass't Adjutant	- 2nd Lt. Joseph A. Koons
Intelligence Officer	- Capt. John J. McCarthy
Ass't Int. Officer	- 2nd Lt. Elisha Walker, Jr.
Supply Officer	- 2nd Lt. Hal D. Bell
Engineering Officer	- 2nd Lt. James M. Stilt, Jr.
Ass't Eng. Officer	- W/O William T. Miazga
Communications Officer	- 1st Lt. Iner W. Anderson
Flight Surgeon	- Capt. William W. Curtis
Ordnance Officer	- 2nd Lt. Edward J. Clinton, Jr.
Armament Officer	- 1st Lt. Lee H. Ives

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<u>Date</u>	<u>No. of P-38s</u>	<u>Type and Target</u>	<u>Victories</u>	<u>Pilot Losses</u>	<u>Plane Losses</u>
July 19	12	B-26 Escort to Ciampino A/D, Italy	-	-	-
" 20	12	" " to Vibo Valentia, Italy	-	-	-
" 20	12	Sea Sweep (Med. Sea)	-	-	-
" 22	12	B-26 Escort to Salerno M/Y, Italy	-	-	-
" 23	12	" " to Aquino A/D, Italy	-	-	-
" 24	12	" " to Marina di Pola M/Y, Italy	-	-	-
" 29	11	" " to Aquino A/D, Italy	2 - Damaged	-	-
" 31	12	" " to Adrano, Sicily	-	-	-
Aug. 1	10	B-17 Escort to Naples, Italy	1 - Dest'd.	-	-
"			2 Damaged	-	-
" 4	24	B-26 Escort to Marina di Catanzaro	3 Dest'd.	-	-
			1 Prob.	-	-
			5 Damaged	-	-
" 6	10	B-26 Escort to Badjazzo, Sicily	-	-	-
" 7	12	B-26 Escort to Marina di Catanzaro	-	-	-
" 8	23	" " to Angitola, Italy	-	-	-
" 9	12	Strafe Highway from Rocella Ionica to Bovolina Marina, Italy.	-	-	-
" 11	12	Dive Bomb RR Bridge at Marina di Catanzaro, Italy.	-	-	*
" 13	11	B-17 Escort to Lorenzo M/Y, Rome, Italy	1 - Dest'd.	-	-
			2 - Damaged	-	-
" 13	5	ASR--Med. Sea	-	-	-
" 14	13	Strafe between Sambiasi and Rosarno, Italy	-	-	-
" 17	4	ASR--Med. Sea	-	-	-
" 17	12	Strafe Road from Marina di Manastierace to Bovalino, Italy.	-	-	-
" 18	7	Top Cover for P-38s to dive bomb Road from Soverato to Bovalino, Italy.	-	-	-
" 18	7	" " "	-	-	-
" 18	6	ASR--Med. Sea	-	-	-
" 18	4	" "	-	-	-
" 19	9	B-17 Escort to Foggia M/Y, Italy	3 - Dest'd.	-	-
" 19	10	" " to Foggia, Italy	-	-	-
" 20	12	ASR--Med. Sea	-	-	-
" 21	9	B-17 Escort to bomb Eversa M/Y, Italy	-	-	-
" 23	12	ASR--Med. Sea	1 - Prob.	1	1
			1 - Damaged	-	-
" 25	22	B-17 Escort to Foggia A/D, Italy.	-	-	-
" 26	12	B-17 Escort to Capua A/D, Italy	-	-	-
" 27	22	B-17 Escort to Sulmona, Italy	-	-	-
" 28	12	B-17 Escort to Terni RR Yards, Italy	5 - Dest'd	1	1
			3 - Damaged	-	-
" 29	11	B-17 Escort to Orte RR Yards, Italy	1 - Prob.	-	-
" 30	10	B-17 Escort to Viterbo A/D, Italy	1 - Prob.	-	-
" 30	6	ASR--Med. Sea	-	-	-

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Date	No. of P-38s	Target	Victories	Pilot Losses	Plane Losses
Sept. 4	19	B-17 Escort to Capua A/D, Italy	-	-	-
" 5	23	B-26 Escort to Naples, Italy	2 - Dest'd.	-	-
" 6	11	B-26 Escort to Capua A/D, Italy	1 - Damaged	-	-
" 8	4	Convoy Escort	-	-	-
" 8	4	" "	-	-	-
" 8	4	" "	-	-	-
" 8	3	" "	-	-	-
" 9	9	Beachhead patrol	-	-	-
" 9	12	" "	-	-	-
" 9	12	" "	-	2	-
" 10	12	" "	-	-	-
" 10	12	" "	-	-	-
" 10	11	" "	-	-	-
" 11	11	Dive Bomb targets of opportunity near Battipaglia, Italy.	-	-	-
" 11	9	Beachhead patrol	-	-	-
" 11	12	" "	-	-	-
" 12	12	" "	-	-	-
" 12	11	" "	-	-	-
" 12	11	" "	-	-	-
" 13	11	" "	-	-	-
" 12	12	" "	-	-	-
" 13	4	Special Reconnaissance	-	-	-
" 14	11	Dive Bomb targets of opportunity	-	-	-
" 14	12	" "	-	-	-
" 14	12	" " Monte Corvino, Italy	-	-	-
" 15	12	" " Montella, Italy	-	-	-
" 15	12	" " Acerno, Italy	-	-	-
" 15	12	" " targets of opportunity	-	-	-
" 16	12	" " Fisciano, Italy	-	-	-
" 16	12	" " Cava, Italy	-	-	-
" 16	12	" " Palna Campania, Italy	-	-	-
" 17	12	" " Ebeli, Italy	-	-	-
" 17	12	" " Acerno, Italy	-	-	-
" 17	2	Escort Convoy	-	-	-
" 17	2	" "	-	-	-
" 18	21	Strafe Foggia Satellites	1 - Dest'd	-	-
" 23	2	Weather observation	-	-	-
" 26	3	" "	-	-	-
" 27	23	Strafe Rodoc A/D, Yugoslavia	-	-	-
" 29	2	Weather observation	-	-	-
" 30	11	Patrol East of Bastia towards Cecina Marina.	-	-	-
Oct. 1	12	B-17 Escort to Leghorn, Italy	-	-	-
" 2	5	Patrol over Sardinia	-	-	-
" 3	4	Weather observation near Leghorn, Italy	-	-	-
" 3	11	Sea Sweep North of Bastia, Corsica.	1 - Dest'd. 2 - Damaged	-	-
" 7	8	Escort Convoy in Aegean Sea	-	-	-
" 7	6	" " "	-	-	-
" 8	6	" " "	-	-	-
" 8	7	Patrol over Lero Island	-	-	-

<u>Date</u>	<u>No. of P-38s</u>	<u>Type and Target</u>	<u>Victories</u>	<u>Pilot Losses</u>	<u>Plane Losses</u>
Oct. 9	7	Convoy Escort in Aegean Sea	17 Dest'd. 3 Prob. 3 Damaged	-	-
" 14	12	B-25 Escort to Grosseto, Italy	-	-	-
" 20	11	B-17 Escort to Marcigliana and Casale L/Gs, Italy.	-	-	-
" 21	10	B-17 Escort to Terni RR Viaduct, Italy	-	-	-
" 22	12	B-25 Escort to Grosseto RR Bridge.	-	-	-
" 24	12	B-17 Escort to Weiner Neustadt, Ger.	-	-	-
" 29	10	" " to Terino, Italy	-	-	-
" 31	12	B-25 Escort to Civitavecchia, Italy	-	-	-
Nov. 2	11	B-17 Escort to Weiner Neustadt, Ger.	-	-	-
" 6	8	P-38 Escort to Orvieto, Italy	-	-	-
" 8	21	B-17 Escort to Torino Ball Bearing Factory, Italy.	-	-	-
" 9	11	B-17 Escort to Bolzano, Italy	-	-	1
" 10	11	" " to Bolzano RR Yards.	-	-	-
" 16	12	B-25 Escort to Salon A/D, France	-	-	-
" 22	16	B-17 Escort to Tulon Sub. Pens, France	-	-	-
" 24	12	B-17 " " " " " "	-	-	-
" 25	6	ASR Med. Sea	-	-	-
" 26	12	B-17 Escort to Rimini, Italy	-	-	-
" 29	13	Convoy Patrol	-	-	-
Dec. 1	11	B-17 Escort to Turin Ball Bearing Factory, Italy.	-	-	-
" 2	8	B-17 Escort to Marseille Sub. Pens	-	-	-
" 7	6	Escort President of the United States	-	-	-
" 14	16	B-17 Escort to Eleusis A/D, Athens, Greece.	1 - Dest'd.	-	-
" 15	14	B-17 Escort to Innsbruck M/Y, Italy	-	-	-
" 16	15	" " to Padova RR Yards, Italy	1 - Dest'd.	-	1
" 19	16	" " to Augsburg A/C Factory	-	-	-
" 20	16	" " to Eleusis A/D, Athens, Greece.	2 - Dest'd.	-	-
" 25	14	" " to Bolzano M/Y, Italy	-	-	-
" 28	14	" " to Verona M/Y, Italy	-	-	-
" 29	14	" " to Reggio Emilia, Italy	-	-	-
" 30	14	" " to Verona M/Y, Italy	-	-	-
TOTAL --			61 Dest'd. 13 Prob. 31 Damaged	10	*11

\*An additional six P-38 were damaged beyond repair as a result of enemy action.

5. Campaigns

The Squadron saw action in the following campaigns:

Tunisian Campaign - The Squadron participated in final knock out blows in this campaign, which officially terminated on May 13, 1943.

Sicilian Campaign - The 37th was active throughout this campaign, participating in the pre-invasion softening-up blows which disrupted the Axis system of communications and their entire air strength based in Sicily. During the landing and for the next few days, the Squadron gave tactical support by many dive bombing and strafing missions. Once that our forces had established themselves, the P-38s returned to the job of escorting bombers in all types of missions. The campaign began on July 10 and the last Axis stronghold on Sicily was captured on August 18, 1943.

Italian Campaign - The Squadron was again called upon for close support in the initial stages of this campaign, flying convoy escort, beach patrol, then dive bombing and strafing missions. The campaign began with the landing at Salerno on September 8, 1943, and the Squadron has continued in active combat in it for the balance of the year.

Besides participating in the above mentioned three major campaigns, the Squadron was an active participant in two other famous engagements. The first was the aerial conquest of the Island of Pantelleria, the 37th completing 10 escort and dive bombing mission to that target between June 2nd and June 11, 1943. The Second was the ill-fated campaign conducted by the British in September and October in the Dodecanese Islands in the Aegean Sea. On detached service and situated at Gambut, Libya, the Squadron flew convoy patrol missions for English warships. A notable occurrence was the Squadron's outstanding victory of the year when more than 25 Stukas were intercepted on October 9, 1943, while covering the convoy. The final result was the destruction of 17 enemy aircraft, 16 Stukas and 1 JU-88, without loss or injury to the Squadron. Hampered by sand storms, a total of 5 missions were completed between October 5 and October 13, 1943.

Other outstanding targets during this period include Sardinia, Corsica, the first raid on Rome, missions to German airfields in Southern France, as well as objectives in Germany proper and the Balkans.

6. Commanding Officers:

Major John G. Bright

Dates of Command: January 16th to June 4th.

Combat Record for Squadron: 9 victories and 7 losses.

Major Bright led the Squadron on its first mission and left it when promoted to be Group Executive Officer. He continued to fly with the Squadron until August 30th when he was reported missing in action. He returned on November 20th after escaping through the enemy lines. He had been forced to bail out when his plane began to disintegrate after pulling out of an excessively high speed dive. He was decorated with the Silver Star and shortly afterwards returned to the United States on leave.

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The Squadron also received numerous commendations for its work as one of the units of the North African Air Force and Strategic Air Force from higher headquarters. A few of them are quoted below, as follows:

1. Tunisian Campaign.

From Gen. Alexander to Lieut. Gen. Spaatz, C.G. NAAF.

"On behalf of the Allied Armies composing 18th Army Group I wish to express our deep gratitude and thanks for the wonderful support you have given us during the present operations. Your cooperation has played a vital part in weakening the enemy and making our victory on the battlefield possible."

From Lieut. Gen. Spaatz to Gen. Doolittle.

"This overwhelming success has been made possible only by coordinated and hard work on the part of all the personnel of the Northwest African Air Forces. In a few months the inseparate elements forming these forces have been welded together into a force able to sweep the enemy from the skies and with unparalleled striking power, able to deliver a coordinated blow with extreme accuracy and devastating effect upon any objective selected for attention. The spirit of cooperation between the British and American Air Forces has developed a team which bodes no good for Italy in the immedate future and her partner Germany later."

From Brigadier General J.H. Atkinson, C.G. 5th Wing.

"I asked you for your best during the last few crucial weeks. You gave it."

2. Battle of Pantelleria.

From General Arnold to Lieut. Gen. Spaatz.

"Entire Air Force joins me in congratulation to Allied Air Forces in North Africa upon highly successful completion of Pantelleria air operations. Tremendous amount of bombs dropped and negligible losses of planes speak well for planning preparations and execution."

From Lieut. Gen. Spaatz to Gen. Doolittle.

"Northwest African Air Forces have achieved a notably victory. This victory has been made possible only by the enthusiasm, skill, determination, and bravery which all elements of the force have displayed. We have maintained and improved the standard which was so vital a factor in the fall of Tunisia."

U.S. AIR FORCE Equals British

US [REDACTED] equals British [REDACTED]

3. Sicilian Campaign.

From NATAF to Gen. Doolittle.

"Wish to express appreciation of enthusiasm, spirit and skill shown by pilots of the 1st and 14th Fighter Groups during operations 10 July. Their work has been magnificent."

From Gen. Webster to 14th Fighter Group.

"I wish to commend the 14th Fighter Group for its outstanding accomplishments and devotion to duty shown in the period of intensive operations from 10 July through 20 July, in conjunction with the Allied invasion of Sicily. Your magnificent execution of assigned missions in support of ground operations, and your skill in locating and successfully destroying targets of opportunity, constantly harassing the enemy wherever he could be found, his vital installations, lines of supply and communication, has been materially responsible for the rapid Allied advance on the Island at a minimum cost. You were called upon to exert a maximum effort continuously during these operations, often to fly as many as eight missions in a single day, over difficult terrain heavily defended by the enemy, not only taxing the skill and endurance of your pilots but also the full capacity of your ground personnel whose job it was to keep every available plane flying. The bomber escort missions which you have flown during this period have been of a similar high character in their execution. The success of our bombing, including the first attacks made by this Wing on the mainland of Europe and the historic first Allied assault on Rome, can be attributed in no small measure to the effective protection provided by your group. To my certain knowledge I express the appreciation and admiration of Higher Headquarters in congratulating you on a difficult task well done. The cooperation of everyone and fine team-work shown have been of a character worthy of the highest traditions of the Army Air Forces."

From Gen. Arnold to Gen. Spaatz.

"I have read with greatest interest your summary of accomplishments of Allied Air Forces in Sicilian Campaign. Please express to the officers and men to all Allied Units my admiration and sincere appreciation for the gallantry shown by combat crews and the diligence and perseverance in performing their duties by ground echelons. The masterful way in which air supremacy deep in enemy territory was secured and maintained evokes my profound admiration and sets pattern for future operations on largest scale against our enemies in Europe and in the Pacific."

4. Italian Campaign.

From Air Marshal Coningham, Commanding NATAF, to Colonel Gravely, Commanding XII Air Support Command.

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[REDACTED] equals British [REDACTED]

#### 4. Missions and Sorties

The Squadron participated in 175 missions totalling 2029 sorties, summarized as follows:

<u>Type of Mission</u>	<u>Missions</u>	<u>Sorties</u>
Escort - B-17	52	684
- B-25	7	84
- B-26	23	355
- P-38	4	35
ASR	9	59
President of U.S.	1	6
King of England	1	1
	97	1,204
Dive Bombing	38	466
Patrol - Beachhead	16	169
- Convoy	11	59
	27	228
Strafing	6	93
Reconnaissance and Weather	5	15
Sea Sweep	2	23
TOTAL --	175	2026

A chronological list of these missions follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>No. of P-38s</u>	<u>Type and Target</u>	<u>Victories</u>	<u>Pilot Losses</u>	<u>Plane Losses</u>
May 6	12	B-25 Escort--anti-shipping (Med. Sea)-		1	1
" 8	12	B-26 " " " Sicilian Straits		-	-
" 9	10	B-17 " to Palermo, Sicily	1 - Dest'd	-	-
" 10	18	" " to Marsala, Sicily	2 - Dest'd	1	1
" 11	12	" " " " " "	-	-	-
" 13	12	" " to Cagliari, Sardinia	-	-	-
" 14	11	" " to Olbia, Sardinia	-	-	-
" 18	12	" " to Marsala, Sicily	3 - Dest'd	2	2
			1 - Prob.		
			6 - Damaged		
" 19	12	" " to Trapani Milo, Sicily	-	-	-
" 21	13	" " to Castelvetrano, Sicily	-	-	-
" 22	12	" " to Bo Rizzo, Sicily	1 - Dest'd	1	1
			1 - Damaged		
" 24	11	Dive Bombing Inglesias Zinc and Lead Smelter Works.	-	-	-
" 25	8	Dive Bomb Terranova (Gulf), Sardinia	1 - Dest'd	1	1
" 26	13	Top Cover for P-38s to dive bomb and strafe Tirso and Busachi, Sardinia.	-	-	-
" 28	12	B-25 Escort to Bo Rizzo, Sicily	2 - Prob.	-	-
			1 - Damaged		

[REDACTED] equals British [REDACTED]



[REDACTED] equals British [REDACTED]

<u>Date</u>	<u>No. of P-58s</u>	<u>Type and Target</u>	<u>Victories</u>	<u>Pilot Losses</u>	<u>Plane Losses</u>
May 30	12	Dive Bomb Chilivani RR Yards and Transformer Stn.	-	-	-
" 31	14	Dive Bomb S. Caterina Power Stn.	-	-	-
June 1	16	B-26 Escort to Porto Romano, Sardinia	-	-	-
" 2	13	Dive Bomb gun emplacements-Pantelleria	-	-	-
" 4	13	" " " " " "	-	-	-
" 5	24	" " Monserrato A/D, Sardinia	-	-	-
" 6	11	" " gun emplacements-Pantelleria	-	-	-
" 7	12	" " " " " "	-	-	-
" 8	14	" " " " " "	-	-	-
" 9	11	B-17 Escort to Pantelleria	-	-	-
" 9	12	Dive Bomb gun emplacements-Pantelleria	-	-	-
" 10	13	" " " " " "	-	-	-
" 11	12	" " " " " "	-	-	-
" 11	12	" " " " " "	-	-	-
" 12	11	B-17 Escort to Bocca di Falco, Sicily	-	-	-
" 15	21	B-26 Escort to Bo Rizzo, Sicily	-	-	-
" 18	12	Dive Bomb Trapani Milo A/D, Sicily	-	-	-
" 20	12	B-26 Escort to Trapani Milo A/D, Sicily	-	-	-
" 22	1	Escort King of England	-	-	-
" 24	24	B-26 Escort to Alghero A/D, Sardinia	7 - Dest'd 2 - Prob. 2 - Damaged	1	1
" 28	12	B-17 Escort Milis A/D, Sardinia	-	-	-
" 30	12	B-17 Escort to Palermo A/D, Sicily	-	-	-
" 30	12	" " to Bocca di Falco, Sicily	-	-	-
July 4	24	B-26 Escort to Sardinia	-	-	-
" 5	22	B-17 Escort to Gerbini, Sicily	-	-	-
" 6	4	" " to Comiso, Sicily	-	-	-
" 8	12	B-25 " " " "	-	-	-
" 8	12	Strafe Radar Stn., Augusta, Sicily	-	-	-
" 9	10	B-17 Escort to Sciacca A/D, Sicily	1 - Dest'd 1 - Prob. 1 - Damaged	-	-
" 9	12	B-25 Escort to Caltanissetta, Sicily	-	-	-
" 10	12	Dive Bomb targets of opportunity in Southeast Sicily	-	-	-
" 10	13	" " " " " "	-	-	-
" 10	12	" " " " " "	-	-	-
" 11	12	" " " " " "	-	-	-
" 11	10	" " " " " "	-	-	-
" 12	12	" " " " " "	-	-	-
" 12	12	" " " " " "	-	-	-
" 12	12	" " " " " "	-	-	-
" 13	12	" " " " " "	-	-	-
" 13	12	" " " " " "	-	-	-
" 13	12	" " " " " "	-	-	-
" 14	12	B-26 Escort to Messina, Sicily	4	-	-
" 16	24	" " to Vibo Valentia	-	-	-
" 17	12	" " to Naples, Italy	-	-	-
" 18	4	ASR--Med. Sea	6 - Dest'd	-	-

[REDACTED] equals British [REDACTED]

US [REDACTED] is British [REDACTED]

"Prior to return of P-38 Groups to parent formation wish to thank Col. Kyle and all ranks of Groups concerned for their splendid work and cooperation during the most tense battle period. Pilots are to be informed that their work firstly in protecting the convoys in movement to the assault area, secondly in the protection of shipping and beaches and lastly the offensive fighter bomber activity against enemy road movement contributed greatly to the success of the operation. Very many thanks for the much appreciated assistance."

