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48TH FIGHTER SQUADRON (TE) ARMY AIR FORCES

14TH FIGHTER GROUP (TE) AAF

APO 520, U. S. ARMY

MARCH FIELD

THRU

DECEMBER, 1943

ED BENSIN

Transcribed by T. Collins

48TH FIGHTER SQUADRON (TE) ARMY AIR FORCES
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FOREWORD

A squadron, as any other Army organization, is a mutation, and an apocryphal thing even during its unnatural existence. Compounded out of the rattle-taggle of all man's emotion, out of all he believes or trusts in, and can only come to laborious fruition as the result of an organized greed, an organized ill that is destructive in all branches of its force. It then, by definition, is a negative creature and inutile but contradictorily and without apparent reason it always becomes more than just that. The several hundred enlisted men, the two or three dozen pilots, the ground officers are compressed, out of themselves and from above, into an organization. At the inception it is just a motley collection of specialists with, for the most part, individual skills and personal aims as beginning and end. Out of the highly complex master plans of the Army come the standards of basic requirements: Scores of trained hands with the planes that demand such skill; Pilots with the training-born with the age-old Icarus urge; Quite a few more diversified talents to maintain the belly (or is it the soul), to fill the forms and make some, to make the whole cohere out of the potpourri to entity. A squadron then is all this and more: It is every town, every state, the whole of the United States geography; Every sectional trait is here with its accompanying virtues and vices; Every pigment of creed, skin, and morality here abounds. You could say simply, "Ah, these planes make damned beautiful sights and sounds as they take to the air". You would have said most of what there is to say.

The 48th Pursuit Squadron was activated on the 18th of Jan. 1941. Thirty five enlisted men were assigned from various Prov. Cp.'s, Pur. Sq.'s, and Prov. Sq.'s with 2nd Lt. Wm. E. Fulmer apid. C.O. 2nd Lt. Troy Keith assumed command May 4, 1941 as Lt. Fulmer was relieved. Andrew J. Bing, Wade C. Wallis, Harry J. Daymuff were assigned to the Sq. in May. The Sq. moved from their field of activation, Hamilton Field, Calif., June 10th, and reached their permanent station, March Field, Calif., the 11th, with a compliment of four officers and thirty six EM. Two PT 17 trainers, eight officers and 191 EM, comprised the wealth of the Sq. in the period Jan. 18th July 31st, 1941.

* An immense effort can be successfully concealed in a short paragraph of "officialese" as the preceding paragraph attests.

In any case the Sq. left March Field the 26th of August bound for Mammoth Lakes, Calif. and a two week vacation. They arrived the next day, did the 15 officers and 152 em. and, from a basis of hearsay, the vacation was no rest and so was a tremendous success.

Upon returning to the permanent station a routine training and indoctrination program was followed. Dec. 7th changed all that and infinitely more. Twelve pilots and thirty one men were on their way to Salinas, Calif.

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the first contact with the enemy was to enjoy. He returned on night bombing operations on the 20th and 21st of Nov. and T/Sgt. Robert J. [Name] to participate in maneuvers but were reassigned to duty at Terminal Island when the declaration of war came. By Dec. 22nd the balance of the Sq.'s eighty em's and two officers left March Field to join the Terminal Islandly contingent at Long Beach, Calif. Municipal Airport. The pilots were flying their combat ships by now, the mechanics were learning the individual quirks of their respective planes-pilots and mechanics both were learning that a plane as they had as often departed from the chart and form as often as it complied.

The Sq. moved to North Island Naval Air Station, San Diego, Calif. the 5th of Feb. 1942 and from that day until the 3rd of June 1942, when the Sq. moved again, the days and nights were filled with our planes as they patrolled the coast, as they flew their tight battle formations, as they, with all of the ground personnel became a combat unit. The transitional training was by now mostly of the past and until the Sq. went into combat in Africa the routine was iteration of past lessons until a most highly and competent instrument was forged.

The Sq. left the Naval Air Station to arrive at the permanent station March Field, June 4th, 1942. Many equipment needs were filled out here before the ground echelon left for Fort Dix, New Jersey, the 20th of July. The air echelon preceded the rest by a month as they left the 20th of June for station at Bradley Field, Conn. The stay at Fort Dix, a staging area was a short one for on August 6th the ground echelon embarked for overseas duty. The air echelon leaving Bradley Field the 25th of July landed in England August 18th to join the ground echelon who disembarked the same day.

