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S E C R E T

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(SEPT 44)

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DESIGNATION SHEET
HISTORICAL RECORDS

R (H)

COMMAND : XXII Tactical Air Command
WING : _____
GROUP : _____
SQUADRON: both Fighter Squadron
OTHER : _____

OUTLINE HISTORY X
WAR DIARY X

S E C R E T

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HEADQUARTERS SIXTY-SIXTH F. S.

APO 650, U S Army,
30 September 1944

A. G. 314.7

SUBJECT: Historical Records.

TO : Commanding General, XII Fighter Command, A.P.O.
650, U S Army.

1. Outline History of the 66th Fighter Squadron for
the period of 1 September thru 30 September 1944.

a. Present designation: 66th F. S., 57th F. G.,
XII F. C., XII A. F.

b. Change in assignment: Relieved assignment from
87th F. W. and assigned to XII F. C.

c. Change in attachment: None

d. Change in Commanding Officer: None

e. Change in Staff Officers: None

f. Strength, commissioned and enlisted:

(1) Month of September, 1944:

(a) 1 September 1944:

1. Commissioned: 56
2. Enlisted: 230

(b) Net increase:

1. Commissioned: 0
2. Enlisted: 21

(c) Net decrease:

1. Commissioned: 6
2. Enlisted: 2

(d) 30 September 1944:

1. Commissioned: 51
2. Enlisted: 249

g. Stations:

(1) Name of station: Alto L. G. Corsica.

(a) Date of arrival: " A " party, 28 March
1944; " B " party, 6 April 1944.

(2) Name of station: Ombrone L. G., Italy.

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RS 528

Page 2., Outline History of 66 th F. S. August, 1944.

(a) Date of arrival: " A " party, 11 September 1944; " B " party, 21 September 1944.

(3) Name of station: Grosseto L. G., Italy.

(a) Date of arrival: Planes arrived 25 September 1944.

(4) The squadron personnel remained at Ombrone thru 30 September 1944.

h. Movements:

(1) From Alto L.G., Corsica, to Ombrone L. G., Italy.

(a) Purpose: Change of station.

(b) Dates: Shown above under " g " stations.

(c) Mode of travel: Motor convoy and LST.

(d) Condition of roads, conveyance, and weather: General conditions good.

i. Campaigns:

(1) Name: Italian.

(2) Duration: Still in progress.

j. Operations:

(1) Campaigns: Italian.

(2) Nature of operations: Dive bombing, armed recce and bomber escort.

(3) Number of missions and sorties for the period 1 September thru 30 September 1944.

(a) Missions: 41

(b) Sorties: 296

(4) Result of most important mission.

(a) Mission No. 823 of 3 September 1944.

1. Direct hits on two bridges; numerous engines, tank cars, and locomotives destroyed.

k. Commanding Officer on important mission: 2nd Lieut. Grady F. Davenport.

l. Losses in action:

(1) Missing in action.

(a) Name: 2nd Lieut. Thomas D. Davis.

Date: 2 September 1944.

(b) Name: 2nd Lieut. Alfred D. Mammarelli.

Date: 4 September 1944.

(c) Name: 1st Lieutenant Vincent J. Bracha.

Date: 9 September 1944.

(d) Name: Captain Donald W. Bell.

Date: 15 September 1944.

m. Presentations of awards to past and present members of this organization.

(1) Name: 1st Lieut. Richard L. Johnson.

(a) Basis: Extraordinary Achievement.

(b) Reward: Distinguished Flying Cross.

CONFIDENTIAL

RS528

Page 3., Outline History off 66th F. S. September, 1944.