From Col. Gravely to Commanding Officer, 12th Fighter Wing, Provisional.

"I desire to add to Air Marshal Coningham's thanks, expression of my own personal appreciation for the splendid work done by the three Groups under your command and by your staff and yourself during the period September 8th to September 17th, 1943, in the conduct of air operations against the enemy in the Naples-Salerno area."

From Col. Kyle, C.O., 12th Fighter Wing, Prov., to 14th Fighter Group.

"It is with greatest of pleasure that I forward this letter of commendation to you. I wish to add my appreciation for the excellent work done by you, your staff, pilots and the ground personnel of your unit during the operation. It has been a pleasure and privilege to have worked with you during the Avalanche Operation."

From Gen. Doolittle to Gen. Atkinson.

"I am proud of the record achieved by our Sicilian based P-38 detachments. Their work, performed under unusually difficult conditions, reflect great credit upon this Command, and I wish to express to all concerned my heartiest congratulations and sincere appreciation."

From Gen. Atkinson to Commanding Officer, 14th Fighter Group.

"I am greatly pleased with your record in recent operations with 12th Air Support Command."

5. Engagement in the Dodecanese Islands.

From Hq. RAF Middle East to Commanding Officer, 1202 Fighter Wing, Prov.

"Please convey to all ranks our admiration and appreciation of the magnificent work done by your group operating under difficult circumstances. Your achievements are all the more praiseworthy and there is no doubt by your efforts you have materially assisted in naval operations."

From Air Officer Commanding, 201 Group, RAF, to Commanding Officer, 1202 Fighter Wing, Provisional.

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Of the preceeding, Lts. Goff and Alexander are known to be prisoners of war. Lt. Collins and F/O Dion were seen to bail our successfully. An unconfirmed report states that Lt. Varndell is a prisoner of war. Of the ten shot down by enemy action, two are known to be aliye and possibly five.

On August 4, 2nd Lt. Lloyd O. Hendrix was shot down by B-26s which his Squadron was escorting. This error was deeply regretted by all as he was one of the "fightingest" pilots in the outfit.

(b) Wounded by Enemy Action.

July 10 - Major Forrest H. Barker - returned to combat.  
July 13 - 2nd Lt. Herbert J. Walker - sent to United States for further hospitalization.

(c) Group Losses While Flying With 37th.

Major Clarence L. Tinker, Jr., Group Operations Officer - shot down by enemy aircraft. He was the son of Major General Tinker of the Army Air Forces lost at the battle of Midway.

Ground personnel sustained no fatal losses through direct enemy action as the base never was subjected to attack. However, S/Sgt. Elsdon F. Heistand suffered permanent injuries (loss of left foot) from enemy land mine while driving a weapons carrier on duty near Ste Marie du Zit, Tunisia.

8. Decorations and Awards.

The Squadron has received its share of decorations and awards which have been earned by the outstanding skill, courage and initiative of its pilots.

Distinguished Service Cross.

Major William L. Leverette

Distinguished Flying Cross with Oak Leaf Cluster.

1st Lt. Richard A. Campbell

1st Lt. Robert E. Gardner

Distinguished Flying Cross.

Major Ferrest H. Barker

Major Carl F. Rudder

Captain Hubert M. Blair

" Leonard L. Conkle

" Harry C. Crim

" Charles J. Crocker

" George D. Wightman

" Robert H. Wilson

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Major Carl F. Rudder

Dates of Command: June 4th to September 19th.  
 Combat Record for Squadron: 31 victories and 3 losses.

Major Rudder led the Squadron through a very successful period of operations with a minimum of losses. He received his Majority while Commanding Officer and was decorated with the Distinguished Flying Cross before returning to the States on leave after completing 50 missions.

Major Forrest H. Barker

Dates of Command: September 19th to September 29th.  
 Combat Record for Squadron: None.

Major Barker, a great favorite with the Squadron, was transferred to the Staff of the Bomber Command shortly after his appointment as Commanding Officer. This was deeply regretted by all members of the Squadron as well as Major Barker, who had hoped to complete 50 missions with the 37th. He won his Distinguished Flying Cross while flying with the Squadron.

Major William L. Leverette

Dates of Command: September 29th to December 31st.  
 Combat Record for Squadron: 21 victories and 1 loss.

Major Leverette joined the Squadron on August 28th upon his arrival from the States and has led it brilliantly, having accounted for 8 enemy aircraft himself during this period. His knowledge and skill in flying and tactics, as well as his cool daring under fire, have been inspiring to all the men in his Command. Under his leadership the Squadron scored its greatest victory of the year, destroying seventeen enemy aircraft without loss over the Dodecanese Islands on October 9th. He has been decorated with the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions while leading the 37th in this engagement during which he shot down 7 enemy aircraft.

7. Losses in Action

Squadron losses were comparatively small and can be subdivided as follows:

(a) Lost Through Enemy Action

May 6	- 2nd Lt. Robert T. Thayer	- shot down by flak.
" 10	- 2nd Lt. Dewey F. Varndell	- shot down by enemy aircraft.
" 18	- 1st Lt. James F. Goff	- " " " "
" "	- 2nd Lt. James J. Toth	- " " " "
" 22	- 2nd Lt. John C. Henry	- " " " "
" 25	- 1st Lt. William M. Collins	- shot down by flak.
June 24	- 2nd Lt. Harold R. Alexander	- shot down by enemy aircraft.
Aug. 23	- 2nd Lt. Russell K. Moomaw	- " " " "
" 28	- F/O Earl J. Dion	- " " " "
Dec. 16	- 2nd Lt. Eugene Pitre, Jr.	- " " " "

TOTAL - 10 - plus one Group Officer.

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US CONFIDENTIAL Equals British

US [REDACTED] Honors British [REDACTED]

Distinguished Flying Cross (Cont'd)

- 1st Lt. Harry T. Hanna
- " James M. Hollingsworth
- " Kenneth L. Waldron
- 2nd Lt. Wayne L. Blue
- " Lloyd O. Hendrix
- " Herbert T. Hickman
- " Marcus C. Linn
- " Homer L. Sprinkle

Silver Star

Major John G. Bright

Purple Heart

- Major Forrest H. Barker
- 2nd Lt. Herbert J. Walker
- Eldon F. Heistand

Air Medal

A total of 63 Air Medals and 384 Oak Leaf Clusters for the Air Medal have been awarded to the pilots of the Squadron.

Legion of Merit

- T/Sgt. Clarence G. Johnson, 19049421
- " Howard L. Larsen Jr., 19010529
- Louis M. Gillet, 19049452

NOTE: See Annex "A" for the accounts of the individual exploits upon which the above awards were based.

See Annex "B" for other meritorious achievements.

US [REDACTED] Honors British [REDACTED]

US [REDACTED] Equals British [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

"The following signal has been received from the Commander-in-Chief Levant, 'I would be glad, if you would convey to the Lightning Squadrons under your command my admiration and gratitude for their fine work to-day, Saturday. His Majesty's ships have been in great difficulties and the efforts of the U.S. Squadrons have without question saved their situation.' I would like to add my own appreciation of your gallant efforts and congratulate you on your fine show yesterday. Finally I should like you to express my appreciation to all those concerned, ground crews and personnel of both Wing (RAF) and American Units who by their hard work so often forgotten enabled the Lightnings to carry out their task."

From Lieut. Col. Sluman to Commanding Officer, 14th Fighter Group.

"I desire to add my commendation on the effort which you and your personnel have put forth. Working under most adverse conditions you carried out your assigned task in a manner that is a credit to yourselves and to the U.S.A.A.F."

From Air Marshal Linnel to Air Chief Marshal Tedder.

"I have issued warning orders for Lightnings and B-24s to be ready to return on receipt of orders from NAAF as from tomorrow 11th October. I should like to express my appreciation of the sterling work which these groups have carried out during their all too short attachment to Middle East."

From Gen. Doolittle to Commanding Officer, 14th Fighter Group.

"It is with much gratification that this well deserved praise is transmitted. The operation in question reflects great credit upon this Command and upon all personnel who played a part in the planning and execution thereof."

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ANNEX "A"Distinguished Service CrossSummary

Major William L. Leverette, O-322014, led his Squadron of seven P-38s on a mission to cover a convoy of warships in the Aegean Sea on October 9, 1943. Twenty-five to thirty JU-87s were sighted just as they were getting ready to attack the convoy. With bold initiative and excellent judgment, Major Leverette ordered White Flight of three ships to stay up as top cover and he led his flight of four right into the enemy formations causing most of the bombers to jettison their bombs. During the encounter, which lasted fifteen minutes, Major Leverette destroyed seven JU-87s and damaged two others, without loss. Major Leverette was able to perform this record-breaking feat only because of his complete disregard for his own safety, his remarkable gunnery and his coolness under fire. Many times he had JUs on his tail or to his rear quarter and three times other members of his flight called out a JU on his tail. Although in imminent danger, Major Leverette just took slight evasive action and courageously stayed right amongst the enemy aircraft destroying one after the other. On account of the great number of the enemy, he realized he had no ammunition to waste, so each time he held his fire until dangerously close to the aircraft he was attacking. Such tactics were very successful but nearly proved fatal as one time his propeller sliced through the aircraft he had just shot down. Major Leverette's outstanding skill as a combat pilot and his inspirational qualities as a leader, his devotion to duty and cool courage under fire uphold the highest traditions of the Armed Forces.

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## Summary

Distinguished Flying Cross

1st Lieutenant Richard A. Campbell, O-659243, participated in an escort mission for two groups of B-17s to Sciacca Airdrome, Sicily, on 9 July 1943. Separated from the formation on the return flight, Lt. Campbell and his wingman sighted approximately ten ME-109s attacking one of the bomber groups. Displaying outstanding combat skill the two P-38s intercepted and dispersed four of the enemy fighters as Lt. Campbell destroyed one ME-109 and damaged a second. Four other ME-109s immediately attacked the element and when both motors of his wingman's plane cut out, Lt. Campbell drove off the enemy fighters single-handed. Courageously covering his comrade until one motor was again in operation, Lt. Campbell guided him under the protection of the bomber formation and continued to protect the crippled P-38 against repeated attacks until friendly territory had been reached.

Oak Leaf Cluster for Distinguished Flying Cross

On 13 September 1943 Lt. Campbell participated in a reconnaissance mission, consisting of four P-38s, which were sent out to reconnoiter all roads from Taranto to Foggia to Potenza. The reconnaissance was carried out at a low level despite the fact that this area was strongly defended by a heavy concentration of enemy fighters and numerous anti-aircraft batteries. For almost three hours these planes patrolled roads, highways, and other transportation arteries observing all activity and spotting enemy positions. These planes landed at Tactical Headquarters and reported their findings which proved to be of vital importance from both a tactical and strategic standpoint. The information obtained was used in the subsequent planning of our operations and contributed greatly to our efforts at a time when our forces were being strongly counter-attacked.

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SummaryDistinguished Flying Cross

1st Lieutenant Robert E. Gardner, O-729333, participated in a bomber escort mission to Terni Rail Road Yards, Italy, on 28 August 1943. Lt. Gardner's Squadron was jumped by fifteen or twenty ME-109s and the flights became separated. Lt. Gardner's flight was then jumped by eight MEs from the rear and they broke into them, Lt. Gardner shooting down one ME. He then saw a badly crippled P-38 at about 21000' in imminent danger of being finished off by two MEs. Without hesitation, single-handed, he closed in on the two attackers and after a brief engagement he damaged one of them and drove the other off. Lt. Gardner then attempted to communicate with his comrade on the radio but his radio was out so Lt. Gardner flew close to him signalling him instructions when two more enemy fighters tried to come in for the kill. However, Lt. Gardner was alert and turned into them driving them off. His comrade then started to lose altitude and Lt. Gardner covered him keeping him free from attack until he bailed out at about 6000'. Lt. Gardner then made 360 degree turns until his comrade hit the water.

Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Flying Cross

On 23 August 1943 Lt. Gardner participated in an Air Sea Rescue Mission to the Gulf of Salerno, escorting a PBV. While flying at 12000' under a heavy overcast about three miles South of Campanella Point, eight ME-109s suddenly dove from above the overcast and attacked the PBV. The MEs, about fifteen or twenty of them, then attacked the twelve P-38s in diving attacks from above the overcast. The Squadron, by turning into the attackers, fought its way out away from the coast. However, one pilot lagged behind and, although he was not in the same flight as Lt. Gardner, the latter, with no thought of his own safety, unhesitatingly went in to bring him out as he was being attacked by two MEs. Lt. Gardner, with great courage and daring, succeeded in driving the MEs away but still another ME started attacking his comrade from the rear. Lt. Gardner turned into the new attacker and after a short engagement, by superior ability, succeeded in shooting the ME down out of control. He then called for his fellow pilot, who was some distance away, to come out but another ME started attacking such pilot. Lt. Gardner turned toward this attacker and his fellow pilot disappeared in a cloud. Then two MEs dove on Lt. Gardner. As they had the initial advantage Lt. Gardner couldn't pull away from them. However, realizing exactly the tight spot he was in, Lt. Gardner's great fighting spirit and courageous determination enabled him to allow his attackers to close in on him until just within range when he suddenly pulled into a tight loop and though they followed him their greater speed took them beyond him. Three more times on the way out he was attacked from the rear and above the clouds but by displaying great professional skill and cool daring he fought his way safely back.

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Distinguished Flying CrossSummary

Major Forrest H. Barker, O-427116, is an inspirational leader and has shown outstanding courage and skill as both a Flight Leader and Squadron Leader. He participated in a bomber escort mission to Marina di Catanzaro, Italy, 4 August 1943 and the Squadron was attacked by fifteen or twenty E/A. Major Barker saw two ME-109s attacking one of his comrades, turned into them and by superior tactics and skill destroyed one and damaged the other. Major Barker personally broke up two more attacks. The Squadron was repeatedly attacked by a superior force but Major Barker calmly called out his orders and the Squadron acted as a team and succeeded in destroying three enemy fighters and probably destroying and damaging five others without loss, turning a potential defeat into a glorious victory. On 23 August 1943 Major Barker's Squadron of 12 P-38s was jumped by about twenty enemy fighters from above an overcast, within four miles of the Italian Coast. When the enemy fighters first dove to attack the formation started spreading out--the worse thing they could do. Major Barker immediately realized the danger and calmly told the pilots to drop their belly tanks, to reform and they would fight their way out. His voice was so calm and reassuring that they immediately closed into formation and followed his orders to turn into the enemy fighters each time they attacked, all the time working the Squadron away from the coast and out of danger. On September 17, 1943, Major Barker led twelve P-38s, each carrying two bombs, on a dive bombing mission to Acerno, Italy. Major Barker so carefully instructed each flight leader and his individual pilots just how they should bomb and so executed his approach and made such a perfect bomb run that all bombs hit the target, causing extensive damage, except two which failed to release properly. The pilots were unanimous in stating that it was the best bomb approach made by any leader they ever followed. Although wounded on July 10, 1943, while on a dive bombing and strafing raid, this fact has not impaired his audacity in any way. After returning from the hospital he has led several very successful dive bombing and strafing raids inflicting severe damage on the enemy.

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US [REDACTED] Equals British [REDACTED]

US [REDACTED] ls British [REDACTED]

Distinguished Flying CrossSummary

Captain Carl F. Rudder, O-431823, led his Squadron of twenty-four A/C on a bomber escort mission to Chilivani, Sardinia, on 24 June 1943. About five minutes after the bombers dropped their bombs, at about 14000' Capt. Rudder sighted about fifteen to twenty E/A on the same level at 10 o'clock flying in the opposite direction, some of them being within three to four hundred yards of his flight. Capt. Rudder called a left turn and his flight broke into 3 E/A and the other flights broke into other E/A breaking up their attack. Of the 3 E/A Capt. Rudder's flight broke into he succeeded in destroying one and damaging a second. Just as Capt. Rudder rolled out of his turn he saw some ME-109s to the rear and above some distance away and at practically the same time saw 2 ME-109s crossing in front at a 45° angle. Capt. Rudder, with coolness and precision, turned his guns on one of the 2 E/A and destroyed it, his wingman damaging the other, and immediately after took evasive action and avoided the ME-109s coming in from the rear. He then called a 360° turn and reassembled his Squadron and led them back to the base. In this encounter Capt. Rudder's Squadron succeeded in destroying 7 E/A, probably destroyed 2 additional, and damaged 3 others, against the loss of one. Capt. Rudder has proved that he is possessed of the qualities which make a successful Squadron Leader--courage, daring at the right time, coolness and good judgment under fire.