From that fateful day of August the 18th the reconnaissance leading to the Battle of Shewsbury was activated. Many a love was lost and won, many a home-grown vow set aside in expediency's sake:

Many a heart was broken in the Dingle,
Many a heart was mended in the Bell.

The Sq. had inevitably suffered training losses. S/Sgt. Sylvester Oaks was asphyxiated the 27th of Nov., 1941.

2nd Lt. George H. Bennett was killed in an airplane crash the 19th of March, 1942.

1st Lt. John E. Dixon and 2nd Lt. Richard D. Moore died as a result of a mid-air collision that took place the 18th of April, 1942.

2nd Lt. Wayman was killed in an airplane crash at March Field, Calif., the 27th of May, 1942.

The ground echelon left Atcham Field, England, Oct. 23, 1942, to embark at the port of Liverpool. The destination was not known by any members of the Sq. embarking. Their vessel was joined by many others to arrive in the port of Oran, Algeria, Nov. 11th, to disembark the 12th and so became a part of the first invasion forces. The air echelon left England the 11th to land at Tafaroui Airport, Algeria. The ground echelon joined the air echelon after a march to La Senia airport after disembarking, an overnight bivouac there, a further march to Tafaroui some ten miles away. The entire Sq. of two hundred thirty two em and thirty six officers were moved by air transport to Maison Blanche Airport, Algeria the 16th of Nov. 1942. These various moves belie any assertion that modern armies move in effortless waves for they were not unattended with creature discomforts. Enemy aircraft bombed the air field and hangers the first night of the bivouac but our personnel suffered no casualties. This raid marked

the first contact with the enemy our Sq. was to enjoy. He returned on night bombing operations the 20th and 21st of Nov. and T/Sgt. Robert J. Hayes suffered a bomb fragment wound of minor extent in an unmentioned area. Though the enemy conducted several more night bombing operations while the Sq. stayed at Maison Blanche the Sq. was not further materially affected. The "fox hole" habit was here fully exploited and no further instruction was ever needed.

The advanced echelon moved up to Youks Les Bains, Algeria the 20th of Nov. and there commenced operations from one of the most advanced fighter bases in that stage of the No. African conflict. The rest of the Sq. had reached Youks by the 20th of Dec. and joined in the most arduous combat operations the Sq. has ever encompassed to this date. Here the Sq. faced quagmires of boggy, foot-deep mud; here the diet to fight on and with was dreary and unbalanced; here the pilots flew from an improvised field when the main one flooded—they landed on an uphill gradient, took to the air in near vertical fashion when enemy planes approached. Recreation and amusements were terms without meaning for ammunition, parts, food and mail comprised the transports cargos. But in spite of these manifold handicaps the Sq. conducted most offensive operations.

Lt. Carl T. Williams shot down the first enemy aircraft in this theater of operations—a Me 109.

Lt. Virgil H. Smith became the first American Ace in this theater as he downed his 5th e.a. the 12th of Dec., 1942. He shot down one more e.a. before he himself met his death in action on the 30th of Dec. That's a fair enough epitaph for a fighter pilot.

SPACE FOR C.WATSONS(unreadable)

On the 5th of Jan., 1943 the Sq. left Youks and moved to Ain Berteaux a fighter field approximately 30 miles southeast of Constantine. The Sq. continued operation from this field until on the 20th of Jan., 1943 the pilots were relieved from operation and returned to the States.

They left behind a remarkable record of accomplishment carried out in face of most determined enemy effort. The maintenance, the ground personnel, kept the planes in flying condition despite the foul weather, uninspired rations, inadequate parts facilities. Twenty eight enemy aircraft were destroyed in aerial combat; numberless ground targets were rendered useless in extremely hazardous attacks—trains, tanks, trucks and troops were all assaulted with devastating effect. The Sq. carried out a total of one hundred and six missions against the enemy during this period of operations. Major Wade C. Wallis of Fort Neches, Texas was C.O. throughout this magnificent aggressive effort.

1st Lt. Carl T. Williams was killed in action on the day of his first victory, Nov. 21st, 1942.

Ace, Lt. Virgil H. Smith was killed in action Nov. 30th, 1942.