- (2) Name: 1st Lieut. William R. Hill.
 (a) Basis: Extraordinary Achievement.
 (b) Reward: Distinguished Flying Cross.
- (3) Name: 1st Lieut. Stephen L. Bettinger.
 (a) Basis: Extraordinary Achievement.
 (b) Reward: Distinguished Flying Cross.
- (4) Name: Major Charles C. Leaf.
 (a) Basis: Extraordinary Achievement.
 (b) Reward: British Distinguished Flying Cross.
- (5) Name: Major William P. Benedict.
 (a) Basis: Extraordinary Achievement.
 (b) Reward: British Distinguished Flying Cross.
- (6) Name: Staff Sergeant Stephen L. Zuzze.
 (a) Basis: Heroism not involving actual conflict.
 (b) Reward: Soldier's Medal.
- (7) Name: Staff Sergeant Robert P. Stewart.
 (a) Basis: Heroism not involving actual conflict.
 (b) Reward: Soldier's Medal.
- (8) Name: 1st Lieut. Quentin J. Goss.
 (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement.
 (b) Reward: Air Medal.
- (9) Name: 2nd Lieut. Anthony R. Knauf.
 (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement.
 (b) Reward: Air Medal.
- (10) Name: 2nd Lieut. James L. Moody.
 (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement.
 (b) Reward: Air Medal.
- (11) Name: 1st Lieut. Carrol J. Yoder.
 (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement.
 (b) Reward: 2nd OLC to Air Medal.
- (12) Name: 1st Lieut. Vincent J. Bracha.
 (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement.
 (b) Reward: 2nd OLC to Air Medal.
- (13) Name: 2nd Lieut. Carl B. Carlson.
 (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement.
 (b) Reward: 2nd OLC to Air Medal.
- (14) Name: 1st Lieut. Richard L. Johnson.
 (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement.
 (b) Reward: 2nd OLC to Air Medal.
- (15) Name: 1st Lieut. Bobby J. Pridgeon.
 (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement.
 (b) Reward: 2nd OLC to Air Medal.
- (16) Name: 1st Lieut. William R. Hill.
 (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement.
 (b) Reward: 2nd OLC to Air Medal.
- (17) Name: 2nd Lieut. Grady F. Davenport.
 (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement.
 (b) Reward: 3rd OLC to Air Medal.

CONFIDENTIAL

RG 298

Page 4., Outline History of 66th F. S. September 1944.

- (18) Name: 1st Lieut. Donald L. Smith.
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement.
 - (b) Reward: 3rd OLC to Air Medal.
- (19) Name: 2nd Lieut. Carl B. Carlson.
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement.
 - (b) Reward: 3rd OLC to Air Medal.
- (20) Name: 1st Lieut. William R. Hill.
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement.
 - (b) Reward: 3rd OLC to Air Medal.
- (21) Name: 1st Lieut. Richard L. Johnson.
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement.
 - (b) Reward: 3rd OLC to Air Medal.
- (22) Name: 1st Lieut. Wilbur P. Bailey.
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement.
 - (b) Reward: 3rd OLC to Air Medal.
- (23) Name: Captain Egil G. Olsen.
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Service.
 - (b) Reward: Bronze Star.

2. Inclosed are the War Diary of the 66th Fighter Squadron for the period 1 September thru 30 September 1944 and Special Account of Mission 823 of 3 September 1944.

CHARLES C. LEAF,
Major, Air Corps,
Commanding.

CONFIDENTIAL

Sheet No. 1, War Diary of the 66th Fighter Sqdn., A.P.O. 650.

Month of September, 1944. Prepared by Eigil G. Olsen, Capt., A.C.