US [REDACTED] ls BRIT [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Awards British [REDACTED]

Distinguished Flying Cross

Summary

1st Lieutenant Hubert M. Blair, O-659061, participated in a bomber escort mission to Chilivani, Sardinia, 24 June 1943. After the bombing run his Squadron encountered stiff opposition from about 20 ME-109s. Flying at 14,000' and being about 10 miles inland from Villanova, Lt. Blair, leading White Flight, attacked a formation of 3 ME-109s. Of the three only one escaped as Lt. Blair shot down one while the Red Flight accounted for another. Immediately after completing a 360 degree turn, Lt. Blair saw that his flight was being attacked from the rear by four more ME-109s, one of which was already on the tail of his No. 4 man. As the latter P-38 dove to try to shake the ME-109 which was doggedly pursuing it, Lt. Blair, without regard for his personal safety, turned into the enemy and then followed it down until his fire had full effect, the ME-109 crashing into the ground a few seconds later. In these encounters Lt. Blair showed not only a high degree of professional aptitude, but also outstanding leadership and team play under fire. Lt. Blair's quick thinking and daring action at crucial times are permanently reflected in the Squadron's operations that day--7 victories against the loss of only one plane.

[REDACTED] als Brit [REDACTED]

Distinguished Flying CrossSummary

1st Lieutenant Leonard L. Conkle, O-725265, on 13 September 1943 participated in a reconnaissance mission, consisting of four P-38s, which were sent out to reconnoiter all roads from Taranto to Foggia to Potenza. The reconnaissance was carried out at a low level despite the fact that this area was strongly defended by a heavy concentration of enemy fighters and numerous anti-aircraft batteries. For almost three hours these planes patrolled roads, highways, and other transportation arteries observing all activity and spotting enemy positions. These planes landed at Tactical Headquarters and reported their findings which proved to be of vital importance from both a tactical and strategic standpoint. The information obtained was used in the subsequent planning of our operations and contributed greatly to our efforts at a time when our forces were being strongly counter-attacked. He has led many flights on dive bombing and strafing raids to Pantelleria, Sicily and Italy during which many direct hits were scored and important targets destroyed, thus effectively disrupting the enemy's efforts.

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Distinguished Flying Cross

Summary

1st Lieutenant Harry C. Crim, Jr., O-659669, on 13 September 1943 participated in a reconnaissance mission, consisting of four P-38s, which were sent out to reconnoiter all roads from Taranto to Foggia to Potenza. The reconnaissance was carried out at a low level despite the fact that this area was strongly defended by a heavy concentration of enemy fighters and numerous anti-aircraft batteries. For almost three hours these planes patrolled roads, highways, and other transportation arteries observing all activity and spotting enemy positions. These planes landed at Tactical Headquarters and reported their findings which proved to be of vital importance from both a tactical and strategic standpoint. The information obtained was used in the subsequent planning of our operations and contributed greatly to our efforts at a time when our forces were being strongly counter-attacked.

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Distinguished Flying CrossSummary

Captain Charles J. Crocker, O-659450, participated in a bomber escort mission to Bo Rizzo A/D, Sicily, 10 May 1943. After the first group of bombers came off the target, Captain Crocker, leading Blue Flight, saw 6 ME-109s attacking a crippled B-17. He and his wingman (the other two members of his flight had left previously to return to Base due to engine trouble) turned into them and drove them off. Immediately about 20 ME-109s surrounded them and another element led by Major Owens and attempted to force them inland. In the ensuing dog fights Major Owens' plane was shot up and he had to feather one engine. Immediately, 4 ME-109s peeled off on his tail and Captain Crocker, realizing the imminent danger of one of his fellow pilots, without hesitation or thought for his own safety, dove into the MEs spraying the air with lead and succeeded in driving the MEs off. In these encounters Captain Crocker probably saved Major Owens' life and also enabled the B-17 to get away safely. Then two more 109s attacked his element from the rear but by turning into them he drove them off and he and his wingman succeeded in getting away safely.

On 22 May 1943 Captain Crocker again participated in a bomber escort mission to Bo Rizzo A/D. Flying at 26000' he saw 2 ME-109s attacking a crippled B-17. He immediately broke into them and succeeded in diverting their fire away from the B-17 and towards him, thus permitting the B-17 to get away. In the ensuing fight one of the MEs peeled off but he opened deadly fire on the other at 300 yards and closed at 100 yards when the 109 went into a spin and splashed into the sea.

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[REDACTED] equals Britis [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] equals British [REDACTED]

Distinguished Flying Cross

Summary

1st Lieutenant George D. Wightman, O-725393, participated in a bomber escort mission to Chilivani, Sardinia, 24 June 1943. After the bombing run he was flying in the vicinity of Chilivani when his Squadron was jumped by about 20 ME-109s. During the course of the dog fights he turned head on into an attacking ME-109 and fired at him from about 150 yards when the E/A rolled out and started a climb. Lt. Wightman maneuvered into firing position and started firing at 200' and ceased firing at about 50' when the ME-109 crashed to destruction. Lt. Wightman then saw an ME-109, apparently unnoticed, on the tail of a P-38 and just after the ME-109 started shooting Lt. Wightman's element turned into it and in a second or two the pilot of the ME-109 was no longer thinking of destroying the P-38 but was fully occupied trying to save himself which he was unable to do as Lt. Wightman and his wingman poured lead into the attacker until he crashed into the sea. Immediately after two MEs sneaked up on the tail of the last man in Lt. Wightman's flight. Without hesitation Lt. Wightman turned into them and succeeded in driving them off only to find that he had an E/A on his own tail and the bullets were passing uncomfortably close. After several anxious moments Lt. Wightman finally succeeded in evading his attacker. During the whole encounter Lt. Wightman displayed great professional skill, acting with daring and precision, with little thought for his own safety, when his fellow pilots were in danger.



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Summary

Captain Robert H. Wilson, O-428432, leading Blue Flight, participated in a bomber escort mission to Trapani, Sicily, 18 May 1943. The second group of bombers made their run about five minutes after the first group and Captain Wilson's Squadron was covering the last group of bombers out of the target when the Fighters were jumped by about 40 to 50 E/A (mostly ME-109s and FW-190s). It soon became apparent that the Squadron was in for a hot time as the enemy was not only superior in number but used the most aggressive and skillful tactics of any E/A encountered by this Squadron. Captain Wilson did not destroy any E/A this day but, by fine team play, courage and daring, coupled with high qualities of leadership and excellent judgment, he did something more important--kept our losses down and help to make the day a victorious one instead of what could have easily been a sad defeat. The E/A, in twos and fours, started attacking our Fighters from various angles, being sure to pounce on any unfortunate who became separated. To start off with 4 ME-109s attacked Captain Wilson's flight from the rear and he turned into them causing them to break. He then noticed two E/A on the tail of No. 4 man of White Flight and immediately turned into them and drove them off. He then called a 180 degree turn and his flight was jumped. In the ensuing dog fight his second element became separated. He headed out towards the coast to get away from the hornets' nest of E/A when he heard a call for help from a P-38 on one engine. Throwing caution to the winds and with firm determination to save his fellow pilot, he and his wingman turned back into the target area and found 3 ME-109s attacking the crippled plane. By turning into the MEs and blasting away with their guns they forced the MEs to break off. They then covered the P-38 until it was out of danger. Captain Wilson's trouble was not over yet as another call for help was heard. He and his wingman did a 180 degree turn and found a single P-38 being attacked and by pointing their noses at the attackers they forced them to break off. He then started out to sea again leading about 8 P-38s which had tacked on. The enemy was still persistent and about 10 or 12 E/A jumped them. In the ensuing dog fight they held the E/A off until they could use scattered clouds for cover. Captain Wilson then picked up a single P-38 and two others and led them safely out below the overcast, the other four also getting out safely. On 24 June 1943, Captain Wilson was leading No. 2 Squadron which was part of a bomber escort to Chilivani, Sardinia, but were acting as top cover for No. 1 Squadron. After the bombers had made their run, about ten miles from the coast about 25 E/A were sighted. Captain Wilson sighted 2 E/A above at 3 o'clock which he directed his Blue Flight to watch. At the same time there were two calls for 9 o'clock. His Squadron was within covering distance of No. 1 Squadron and when E/A started coming in to attack he broke left into them and drove them off. Blue Flight was then being attacked from 3 o'clock and 9 o'clock. Blue Flight turned into one group and Captain Wilson's flight took care of the other and just at that time he saw some E/A coming in on White Flight and drove them off damaging one plane. He made a 360 degree turn and E/A were coming in from 3 and 11 o'clock. He broke left and the E/A coming in from 11 o'clock peeled out. He then turned head-on into the other 2 E/A and started firing at about 100 yards at one of the E/A which returned the fire. At about 50 yards a piece of the E/A's cowling or canopy blew off and the E/A ceased firing. Captain Wilson continued to fire and just missed colliding with the E/A by a few feet. He looked back and saw it roll over on its back and go down as if out of control.

US CONFIDENTIAL Equals Brit

US CONFIDENTIAL Equals British Confidential

Distinguished Flying CrossSummary

2nd Lieutenant Harry T. Hanna, O-737778, participated in a mission to patrol a convoy of one Cruiser and four Destroyers in the Aegean Sea on 9 October 1943. On the first turn after contacting the convoy about twenty-five or thirty JU-87s were sighted approaching the convoy from the Northwest at about 8000'. The Leader maneuvered his Squadron, consisting of only seven P-38s, to the rear of the enemy aircraft. He then directed White Flight of three P-38s to stay up as top cover and Red Flight, of which Lt. Hanna was leading the second element, dove into the JU-87s and started attacking them. Lt. Hanna immediately opened fire on a Stuka which burst into flames and fell into the sea. He did a 180 degree turn and opened fire on another which also burst into flames and the pilot and gunner bailed out. He attacked the third from dead astern and a little above and as he followed through with the attack he passed beneath the enemy aircraft and some oil fell onto his windshield. By a quick maneuver he was able to get a good burst in on another Stuka, which was attacking a P-38, from about a 30 degree deflection and it started burning and went in. He broke off and pulled into position to fire on a fifth one. The wing broke away and the plane caught fire and went in from 2500'. He then noticed a JU-87 on his Squadron Leader's tail and attacked it from a 90 degree deflection. The 87 immediately caught fire and fell into the sea. In fifteen minutes Lt. Hanna destroyed five JU-87s and damaged a sixth. Lt. Hanna's disregard for his own personal safety, his alertness in protecting his comrades, his remarkable gunnery and great skill as a combat pilot were very important factors in his great accomplishment of destroying five enemy aircraft in one flight and in the great victory scored by the Squadron--destroying sixteen JU-87s and one JU-88 without loss.

US CONFIDENTIAL Equals British Confidential

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Distinguished Flying Cross

Summary

1st Lieutenant James M. Hollingsworth, O-730495, has earned for himself a most enviable reputation in his Squadron for his flying ability, resourcefulness, calmness and self possession at all times, particularly under fire. On 10 May 1944, while escorting B-17s to Trapani, Sicily, the Squadron was attacked by a superior number of enemy aircraft, a vicious dog fight ensuing. Lt. Hollingsworth was flying Lt. Crim's wing at the time and they turned to attack four ME-109s diving in string on a flight of four P-38s below. Two of the enemy aircraft were damaged and the attackers dispersed. Subsequently, while flying out of the target area, they noticed a P-38 smoking badly from one engine. They covered this cripple until it reached cloud cover, driving off three Me-109s which tried to finish off the cripple. As soon as the latter had reached cloud cover, nine ME-109s appeared and the two P-38s hit the deck. They were followed by two ME-109s for at least fifty miles and gave each other mutual support, driving off repeated attacks. In this way they conserved their fuel and were able to save their aircraft, landing at a field close to the shore with less than ten gallons of gasoline. On 15 June 1943, Lt. Hollingsworth was flying Lt. Campbell's wing while escorting bombers to Milo A/D, Sicily. On the return leg they destroyed a MA-202 and shortly thereafter spotted a life raft. Despite the fact that Lt. Hollingsworth had only twenty rounds of ammunition left per machine gun and that ME-109s were visible in the distance, he together with Lt. Campbell circled the life raft for an hour until relief planes arrived. On 11 July 1943, Lt. Campbell's plane was seriously damaged on a dive bombing and strafing raid over Sicily. Although his plane was damaged, Lt. Hollingsworth covered Lt. Campbell whose plane was barely maneuverable. Besides these specific instances of Lt. Hollingsworth's courage and ability, he has the record of never having been parted from his element leader and no enemy aircraft ever has been able to fire a single round at the man whose wing he has flown. He has completed numerous dive bombing and strafing raids during which he has shown a complete lack of regard for his own safety in order to fulfill instructions and deliver the most damage possible to the enemy. He has destroyed two enemy aircraft, a Dornier 217 on 25 May 1943, and a ME-109 on 24 June 1943.

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Distinguished Flying CrossSummary

1st Lieutenant Kenneth L. Waldron, O-729383, on 13 September 1943, participated in a reconnaissance mission, consisting of four P-38s, which were sent out to reconnoiter all roads from Taranto to Foggia to Potenza. The reconnaissance was carried out at a low level despite the fact that this area was strongly defended by a heavy concentration of enemy fighters and numerous anti-aircraft batteries. For almost three hours these planes patrolled roads, highways, and other transportation arteries observing all activity and spotting enemy positions. These planes landed at Tactical Headquarters and reported their findings which proved to be of vital importance from both a tactical and strategic standpoint. The information obtained was used in the subsequent planning of our operations and contributed greatly to our efforts at a time when our forces were being strongly counter-attacked.

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US CONFIDENTIAL Equals British CONFIDENTIAL

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Distinguished Flying CrossSummary

2nd Lieutenant Wayne L. Blue, O-729307, participated in a mission to patrol a convoy of one Cruiser and four Destroyers in the Aegean Sea, on October 9, 1943. On the first turn after contacting the convoy about twenty-five or thirty JU-87s were sighted approaching the convoy from the Northwest at about 8000'. The Leader maneuvered his Squadron, consisting of only seven P-38s, to the rear of the enemy aircraft. He then directed Lt. Blue, who was leading a flight of three, to furnish top cover while his flight of four went down to attack the Stukas. After the Leader's flight started to close in on the Stukas a JU-88, previously unnoticed, dove from the rear and above to knock out the tail end man of the attacking flight. Lt. Blue had no chance to get on the tail of the JU-88 but by a quick maneuver brought his flight within range of the enemy aircraft just as it got within range of his comrade. Although he had a difficult deflection shot Lt. Blue, by superior aerial gunnery, damaged the 88 on his first burst causing it to break off its attack. The 88 then attempted to evade Lt. Blue's flight and return to base but without success as Lt. Blue fired another long burst into it and it crashed into the sea. Lt. Blue's flight furnished perfect cover for the attacking flight and later when a JU-87 made itself obnoxious they immediately destroyed it. The Squadron of only seven planes destroyed seventeen enemy aircraft, probably destroyed two and damaged three others without loss. The Squadron Leader said that Lt. Blue meticulously followed his orders and his flight deserved equal credit for the great victory scored by the Squadron because without the splendid cooperation given by them it would have been impossible. Lt. Blue has also proved himself to be an excellent dive bomber and strafier. During the invasion of Sicily he destroyed many motor trucks, cars and other important targets which interfered with reinforcements being rushed to the front lines by the enemy.

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US [REDACTED] ls Britis [REDACTED]

Distinguished Flying CrossSummary

2nd Lieutenant Lloyd O. Hendrix, O-729005, on 18 July 1943, participated in a escort for a Sunderland Flying Boat on an Air Sea Rescue Mission to the Coast of Italy near Naples. While flying a search pattern, in elements of two, Lt. Hendrix, leading his element, sighted 15 JU-52s about 25 feet above the water in five elements of three in line abreast, about 15 miles south of the island of Ischia headed towards Sardinia. Lt. Hendrix first called them out and then circled above and to the side to make certain that there was no fighter escort. Finding no fighter escort, Lt. Hendrix and his wingman initiated the attack from the rear in a shallow dive. Lt. Hendrix's first burst was little short, but with remarkable gunnery each of his next two bursts, in one continuous pass, accounted for one E/A--his second burst caught the left-hand A/C in the fuselage and wings causing it to explode in mid-air and crash; his third burst started an engine of his second destroyed A/C on fire and it nosed over into the sea and exploded. Lt. Hendrix then made a 360 degree turn and again with unerring accuracy shot up his third victim which burst into flames and exploded. He then made another run and on his third pass one of the two remaining JUs attempted to turn and flee but Lt. Hendrix kept his record perfect for the day by a deadly burst into the front of the fuselage and wings and it followed the routine set by its predecessors by bursting into flames and crashing into the sea. Lt. Hendrix and his wingman then circled to make sure that there were no more E/A and they then rejoined the Sunderland. Not one of the 15 JUs sighted and called out by Lt. Hendrix escaped destruction, eight other Pilots on the mission accounted for the remaining eleven. The remarkable feat of destroying 4 E/A in less than five minutes required great professional skill, not only as a pilot but as an aerial gunner, and also required a high degree of mental and physical coordination which transformed Lt. Hendrix and Gigolo George (his ship) into a perfect combat team. Lt. Hendrix gave promise on his second mission of becoming a top-notch combat pilot. On 10 May 1943, over Cap Boso O Lilibeo, the Squadron Leader, whose wing he was flying, became tangled with some ME-109s and a vicious dog fight followed. Twice when the Leader was busy attacking and unaware of E/A coming in on his tail, Lt. Hendrix carried out his duty like a veteran and drove the attacking E/A off, thereby making it possible for his leader to destroy 2 ME-109s and get home safely although his A/C was pretty well shot up.

US [REDACTED] ls Britis [REDACTED]

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Distinguished Flying CrossSummary

2nd Lieutenant Herbert T. Hickman, O-16019659, on 19 August 1943, while escorting B-17s to Foggia, Italy, he was flying the wing of Lt. Hollingsworth. On the return journey out from the target, after leaving the coast of Italy, his flight was attacked by a single E/A. Lt. Hollingsworth and Lt. Hickman turned into it and, during the ensuing engagement, became separated from the rest of the Squadron. Just at this moment there came a radio call from the bombers asking for help from the fighters against E/A. This element, about 12,000' above and five miles behind the bombers, dove down and sighted two MA-202s. Each pilot chose one as his target. After pursuing his enemy for a short time Lt. Hickman found himself alone on the starboard side of the bomber formation. When he saw four MA-202s climbing up beneath him to attack the bombers and despite the fact that he was alone Lt. Hickman, without any regard for his own safety, daringly attacked them. On his first pass he destroyed one MA-202. He pulled up sharply to maintain the advantage of altitude then made a second pass, firing at two E/A seemingly without any effect. Upon pulling up the second time he saw another MA-202 pass under and start a turn to try to get on his tail. He reefed his ship sharply to the right, out turned the enemy, damaged him on his first burst and sent him crashing down in flames a few seconds later. The enemy thereupon broke off the engagement.