2nd Lt. Clark W. Smith was reported missing in action Nov. 30th

2nd Lt. Richard J. Carroll, MIA Nov. 30th, 1942.

2nd Lt. Elmer M. Warren " Jan. 18th, 1943.

1st Lt. William F Schottelkorb, MIA Jan. 23rd, 1943.

2nd Lt. Leo M. Yates " Jan. 23, 1943.

2nd Lt. Kenneth W. Harley " Jan. 23, 1943.

2nd Lt. Guy E. Sluteville " Jan. 23, 1943.

The ground personnel of the Sq. moved back to Casablanca the 28th of Feb. to reform a new 48th Sq. Major Bernard R. Muldoon became the C.O. and a rigorous training schedule occupied the time spent at Medouina Air Base. The Sq. on the 6th of May, 1943 moved again to Telergma Air Base to

re-commence combat flying.

1st Lt. Carl A Hahn was fatally injured in an auto crash during the trip back to the operational area.

Escort, strafing, and dive bombing missions were flown to Sicily, Sardinia and Pantelleria. Their dive bombing interventions played a large role in the air force success at Pantelleria. The Sq. moved once more after a relatively short stay at Telergma and from El Bathan they resumed the offensive under the new C.O. Captain Robert R. Mc Cord

The Sq. had a field day on the 18th of July, for while flying Air Sea Rescue Missions in addition to regular combat work, they bagged nine JU 52's.

Capt. Herbert E. Ross became C.O. Aug. 2nd, 1943 and is now acting in that capacity.

The Sq., after the reformation at Casablanca, has completed eighty six offensive operations; has destroyed twenty eight enemy aircraft in combat; has materially assisted in the reduction at Pantelleria; has made appreciably easier the task of the invasion of Sicily and it's successful conclusion. Every operation that can be undertaken by combat airplanes have been accomplished with great efficiency by the 48th. Citations amply attest this fact for on...(insert dates and pertinent data...)

... ..

2nd Lt. Robert B. Benton	was reported MIA	May 18th, 1943
" " Fred M. Sanders	"	May 26th, 1943
" " Harry E. Simmons	"	May 28th, 1943
" " Fredrick W. Browne	"	June 15th, 1943
" " Robert J. Hermann	"	July 12th, 1943
" " Donald J. Lister	"	July 13th, 1943
" " Jack L. Tarr	"	Aug. 17th, 1943
" " Harold I. Texter	"	Aug. 17th, 1943
" " Robert C. Thompkins	"	Aug. 17th, 1943
" " Wallace R. Kennedy	was killed in action	July 9, 1943

The Sq. has suffered a great loss though not a loss commensurate with the casualties and great material damage inflicted on the enemy. Two pilots reported as missing in action have recently returned through the exercise of split second thought, an acute imagination, and in the case of 2nd Lt. Stidham, the best qualities of a highly efficient Donegal brawler.

2nd Lt. Jerry Stidham was shot down in the course of an offensive mission on July 13th, 1943. He bailed out over Sicily and was captured by Germans. Though injured he managed an escape by treating the injury secretly and exaggerating its seriousness to his captors. He was recaptured but by dint of guile and a British barrage that killed one guard, he managed to again escape and to join the British Eighth Army operating in Sicily. The British returned him via Malta and he rejoined the Sq. the 24th of July, 1943. His doggedness in resisting imprisonment, though deprived of his normal combat weapon, his aggressiveness in escape though painfully wounded, form as fine a picture of an American warrior under stress as has been chronicled in our past.

Capt. Donald E. Anderson was reported missing in action in the course of a mission undertaken the 15th of June. His plane was shot down but he managed to bail out over Sicily handicapped as he surely was with a fracture in the right shoulder area. He was captured by Italians but was released by the Americans when they invaded Sicily in very timely fashion. He was returned to the Sq. on the 29th of July and was exultantly welcomed.

"Ah, these planes make damned beautiful sights and sounds as they take to the air".