DAYEVENTS

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- 1 Except for a training flight there was no flying to-day as we were released for maintenance purposes. About five hundred bottles of beer were flown in from Africa to-day. Major Leaf has promised the squadron a party before leaving the island and he is attempting to store a supply of liquor that will make the occasion one long to be remembered. "As Thousands Cheer," a collection of excellent musical shorts, was shown in the evening.
-
- 2 Three missions, an armed recce and two bomber escorts, found us returning to the Po Valley, to once again attack enemy communication lines. While down on the deck in search of targets of opportunity near Ferrara, Italy, 2nd Lieut. Thomas D. Davis was seen to pull up into the clouds and no further contact was ever made with him. Congratulations were in order to-day to Majors Charles C. Leaf and William P. Benedict, our present and past squadron commanders, when it was announced that they were the recipients of the coveted British Distinguished Flying Cross for their work in Yugoslavia.
-
- 3 Pilots returning from two armed recces in the Po Valley reported that it was a shade like old times with the numerous targets offered. Destruction was rained upon rolling stock, motor transports, barges, and pontoons; a bomber escort completed the day's activity. Movies have always been one of the foremost morale builders in this squadron and it has been a universal gripe of the men against the so called "flag wavers" and second rate productions. Hollywood has evidently heeded these complaints and those of other G I's as evidenced by the high grade performance of the picture for the evening, "The Adventures of Mark Twain" and many pictures of similar caliber which have been shown recently.
-
- 4 The directive called for two dive bombing shows and an armed recce to the old hunting grounds, the Po Valley; targets were plentiful but not as abundant as the previous day. 2nd Lieut. Alfred D. Mammarelli failed to pull out of his bomb run during the first mission and his a/c was seen to auger in and explode. The excessive heat of the last few weeks has had a telling affect on the men working under the hot sun and humidity.

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Sheet No. 3, War Diary of the 66th Fighter Sqdn., A.P.O. 650.

Month of September, 1944. Prepared by Egil G. Olsen, Capt., A.C.

DAYEVENTS

of " A " party to Italy. The convoy pulled out shortly after noon bound for Calvi where they loaded on an L.S.T. manned by the U. S. Navy, our first trip with our own Navy. Four armed recces and an air sea rescue mission kept " B " party on the jump from early morning till dark. 1st Lieut. Richard L. Johnson, flight leader of the last mission, bombed and strafed a string of railroad cars loaded with ammo. A terrific explosion followed and 1st Lieut. Vincent J. Bracha called in on the " RT " to say he was hit. He was guided to the coast by Lieut. Johnson and, a half mile off the shore from Genoa, he bailed out at 300 feet. Coastal guns immediately opened up on him but he eventually managed to climb into his dingy while three a/c of the flight circled him. Just as the P.B.Y. arrived, Lieut. Bracha was not to be seen and all that remained of the dingy was scattered remnants of rubber.

- 10 Operations were on a smaller scale to-day - two armed recces and the planes were then put away for the night. Excitement ran high for a few minutes to-day when an a/c of the 65th Squadron caught fire. The bombs exploded and flying shrapnel set fire to an adjoining a/c, which also exploded. " A " party set sail at 0230 hours and after an hour or two of rough water, the ship reached a smooth pace thru the typically " millpond " Mediterranean. An unusual treat was in store for the men when three meals of good Navy chow was served. At 1630 hours Piombino, Italy, was reached; the ship was unloaded and they then drove to Grosseto where they parked and set up camp for the night.

- 11 Only two routine armed recces to the Po Valley were flown to-day. Pilots report that this area has been well clobbered by now, and, except for occasional rolling stock and a few marshalling yards, targets are scarce. " A " party was up early to drive to the new field, Ombrone, which is about seven miles east of Grosseto. About a mile from the field, camp was set up in a belt of beautiful jack pines. The pilots and ground officers will live in five villas about five miles from the field at Grosseto Marina.

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Sheet No. 2, War Diary of the 66th Fighter Sqdn., A.P.O. 650.

Month of September, 1944. Prepared by Eigil G. Olsen, Capt., A.C.

DAYEVENTS

but the weather has now taken a decided change and the days and nights have a definite autumn tinge.