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[REDACTED] als British [REDACTED]

U.S. Naval Air Station, Naval Air Station, British Naval Air Station

Distinguished Flying Cross

Summary

2nd Lieutenant Homer L. Sprinkle, O-743527, participated as an escort for a convoy of warships in the Aegean Sea on 9 October 1943. His Squadron, consisting of seven P-38s, sighted about twenty-five or thirty JU-87s shortly after contacting the convoy. Lt. Sprinkle was flying No. 4 position in Red Flight which attacked the Stukas. As Red Flight closed in Lt. Sprinkle maneuvered into position and gave a Stuka two bursts and it caught on fire and crashed into the sea. He then fired from very close range at another and the tail gunner stopped firing and bailed out and the Stuka rolled off on its left wing and disappeared in the sea. He then saw two Stukas closing in on one of his comrades. Although the tail gunners started firing at him he boldly closed in on them and chased one off and fired at the other from less than 200' and it burst into flames and went into the sea without anyone getting out of it. A fourth he knocked off the tail of one of his comrades and although the tail gunner put a few holes in his aircraft Lt. Sprinkle closed in to very close range and started firing. The Stuka started streaming black smoke and fell into the sea. Lt. Sprinkle's courage under fire, alertness and great combat skill were very important factors in his Squadron destroying seventeen enemy aircraft without loss.

U.S. Naval Air Station, Naval Air Station, British Naval Air Station



US [REDACTED] equals british [REDACTED]

Silver StarSummary

Major John G. Bright, O-889017, led the Group formation of P-38s on a mission to escort B-26 bombers with Milis A/D, Sardinia, as the target. Just after the bombing run had been completed, Major Bright observed twenty-two ME-109s directly below the formation. Leading a flight of twelve P-38s through an intense barrage of anti-aircraft fire, he attacked the superior force of enemy planes. In the ensuing encounter, five ME-109s were destroyed, one probably destroyed and two damaged without loss to our fighters. The enemy planes were successfully dispersed thereby preventing them from making any further attacks. The initiative and clear thinking displayed by Major Bright contributed directly to the complete rout of the enemy fighters. By his outstanding leadership and coolness under fire, this officer upheld the highest traditions of the Army Air Forces.

Purple Heart

Major Forrest H. Barker, O-427116, was wounded in lower right arm while dive bombing and strafing a enemy truck convoy over Sicily, necessitating hospital treatment, on July 10, 1943.

2nd Lieutenant Herbert J. Walker, O-729063, received two bullet wounds in arm while flying over Sicily, necessitating hospital treatment, on July, 13, 1943.

Staff Sergeant Eldon F. Heistand, 19021025, suffered the loss of left foot as a result of enemy land mine while driving a weapons carrier on duty near Ste Marie du Zit.

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US [REDACTED] equals British [REDACTED]

LEGION OF MERIT

Technical Sergeant Louis M. Gillet, 19049452, for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services in North Africa from March 1943 to September 1943. By unusual mechanical and administrative ability, he initiated and installed timesaving practices which made possible a greater number of engine changes without additional personnel. Throughout the Sicilian Campaign he and his crew maintained the combat quota by using salvaged parts and improvisations to keep all planes in operational condition.

Technical Sergeant Clarence G. Johnson, 19049421, for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services in North Africa from March 1943 to August 1943. Through his exceptional ability and resourcefulness as a mechanic and engineer, he has contributed services of great value in devising new and efficient means of assembling, maintaining and repairing his squadron's aircraft. A device to test propeller governors which he designed and constructed has made possible a great reduction in the time previously required to test this equipment.

Technical Sergeant Howard J. Larsen, 19010529, for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services in North Africa from March 1943 to September 1943. In correcting an altitude defect in one type of aircraft, he greatly increased the efficiency of that particular type. His resourcefulness and persistency to accomplish an assignment, coupled with his unusual mechanical ability and engineering skill, have been responsible for keeping many aircraft operational for combat which otherwise would have remained grounded.

US [REDACTED] equals British [REDACTED]

CONFIDENTIAL Equals British

ANNEX "B"Summary

1st Lieutenant Robert E. Glendening, O-791090, is one of the outstanding pilots of his Squadron. His extreme devotion to duty, all-around excellent work and team play have been very important factors in the fine success scored by his Squadron and in building up a great esprit de corps within the Squadron. On 24 June 1943 on a bomber escort mission to Chilivani, Sardinia, Lt. Glendening lead the second element of Blue Flight. On this mission there were six wingmen who had never been over the enemy lines or had only been over once. At this inopportune time the MEs attacked the Squadron from all sides in twos and fours. Although several times in the ensuing dog fights the flights and elements became separated, the Flight and Element Leaders, by inspirational leadership and the exercise of sound judgment and daring at the right times, succeeded in destroying seven E/A at the loss of only one. Although Lt. Glendening was handicapped by having a wingman who was making his first trip over the enemy lines, his effort was outstanding and highly instrumental in making the day a victorious one for the Squadron. During the fight he remained cool and alert, always being ready to turn into attacking MEs and drive them away from his fellow pilots. On one of these occasions Red and White Flights broke left and his Flight Leader, to avoid some MEs, broke right. Immediately two other MEs got on his Flight Leader's tail without him knowing it. Before the MEs could do any damaged however, Lt. Glendening maneuvered into firing position forcing the MEs to break off their attack. Lt. Glendening's first reaction was to attempt to finish off one of the MEs but not wishing to enganger his inexperienced wingman he broke off the attack and rejoined the formation. Lt. Glendening's record in dive bombing and strafing has been brilliant. On his first dive bombing mission to Sardinia, he scored a direct hit on a barracks and since then destroyed several buildings and gun emplacements in Pantelleria and Sicily. During the invasion of Sicily on four dive bombing and strafing missions he destroyed motor trucks and railroad cars and did great damage to a power station and administration buildings. He also made a direct hit on a bridge which halted a convoy of 50 or more trucks which were rushing reinforcements to our enemy.

CONFIDENTIAL Equals British

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Summary

2nd Lieutenant Henry C. Alm, O-733772, has developed during his combat career from a Wingman to a Flight Leader through his professional skill, aggressive spirit and qualities of leadership. He has participated in numerous dive bombing and strafing missions which have caused extensive damage to the enemy. On 8 July 1943, while on a strafing mission over eastern Sicily, Lt. Alm strafed a radar station, getting in a long accurate burst closing to very close range despite intense light flak that shot off one-half of his ailerons. (A few days later, during the invasion of Sicily, after dive bombing a truck convoy, Lt. Alm helped strafe two long trains. Most of the cars immediately burst into flames and then the two locomotives which were in a round house were machine-gunned despite intense, accurate flak which shot out one engine of a comrade's aircraft. On 18 September 1943, while on his fiftieth mission, Lt. Alm participated in a strafing mission against Foggia Satellites, Italy. He destroyed two JU-88s on the ground, which burst into flames, and silenced the guns which were pouring out flak from a farm building.

- 2 -

[REDACTED] equals British [REDACTED]

US [REDACTED] is British [REDACTED]

Summary

2nd Lieutenant Robert L. Carey, O-729314, participated in a bomber escort mission to Marina di Catanzaro, Italy on 26 August 1943. Lt. Carey was leading the second element of White Flight when two ME-109s got on his wingman's tail. Inasmuch as Red Flight had broken away from the enemy aircraft, there was no one to cover this element. Lt. Carey immediately sized up the situation, broke out of formation and engaged the enemy thus freeing his comrade. Again on 6 September 1943 while covering a convoy during the invasion of Italy, Lt. Carey was leading a two ship element that was attacked by four ME-109s diving out of the sun. Lt. Carey by superior skill outmaneuvered the two enemy aircraft that had attacked him and then went to the rescue of his wingman who was being shot up by the other two ME-109s. Lt. Carey drove them off while his comrade had to feather one engine, then escorted him out of the danger zone, repulsing repeated attacks by the enemy aircraft and bringing him safely back to base. Lt. Carey's skill, courage and regard for his fellow pilots have earned him an enviable reputation in his Squadron.

- 3 -

[REDACTED] EQUALS BRITISH [REDACTED]

US [REDACTED] equals British [REDACTED]

Summary

2nd Lt. John S. Garbett, O-732217, on 24 June 1943, participated in a bomber escort mission to Chilivani, Sardinia. While flying at about 13000' his Squadron was attacked by about fifteen or twenty ME-109s. A vicious dog fight followed and an ME-109 attacking from the rear gave Lt. Garbett a very uncomfortable time until he was able to shake him. Immediately on freeing himself from his attacker he saw an ME shooting up one of his fellow pilots and it was quite apparent that he was in great danger. Lt. Garbett, with dash and daring, turned into the attacker and after a short engagement not only freed his fellow pilot but sent the attacker hurtling to destruction. Lt. Garbett then looked around to join his flight when he saw two more MEs coming in to attack him. Another pilot joined up with him and they turned into the MEs and drove them away, and successfully repeated the same tactics when attacked again a few minutes later.

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Summary

2nd Lieutenant John D. Joyce, O-732264, is an aggressive, capable and fearless fighter pilot. He has inflicted severe damage upon the enemy during numerous dive bombing and strafing raids, making a direct hit on the important target of the Zinc Works at Iglesias, Sardinia, on 24 June 1943 with a 1000 lb. bomb. While escorting B-17s to Terni, Italy, on 28 August 1943, Lt. Joyce proved not only his professional skill, but also an utter disregard for his own safety to help his fellow pilots. A flight of four P-38s was attacked by 11 enemy aircraft and called for help. Since the flight in which he was flying did not turn to help them, Lt. Joyce immediately peeled out of formation and attacked the enemy destroying an ME-109 in the encounter. He then assisted in covering a crippled P-38, driving off repeated attacks by the enemy who was trying to finish off the disabled aircraft. While driving them off Lt. Joyce severely damaged a MA-202 and thus protected his comrade from further enemy fire. Lt. Joyce's aggressive combat spirit and superior professional skill were responsible to a great extent in preventing this encounter with a numerically superior enemy from becoming a sad defeat and turning it into a victorious one.

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WAR DIARY  
37TH FIGHTER SQUADRON

December 2

Major Downs, Engineering liaison officer from Portland, inspected new barracks with Commanding Officer, of New Air Base and S-2.

Telephone report from Pierce County Sheriff's Office that two planes had collided near Nisqually River. This was confirmed. Lt. Finley killed in crash. Lt. Jackson parachuted to safety.

December 3

Enemy Fleet sighted off coast of San Francisco. 37th Fighter Squadron alerted. Ground crews placed on duty. Four pilots on alert, six on ready.

December 4

Message General Kepner alert ended, Pursuit Aviation on standby status, flights may proceed in immediate vicinity of airdrome. Planes will be gassed and readied for immediate service.

Report of fleet approaching coast proves erroneous.

December 5

Nothing to report.

December 6

P-38 Plane crashed north of Shelton, Washington. Lt. Conkle, pilot parachuted to safety. Plane was lost.

December 7

Nothing to report.

December 8

Nothing to report.

December 9

Nothing to report.

December 10

Nothing to report.

December 11

Nothing to report.

December 12

The following Pilots departed for Pojeek: Lt. MacKay, Lt. Mathews, Lt. Staiger, Lt. Jackson, Lt. Crane, and Lt. Cochran.

December 13

Majors Keating, & Jenkins, visited the Squadron.

December 14

Lt. Treese departed this station destination unknown.



WAR DIARY  
37TH FIGHTER SQUADRON

November 20 - '42

Weather: Inclement in early hours improved in afternoon allowing maneuvers to be conducted. Three tactical flights were conducted at the following time:  
Red Flight 1521-1650 Capt. Kelley - No enemy contacts made.  
Blue Flight 1525-1646 Lt. Rudder - No enemy contacts made.  
White Glight 1525-1639 Lt. Palmer - No enemy contacts made.

November 21

Nothing to report.

November 22

Nothing to report.

November 23

Major Keating visited the Squadron for an inspection and Pilot Meeting.

November 24

Lt. Sur, 338th Fighter Squadron crashed at Onalaska. Report came from State Highway patrol at 1150. Capt. McCarthy aided in handling the crash, seeking affidavit material from witnesses to aid The Accident Board in determining the cause of the crash.

November 25

Nothing to report.

November 26

Thanksgiving Dinner was served at regular mess. The meal was Excellent.

November 27

Nothing to report.

November 28

Nothing to report.

November 29

Nothing to report.

November 30

Major Keating and Capt. Blanton showed films and gave a talk on "Experiences at the Front."

December 1

Nothing to report.

WAR DIARY  
37TH FIGHTER SQUADRON

Nothing to report. December 15

Nothing to report. December 16

December 17  
Unidentified target sighted off San Francisco Gate. Radio silence 0935.  
Target later identified as normal and status resumed.

Nothing to report. December 18.

Nothing to report. December 19

Nothing to report. December 20

Nothing to report. December 21

Nothing to report. December 22

Nothing to report. December 23

Nothing to report. December 24

Nothing to report. December 25

Nothing to report. December 26

December 27  
Major Keating visted the Squadron for an inspection and Pilot meeting.

December 28  
Major Heckel, Major Albert, Major Neely and Captain Welch visted the Squadron. Lt. Walker reported to the Squadron as assistant Intelligence Officer.

WAR DIARY  
37TH FIGHTER SQUADRON

December 29

Lt. George S. Elliot crashed about one-fourth mile off end of runway at Olympia Airport when engine failed after attempting to land with feathered prop. Time 1718. Ship No. 43-2062.

December 30

Nothing to report.

December 31

Nothing to report.

January 1

Nothing to report.

January 2

Nothing to report.

January 3

Nothing to report.

January 4

Squadron visited by four Canadian Flyers.

January 5

Squadron moved from Olympia Airport to McChord Field Washington.

January 6

Nothing to report.

January 7

Nothing to report.

January 8

Nothing to report.

January 9

Nothing to report.

January 10

Nothing to report.

January 11

Nothing to report.

January 12

Nothing to report.

WAR DIARY  
37TH FIGHTER SQUADRON

January 13

Lt. Mason O. Thompson reported crashed into mountain near McChord Field, Washington and later found dead. Time: 1850.

January 14

Nothing to report.

January 15

Captain Wendell J. Kelley made crash landing at McChord Field, Washington. Reported not seriously injured. Time 1305.

January 16

Major John G. Bright was assigned Squadron Commander.

January 17

Nothing to report.

January 18

Squadron left McChord Field, Washington, via train. Destination unknown.

January 19

Nothing to report.

January 20

Nothing to report.

January 21

Nothing to report.

January 22

Nothing to report.

January 23

Nothing to report.

January 24

Squadron reached the unknown destination: Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, at 0630 A.M.

January 25

Nothing to report.

January 26

Nothing to report.

January 27

Nothing to report.

January 28

Nothing to report.

WAR DIARY  
37TH FIGHTER SQUADRON

Nothing to report. January 29

Nothing to report. January 30

Nothing to report. January 31

Nothing to report. February 1

Nothing to report. February 2

Nothing to report. February 3

Nothin to report. February 4

Nothing to report. February 5

Nothing to report. February 6

February 7  
Squadron boarded train for embarkation point in New York City and stayed the night on the good ship F. H. Alexandri.

February 8  
Squadron set sail from the good old U.S.A. for an unknown destination.

Nothing to report. February 9

Nothing to report. February 10

Nothing to report. February 11

Nothing to report. February 12

Nothing to report. February 13

Nothing to report. February 14

WAR DIARY  
37TH FIGHTER SQUADRON

February 15

Nothing to report for diary until February 21. (*Stayed over last 14 days*)

February 21

Squadron departed from the F. H. Alexandria in Oran, North Africa and boarded train for Bivouac Area No. 1.

February 22

Nothing to report from February 22 to 27. (*time spent on "Med Hill" bivouac area*)

February 27

Squadron departed from Bivouac Area No. 1, for Le Senia Airport.

February 28

Nothing to report from February 28 to March 17. (*intervening time spent assembling A/C and training missions*)

March 17

"C" Flight moved to Mediouna Airport.

March 18

Nothing to report from March 18 to March 22.

March 22

"B" Flight moved to Mediouna Airport to join "C" Flight.

March 23

Nothing to report.

March 24

Nothing to report.

March 25

Nothing to report.

March 26

Squadron personnel less "A" Flight at Mediouna Airport.

March 27

Nothing to report.

March 28

Squadron reached Casablanca and joined "B" and "C" Flights at Mediouna Air Base.

March 29

Nothing to report.

March 30

"A" Flight joined Squadron at Mediouna Airport.

March 31

Nothing to report.

WAR DIARY  
37TH FIGHTER SQUADRON

April 1

Nothing to report.

April 2

Nothing to report.

April 3

Lt. Henry crashed when attempting to land. Plane was caught in prop wash and did not accept the acceleration of the left engine when attempting to pull out and go around field. The left wing tip dragged and the plane skidded off the runway. Lt. Henry was un-injured.

April 4

Nothing to report.

April 5

Nothing to report.

April 6

Nothing to report.

April 7

Nothing to report.

April 8

Nothing to report.

April 9

Nothing to report.

April 10

Nothing to report.

April 11

Nothing to report.

April 12

Nothing to report

*Intervening time spent training*

April 13

Lt. Hollingsworth had taxi accident after ferrying plane from Birschid to 48th F. Sq. Faulty left brake responsible for accident--Lt. Hollingsworth un-injured.

*Rechecked*

April 14

Nothing to report in diary until April 25.

April 25

Supplies of the Squadron were loaded on train at Casablanca.

WAR DIARY  
37TH FIGHTER SQUADRON

April 26

At 0700 O'clock, the first truck convoy departed for Telergma Air Base.

April 27

At 0845 O'clock, the ground echelon left Mediouna Air Base via truck to board train at Casablanca en route to Telergma Air Base.

April 28

Nothing to report.

April 29

Nothing to report.

April 30

Nothing to report.

May 1

At 1100 O'clock, the first truck convoy reached its destination, Telergma Air Base, safely.

May 2

At 0430 O'clock, the first ground echelon reached their destination, Telergma Air Base, safely.

May 3

Nothing to report.

May 4

At 1615 O'clock, the air echelon departed from Mediouna Air Base and stopped over night at Relizane.

May 5

~~Nothing to report.~~ *First Air Echelon reached Telergma Air Base. Second Air Echelon also arrived.*

May 6

MISSION NO. 1. At 0855 O'clock, 12 P-38's off on Anti-shiping Mission as escorts for B-25's of the 321st Bomb Group. Two planes down at 1250 which accompanied the 48th Fighter Squadron--Nine planes down at "one at 1245. Robert T. Thayer (2nd Lt.), missing in action. Plane #42-12944.

May 7

0900-Pilots received briefing in Group Operations. - Mission cancelled due to weather conditions.

May 8

0925-12 pilots took off on Escort Mission for B-25's for anti-shiping patrol. 2 hospital boats cited about 12:30 east of Tunisia heading toward Sicily. Bombers flew around boats. Nothing else to report.

*Remaining Ground Echelon left Mediouna Air Base en route to Telergma Air Base.*



WAR DIARY  
37TH FIGHTER SQUADRON

May 9

0935-12 planes up on escort mission of B-17's to Bomb Palermo. 1 SM-82 destroyed, many fires observed at target at docks and town. 2 planes returned early, nine planes returned at 1445 and one plane returned at 1610. Credit of 1 SM-82 pending until photos developed. Lt. Terwilliger ~~was~~ assigned to this Squadron.

May 10

1035-24 P-38's on Mission to Escort B-17's over airdromes at Cap Boeo o Lilibeo. Many hits by B-17's on two airdromes, buildings burning and much smoke. Pilot reported having seen parachutes shot as high as 22,000' into the air with cables attached. One B-17 hit and exploded. 2nd Lt. Dewey F. Varndell, ASN O-729384, missing. Ship #43-13137. Lt. Moomaw ~~was~~ assigned to this Squadron.