OPERATIONAL CALENDAR OF 48TH SQUADRON

- November 18, 1942--First combat operation in the North African Theater. Flown from La Senia airdrome, Algeria. Escort of C-47's to Constantine and return. Ten ship convoy sighted traveling east along coast.
- November 19, 1942--From Maison Blanche, escorted bombers to Tunis and return. Encountered four enemy aircraft but they did not attack.
- November 20, 1942--Attack motorized convoys on roads in vicinity of Gabes. Another mission strafed aerodrome at Gabes, shot up Ju 52 on runway. Planes landed at Tebessa due to shortage of gas. Also escorted more C-47's to Tebessa.
- November 21, 1942--Escort C-47's to Youks les Bains.
- November 21, 1942--Escorted 12 B-17's to Tunis, engaged 4 enemy in a 25 minute running battle. Lt. Ayers crashed on return, not fatally injured. Lt. Williams shot down first enemy plane, Me 109, this was the first victory for any American pilot.
- November 22, 1942--Squadron moved to Youks les Bains, Algeria, made mission on same day, Captain Walles, leading six ship formation, shot up a motorized convoy leaving 4 tanks and 1 motorcycle in flames. The same formation attacked a train and completely destroyed the locomotive.
- November 22, 1942--On reconnaissance Lt. Shipman attacked an Italian bi-motored plane, it crashed into the ground and was left in flames.
- November 22, 1942--On reconnaissance Lts. Sorensen and Tollen shot up a troop train, destroying both locomotive and cars.
- November 22, 1942--Airdrome alert, 1 Ju 88 flew over the field at 9,000 feet, Lts. Sorensen and Shipman took off and shot this aircraft down.
- November 24, 1942--While on patrol Lts. Schottelkorb and Tollen intercepted and shot down one Ju-88.
- November 24, 1942--Captain Walles led a six ship formation on a reconnaissance mission. Shot up a 26 piece Italian truck convoy 5 miles SE of Sbeitla.
- November 25, 1942--On reconnaissance Lts. V. Smith and Goebel intercepted 4 staff cars on the Gabes road, all were left in flames. Later destroyed 2 radio trucks on the Ben Gardene road. Then intercepted armoured column of 20 vehicles, 12 of these being tanks, also 50 motorcycles. Disrupted column by strafing, returned to base out of ammunition.
- November 25, 1942--Escorted 11 A-20's to bridge near La Hencha, no enemy seen.
- November 26, 1942--Escort of 12 A-20's to Djedieda aerodrome near Tunis. P-38's strafed field and destroyed 10 Me-109's and Ju-88's on the ground. On return intercepted a convoy of 15 trucks and 10 tanks. Left five of the vehicles in flames and the others shot up.

November 26, 1942--2 P-38's and six A-20's flew reconnaissance.

November 27, 1942--Bomber escort to Matuer RR station, five e/a seen, but when engaged enemy would not fight.

November 27, 1942--Bomber escort to Sfax, no e/a seen.

November 28, 1942--Reconnaissance flight to Gabes and Mendenine, intercepted two Ju-88's and destroyed them after two minutes combat. Lts. V. Smith and Eubank, sighting no more, returned to base.

November 28, 1942--Reconnaissance flight to Kasserine, Sbeitla, Thala and return, nothing of importance sighted.

November 28, 1942--On reconnaissance flight Lt. Ethell shot down four Ju-52's and then attacked one Me-109 and damaged this e/a. Lt. Skinner did not return from mission.

November 28, 1942--12 P-38's escorted 12 A-20's to Bizerte, flight was attacked by 10 Me-109's and the engagement lasted for two minutes. All planes returned, though two were severely damaged.

November 29, 1942--Reconnaissance to Sbeitla, Faid and Sfax.

November 29, 1942-- Reconnaissance to Sbeitla, Kairouan and return, nothing sighted.

November 29, 1942--Reconnaissance to Sousse, Kairouan, Takrouna, and return.

November 29, 1942--10 ships on fighter sweep to Tunis area, sighted 6 Me-110's, in distance but were not engaged.

November 29, 1942--3 P-38's escort to 5 A-20's to Gabes Aerodrome, all returned, one damaged by flak.

November 30, 1942--12 P-38's escort for 9 A-20's to Djedeida. Bombs were dropped on RR station, no e/a seen.

November 30, 1942--4 P-38's on reconnaissance to Gabes, aerodrome was strafed, also tank and two trucks shot up on road.

November 30, 1942--12 P-38's on fighter sweep to Djedeida, weather was poor and flight had to turn back short of target.

November 30, 1942--12 P-38's on tactical reconnaissance intercepted 10 Me-109's, Lt. V. Smith destroyed one, Capt. Wallis and Watson damaged three more, Lt. Cole did not return from this flight.