- 5 The day's flying activity consisted of two armed reces to the Po Valley. Passes to Rome and Alexandria have been resumed for both the officers and the enlisted men, although the quota is much smaller than before. Another excellent picture, " The Bridge of San Luis Rey " was shown this evening.
- 6 Dawn broke with a fine drizzling rain falling and although two missions had been scheduled, the weather curtailed operations and we stood down for the day. We drew our two week ration of two bottles of Coca Cola and eight bottles of beer. We have always associated Coca Cola and beer with fond memories of America and civilization and it helps close the gap literally between Corsica and home.
- 7 Due to lack of suitable targets we were released for the day. With " B " party of the 4th French Fighter Group breaking camp to-day, the area has taken on the appearance of a deserted village as there are now only two fighter groups remaining. An excellent variety of two weeks canteen rations were issued and in the evening the picture " Rosie the Riveter " was shown.
- 8 It was 1700 hours before a scheduled 0900 hours armed recce to the Po Valley became airborne; a heavy downpour of rain and inclement weather made missions abortive during the remainder of the day. The Group insignias, which were ordered many months back, arrived to-day; Good Conduct Ribbons and four battle stars for our European-African Theater Ribbon, one each for the Egyptain-Libyan, Tunisian, Sicilian and Italian campaigns, were issued, late in the evening word was received that " A " party would depart tomorrow for a destination not yet announced.
- 9 The entire squadron was up before dawn to prepare for the move

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Sheet No. 4, War Diary of the 66th Fighter Squadron, A.P.O. 650.

Month of September, 1944. Prepared by Eigil G. Olsen, Capt., A.C.

DAYEVENTS

12 Three armed recces on the milk run to the Po Valley were on the schedule for the day. The French Fiesta grounds, located near our camp area, burned to the ground tonight. The fire is believed to have been started by a carelessly discarded cigarette butt. "A" party spent the day in setting up camp. A shower, a huge tank on several upright boards, has been installed; although it is a far cry from the crystal clear water of the stream at Alto, it will serve its purpose.

13 No variations of the directive to-day and once again it was two armed recces to the Po Valley. A British ENSA stage show was put on in the 26th Service Group area this evening. The type of entertainment usually given by ENSA offers exceptionally good talent and the men have nothing but the highest of praise for their productions. "A" party spent the day hoping and praying the planes wouldn't arrive at their field and shortly after noon their entreaties were answered.

14 By now the pilots know just about every blade of grass in the Po Valley as, except for a few weeks of operations in France, they have been flying over that territory for five months. Two more shows armed recces, were flown there to-day. The picture "A Guy Named Joe," starring Spencer Tracy, offered an excellent evening's entertainment. No diversion in the activity of "A" party - just sitting around enjoying the picturesque scenes of Italy.

15 The bitter must be taken with the sweet and, although 1st Lieut. Richard L. Johnson and flight reported the destruction of a good amount of rolling stock on our only mission for the day, the results were somewhat dimmed by the loss of Captain Donald W. Bell, who crashed into a locomotive during a strafing run. The group B-25's have been shuttling equipment over to the new field in Italy; by the time "B" party is ready to depart, a good amount of their equipment will be in use on the new field.

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Sheet No. 5, War Diary of the 66th Fighter Sqdn., A.P.O.650.

Month of September, 1944. Prepared by Eigil G. Olsen, Capt., A.C.