May 11

0930-12 P-38's took off to escort B-17's over Marsala Airdromes. Many hits were observed and much smoke. Nothing else to report.

May 12

Nothing to report.

May 13

1130-12 P-38's took off to escort bombers over Cagliari. Observed three vessels burning near Naval Base, many hits on U-Boat Bases, Naval Base oil tanks and hangers. Many fires and much smoke; also many hits in town. Planes down at 1335.

May 14

1525-2nd Lt. Edward R. Terwilliger, ASN O-734031, crashed while making a local flight. Plane went into a dive as he was turning and did not pull out. Ship #43-2412.

1030-11 P-38's took off to escort bombers over Olbia (Sardinia). Many hits observed on boats in harbor. Planes down at 1715 after stopping at Djidgelli to re-fuel.

*Last of the ground Echelon reached Silegama A/B*

May 15

Pilots practiced their first time with bombs. Lt. Hickman and Lt. Walker were assigned to this Squadron.

May 16

Lt. Alm was assigned to this Squadron.

May 17

1200 - 1st Lt. Ryan M. Moon crashed landed airplane No. #43-2419 when the landing gear handle broke off and was unable to get the wheels down. Lt. Moon uninjured.

WAR DIARY  
37TH FIGHTER SQUADRON  
MAY 18

12 P-38's escorted B-17's to bomb Messina but alternate target was bombed due to weather conditions. 2nd Lt. JAMES J. TOTH, JR., ASN 0-730871 was killed in action. 1st Lieut., JAMES H. GOFF, ASN 725283, missing in action.

May 19

12 P-38's took off to escort bombers to Trapani/ Milo A/D. No incidents. 2nd Lieut., Youngman & 2nd Lieut. Blue assigned to the Squadron.

May 20

Nothing to report.

May 21

12 P-38's took off to escort B-17's to Castelvetro A/D. No enemy planes encountered.

May 22

12 P-38's took off to escort B-17's to Bo Rizzo A/D's. Lt. JOHN C. HENRY, JR. missing in action. ASN 0-730485.

May 23

Nothing to report.

May 24

12 P-38's took off to bomb the Iglesias Zinc and Lead Works (Sradinia). Ten bombs were dropped on and near target. No losses or claim of A/C.

May 25

12 P-38's took off to bomb an Oil Tanker in the Gulf of Terranova. Did not hit ship but two near misses. 1st Lieut., WILLIAM M. COLLINS reported to have been hit by flak, plane destroyed, but was reported to have bailed safely from the plane. Lt. Hollingsworth destroyed one Dornier 217.

May 26

14 P-38's took off on an escort mission to top cover for P-38's, to bomb Tirso and Busachi Power Stations. Busachi power station hit, much smoke seen, also Tirso dam hit and possibly power station. No enemy planes encountered.

May 27

Warant Officer, William T. Miazga transferred to 301 Bomb Group.

WAR DIARYx May 28 -43

1445 - Planes took off to escort B-25's to Bo Rizzo. The damage of the bombing was unobserved by the planes of this Squadron. E/A were encountered with a probable loss of two Me 109's - one each to Capt. Palmer & Lieut. Campbell. Planes down at 1945.

May 29 -43

Nothing to report.

May 30 -43

1425 - 13 Planes took off on a dive bombing mission to bomb Chilivani RR Station and No. 7 Transformer Station. The RR Station was hit with eight bombs and demolished. 8 planes strafed the Station and a train, Alghero factory and railroad yards. Planes landed at 1750.

May 31 - 43

1125 - 12 Planes took off to bomb the Power Station in S. Caterina. There were direct hits on the Power Station, and many near misses, also Boats and gun emplacements were strafed while returning home. All planes returned at 1355.

June 1 - 43

1435 - 16 Planes took off to escort B-26's to Porto Romano in Sardinia. No direct hits observed but gun emplacements was shot out also a small naval vessel approximately 60' long was strafed. Planes returned at 1705.

June 2 - 43

1720 - 14 Planes took off to bomb gun emplacements on the Island of Pantelleria. 1 plane returned early and the rest of the planes returned at 2020.

June 3 - 43

Nothing to report.

June 4 - 43

1625 - 13 planes took off on a dive bombing mission to Pantelleria. All the planes returned at 1925.

June 5 -43

1245 - Planes took off on a dive bombing mission to Decimomannu A/D. All planes returned at 1645.

June 6 - 43

1500 - 13 planes took off to bomb gun emplacements in Pantelleria. Direct hits observed on one emplacement and many near misses on others. Planes returned at 1805.

WAR DIRRYJune 7 - 43

1320 - 14 Planes took off to Dive Bomb gun emplacements on Pantelleria. 3 or 4 direct hits scored and many near misses. Planes down at 1620.

Major General Bradley and the Ass't Secretary of War visted the Squadron.

June 8 - 43

0920 - 14 Planes took off to Dive Bomb gun emplacements on Pantelleria. Several near misses or hits on gun emplacements. Planes returned at 1215.

June 9 - 43

1325 - 12 Planes took off to Dive Bomb gun emplacements on Pantelleria. Several hits or near misses on gun emplacements. All planes returned at 1730.

June 10 - 43

0740 - 14 Planes took off to Dive Bomb gun emplacements on Pantelleria. There was many hits on target area. All planes returned at 1040.

June 11 - 43

1220 - 12 Planes took off to escort B-26's and Dive Bomb gun emplacements on Pantelleria. There was many friendly naval vessels and landing barges seen in the harbour. All planes returned at 1605.

1340 - 12 Planes took off to escort B-26's and Dive Bomb gun emplacements on Pantelleria. No bombs were dropped due to white pannels on island. All planes returned at 1930 with the exception of 2 which landed at Bone.

June 12 - 43

0820 - Planes took off on an Bomber escort mission to Bocca di Falco Palermo, Sicily. 1 plane returned early and 4 planes landed at 1250 and the remaining 6 came in at 1320.

1730 - Capt. Barker and Lt's Crim, Haddock, Kearns and Anderson were seriously injured when their Jeep over turned while in route to the Camp area. At 2105 2nd Lt. Thomas E. Kearns died from the injuries received in the accident.

June 13 - 43

2nd Lt. Thomas E. Kearns was buried in Communal Cemetary in Constantine, North Africa. Funeral attended by all the Pilots and ground Officers.

1140 1st Lt. Iner W. Anderson died from the injuries resulting from the accident which occured while in route to camp area from line, June 12, 1943

WAR DIARYJune 14 - 43

Iner W. Anderson, 1st Lt., was buried in Communal Cemetary in Constantine, North Africa. Funeral attended by all the pilots and ground Officers.

June 15 - 43

0610 - 24 Planes took off on a B-26's escort mission to Bo Rizzo, Sicily. 3 planes returned early, 12 planes returned at 1000 and the remaining 2 returned at 1215.

1 Macchi 202 destroyed.

June 16 - 43

Nothing to report.

June 17 - 43

Nothing to Report.

June 18 - 43

0850 - 12 planes took off to Dive Bomb the A/D at Bo Rizzo. Many hits and near misses observed. 10 planes returned at 1310 and two landed at Bizerte.

Pilot, 2nd Lt. John R. Wilkes entered the Squadron.

June 19 - 43

Nothing to report.

June 20 - 43

0650 - 12 Planes took off to escort B-26's to Milo A/D. No enemy planes ecoucuntered. Planes down at 1035.

2nd Lts. Robert E. Carey and Marion E. Strong, left Squadron for rest Camp at Fez.

June 21 - 43

General Atkinson visted Squadron on tour of inspection.

2nd Lt. Richard J. Atkinson and Flight Officer Earl J. Dion, assigned to Squadron.

June 22 - 43

Capt. Sam L. Plamer and 1st Lt. Ryan M. Moon, transferred out of Squadron.

June 23 - 43

Nothing to report.

WAR DIARYJune 24 - 43

0700 24 Planes took off to escort B-26's to Alghero A/B, Sardinia. There was about 15 or 20 ME 109's encountered in the vicinity of Chilivani, we destroyed 5 Me 109's, probably destroyed 4 Me 109's and damaged 3 Me 109's. 2nd Lt. Harrold R. Alexander was lost in action. Planes returned at 1345.

June 25 - 43

Elisha Walker, Jr., 1st Lt. Assistant S-2 Officer, left Squadron Via transport for Casablanca to instruct pilots.

June 26 - 43

Nothing to report.

June 27 -43

Nothing to report.

June 28 - 43

12 Planes took off on a B-26 Bomber Escort Mission to Milis A/D, Sardinia. All planes returned.

June 29 -43

Nothing to report.

June 30 -43

12 Planes took off on a B-17 bomber escort mission to Bocca di Falco A/D, Sardinia. All planes returned safely.  
12 Planes took off on a B-17 bomber escort mission to Palermo A/D, Sicily. All planes returned safely.

July 1 -43

Nothing to report.

July 2 43

Air echelon packed and prepared to leave for El Bathan.

July 3 -43

Air Eschelon left Telergma by truck and Jeep for El Bathan.

July 4 -43

Air Eschelon arrived at El Bathan Air Base.

July 5 -43

24 Planes took off on a B-17 escort mission to Gerbini, No 6, Sicily. All planes returned safely.

WAR DIARYJuly 6 -43

8 Planes took off on a B-17 escort mission to Comiso A/D, Sicily. All planes returned to Base safely.

July 7 -43

Nothing to Report.

July 8 -43

12 Planes took off on a strafing mission to Radar Sta. in Augusta, Sicily. All returned Safely.

12 Planes took off on a B-25 escort mission to Gerbini No. 6, Sicily. All planes returned safely.

Remainder of Squadron reached El Bathan.

July 9, 43

12 Planes took off on a B-17 escort mission to Sciacca A/D, Sicily. Lt. Campbell destroyed 1 ME 109 and Lt. Atkison Probably destroyed 1 ME 109. All planes returned to Base safely.

12 Planes took off on a B-25 escort mission to Caltanissetta, Sicily. All returned safely.

July 10 43

12 Planes took off to dive bomb SE part of Sicily area. 6 trucks dest'd. All planes returned safely.

13 Planes took off to dive bomb S of Gerbini and N of Comiso A/D to west. All planes returned safely.

12 Planes took off to dive bomb S of Gerbini and N of Comiso A/D to west. All planes returned safely. Capt. Barker belly landed his plane due to injuries received while strafing a truck.

July 11 -43

12 Planes took off on a Dive bombing mission to Agrigento/Caltanissetta-Alia-Casteltermini Targets of opportunity. All planes returned safely.

12 Planes took off on a Dive bombing mission to N of bombing line SE part of Sicily. All returned safely.

Lt. Campbell's plane was hit a medium anti-tank gun and was able to return to Base.

July 12 -43

12 Planes took off on bomb Agrigento-Calanissetta-Alia-Casteltermini, Targets of Opportunity, all planes returned safely.

12 Planes took off on a dive bombing mission. All planes returned safely.

WAR DIARYJuly 13 -43

12 Planes took off on a Dive bombing mission to N and West of Ragusa, Sicily. All returned safely.

12 Planes took off on a Dive bombing Mission to N of Grammichele and then E. 11 planes returned safely and 1 planes landed at Licata, Sicily, due to shots fired at it from a ME 109.

12 Planes took off on a Dive bombing mission to NE of Sicily. All returned safely. 2nd Lt. Herbert J. Walker was injured by shots fired at his plane. He landed at Licata A/D, Sicily. Two pilots that landed with him report that he was injured in his left arm by fragments of 20 mm shell. He is now in a hospital there.

July 14 -43

12 Planes took off on a B-26 escort mission to Messina, Sicily. All planes returned safely. Cpl.

July 15 -43

Nothing to report.

July 16 -43

24 Planes took off on a B-26 bomber escort mission to Vibo Valentia A/D, Sicily. All returned safely.

July 17 -43

12 Planes took off on a B-26 bomber escort mission to Naples RR Yards, Italy. All returned safely.

July 18 -43

5 Planes took off on a Sea Sweep mission over the Med. Sea. 15 Italian JU-52's were encountered of which we destroyed 6. All returned safely. Lt. Hendrix claimed 4 JU-52's and F/O Wilkins claimed 2 JU-52's.

July 19 -43

12 planes took off on a B-26 bomber escort mission to Ciampino A/D, Italy. All planes returned safely.

July 20 -43

12 Planes took off to dive bomb and strafe targets of opportunity on the Med. Sea. No E/A encountered - all planes returned safely. 2nd Marion E. Strong transferred out of Squadron.

July 21 -43

Squadron had a holiday and most of the Squadron spent the day on the beach at Carthage.

July 22 -43

12 Planes took off on a B-26 Escort Mission to bomb Marshalling Yards at Salerno, Italy. No E/A encountered and all planes returned safely.



July 23 -45

12 planes took off on B-26 Escort Mission to Aquino A/D, Italy,. No E/A sighted.

July 24 -45

12 planes took off on B-26 Escort Mission to Marina di Paola, Marshalling yds., Italy. All planes returned safely.

July 25 -45

Squadron spent the day packing in preperation for move to Ste Marie du Zit. No Mission.

July 26 -45

Squadron moved from El Bathan L/G to Ste Marie du Zit. Nothing else to report.

July 27 -45

Squadron spent the day setting up the different departments.

July 28 -45

Mission scheduled this date but called off due to weather conditions.

July 29 -45

12 planes took off on B-26 Escort Mission to Aquino A/D, Italy. Three MA-202s or ME-109s damaged in dog fight as the Escort was driving off the E/A which were attacking the bombers. No losses or damaged to our planes.

July 30 -45

Squadron did not have a Mission. Nothing to report.

July 31 -45

12 Planes took off on a B-26 Bomber Escort Mission to Adrano, Sicily, to bomb the town. Many bombs hit in the town -causing much smoke. No E/A sighted. Lts. Brower, Hallsiek, Margison, Sprinkle assigned this Squadron.

August 1 -45

12 Planes took off on B-17 Escort Mission to Bomb Docks at Naples Italy. Six or seven Macchis attacked the bombers and one was destroyed by Captain Rudder. Many bombs hit in dock area and on factories and locomotive repair shops just N of docks.

August 2 -45

Nothing to report.

August 3 -45

Nothing to report.

August 4 -45

24 Planes took off on B-26 Escort Mission to bomb RR briges at Marina di Catanzaro. Flight was attacked by about 15 E/A before reaching target area. A Big dog fight ensued resulting in the destruction of of three E/A--one each for Capt. Barker, Lts. Highsmith and Atckison.

One Macchi 202 probably destroyed and 2 damaged, and one ME-109 damaged. 1 50' sail boat shot up which was anchored near Pizzo.

2nd Lt. Lloyd O. Hendrix, ASN O-729005, did not return. The 17th Bomb Gp. reported shooting down one P-38 type A/C which crashed into the sea 5 miles East of the Island of Stramboli. This A/C was reported to have pulled up into the tail of the bomber formation at which time the tail gunner of the trailing bomber fired a burst to warn the A/C to get off tail of formation and the A/C fell away but immediately pulled back up into this position at which time the gunners fired upon it and destroyed it. No other P-38 type A/C was reported missing in this theater or this mission so it is assumed that the destroyed A/C was piloted by Lt. Hendrix.

August 5 -43

Received word this day from the bomber unit, of which our Squadron was acting as escort to bomb the RR bridges at Marina di Catanzaro, Italy, that Lt. Hendrix was destroyed when he pulled up behind one of the bombers and the gunner shot him down because he was afraid that it might be a captured P-38 which was being flown by an Axis pilot. 0700, Squadron was on a standby alert.

August 6 -43

12 Planes took off on a B-26 escort mission to Bedjazzo, Sicily. No enemy aircraft encountered. All planes returned safely.

August 7 -43

12 Planes took off on a B-26 escort mission to S of Marina di Catanzaro, Italy. The bombers were to bomb RR bridges. No E/A encountered. All planes returned safely.

August 8 -43

24 Planes took off on a B-26 escort to Zngitola, Italy. All planes returned safely. Bombers dropped bombs, 1 hit on end of bridge.

August 9 -43

12 planes took off on a strafing mission to Rocella Ionica <sup>and</sup> Bovolina Marina, Italy. Trains strafed and also a Radar sta. No enemy aircraft encountered. All planes returned safely.

August 10 -43

Nothing to report.

August 11 -43

12 planes took off on a dive bombing mission to Marina di Catanzaro, Italy. There were 3 or 4 direct hits on RR bridge and damaged Marshalling yds. No Enemy Aircraft encountered. All planes returned safely.

August 12 -43

2nd Lt. Donald E. Dobbins joined squadron as Communication Officer.

August 13 -43

6 planes took off on an Air Sea Rescue mission over the Med. Sea, they were escorting PBVs. No Enemy aircraft encountered and no results from mission. All planes returned safely..

12 planes took off on B-17 escort mission to Lorenzo Marshalling yds., Italy. Lt. Moomaw destroyed a MA 202 and Lts. Garnder and Hollingsworth damaged two MA 202s. All planes returned safely. *Friday the 13th was Lt. Moomaw's lucky day.*

August 14 -43

13 planes took off on a strafing mission between Sambiasse and Rosarno, Italy. 4 trucks and one Sedan set on fire; train and radar sta. hit. <sup>Major</sup> Major Rudder strafed a MA 202 on the field at Vibo Valentia, the plane was left smoking. No Enemy aircraft encountered. All planes returned safely.

August 15 & 16 -43

Nothing to report.

August 17 -43

4 planes took off on PBV escort mission over the Med. Sea. One German pilot was picked up, that had been in the water since 13th. No other sightings. All planes returned safely.

12 Planes took off on a strafing mission between Marina di Manastierace and Bovalino, Italy. 3 trains strafed, 2 trucks 1 Command car were destroyed. No enemy aircraft encountered, but flak was heavy and two of our planes slightly damaged. All planes returned safely.

August 18 -43

7 planes took off as top cover for P-38s to dive bomb and strafe road between Soverato and Bovalino, Italy. 1 direct hit on RR bridge and two hits in RR Yards near bridge. No Enemy aircraft encountered. <sup>ed</sup> All returned safely.

7 planes took off as top cover for P-38s to dive bomb and strafe road between Soverato and Bovalino, Italy. 1 direct hit on RR bridge. No Enemy aircraft encountered. All planes returned safely.

6 planes took off on an Air Sea rescue mission escorting a PBV. After an hour and a half returned to Base being unable to ~~find PBV~~ *contact PBV.*

August 19 -43

13 planes took off on an B-17 escort mission to Foggia, Italy. They bombed Marshalling Yds. <sup>by</sup> <sub>7/0</sub> Hickman destroyed 1 MA 202

August 20 -43

12 planes took off to escort FBY on a Ari Sea Rescue Mission over the Med. Sea. FBY picked up two men swimming in water with life vests about 50 miles from C. Palinurn, about 1420 and threemen in the water about 20 miles from Italy. Lt. Highsmith sighted the men in the water. Their were no other sightings. All planes returned safely. ~~except~~ Lt. Hanna, who has not been heard from.