December 1, 1942--12 P-38's escort for 6 A-20's to El Acuina. Bombs were seen to hit on the field. Our flight was attacked by 6 Me-109's, Lt. Singleton destroyed one, all of our planes returned safely.

December 1, 1942--12 P-38's escorted 6 A-20's to Djedeida, bombs hit in town, two Me-109's seen in distance, no engagements.

December 7, 1942--11 P-38's on reconnaissance, nothing sighted.

- December 2, 1942--Reconnaissance to Kairouan, Sousse, Enfidaville, Pont Du Fahs, three light cars were destroyed.
- December 2, 1942--Reconnaissance to Sbeitla, Sfax, Sousse, (unreadable) tank near Sfax, no other observations.
- December 2, 1942--Escorted B-25's to Gabes aerodrome, bombs were dropped and fires started. On return our planes attacked and destroyed a tank. All planes back safely.
- December 3, 1942--12 P-38's on fighter sweep to Tunis. The flight intercepted 12 Me-109's and 2 FW-190's. Lt. V. Smith destroyed one Me-109, Capt. Watson and Lt. Beindiek damaged two others. Lt. Carl Williams was killed in action during this sweep.
- December 3, 1942--On reconnaissance to Faid and Sfax attacked 5 tanks and a car, car destroyed, and tanks damaged.
- December 3, 1942--On fighter sweep in the Tunis area was engaged by 7 Me-109's and 1 FW-190, Lt. Tollen missing from this flight. Lt. Eubank crash landed in friendly territory.
- December 4, 1942--2 P-38's on reconnaissance to Faid, Sfax and return. Five trucks and trailers were attacked and set on fire.
- December 4, 1942--4 P-38's on reconnaissance to Faid strafed 2 tanks, 1 car and approximately 300 men. Over Faid intercepted by 4 Me-210's, Capts. Walles and Bing destroyed two of these.
- December 4, 1942--2 P-38's on reconnaissance to Gabes, sighted only trucks burning which had been attacked by previous mission.
- December 5, 1942--2 P-38's on reconnaissance to Gafsa, Gabes, Sfax, Faid, Sbeitla; Strafing ship entering Sfax harbor. Observed French column between Gafsa and Gabes.
- December 5, 1942--Escorted A-20's to Faid, after dropping bombs, area was patrolled and nothing sighted.
- December 5, 1942--Patrolled Sbeitla-Faid road, destroying 5 trucks in the area. Another reconnaissance mission was flown later in the day, nothing sighted. Also another mission in which two tanks were strafed was carried out.
- December 6, 1942--2 P-38's reconnaissance to Sfax, Gabes and Gafsa, no encounters.
- December 6, 1942--Reconnaissance of Faid area, nothing to report.
- December 6, 1942--Capt. Walles destroyed one Ju-52 while on fighter sweep to Sousse.
- December 7, 1942--10 P-38's on high reconnaissance to Souk El Arba and Djédeida.
- December 7, 1942--11 P-38's on reconnaissance, nothing sighted.

December 7, 1942--Escort for bombers, weather forced mission to return.

December 7, 1942--Capt. Watson and Lt. V. Smith destroyed 2 Ju-52's while on fighter sweep in Sfax area.

December 9, 1942--Reconnaissance to Feriana, Gafsa, nothing to report.

December 11, 1942--2 P-38's reconnaissance to Sbeitla, Kairouan, Sousse, Lt. Tolan, who had returned a few days previously, did not return again. 1 large ship seen in Sousse harbor.

December 12, 1942--2 P-38's covered train enroute Kasserine to Sbeitla.

December 12, 1942--Reconnaissance to Gafsa, Gabes, Sfax, Sousse, Sbeitla, nothing to report, weather closing in.

December 12, 1942--Lt. V. Smith shot down the first FW-190 in this theater of operations. Lt. Smith outclimbed and shot down this e/a at 18,000 ft. The flight also shot up cars and trucks at Kebili.

December 13, 1942--5 P-38's on reconnaissance to Faid, Sousse, Gabes, destroyed 4 trucks N. of Gabes. Saw Me-109's taking off aerodrome but no engagements.

December 14, 1942--Escort for A-20's on mission to Sfax. Bombs hit docks and MU yards, no e/s sighted.

December 14, 1942--Escort for A-20's to Sfax, bombs hit in center of town.