DAYEVENTS

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- 16 A dive bombing show and an armed recce constituted the day's flying activity although a third scheduled mission was abortive due to threatening weather. B-26's of the 320th Bomb Group have started moving in our field and within a few days they should be ready for operations. " A " party spent another uneventful day sweating out the planes to land on their field.
-
- 17 Word was received that the planes would fly to Ombrone L. G. in the afternoon but two armed recces set course to the Po Valley before they departed. Personnel and equipment were flown to the new field in DC's and B-25's and in the evening a B-26 transported a number of mechanics and armorers. There was much anxiety amongst those men as the pilot of the B-26 was unable to locate the field and finally, when gas was running low he was forced to land at Grosseto Main where they remained for the night.
-
- 18 The kites are now with " A " party and in the morning an armed recce set course to reconnoiter our old hunting grounds, the Po Valley; a second scheduled mission was abortive due to weather. A very generous ration of canteen supplies were issued." B " party in Corsica spent the day preparing for the anticipated move.
-
- 19 Three schedules missions for a busy day but once again weather interfered and the third mission stood down. Early in the afternoon several transports landed here and a number of men, with " sprog " written all over their faces, climbed out. They were replacements for the men who had left for the B-29 groups and our squadron received nine, all basic men. In a steady down-pour of rain, " B " party departed from their camp area at Alto to procede to a marshalling yard outside of Bastia. Equipment and personnel were loaded on an American L.S.T. and they spent the night in the harbor.
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- 20 A mission was scheduled for early morning but a cloudy sky at dawn followed by a torrential downpour of rain which continued for hours, made all missions abortive, " A " party set sail from Bastia early in the morning in a rough sea that left the

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Sheet No. 6, War Diary of the 66th Fighter Sqdn., A.P.O. 650.

Month of September, 1944. Prepared by Eigil G. Olsen, Capt., A.C.

DAYEVENTS

men hanging their head over the rail most of the trip. Arriving at Piombino late in the afternoon, the convoy was unable to dock due to the crowded condition of the harbor; resultingly another night was spent in a harbor.

- 21 The condition of our drome is easiest described by the fact that the sea gulls are now lighting on the runway instead of the nearby Tyrrhenian Sea. It appears that we will be stood down for several days yet. After a night in the harbor of Piombino, " B " party sailed north to Leghorn where they finally disembarked. The greater part of the personnel and equipment succeeded in reaching camp this evening but some few spent the night along the road south of Leghorn.
- 22 The drome is still in wretched condition. Engineers are attempting to set up a drainage system but in air corps lingo, the field appears " to have had it." During the past week, twenty new enlisted men have joined the squadron and we are now at full T. O. strength. Except for one corporal, there is no rank amongst them. Advancement for the enlisted personnel has been almost frozen for the last year but now it will be possible to distribute to the worthy ones, the rank they are deserving of. A double feature, " Blonde Trouble " and " Du Barry Was A Lady," was shown in the local cinema house, a converted garage in Grosseto Marina.
- 23 Mechanics took a trip to the line this morning to pre-flight the aircraft. With flying activity at a standstill, the men are having a well earned respite after the extensive operations in Corsica. Some of the pilots are spending a few days in Rome and many of the men have taken daily passes to the adjoining towns to see what they have to offer. The picture, " Reunion In France," was shown this evening.
- 24 The planes will be flown to Grosseto Main L. G. as soon as conditions warrant their taking off; future operations will be based from this field. Bombs were dropped from all aircraft but late in the afternoon it was decided to hold off

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Sheet No. 7, War Diary of the 66th Fighter Sqdn., A.P.O. 650.

Month of September, 1944. Prepared by Eigil G. Olsen, Capt., A. C.

DAYEVENTS

the removal until the following day. A number of the men took off this evening to a nearby town to trip the light fantastic with the Italian Signorinas.

25 The condition of the field is finally serviceable enough to fly the planes out and this afternoon the a/c of the three squadrons flew to Grosseto Main amidst much " sweating out " but with no accidents. The 47th Medium Bomb Group has moved from that drome but the 86th Fighter Group will remain there as our neighbors. The field was well clobbered during the aerial onslaught in Italy, often by our own pilots, and much of the area is still strewn with wreckage.

26 Most of the day was spent in moving equipment to the new field, the setting up of tents, and maintenance of the aircraft. Although it will involve a ride of several miles from the camp area and a longer distance from the officer's villas, we will continue to remain at our present site. A tentative plan whereby each squadron operates for two consecutive days has been set up.