August 21 -43

16 planes took off on a B-17 escort to Eversa Marshalling Yards, Italy. The target area was well covered with bombs. There were 8 to 10 MA 202s seen but no encounters. 9 planes returned at 1445 and the rest returned later. Received a report that 2nd Lt. Harry P. Hanna had crashed landed his plane at Sidi bou zid and was un-injured.

August 22 -43

Nothing to report.

August 23 -43

12 planes took off to escort FBY on an Air Sea Rescue mission over the Med. Sea. There was 15 or 20 ME 109s sighted in the Gulf of Salerno 3 miles south of Campanella Pt. Lt. Gardner probably destroyed 1 ME 109 and E/O Scott damaged a ME 109. No other sightings. 11 planes returned at 1330. 2nd Lt. Russell K. Moomaw, ASN 732312, is missing in action.

August 24 -43

Nothing to report.

August 25 -43

24 planes took off to escort B-17s to Foggia A/D, Italy. About 20 E/A seen but soon disappeared making no attack on bombers. 2 planes returned early due to improper functioning of the plane. 12 planes returned at 1535 and 8 came in at 1600 and the remaining 2 landed at Comiso, the return later. Capt. Forrest H. Barker received official papers as to his promotion to Major.

August 26 -43

12 planes took off to escort B-17s to Capua A/D, Italy. The bombing results <sup>were</sup> unobserved. 15 or more E/A seen over target, but no encounters. All planes returned at 1340.

August 27 -43

24 planes took off to escort B-17s to Sulmona, Italy. The target area was well covered with bombs. About 10 MEs and MAs sighted between the target and coast, but would not engage in combat. 11 planes returned at 1340 and 4 returned at 1414 and the remaining 7 landed at Bo Rizzo, Sicily to return later. S/Sgt. Eldon F. Heistand, ASN. 19631025, was driving a Dodge Weapons Carrier, on a road southeast of Ste Marie du Zit. du While turning the truck around, the left front wheel ran over and exploded a land mine. Sgt. Heistand's left leg ~~leg~~ was broken above the ankle and the heel and arch bones were shattered. His left leg was amputated at the 54th Station Hospital, Tunis, the same evening of the accident. The accident was "in line of duty" and a result of enemy action.

August 28 -43

6 planes took off with the 49th Fighter Squadron to escort B-17s to the RR yards at Terni, Italy. As the bombing was finished and the escort was leaving the target area, they were jumped by 8 ME 109s. In the ensuing dog fight F/O Dion's ship had both engines shot out by one of the MEs and ~~was~~ forced to bail out about 35 miles off the coast from Civitavecchia, Italy. ~~5~~ 5 ME 109s were destroyed, 2 by Lt. Campbell and 1 by Lts. Gardner, Joyce and Clark. Lt. Campbell also damaged another ME 109 and Lts. Gardner and Joyce ~~each~~ damaged a MA 202.

12 planes took off to escort B-17s to Terni RR Yards, Italy. Bombing results was unobserved by the escort and No E/A was encountered. 4 planes landed at 1600 and 8 landed at 1645.

The Squadron was led by Capt. Blair and this was his last mission (50th) in which Captain Blair had to participate in our Squadron. Capt. Blair was the first to finish the required No. of sorties with the 37th Fron.

Major William L. Leverette, ASN O-322041, was assigned to the Squadron.

Lt. General Spaatz, Maj. General Doolittle and Brig. General Atickson visited the Squadron.

August 29 -43

12 planes took off to escort B-17s to Orte RR, Italy. The bombing results were unobserved due to dust over the target area. One ME 109 was probably destroyed by Lt. Atkins. 1 plane returned early and 11 returned at 1225. Squadron was led by Captain Charles J. Crocker this was his (50th) and last sortie with the 37th Fron. 1st Lt. Robert B. Kelly succeeded Captain Blair as Operation Officer.

August 30 -43

12 planes took off to escort B-17s to bomb Viterbo A/D, Italy. Three fires observed on the A/D after the bombing run. One ME 109 attacked from the rear about 70 miles off the coast. Major John G. Bright, a former E.O. of the 37th Fron. Executive Officer of the 14th F. Gp. participated in this mission and attacked an E/A which was underneath the Squadron formation. One pilot attempted to follow Major Bright in the attack but was forced to pull out of his dive due to excessive speed. Major Bright was not seen after this action. Lt. Hanna's ship was damaged as a result of E/A attack.

6 planes took off to escort a B-17 which was trying to spot pilots shot down at sea. A Hospital ship was sighted with a small boat approaching it. No other sightings. All planes landed at 2015.

Lt. Hollingsworth completed his (50th) mission and last sortie with the 37th Fron.

August 31 -43

and Lts. Harold C. Lamberson, ASN O-737047, Elmer H. La Rue, ASN O-737150, Enoch E. Lemon, ASN O-737157, Morgan H. Mathews ASN O-743360 and F/O Regis Jeffries ASN T-694 were assigned to this Squadron.

September 1 -43

Pilots practiced dive bombing this date, nothing else to report.

September 2 -43

The newly assigned pilots practiced dog fighting today and had P-40s as opposition.

September 3 -43

The newly assigned pilots practiced dive bombing then returned to field and practiced dog fighting with the P-40s.

September 4 -43

24 P-38s took off to escort B-17s to bomb the A/D at Capua, Italy. <sup>Bombing</sup> Target results were unobserved. E/A made one pass the escort without results. 6 planes returned early, 18 returned Squadron equipment loaded on plane for move to Lentini E., Sicily.

September 5 -43

A part of the Air Eschelon left Ste Marie du Zit on two transports with part of the Eschelon leaving in the afternoon, spent the remainder of the day setting up camp.

September 6 -43

14 P-38s escorted B26s to bomb Capua A/D, Italy. Bombing results unobserved. About 20 E/A sighted and they made passes at the escort in pairs- pulling away and returning. No E/A destroyed and no losses. Planes landed at 1330, at Lentini East A/D, <sup>a field formerly being used by Luftwaffe.</sup>

September 7 -43

No mission this date. Day was spent setting up the Squadron equipment and maintenance of the A/C. A gas refueling unit caught fire while servicing one of the Sqdn's A/C but was brought under control without damage by T/Sgt. Conine.

September 8 -43

The Squadron was called together this day and told of the planned invasion of Italy. The personnel was told of our part in the invasion and the work expected of the personnel.

<sup>convoy escort</sup> Three Mission were flown this date from 1545 to 1605 hours on take offs' and landings from 1935 to 1955. One P-38 was damaged from E/A attacks. Of about 20 E/A sighted there was no losses or destroyed A/C. One ship of the Convoy was seen burning and later sighted sinking.

September 9 -43

12 P-38s took off at 0815 to patrol between Salerno, Italy and Island of Capri. No E/A encountered. One L/S seen burning 6-8 miles S. of Salerno, Italy. A/C landed 1130.

12 P-38s tool off at 1200 to patrol between Pisciotta and Agropoli, Italy. Few boats on beach S. End of Gulf of Salerno. No E/A sighted. A/C landed 1445.

12 P-38s took off 1600 to patrol areas from Pisciotta to Agropoli, Italy. While on this patrol the Squadron was ordered to go on strafing mission but they had been out on patrol until gas was low and returned to base, landing at 1855.

Major Carl F. Rudder completed fifty combat sorties this date.

September 10 -4c

12 P-38s took off to patrol area from Pisciotta to Agripoli, Italy. No E/A sighted or anyother activity. Planes landed 1005.

1115 12 P-38s took off to patrol from Salerno, Italy, to Island of Capri. Big fire observed near airport N of Naples. No other activity observed. Planes landed 1430.

12 P-38s took off to patrol from Pisciotta to Agripoli, Italy. No E/A or other activity observed. Planes landed 1705.

11th

12 P-38s took off to Dive Bomb targets of opportunity in area East of Battipaglia between Palinuro, Italy. About four or five trucks were destroyed Eleven bombs dropped. After bombing the A/C patrolled for one hour without encountering E/A. Observed 1st Fighter Group strafing train of several cars N near Sala Cosilina. Planes landed 0925.

11 P-38s took off to patrol between Pisciotta and Agripoli, Italy. No activity observed. Planes landed 1200. 2 P-38s returned early.

12 P-38s took off to patrol area from Salerno, Italy to Island of Capri. Flight found about 12 MEs and equal number of Spits in dog fights just East of Mt. Vesuvius. On approaching several MEs half rolled and left the area and then the flight climbed to higher altitude and drove two more E/A away. No E/A were destroyed and no losses. Flight later sighted 4 Grummans and thought them to be FW-190s. ~~Controller~~ corrected the mis-identification. Planes landed 1615.

*Patrol*  
12th

Three Mission were flown this date. Take offs' 0815, 1200 and 1600 and landings 1140, 1505 and 1900 respectively. No encounters and no sighting observed on these three missions.

13th

Three mission were flown this date. ~~One flight~~ of 12 A/C took off at 0700 to patrol from Pisciotta to Agripoli, Italy. No E/A were encountered; or no other sightings.

1115 - 12 A/C took off to patrol between Salerno and Island of Capri. Flak was shot at the Flight by Allied Troops at Campanella Pt. There were No E/A sighted. Planes landed 1440.

1420 - 4 P-38s took off on a Special Reconnaissance Mission. A few trucks seen parked in a barracks area near Potenza, but very little activity on road.

A Flight of 12 P-38s were on standby status until 0730. The Flight was to escort C-47s which were to carry Paratroopers behind the lines.

14th

0615 - 12 P-38s took off with 500lb. Inst. bombs to bomb targets of opportunity in Apples area. About 4 trucks were destroyed, 5 hits on road and 3 bomb hit in town of Fisciano.

14th (Cont'd)

0900 - 12 P-38s took off to Dive Bomb targets of opportunity. The Controller directed the Flight to bomb road West of Mt. Vesuvius. 5 bombs hit near eight trucks; destroying four or more, silenced a large gun which was sending up flak. Two warehouses and a few miscellaneous buildings were blown up. Planes landed at base 1200.

1315 - 12 P-38s took off with 1000lb. bombs to bomb targets of opportunity in Apples area. Controller "Charger" directed the Flight to bomb the town of Monte Corvino Rovella. 10 Bombs hit in the area of the town, causing much smoke. 2 large guns SW of town but these were not ~~destroyed or were not~~ believed to be damaged. Planes landed 1615.

15th

12 P-38s took off to dive bomb targets of opportunity as directed by <sup>ground</sup> controller "Charger". 11 - 1000 lb. bombs were dropped in the town of Montella as directed. Two big flames and much smoke resulted from the bombing and was believed to have been an ammunition dump or oil storage dump. No activity on the road to Montella. No E/A were sighted. The Flight patrolled Apples area for 25 minutes and returned to base at 1135.

12 P-38s took off at 1200 to Dive Bomb targets of opportunity. The controller directed the Flight to bomb the town of Acerno. 9 bombs hit in the area of the town, others scattered around town and 2 bombs hit in the Southern edge of town. The A/C returned to the base at 1500.

1600 - 12 P-38s took off to dive bomb targets of opportunity as directed by controller. Roads were bombed N of Roccadapile near Calabrite and Oliveta Citro. One heavy tank was destroyed, one bridge destroyed, 2 trucks, and one hit on the Y of roads. An oil storage or ammunition dump was hit which caused large flames to shoot up. After the bombing, the Flight was directed to patrol Beach's area for 25 minutes and returned to base at 1900.

2nd Lt. Elmer H. La Rue took off with Mission #223 at 1600 hours and as the A/C became airborne, one engine cut out and was feathered. The remaining engine would not pull more than 21 inches of mercury and the plane was bellied in. The A/C was a complete loss; the pilot uninjured.

16th

0700 - 12 P-38s took off to dive bomb the targets as directed by the controller. The controller directed the Flight to bomb the town of Fisciano and eight bombs were dropped in the town proper. 1 hit in the Northern end of town causing a large flame and was believed to be a gas dump. 2 hit at Southern end close to guns which were shooting flak and possibly hit them. After the bombing the Flight made reconnaissance to Aveline and then patrolled Apples from 0850 to 0910 as directed by controller. Planes landed at 1010.



16th (Cont'd)

1115 - 12 P-38s took off with 24-500 lb. bombs to bomb targets as directed by controller "Changer". The Flight bombed the town of Cava with 20 hits and the main road was hit. Many of the buildings were flattened. The Flight landed 1010.

1400 - 12 P-38s took off with 24 - 500 lb. bombs. The Flight bombed Palma Campania, causing a lot of damage with 22 hits in the town. The Flight observed a large fire South of Naples. The Flight landed at base 1635.

17th

0615 - 12 P-38s took off with 24-500 lb. bombs to bomb targets as directed by the Controller. The flight bombed Eboli. Twenty bombs hit in the town; a fire was started, one hit W of town in buildings and three missed the town. The Flight patrolled ten minutes before returning to base -landed 0835.

0900 - 12 P-38s took off with 24 - 500 lb. bombs to bomb targets as directed by the Controller. The town of Acerno was bombed with twenty-two hits resulting, causing much damage. The Flight patrolled for thirty minutes after the bombing, returning to base at 1200.

1115 - 12 P-38s took off on a Special Escort Mission to escort the HMS Warspite. The Flight escorted the ship for one hour and thirty minutes without any sightings. A/C landed at base 1335.

1315 - The second two ship flight took off to escort the HMS Warspite and escorted the ship from 1340 to 1610 without incident. Landed at base 1630.

Another mission was scheduled to escort the Warspite but was called off as it was felt that the ship was far enough into friendly waters to be safe.

Squadron notified that the Air Echelon was to return to Ste Maire du Zit and preparations were started to leave on the 18th or 19th.

18th

0715 - 23 P-38s took off to strafe two satellites at Foggia, Italy. Six or seven JU88s, 2 ME 110s, one FW 190 and one ME 109 were destroyed on the ground. One JU 52 was destroyed in the air as it was taking off. Three men manning a 88mm were knocked over and three or more trucks and one jeep strafed, three building was strafed; one of which was shooting flak and a train of about twenty box and train cars strafed. The Flight landed at base 1010.

The A/C were serviced in preparation for the flight back to Ste Maria du Zit. The air echelon also left.

19th

Most of the Squadron rested this date after having operated for a period of eleven days and most of the personnel felt that the rest well deserved, as the operations had been under adverse conditions and more mission were run in this period of time than in other such periods of time.

20th

The enlisted men spent the morning in practice drill in preparation for the ceremony at which time Major Rudder, Lieuts. Campbell, Grim, Conkle, Waldron and Wightman received the Distinguished Flying Cross. Lt. Campbell also received a Cluster to the Cross. The presentations were made by General Spaatz.

21st

~~Nothing to report.~~

22nd

Nothing to report.

23rd

2 planes took off on an weather hop mission to N and S of Rome, Italy. There was no E/A encounters, both pilots returned safely.

24th & 25th

Nothing to report.

26th

3 planes took on an weather hop mission to the East Coast of Sardinia and west Coast of Italy. No Enemy encounters. The planes returned safely. Lt. Col. Oliver B. Taylor took over Lt. Col. Troy Keith position as Group Commandar.

27th

24 planes took off on a strafing mission to Rodoc A/D, Yugoslavia. The mission was not completed due to bad weather conditions. 1 plane returned early and the remaining 23 returned between the hours of 1515 and 1720.  
*Lt. Lamberson Crash landed on return - slight injury.*

28th

Nothing to report.

29th

2 planes took off on an weather hop mission near Italian coast, W and S of Rome. No E/A was encountered. Both planes returned at 0930.

30th

12 - P-38s took off at 0600 to patrol East of Bastia towards Cecina Marina. Due to bad weather the Flight was forced to turn back five or ten miles S and E of Bastia. One plane returned early and the remainder landed at 1100.

1st October 1945

12 P-38s took off at 0810 to escort B-17s to Leghorn, Italy. Due to a heavy overcast the bombers turned back about 15 miles from the Target. One enemy aircraft sighted but no contact was made. The Flight landed at 1330.

Five P-38s took <sup>off</sup> to patrol Southern Sardinia. The Flight landed at Decimomannu A/D ~~overnight~~ and were alerted for patrol.

2nd

One P-38 blew nose wheel tire and did not complete mission which was called off to patrol in vicinity of Decimomannu A/D and to coast of Sardinia to East and Northeast. Two Flights of two ships each patrolled for one hour ~~each~~ without encountering E/A although one unidentified A/C was sighted. The Two Flights returned to base at Ste Marie du Zit from 0945 to 1005 hours, which were airborne at 0730 to 0740 hours.

3rd

0555 - 4 P-38s took off on a weather hop to Leghorn, Italy. Weather clear over Sardinia and CAVU over Leghorn. Two ME-109s were sighted but the E/A evidently did not see the P-38s which were flying on the deck. The Flight landed at 1030.

1320 - 12 P-38s took off on a Sea Sweep NW of Bastia, Corsica. Seven enemy aircraft were sighted and during the encounter one ME-109 was destroyed and two damaged. The E/A were carrying belly tanks which they did not jettison during the engagement. The Flight landed at 1805.

*by Lt. Donald E. Clark and Lt. Highsmith and  
F. O. Scott each 4th damaged a ME-109*

Squadron received orders to pack equipment for a move and ~~1000~~ seven Transports loaded with Squadron equipment, seventy-seven enlisted men and seven officers left between 1055 and 1200 hours for Gambut #5. One of the Transports landed at Bentani and proceeded to Gambut the following morning, the six having proceeded to the field without stop-over.

Twenty-five of the Squadron's P-38s left Ste Marie du Zit at 1345 for Gambut #2. Two of the A/C turned back and twenty-three landed at Gambut #2 thinking it was #3. One of the A/C hit a rock pile while taxiing and destroyed the aircraft when the landing gear folded.

5th

The Squadron's aircraft proceeded to Gambut #5 from #2 and the personnel set up the equipment.

5th

Nothing to report.

7th

8 P-38s took off at 1200 hours to escort a convoy of two cruisers and four Destroyers. The flight patrolled over the convoy for thirty minutes; two groups of spits were sighted consisting of six planes. The flight landed at Yuletide at 1600 hours and returned to base at 1800.

A Second flight of eight P-38s took off to escort a convoy of two cruisers and four destroyers at 1400 hours and patrolled over the vicinity for thirty minutes without incident--landing at base 1730 hours.

Roy L. Quindt, Cpl., received 2nd degree burns when a gasoline burner exploded which he had lighted in his tent.

8th

Eight P-38s took off at 0905 to escort the convoy that was escorted the preceding day by the Squadron. Two of the aircraft returned early and six patrolled over the convoy for thirty-five minutes without incident--landing at base at 1335.

Eight P-38s took off at 1230 to patrol over the Island of Lero. Flight was fired upon by flak from S of Heraklion A/D and N of Lero Island. About six boats were sighted about 10 miles S of Lavindos Island going SE. The Flight returned to base at 1625--one aircraft returned early.

The Squadron personnel are getting a fair idea of the desert dust storms and it isn't to their liking. All conversation includes the speaker's hopes of another movement to better field--all gripping and all very ready to return to Ste Marie du Zit from which they were so anxious to move. The flights which leave the field are directed to land at an alternate field if the base is "dusted" in.