December 14, 1942--Shot up convoy headed for Sfax, nothing else to report. All planes returned safely.

December 15, 1942--Lts. Stege and Ziegler on weather reconnaissance, destroyed locomotive in yards at El Djem, also left burning 12 freight cars fully loaded, all returned safely.

December 15, 1942--4 P-38's escort for 3 A-20's to Maheres, R/V with P-40's failed so mission returned to base.

December 15, 1942--8 P-38's escort for 8 A-20's to Pont Du Fahs, bombs covered target well, nothing else to report.

December 16, 1942--Patrol sighted 2 Ju-88's and caused them to jettison their bombs, 88's escaped into the clouds.

December 16, 1942--Escort A-20's to Meteur, bombs were seen to hit in town. no enemy activity.

December 16, 1942--Escort to Massicault and return, nothing to report.

December 17, 1942--2 P-38's on weather patrol to Tunis, Sousse, Sfax, sighted 7 barges off shore.

December 17, 1942--8 P-38's escort 12 A-20's to Gabes. Were engaged by 4 Me-109's but when we turned into them, attack was broken off.

December 17, 1942--8 P-38's escort 12 A-20's to Souk El Abba, bombs were seen to hit aerodrome. Three Me-109's were engaged, but no claims made.

December 19, 1942--Bomber escort to Soussa, hits were made on docks and RR yards, no e/a sighted.

December 21, 1942--Weather reconnaissance to Feriana, Gafsa, Sfax, and Soussa, noticed Arabs evacuating around Soussa. Roads appeared to be impassable because of rains.

December 21, 1942--Weather reconnaissance to Le Keif and Port Du Fahs. Only one burning train sighted.

December 26, 1942--5 P-38's acted as high cover for the 49th Squadron as they went on low level fighter sweep. Three tanks and from 6 to 10 large trucks destroyed. All returned safely.

December 27, 1942--8 P-38's on fighter sweep to Port Du Fahs, Soussa, and Kairouan. At Soussa encountered heavy flak. Sighted 1 large ship anchored in harbor and 8 barges. Staff car shot up and left in flames near Soussa.

December 28, 1942--Capt. Bing, Lts. Sorenson, Smith, Singleton, Eastgen and Ubege on fighter sweep to Medenine. Sighted 21 large trucks and trailers between Es Zonia and Medenine and on return shot up and destroyed all. Trucks were carrying fuel, troops and supplies.

December 28, 1942--Lt. V. Smith became the first American Ace in this theater when he shot down his fifth enemy aircraft. While on alert a Me-109 came over the field and Lt. Smith took off, caught the e/a and destroyed it.

December 28, 1942--While on aerodrome patrol Lt. Mahank intercepted 3 Me-109's, these were attacked and one of them shot down, another was damaged.

December 29, 1942--5 P-38's on troop strafing mission to Port Du Fahs, were intercepted by 3 Me-109's and a five minute engagement followed, no claims.

December 30, 1942--12 P-38's bomber escort to Gabes, when leaving target were attacked by Me-109's. Lt. V. Smith was killed in action this date, and Lts. C. Smith and Carroll did not return.

December 31, 1942--On bomber escort to Gabes five Me-109's were intercepted and Capt. Dallas destroyed one, bombs were seen to hit in the town, all planes returned safely.

December 31, 1942--3 P-38's on fighter sweep to Tripoli. Shut up and left burning one gasoline truck at the border, eight other vehicles destroyed in this area. Capt. Johnson hit the ground while strafing, but got plane under control and flew back to base on one engine.

January 2, 1943--Lts. Sorenson and Guebel intercepted a Ju-88 over Tobessa and destroyed it. Lt. Guebel returned to base with one engine shot out, Lt. Sorenson continued on weather reconnaissance in the Faid area.

January 2, 1943--8 P-38's escort 8 A-20's to Sousse. Excellent hits were on docks and town. Flak very intense, no e/a seen.

January 3, 1943--8 P-38's on tank strafing mission to Pichon. 15 tanks and 4 armored vehicles strafed near Pichon. Were intercepted by Me-109's and Capt. Bing was shot down, making a belly landing near friendly territory.

January 3, 1943--Capt. Watson led flight to Pichon where A-20's bombed and 10 P-38's strafed two tanks. Other vehicles were strafed in the area, but could not observe results.

January 4, 1943--No mission flown, Capt. Bing returned to base safely.