27 64th's turn to operate to-day and tomorrow we hope to finally set course to match wits with the wiley Hun. A definite policy of pass system for the enlisted personnel of the group has been set up whereby each man is entitled to a five day furlough every two months and ten days every four months. It appears that the mail authorities have forgotten that we exist; except for a mere trickle of letters, day after day passes without the much awaited " mail call."

28 Hitler's entreaties were answered once more and a light rain fell during the greater part of the night. The directive called for several missions in close support of the Army but the first mission returned early due to weather. The dispersal area was such that all planes had to be pulled by the cletrac to the runway. We were released early in the morning due to the condition of the field and the weather.

CONFIDENTIAL

RC 298

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Sheet No. 8, War Diary of the 66th Fighter Sqdn., A.P.O. 650.

Month of September, 1944. Prepared by Eigil G. Olsen, Capt., A.C.

DAYEVENTS

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- 29 It was hoped that the dispersal area would be serviceable to schedule a few flights but in the afternoon it was decided to cancel all missions. The enlisted men have taken over a small three room house, directly across the street from their camp area, to be used as a day room. A lot of hard work has been spent in removing the pine seeds which had been stored there, cleaning the walls and floors, painting and repairing, and for their efforts they now have an ideal club house.
-
- 30 It actually happened. We flew to-day, four armed recces and an anti flak diversion show. A long lay over usually results in a temporary drop in the efficiency of the squadron but to-day operations sailed along smoothly. The schedule called for close support of the Fifth Army as directed by "Rover Joe" but bad weather over the Gothic Line forced flights to bomb alternate targets, communication lines in the Po Valley. During the second mission 2nd Lieut. David T. Hutton, his aircraft damaged by flak, was forced to belly land at a Florence Drome. 1st Lieut. William R. Hill and 1st Lieut. Bobby J. Pridgeon, two of our oldest and most respected pilots, packed bags to-day to ship stateside.
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Sheet No. 9, War Diary of the 66th Fighter Sqdn., A.P.O. 650.

Month of September, 1944. Prepared by Eigil G. Olsen, Capt., A.C.

Special Account of Mission No. 823 of 3 September, 1944 from
Alto L. G. Corsica

A/C	PILOT	A/C	PILOT
91	Davenport	95	Bracha
83	Noyd	84	Lown
77	Hartwig	89	Moody
71	Hutton	70	Mosites

Duty: 8 a/c with 2 x 500 1/10 delay on armed recce from Savona, Turin and Cuneo.

Narrative: Formation headed on course, climbing to 11,000 feet. A 100 foot concrete highway bridge at O-07-58 was bombed from 1,000 feet. Two hits scored on south approach and two hits on road just north of bridge. The last flight bombed a railroad bridge at O-0658, one direct hit scored on south end and several near misses. Strafing attacks were made as follows: at O-05-55, 2 passanger cars and engine heading west. Engine destroyed, cars smoking. At O-25-50, engine strafed and destroyed and house set afire. At J-05-04, engine and 20 plus flat and boxcars heading north with 15 M/T on flat cars. Engine destroyed and 3 plus smokers. At O-0196, M/Y, one engine with steam up destroyed, 5 plus tank cars, one exploded; 8 boxcars and 12 flat cars with M/T, two flamers and several smoking; at the northwest corner of town (O-01-96) large fire, black smoke, also as result of attack. At O-00-86, 15 plus flat cars with M/T, two flamers and 3 smoking. O-04-61, 20 plus box cars and gondolas, 7 plus smoking. O-09-52, 10 box cars, results not observed. No e/a. 20mm from house at O-25-50, scant inaccurate (house strafed and set afire) Near Asti, railroad traffic appeared headed north and northwest. At least five engines were observed. A barrage ballon, drifting loose seen in area T-50-90 at 3,000 feet. Visibility good over target area, along coastline from Genoa east, 10/10 from deck to 12,000 and thunderheads. 2/10 at 3,000 feet over sea; air extremely rough.

All a/c returned safely.

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