9th

The Squadron woke up this morning to a dreary sky filled with dust and could best describe the night of sleep as just plain hell because of the filtering dust.

Another mission, which was to the Squadron just routine, took off to patrol the convoy which the Squadron had been patrolling for the previous two days, at 1030 hours. The personnel huddle together in small bunches--having the attitude that they will just have to bear the discomforts of the desert

(9th Cont'd)

until someone decides it better to move to an airdrome better for operations. No one seems to be greatly interested in the results of the mission and in fact have come to the point of believing that the missions have no worth and really do not expect results. The attitude of the members of the Squadron as a whole went into a quick reverse when Major Leverette and Lts. Sprinkle and La Rue landed at 1930 hours to make the statement that there had been action. The Squadron of seven P-38s had reached the convoy, one P-38 had returned early, to find that the cruiser was smoking as results of an air attack. The seven P-38s climbed to altitude immediately and on the first orbit around the convoy sighted from twenty-five to thirty JU-87s coming in to attack the convoy. Under Major Leverette's guiding hand the Red Flight of the Squadron were directed to stay up as top cover for White Flight which was going into attack the superior number of aircraft of the enemy. As White flight dove to attack, a JU-88 which was previously unnoticed by the Flight, came diving in to attack the rear aircraft of the attackers. This JU-88 was finished off in short order by the alert top cover and left the "attackers to go about their business. In the dog fights, lasting approximately fifteen minutes, fifteen JU-87s were shot from the skys by the attacking White Flight and the top cover had accounted for another JU-87 which brought the grand total to seventeen. The story of this action was brought to a climax when Major Leverette made the statement that while closing to minimum range in order to destroy his sixth victim that the aircraft had dived abruptly and he being unable to miss the diving aircraft, had hit it and that three feet of his right propeller had sliced through the aircraft. The remaining four ship of the seven ship flight were in a Matruh and would remain there over night.

*The score  
Major Leverette  
Lt Hanna* 10th *7-JU 87  
5-JU 87*

Received notification this AM that the Squadron would return to Ste Marie du Zit. This information was gladly welcomed by all concerned as it meant leaving the dust and sands of Libia.

11th & 12th

Squadron packed and waiting for transportation.

13th

First load of men and equipment left the field at 0700 to return to Ste Marie du Zit.

Five pilots assigned to the Squadron and waiting at Ste Marie for its return. It is of intrest to note that the pilots have reached the Squadron with more flying hours and different forms of combat tactics than the usual replacements.

*Serial No. & Names of pilots*  
14th

12 P-38s took off from Ste Marie at 1020 hours to escort B-25s to Grosseto, Italy. The bombing results were unobserved and the planes landed at base at 1435 without incident.

15th

Newly assigned pilots took off on practice flight to familiarize themselves with the surrounding territory of the base.

16th

New pilots given instructions and pointers of Dive Bombing and took off on mission to practice.

17th

Nothing to report.

18th

Homer L. Sprinkle, 2nd Lieut., ASN O-743527 and Julius T. Friend, Sgt. ASN 37058688, were killed when their plane crashed while on local flight. The crash occurred about three miles South of the Field (Ste Marie du Zit); the cause undetermined. *A sad blow to the Squadron,*

Major Barker visited the Squadron this PM. Major Barker was recently succeeded as CO by Major William L. Leverette, and is now assistant to the Operations Officer of 12th Headquarters. *Bomber Command,*

19th

Homer L. Sprinkle, 2nd Lt., ~~743527~~, and Julius T. Friend were buried in the American Cemetery in Tunis, North Africa. ~~The Deceased were killed when their aircraft crashed about three miles South of the Field at 1520 hours, October 18, 1943.~~ Memorial Services were held by Rev. Johnson, Captain, Group Chaplain, at 1730 hours. *Robinson*

*memorial*20th

12 P-38s took off at 1050 hours to escort B-17s to to Marcigliana & Casale L/Gs. One P-38 returned early and eleven completed the mission with out incident. Bombing results unobserved. Plane landed at 1540 hours. *near Rome*

Lieutenants Tindell, Wilhelm, Tyler, Townsend, Tatum, Stahl and Zimmerman assigned to the Squadron.

21st

12 P-38s took off at 0645 hours to escort B-17s which were to bomb the RR Viaduct at Terni, Italy. Two of the escort returned early. Two ME-109s were sighted--one of which made a pass at the escort but the other did not approach the formation. The bombing results were not specifically visible to the escort but target area thought to be well covered. Six of the P-38s returned at 1215 and four landed at Decimomannu L/G, three returning to the field at a later hour and one remained at the L/G for repairs of the nose wheel strut and short in electrical system.

2nd Lt. Robert F. Boettger, O-748997, and Marvin R. Elston, O-748933 were assigned to the Squadron.

22nd

12 P-38s took off at 1025 hours to escort B-25s which were to bomb the RR Bridges at Grosseto, Italy. Target area observed to be well covered with bombs. A dinghy was sighted containing several men which was thought to be located about 45 miles due East of the Gulf of Crosei. A submarine sighted about seventy miles East of the North tip of Sardinia which quickly submerged. Planes landed at base 1525 hours.

Squadron informed that a part of the Air Echelon and pilot would proceed to Foggia A/D and presume operations from that base for an *indefinite* time.

Lieutenants Wayne L. Blue, O-729307, Harry C. Crim, O-659669, Robert E. Gardner, O-729333 and Robert D. Keel, O-724100, left the Squadron after having completed fifty combat sorties. The Squadron personnel very much regretted seeing these pilots leave as Lt. Crim and Gardner are the last of the original pilots to have left the States with the Squadron.

23rd

Seventeen mechanics and two ground Officers left field for Foggia A/D at 1025 hours, and 23 pilots proceeded to Foggia at 1335 hours.

24th

(Foggia A/D)  
12 P-38s took off at 1035 hours to escort B-17s and B-24s out of the Southern tip of Germany. The bombers were to bomb the Messerschmitt factory at Wiener Neustadt, Germany but were unable to find the target because of a layer of very low clouds which made the target area completely invisible. Planes landed at Foggia A/D at 1430 hours.

This Mission marks a Red Letter day for the Squadron as it is the first mission over Germany--the objective of all operations.

25th

Twenty-two of the Squadron A/C returned from Foggia A/D at 1350 hours. The remaining two A/C are to return at a later date.

26th

Eight of the newly assigned pilots took off on a practice dive bombing mission under the supervision of some of the experienced pilots.

27th

Two practice mission flown ~~by~~ dive bombing and strafing.

28th

Practice mission flown by the *new* unexperienced pilots so that they might become better acquainted with formation flying.

29th*Ball Bearing*

Twelve (12) P-38s took off at 0850 hours to escort B-17s to bomb the ~~Steel~~ Works at Torino, Italy. Two of the P-38s returned early. The ~~Steel~~ Works not bombed due to overcast at target and the town of Genoa, an alternate, was bombed. The results of bombing unobserved by the escort. At approximately 1230 hours, Flight Officer Rigis Jeffries, T-694, and 2nd Lieut. Edmund A. Tindell, O-746223, reported to the Squadron Leader that they were returning to base as one of the A/C had an engine cutting out. These pilots unreported from that hour. The remaining eight P-38d returned to the base at 1740 hours having first landed at Decimomannu, Sardinia, before returning to base.

30th

12 P-38s took off at 0845 hours to escort B-17s to bomb Ball Bearing Works at Torino. Italy. Six of the Squadron A/C developed miscellaneous high altitude troubles and returned after a short time--three more were forced to return when about ten miles from the coast of Italy. and the three remaining A/C also returned as there were too few P-38s to participate as escort. The flight was ~~down~~ at 1425 hours.

Flight Officer Rigis Jefferies and 2nd Lt. Edmund A. Tindell returned to base. The Two Pilots were unreported after mission of 29 October 1943. The two ships had set down at Ajaccio A/D due to engine trouble and were forced to remain over night before returning to base.

31st

12 P-38s took off at 1030 hours to escort B-25s to Civitavecchia, Italy. The escort observed many bomb to hit in the area of the harbor installations and it is believed that oil storage tanks were probably blown up as much black smoke was seen. The Flight returned at 1435 hours without incident.

1st November 1943

Twenty-one of the Squadrons P-38s took off at 1445 hours enroute to Foggia #3 L/G where they are to remain for an indifinate period. Two of the P-38s returned to the base due to engine trouble.

*S/N - 1420*



3rd

16 P-38s returned to this base from Foggia #3 L/G between 1645 and 1710 hours. Three planes remained at Foggia.

4th

Two of the three remaining ships at Foggia returned to home base.

5th

12 P-38s took off at 0850 to escort Bombers to bomb the Ball Bearing Factory in Northern Italy. The flight had just become airborne when the mission was called off due to weather conditions.

A Flight of twelve ships were alerted for a Div Bombing Mission but was called off due to weather conditions.

The last remaining ships at Foggia #3 L/G returned to this base.

6th

8 P-38s took off at 0940 hours to furnish fighter escort to bomb the RR Bridges South of Orvieto, Italy. Several near misses observed by the escort. Flight landed at 1435 hours without incident.

7th

Mission scheduled at 0940 to 0959 hours for 24 planes but called off due to weather conditions.

8th

Twenty-three P-38s took off to escort B-17s which were to bomb the Ball Bearing Works at Torino, Italy. The escort turned back at Imperia, Italy, due to part of the A/C having engines cutting out and low on fuel. Two of the A/C returned early, eleven returned at 1520 and ten returned at 1710 hours.

9th

12 P-38s took off at 0805 hours to escort B-17s to Bolzano, Italy. Three of the A/C returned early and nine were forced to turn back at Brescia, Italy, due to gas. Five of the A/C returned at 1630 hours. 2nd Lts. Richard G. Atckison, 0740335, Thomas W. Smith, 0736393, David A. Vann, 0736422, and Flight Officer Regis Jeffries are missing but are believed to be landed in Sardinia.

10th

Eleven P-38s took off at 0715 to escort B-17s to bomb RR Yards at Bolzano, Italy. The Flight ran into bad weather and were forced to turn back over the Gulf of Crosei, Sardinia. The Flight landed at 1120 hours.

Lieutenants Atckison, Vann, and F/O Jeffries returned to base. The three ships were forced down to refuel in Ajaccio, Sardinia and remained there overnight.

11th

Nothing to report.

12th

Received word this AM that 1st Lt. Thomas W. Smith was safe in Ajaccio, Corsica. Lt. Smith was un-reported after participating in a B-17 escort mission to Bolzano, Italy, 9 November 1943.

Lt. Smith returned to base at 1600 hours and had quite an interesting story to tell of his ditching his aircraft and his frightful experience of trying to swim into the shore without sustaining injuries from the rough shoreline--and of his eventually reaching Allied Forces through the aid of the natives of Corsica.

13th

Nothing to report.

14th

Nothing to report.

15th

Nothing to report.

16th

Twelve P-38s took off at 0810 hours to escort B-26s to Salon A/D, France. The Flight was contacted by radio shortly after becoming airborne and ordered to return to base.

Twelve P-38s took off at 1015 hours and proceeded to Sardinia where they were to rendezvous with the Bombers. The Bombers had already left but the Escort picked them up on the way into the coast. About twelve War Ships were seen in dock at Toulon Harbor. Some bomb strikes were seen to have hit on the edge of the field but most hits were unobserved. About forty radial engine enemy aircraft were over the target area but only two enemy aircraft made <sup>air</sup> passes at the bombers, and they only made ~~two weak passes~~. The enemy aircraft were very unaggressive and did not attempt to engage the Fighters in combat. Seven of the P-38s returned to base at 1745 hours and five landed in Elmas--where they were to remain over night.

17th 17th

A briefing time was for 0700 hours but the mission was called off.

2nd Lts. Hancock, Wesley C. O-802027, Harrow, Jack R. O-799174, Sziich, Andrew S. O-801849, and F/Os Ginder, Albert V. T-61063, Steffes, Sylvester P. T-61055, Sullivan, Kenneth C. T-135120 and White, William O. T-60970 were assigned to this Squadron

18th

Newly assigned pilots instructed in formation flying and took off on two eight ship flights to practice.

19th

A twelve ship flight and three spares took off at 0955 hours to escort B-17s to bomb an A/D in Istras Le Tube, France. The flight was contacted by radio shortly after becoming airborne and ordered to return to base.

A training mission in formation flying, <sup>simulated</sup> assimilated dive bombing and strafing flown by the newly assigned pilots under the guiding hand of the Squadron's experienced pilots.

20th

Major John G. Bright returned to the 14th Fighter Group. Major Bright participated in a B-17 Escort Mission to bomb Viterbo A/D, Italy, 30 August 1943. He dove to attack an E/A which was flying beneath the Squadron formation and was not seen after this action. The tail had broke away from Major Bright's aircraft while in the diving attack and he baled out and became a captive of the Italians for a period of thirteen days at which time he was released. He reached the Allied Forces by crossing through German held territory dressed in civilian clothes.

The newly assigned pilots practiced dive bombing, strafing and formation flying.

21st

A high altitude practice mission was flown consisting of twelve ships to accustom the in-experienced pilots to the conditions of high altitude flying.

22nd

Sixteen P-38s took off at 1035 hours to escort B-17s to bomb the Submarine Pens at Toulon, France. On the route to the target, the Bombers started circling off the NW tip of Sardinia and the Escort, while following them, ended up West of the Gulf of Cristano and returned to base at 1325 hours. It appeared that the Bombers were circling in order to try and find a hole in the weather front but a part of them jettisoned their bombs.

23rd

Nothing to report.

24th

Twelve planes took off at 0940 hours to escort B-17s to bomb the Submarine Pens at Toulon, France. Specific results were not observed by the Escort but two pilots saw bombs dropping into the target area. The Flight returned to base at 1535 hours without incident.

25th

Six planes took off at 0900 hours to escort a PBY on an Air Sea Rescue Mission. The Flight ran into a weather front and three of the aircraft returned to base between 1125 hours and 1415 hours, without reaching the rendezvous point. The three remaining aircraft landed at Cagliari, Sardinia, at which time one of the aircraft broke a nose wheel and is to remain there for repairs. Two, of the three which landed at Cagliari, returned to base at 1615 hours.

"Thanksgiving day" did not pass without recognition in the traditional old way as all personnel received a goodly porportion of tasty turkey and cranberry sauce; which was greatly enjoyed and appreciated by all concerned.

26th

Twelve P-38s took off at 0910 hours to escort B-17s to bomb the Marshalling Yards and Bridge at Rimini, Italy. After the bombing run is completed, the Escort is to land in Foggia to refuel if necessary before returning to base.

27th

Ten of the aircraft, whēh took off at 260910 to escort B-17s to bomb Rimini RR Yards and Bridge returned at 1220 hours. The escort chased ten or twelve enemy aircraft away which attempted to attack the Bombers. The enemy aircraft were very unaggressive and did not attempt to attack the Escort. The only bomb strikes visible hit in the sea. On the return route, the Escort ran into a weather front off the NW tip of Sicily, so returned to Palermo where they stayed the night. Two of the aircraft remained in Palermo-- cause un-determined.

28th

Fifteen of the Squadron's aircraft and two borrowed from the 48th Squadron took off at 0730 hours enroute to Algiers where they are to be based while on Convoy Patrol.

One P-38 returned shortly after becoming airborne.

(28th Cont'd)

The Flight of Sixteen aircraft which took off at 0730 landed at 0940 at Maison Blanche. One Flight of seven ships took off at 1430 hours to patrol from Isle of Menorca to thirty miles east. The Flight patrolled for three and one-half hours without incident--landing at 1800.

A second Flight took off at 1450 to patrol between Spain and Isle of Biza. Three masted fishing schooners with white sail were sighted. No other sighting were made and Flight landed at 1750 without incident.

29th

Twelve P-38s returned from Maison Blanche at 1240 hours--three returned by 1515 hours and one remained at Maison Blanche due to engine failure.

30th

A Flight of twelve ships took off at 0915 to escort B-17s to bomb Submarine Pens at Marseilles, France. The Flight was ordered to return to Base shortly after becoming airborne.

1st December 1943

Twelve planes took off at 1005 hours to escort B-17s which bombed the Ball Bearing Works at Torina, Italy. One plane returned early and ten returned between 1530 and 1630 hours. 2nd Lt. Frank O. Rooks did not return but believed to have landed at Elmas to refuel. The Flight was made without incidence. ~~First Ground Echelon of thirteen enlisted men and one officer proceeded to Bizerte where they are to wait the arrival of the second and third echelon before boarding boats enroute to Italy.~~

2nd

Ten P-38s took off at 0935 hours to escort B-17s to bomb Submarine Pens at Marseille, France. Two A/C returned early. Bombing results were unobserved. One unidentified B-17 sighted, did not attack. Eight ships returned between 1520 and 1640 hours. (2nd Lt. Frank O. Rooks returned to Base from Maison Blanche.) Eight officer and one hundred and thirty enlisted men departed via trucks and jeeps enroute to Bizerte on the first leg of the trip to Italy. At 1030 ninety-one of the personnel left for the same destination arriving at 2215. The rain, mud and pup tents, being so similar, brought back unpleasant memories of arriving in N. Africa and the first few days of miserable existence on Mad Hill in St. Barbe.

3rd

A mission was scheduled for 0920 hours to escort B-17s to bomb Fiano Romano A/D, Italy, but mission was called off before take off time. The third ~~group~~ *echelon* of forty-nine arrived at 1215 hours at ~~bizouac~~ *bizouac* area in Bizerte.



NATOUSA  
By G.O. no. 15, dated 11 Dec 1942,  
Major Zeverette was awarded the Distinguished  
Service Cross for extraordinary heroism  
on Oct 9, 1943, when, <sup>while leading</sup> he led a formation  
of seven planes, he attacked 30 Stukas  
which attempted to attack a bomb-a convoy  
in the Aegean Sea which he was escorting.  
He personally destroyed 7 Stukas and  
the Squadron accounted for 16 Stukas  
and one JU 88 without loss.

7th Cont'd The Convoy, transporting the ground echelon, arrived in Naples Harbour at 1035 hours, having left Bizerte at 1620 hours, 5 December 1943. Lunch was ~~ate served~~ aboard ship and then personnel marched to area #2 where trucks ~~then~~ carried them to G.I.L. Collegio Ciano Tondazione Del Banco Di Napoli.

8th Dec. First group left the College at 1500 hours via trucks and arrived at Foggia #7 L/G at 0145 hours. The remainder of the personnel are to be moved from the College in Naples as soon as transportation is available.

9th Dec Remainder of the personnel arrived from Naples and the day was spent setting up tents and camp area. ~~XXX~~

10 Dec. No activity at Ste Marie du Zit where the air echelon is awaiting for the move. Nothing to report from Foggia.

11 Dec. The Squadron's aircraft took off from Ste Marie du Zit enroute to Foggia at 1400 hours. Upon reaching Italy, as it was very hazy, the correct field could not be located and the Flight attempted to land at Foggia #3 at which time Lt. Hanna's aircraft was destroyed when he hit a roll of matting which was rolled up in the middle of the runway. Lt. Hanna was un~~in~~jured.