January 9, 1943--First mission flown from new base at Bertaux. 8 P-38's escort for 6 B-25's. Weather bad, nothing to report.

January 10, 1943--8 P-38's on fighter sweep to Faid area, nothing to report.

January 12, 1943--Capt. Bing led an escort of 16 P-38's to 12 B-26's. Bombed the town of La Hencha, no e/a seen.

January 14, 1943--Bomber escort to Kalsa Srira, no engagements.

January 15, 1943--Flight could not make R/V because of darkness, returned to base.

January 15, 1943--8 P-38's for bomber escort to Marettimo and Fatignana Islands, flight of Ju-52's were intercepted and 3 of them shot down. Also one six engine German aircraft shot down.

January 18, 1943--Anti-shipping mission, 16 P-38's escort to 3 B-26's. R/V bombed off shore near Enfidaville. Lt. Warren did not return from mission.

January 20, 1943--Bomber escort for anti-shipping. Between Pantelleria and Sicily convoy of nine ships attacked. Ten fighters seen in distance but none attacked.

January 22, 1943--Failed to R/V, returned to base.

January 22, 1943--8 P-38's escort to 21 B-25's to attack El Ouna aerodrome. Bombs made direct hits on aerodrome. Five Fw-190's seen but no encounters.

January 23, 1943--16 P-38's on low level fighter sweep to Gabes and Ben Gardine, at Ben Gardine flight was attacked by 10 to 20 enemy aircraft and running fight lasted for 30 minutes. Over Ben Gardine Lt. Shottelkorb was hit by flak and seen to crash. Lts. Stateville, Harley, Yates and Soliday, missing in action. Lt. Shipman was also shot down, but later returned to base. Capt. Watson shot down 1 Me-109 and Lt. Seagraves damaged another. During the running fight out formation strafed and destroyed 25 miscellaneous vehicles along the road.

January 25, 1943--Counter shipping mission returned to base early due to poor weather.

January 27, 1943--Counter shipping mission to Egadi Islands, two large R/V sighted and bombed, nothing else to report.

*This was the last operational mission, pilots of this squadron returned to the United States on the 29th of January, 1943.

WAR DEPARTMENT ARCHIVES AND GROUP HISTORY

48th Fighter Squadron

18 November/42--27 January/43

REPORT

Total number of Sorties flown	Total number of Hours in air	Number of enemy planes		
		Destroyed	Damaged	Probable
834	2220	28	5	3

Other than planes destroyed

Locomotives.....	14
Tanks.....	33
Vehicles.....	166
o/a on ground.....	10

MISSIONS

106

48th Sq.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Ser. No.</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Date</u>
Carrol, Richard J.	2nd Lt.	O-724703	Gabes area	Dec. 30/42 KIA
Cole, Arthur V. Jr.	2nd Lt.	O-724710	Tunis area	Nov. 30/42 KIA
Harley, Kenneth W.	2nd Lt.	O-662926	Medenine	Jan. 23/43 KIA
Schettelkorb, William F.	1st Lt.	O-431164	Medenine	Jan. 23/43 KIA
Shipman, Mark E.	1st Lt.	O-431166	Medenine	Jan. 23/43 KIA
Skinner, Carl F.	1st Lt.	O-431171	Between Mensel & Metline	Nov. 28/42 KIA
Smith, Virgil H.	1st Lt.	O-431172	Gabes area	Dec. 30/42 KIA
Smith, Clark W.	2nd Lt.	O-421676	Gabes area	Dec. 30/42 KIA
Soliday, R.H.	2nd Lt.	O-730642	Medenine	Jan. 23/43 KIA
Stateville, Guy E.	2nd Lt.	O-726701	Medenine	Jan. 23/43 KIA
Tollen, James R.	2nd Lt.	O-724852	Djedidba-Tunis area	Dec. 11/42 KIA
Warren, Elmer N. Jr.	2nd Lt.	O-724575	S. Pont Du Fahs	Jan. 18/43 KIA
Williams, Carl T. Jr.	2nd Lt.	O-409032	Tunis area	Dec. 3/43 KIA
Yates, Leo M.	2nd Lt.	O-724868	Medenine	Jan. 23/43 KIA

Headquarters

Palmer, William E.	Capt.	O-396429	Aysan Islands	Jan. 15/43 KIA
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