The third ground echelon left Ste Marie du Zit for Bizerte.

12th Dec. Six transports took off at 0900 hours from Ste Marie du Zit loaded with air echelon personnel and equipment landing at Foggia #7 L/G at 1230 hours. ~~X~~

13th Dec. Personnel spent the day setting up available equipment in preparation for active operations.

14th Dec. 16 P-38s took off at 0745 hours to escort B-17s to bomb Eleusis A/D, Athens, Greece. About 15 or 20 E/A (ME-109s) sighted NE of Eleusis and a few of them attacked the Bombers. One of the attackers was destroyed by Major Leverette. The Squadron suffered no losses or damages. The sixteen P-38s completed the mission and returned safely to base at 1330 hours.

*which raises his score to eight.*  
The last of the Squadron personnel left Ste Marie du Zit enroute to Bizerte.

15 Dec. Sixteen P-38s took off at 0950 hours to escort B-17s to bomb Innsbruck Marshalling Yards. Two P-38s returned early. About thirty puffs of flak shot up near Sacili, Italy, on the return trip but none of the Squadron aircraft were damaged. No enemy aircraft were sighted. Specific results of the bombing ~~were~~ not observed but many bombs seen to drop in the general target area. Fourteen P-38s completed the mission and returned to base at 1520 hours. ~~X~~

16th Dec. Fifteen P-38s took off at 1005 hours to escort B-17s to bomb Padova RR Yards, Italy. Approximately 20 ME-109s very aggressively attacked the escort just after going in over the coast, south and west of Lake Veneta. Three of the P-38s returned when attacked as the belly tanks could not be released. One ME-109 was destroyed by Lt. Paul H. Wilkins while we suffered the loss of one P-38 and two were damaged. The P-38 which was lost was piloted by Eugene N. Pitre, Jr., O-749051, 2nd Lt. None of the members of the Flight saw the ship hit by E/A fire but first noticed it going down in a steep dive and making a gradual turn. Eleven P-38s returned at 1430 hours.

*popular with*  
~~Due to the fact that~~ Lt. Pitre was very well liked by both officers and enlisted men



X Dec. 12 - The field was very muddy and two of the transports got stuck in the mud when they taxied off the runway. The runway is covered by steel mats but in several spots there ~~is~~ <sup>was</sup> a few feet of water on the runway. The road from the field to the bivouac area is muddy and slippery.

X Italian peddlers come into camp and oranges, almonds and wine are much more reasonable than in North Africa. Eggs are very scarce and sell from ten to fifteen cents each. Many of the men have been able to buy chickens for about a dollar and turkeys for \$5. There ~~are~~ <sup>is</sup> many<sup>a</sup> chicken fry at night in the tents which helps a lot as chow is not too good.

*was sorrowfully received  
by the Squadron.*

the Squadron very much regretted hearing <sup>and</sup> the news that he was lost. <sup>On</sup> many long and dangerous missions, Lt. Pitre is the first pilot lost due to enemy action since 31 August 1943.

1st Lt. Charles W. Herrall, O-737783 completed fifty missions.

17 & 18th Dec. Nothing to report.

19th Dec. 16 P-38s took off at 1035 hours to rendezvous with B-17s and 24s after they completed their bomb run on Augsburg Messerschmitt Factory. The Bombers were met before reaching the designated rendezvous point and escorted back without incident.

20 Dec Sixteen P-38s, one of which returned early, escorted B-17s to bomb Eleusis A/D, Athens, Greece. About ten or twelve ME-109s attempted to attack the Bombers while in the target area. The Escort dived on the attackers and destroyed two of them--one by Lt. Kenneth L. Stahl and one by Richard D. Wilhelm. The Squadron suffered no losses or damages but one B-17 was seen to go down and a second one which was smoking badly was believed to be lost. Fifteen of the original sixteen P-38s completed the mission and ret'd safely to base.

1st Lt. Harry T. Hanna completed fifty mission.

~~XXXXXXXX~~ The second and third ground echelon to leave Ste Marie du Zit; which were bivouaced in Bizerte, boarded L.S.T. boats in Bizerte Harbor.

21 Dec. A P-38 was seriously damaged when Lt. Steffens dropped his aircraft in from about twelve feet, when landing from a routine practice mission, and blew a nose wheel tire. When he bounced ~~from striking the ground~~, he circled the field and when he landed the second time the nose wheel gave away and the aircraft skidded to a stop on its nose. Lt. Steffens was uninjured.

The last echelon to leave Ste Marie du Zit boarded L.S.T. boats and left the Bizerte Harbor at 1200 hours enroute to Italy.

22 Dec. Nothing to report.

23rd Dec. The Squadron personnel which boarded boats on 20 and 21 Dec. 1943 docked in Naples Harbor.

24th Dec. Part of the personnel arrived from Naples at 1600 hours and the remainder are to follow as soon as transportation is available.

25 Dec. 16 P-38s took off at 1005 hours to escort B-17s to bomb belzane Marshalling Yards,,Italy. The Bombers flew about 20 minutes over land from coast of Italy and then made a right turn and flew east but due to a solid overcast they did not find the target and the escort returned directly to Base--landing at 1345 hours. On landing, two P-38s were damaged when one ran off the end of the runway and another taxied into it--cutting the rudder off above the stabilizer and damaging the wing of the other.

A fine turkey dinner was served to all which was appreciated, but the feeling was nearly unanimous that it was the worst Christmas ever. Many went to midnight Mass and services during the day at Camp and San Severo.

26 Dec. Nothing to report.

27 Dec. The remainder of the personnel which docked in Naples 23 December arrived at 1645 hours.

28 Dec. 16 P-38s took off at 0940 hours to escort B-17s to bomb Verona Marshalling Yards, Italy. Two P-38s returned early due to mechanical trouble. The Bombers did not bomb Verona due to a solid overcast, but on their return trip they bombed the alternate target, Rimini. Fourteen ships landed at 1345 hours without incident.

29 Dec. 15 P-38s took off at 1040 hours to escort B-17s to bomb Reggio Emilia. One plane returned early. Three string of bombs were observed, one hitting short of town, one in the town, and one beyond the town. The Bombers also bombed Rimini on the way out. 14 planes returned to Base at 1515 hours.

30 Dec. 15 P-38s took off at 1020 hours to escort B-17s to bomb Verona Marshalling Yards. One plane returned early. Twenty-five ME-109s were seen 20 miles off the coast east of Ravenna. Two started to make a pass at the Bombers but climbed back up into formation. Due to gas getting low the P-38s did not go into the target. 14 planes landed between 1400 hours and 1440 hours.

31 Dec. A holiday was declared for tomorrow and some Old Overhilt was Available the pilots proceeded to do a little celebrating. Some of the enlisted men had parties in the tents but on the whole it was a very quiet New Year's Eve. At midnight anti-aircraft and machine guns broke loose but in a few minutes everything was quiet and 1944 was ushered in which all hoped would see the end of the war in Europe and their return to the United States.

gained 2  
lost 1

1 JANUARY 1944

Nothing to report.

EM 241 - 0 - 46  
242 2nd - 40

31

Major William L. Leverette was decorated with the D.S.C., 1st Lt. Troy T. Hanna the D.F.C. and T/Sgts. Johnson, Larsen and Gillet were decorated with the Legion of Merit by Gen. Atkison.

3rd

16 P-38s took off at 0750 to escort B-17s to bomb the Ball Bearing Works at Torino, Italy. About ten ME-109s sighted about 35 miles from the coast SW of Rome and ten more near Torino. Two ME-109s attacked the bombers but were driven off. The E/A were very un-aggressive. Escort did not see bombing results. Two P-38s returned early and two returned at 1555 hours.

4th

11 P-38s returned at 1245 hours from mission of 3 January. The A/C remained in Decimomannà over night where they landed to refuel. One P-38 remained there due to mechanical trouble.

5th.

1st Lt. Robert L. Margison returned from Decimomannà where he remained after landing to refuel from mission of 3 January 1944.

6th

Nothing to report.

7th

16 P-38s took off at 0800 to escort B-17s to bomb Weiner Neustadt Messerschmitt Factory. The bombers split over the target and the Squadron followed some bombers to Fiume where they bombed the M/Y. No E/A sighted. Two P-38s returned early and 14 returned at 1400 hours without incident.

8th

15 P-38s took off at 0950 to escort B-17s to Reggio Emilia. Two P-38s returned early. One of them was destroyed when Lt Sullivan's <sup>single engine</sup> landing approach was interfered with by a Spitfire at Naples. Lt. Sullivan was uninjured. The Bombers bombed the M/Y and A/D at Reggio and the target area seemed well covered with bombs, also oil storage tank probably hit as much black smoke observed. 13 P-38s returned at 1510 hours.

9th

15 P-38s took off at 0930 to escort B-17s to Fiume. Due to overcast, Pola, the alternat target, was bombed. The target appeared to be well covered with bombs and also a few bomb strikes were observed on two small Islands near Pola. 15 P-38s returned at 1245 hours without incident.

10th

Fifteen P-38s took off at 1005 hours to escort B-17s to Sofia, Bulgaria. Approximately 25 ME-109s and FW-190 were encountered over the target area. The enemy aircraft attacked aggressively and broke up the flight formations, causing the Squadron to resort to a Lufberry formation for protection. By breaking out of the Lufberry when E/A ventured too close, or was attacking P-38s in the circle, three E/A were destroyed, one probably destroyed and three damaged, credit for victories being given as follows:

Lt. Wilkins-- 1 FW-190 destroyed and 1 FW-190 damaged.  
 Lt. Tatum -- 1 FW-190 destroyed.  
 Lt. Margison- 1 ME-109 destroyed.  
 Lt. Smith -- 1 ME-109 damaged.  
 Lt. Tyler -- 1 ME-109 damaged.

These victories were accomplished against a superior number of enemy aircraft and a feat of which the Squadron is rightfully proud of as their encounter with the enemy aircraft left the Bombers to press home their bombing run with devastating effect on Sofia, Nazi held capital city of Bulgaria. Fifteen planes returned safely to base at 1435 hours.

11th

Thirteen P-38s took off at 0940 hours to escort B-17s to bomb Piraeus Harbor, Greece. Three B-17s were seen to go down as a result of a mid-air collision. The Bombers called out that they were turning back near Corinth and the Escorting P-38s returned at this time, landing at base at 1520 hours.

12th

Nothing to report.

13th

Seventeen P-38s took off at 0940 to escort B-17s to bomb Guidonia, A/D, Rome, Italy. The Escorting P-38s were attacked by about 25 to 30 ME-109s about 10 ~~th~~ miles North of Rome. The attacks were made from above the overcast and on the first pass the attackers succeeded in shooting out one engine on Lt. Dale W. Tyler's aircraft on the first pass. He called out that he was hit and Lt. Walter L. Brower, who was pressing home an attack on an enemy aircraft, immediately maneuvered into position to afford him protection but Lt. Tyler feathered one propeller and started down at about 350 mph and headed out to the coast North of Fiumicino and apparently the aircraft was under control; so Lt. Brower assuming that he was returning to base; returned to formation. Lt. Tyler was not seen after this action. Lt. Paul H. Wilkins destroyed one ME-109 which was pressing home an attack on a P-38 and Lt. Cleveland J. Tatum damaged an ME-109. The bombing results were unobserved. One P-38 returned early and 15 returned at 1330 hours.

14th

Sixteen P-38s took off at 0945 to escort B-17s to Mostar, Yugoslavia.  
 base & landing ground.

15th Cent'd

The bomb strikes appeared to cover the target area. Sixteen planes completed the mission and returned to base at 1230 hours without incident.

15th

Eighteen P-38s took off at 0940 hours to escort B-17s which were to bomb the M/Y at Certaldo and Arezzo and Viaduct at Bucine, Italy. Three planes returned early. Escorting pilots believed the Viaducts at Bucine to be well covered with bombs but bombs strikes on other targets were not observed. This proved to be an uneventful mission for the escort and the Flight of fifteen returned at 1440 hours.

2nd Lieut. John C. Ingram, Jr., O-750599 assigned to this Squadron.

2nd Lieut. Paul H. Wilkins completed fifty mission over enemy held territory.

16<sup>th</sup>

Lt. Stahl -  
Lt. La Rue -

17th

14 P-38s took off at 0925 hours to escort B-17s to bomb RR M/Y at Prato, Italy. Escort believed several direct bomb hits were made on the targets. No E/A were sighted and the flight was made without incident until reaching Ancona on the return trip at which time 2nd Lieut. Frank O. Rooks, O-749067, left the formation because he was low on oxygen. Lt. Rooks was later heard to call a homing station for emergency homing and a fix place him at 44° 25' N 14° 59' E but was not heard to acknowledge. 13 planes of the original 14 planes landed safely at 1510 hours.

18th

Pistoia and Pontedera RR Junction were the targets for the B-17s escorted by the Squadron's 13 ship Flight, taking off at 1125 hours. Escorting pilots believed the target area well covered with bombs. No flak or E/A were sighted. 13 ships returned safely at 1545 hours without incident.

Second Lieutenant Frank O. Rooks, O-749067, remains were found where he had crashed into a mountain near Roseta Valfortare, Italy.

19th

13 P-38s took off at 1020 hours to escort B-17s to Ciampino A/D Rome, Italy. Only two E/A were sighted but did not approach the formation. The A/D appeared to be well blanketed with bombs. 13 P-38s returned to base at 1345 hours without incident.

A Group library was opened with a variety of reading material available. This is greatly appreciated by the Squadron as it will afford many hours of recreation.

20th

12 P-38s took off at 1045 hours to escort B-17s to bomb Ciampino A/D Rome, Italy. No E/A were sighted. Specific results of bomb strikes were not observed but could see oil fire burning when 40 miles away from the target. One A/C returned early and eleven returned at 1430 hours.

2nd Lieut. Joseph A. Garrity, O-750570, assigned to the Squadron.

21st

13 P-38s took off at 0835 hours to escort B-17s to bomb Le Tube & Salon A/Ds, France. While the bombers were on their bombing run five FW-190 made a pass at the bombers but they turned in flight when the escorting P-38s dove on them. The target seemed well covered, hitting hangers, buildings and dispersal area. The P-38s landed in Sardinia, refueled and returned to base at 1700 hours.

1st Lt. Donald Ross McMahon, O-885287, joined the Squadron

*Spartan B. Canine, T/Sgt., Gen. Orders No. 19, 15AF, 15 Jan. 1944, received the Soldiers medal for heroism in subdiving a fire on a gasoline truck which caught fire while refueling a P-38, 7 Sept. 1943, at Lentini Ebat, Sicily.*

22nd

First Lieutenants Harry T. Hanna, Charles W. Herall, Robert L. Highsmith and John R. Wilkes departed for the U.S. for a well deserved rest after completing 50 combat missions over enemy held territory.

The Squadron met the 48th Basketeers in Foggia for the first game of the season. and toppled them with a neat low score of 16 - 6. The Squadron's was represented by Sgts. Anderson, Alley, Gatski, Ingalls, Willey and Cpls. Cohen, Lockwood, Ristow and Potka.

23rd

13 P-38s took off at 1430 hours to dive bomb Targets of Opportunity on the Rome Riet Road, Italy. Ten P-38s dropped 15 bombs on the Fano Bridge making several direct hits and near misses; also hits on road leading to bridge. Due to smoke the specific results of the bombing could not be observed. Two dropped one bomb each on the Cesano River Bridge and reported near misses. One plane returned early and 12 landed at 1620 hours.

Memorial Services were held by Rev. Robinson, Captain, Group Chaplain, at 1630 hours in memory of Lieutenant Frank O. Rooks.

24th

9 P-38s took off at 0945 hours to escort B-17s to bomb Sofia A/D, Bulgaria. Approximately six unidentified E/A sighted East of Skoplje but disappeared when the escort turned into them. The escort left the bombers before reaching the target due to a shortage of gas. On the return trip, Lt. Vann, Squadron Leader, became unconscious for quite a few minutes due to oxygen trouble. For a while he was making 360° turns and the pilots were unable to get an answer from him on the Radio. He later landed at Brindisi with F/O White. One plane returned early and six landed at their base from 1650 to 1715 hours.

25th

Lt. Vann and F/O White returned from Brindisi where they landed 24 January to refuel.

26th

No Mission scheduled. This is the first *holiday* day since 7 January that the Squadron has not had a mission scheduled or else on stand-by status.

Coffee and tasty doughnuts were served to the personnel from 1400 to 1600 hours by the Red Cross which were greatly appreciated.

27th

15 P-38s took off at 0905 to escort B-17s, which bombed the Salon A/D, France. 12 FW-190 and one or two ME-109s were encountered over the target. Lts. Brower



27th Cont'd

and Mathews each succeeded in damaging a FW-190. The bombing was unobserved as the Fighters were engaged with the enemy at the time. Shortly after the encounter with the enemy, Lt. Sziich's left engine caught fire forcing him to feather it. As he was approaching Ajaccio, Corsica, his right engine stopped, due to the lack of gas, and he crashed landed his ship. Lt. Sziich was uninjured. One plane returned early and 13 landed at 1645 hours.

Joe E. Brown put on a great show at our base this afternoon. He was alone, having no curvacious female to assist him, but he had many funny stories and told them as only he with his famous kisser could tell them. The men enjoyed every minute of it, although they had to stand with a chilly wind blowing, as everyone seemed to sense here was one real grand guy. His pantomime baseball pitcher's skit was a terrific hit. Joe said he wanted to hear a lot of laughter--nothing serious--and that the men could laugh all they wanted to at his mug but that he was laughing too as he had about a thousand funny mugs to look at. Many knew that he lost a son, a pilot, in the Pacific but he never mentioned that. As the men said "Joe is strictly GI", and he is tops with them.

28th

13 P-38s took off at 0855 hours to escort B-17s which bombed Aviano A/D, Italy. Three fires were seen, two of which were emitting black smoke and one white smoke. No E/A were sighted but one P-38s was seen which acted rather suspiciously. This A/C did not attempt to join the formations nor was an answer received when an attempt was made to contact the ship by radio. The A/C was last seen proceeding Southeast along the coast of Yugoslavia. Two P-38s returned early and eleven returned safely at 1315 hours.

29th

Lt. Dobbins called in his Powerful Static Section ten and eked out a close winning score of 10 - 9 over Capt. (Doc.) Curtis's Camp Area Scrubs in a fast seven inning softball game of many clean hits and many errors.

30th

No mission scheduled.

Lt. Dobbins wallowing in the glory of his powerful Static Section ten called them on the field again to-day so that they might repeat their victory of the preceeding day but they went down under a humiliating defeat as Capt. (Doc.) Curtis's Camp Area Scrubs topped them off with a neat score of 13 to 4, and though the game was as fast the ballyhooing was not so strong as the preceeding day as Lt. Dobbins spirit was down to an all time low.

31st

13 P-38s took off at 0855 hours to escort B-17s to Klagenfurt, Austria, About eight unidentified E/A were sighted about 10 miles SW of Target just before bombing run. They were at about 5000' below the formation and disappeared without attempting to attack. The bombing results was not observed. Three P-38s returned early and ten returned at 1355 without incident.