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RESTRICTED DESIGNATION SHEET
 HISTORICAL RECORDS

COMMAND : XXII Tactical Air Command

WING : _____

GROUP : 57th Fighter Group

SQUADRON: 66th Fighter Squadron

OTHER : _____

OUTLINE HISTORY _____

WAR DIARY _____

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HEADQUARTERS SIXTY-SIXTH F. S.

APO 650, U S Army,
31 October 1944.

A. G. 314.7

SUBJECT: Historical Records.

TO : Commanding General, XXII Tactical Air Command, APO 650,
U S Army.

1. Outline History of the 66th Fighter Squadron for the
period of 1 October thru 31 October 1944.

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

b. Change in attachment: None

c. Change in assignment: Relieved assignment XII F. G.
and assigned to XXII T.A.C.

d. Change in Commanding Officer: None

e. Change in Staff Officers: 1st Lieut. Richard L.
Johnson assumed the duties of Operations Officer, replacing 2nd
Lieut. Herman R. Williams who returned to the U. S. A. 1st Lieut.
Alexander N. Apostolou assumed the duties as Acting Intelligence
Officer replacing Captain Eigil G. Olsen, who returned to the
U. S. A.

f. Strength, commissioned and enlisted.

(1) Month of October, 1944.

- (a) 1 October 1944
 - 1. Commissioned: 51
 - 2. Enlisted : 249
- (b) Net increase:
 - 1. Commissioned: 1
 - 2. Enlisted : 3
- (c) Net decrease:
 - 1. Commissioned: 11
 - 2. Enlisted : 1
- (d) 31 October 1944
 - 1. Commissioned: 41
 - 2. Enlisted : 251

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

- g. Stations:
 - (1) Name of station: Grossetto L. G., Italy.
 - (a) Date of arrival: " A " party, 11 September 1944, " B " party, 21 September 1944
 - (2) The squadron personnel remained at Ombrone thru 31 October 1944, where they are located for operations from Grossetto L. G.
- h. Movements: None
- i. Campaigns:
 - (1) Name: Italian.
 - (2) Duration: Still in progress.
- j. Operations:
 - (1) Campaigns: Italian.
 - (2) Nature of operations: Dive bombing and armed recce.
 - (3) Number of missions and sorties for the period 1 October thru 31 October 1944.
 - (a) Missions: 41
 - (b) Sorties : 200
 - (4) Result of most important mission: None
- k. Commanding Officer on important mission: None
- l. Losses in action: None
- m. Presentations of awards to past and present members of this organization.
 - (1) Name: 2nd Lieut. Howard W. Cleveland
 - (a) Basis: Extraordinary Achievement
 - (b) Award: Distinguished Flying Cross
 - (2) Name: Captain Fred K. Martin
 - (a) Basis: Extraordinary Achievement
 - (b) Award: Distinguished Flying Cross
 - (3) Name: 1st Lieut. James B. Wise
 - (a) Basis: Extraordinary Achievement
 - (b) Award: Distinguished Flying Cross
 - (4) Name: 1st Lieut. Wilbur P. Bailey
 - (a) Basis: Extraordinary Achievement
 - (b) Award: Distinguished Flying Cross
 - (5) Name: 1st Lieut. Stephen L. Bettinger
 - (a) Basis: Extraordinary Achievement
 - (b) Award: Distinguished Flying Cross
 - (6) Name: 2nd Lieut. Carl B. Carlson
 - (a) Basis: Extraordinary Achievement
 - (b) Award: Distinguished Flying Cross

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Page 3., Outline History of 66th F. S. October, 1944.

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- (7) Name: T/Sgt. Warren K. Anderson
(a) Basis: Meritorious Service
(b) Award: Bronze Star
 - (8) Name: T/Sgt. Clarence M. Clark
(a) Basis: Meritorious Service
(b) Award: Bronze Star
 - (9) Name: S/Sgt. Felix M. Tunnell
(a) Basis: Meritorious Service
(b) Award: Bronze Star
 - (10) Name: S/Sgt. William M. Berry
(a) Basis: Meritorious Service
(b) Award: Bronze Star
 - (11) Name: Captain Donald A. Smith
(a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
(b) Award: 4th Oak Leaf Cluster
 - (12) Name: Lieut. Colonel William J. Yates
(a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
(b) Award: 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
 - (13) Name: 1st Lieut. Stephen L. Bettinger
(a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
(b) Award: 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
 - (14) Name: 1st Lieut. Bobby J. Pridgeon
(a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
(b) Award: 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
 - (15) Name: 1st Lieut. Leon E. Jansen
(a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
(b) Award: 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
 - (16) Name: 1st Lieut. Robert E. Kaiser
(a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
(b) Award: 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
 - (17) Name: 1st Lieut. Darrell F. Casida
(a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
(b) Award: 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
 - (18) Name: Captain Donald W. Bell (Posthumous)
(a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
(b) Award: Air Medal
 - (19) Name: 1st Lieut. William C. Tench
(a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
(b) Award: Air Medal
 - (20) Name: 1st Lieut. Thomas H. Callan
(a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
(b) Award: Air Medal
 - (21) Name: 1st Lieut. Louis J. Pernicka
(a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
(b) Award: Air Medal

2. Inclosed is the War Diary of the 66th Fighter Squadron for the period 1 October thru 31 October 1944.

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

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Sheet No. 1, War Diary of the Sixty-Sixth Fighter Sqdn., APO 650.
 Month of October, 1944. Prepared by A. N. Apostolou, 1st Lieut. A.C.

DAYEVENTS

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- 1 The weather continued on the sunny side and for the second day running, we were able to fly five missions, two "Rover Joes," two dive bombing shows and an armed recce. In November of 1943, the English Eighth Army originated the Rover idea for the purpose of close support with our troops. Flying with the D. A. F. at the time, we were amongst the first to use the practice. He is usually located in an armored car at an advantageous spot overlooking the front lines and, upon the approach of the planes, he directs the flight to a target, one of his own choice or one that has been given him by the Army.
-
- 2 Two days will now elapse until we fly again. Passes to Rome started to-day for the enlisted men. 1st Sgt. Pettis has hired a suite of fifteen rooms for the enlisted men at the California Hotel, which is centralized to all points of interest and also the G. I. mess halls.
-
- 3 Holiday again to-day. A P-38 piloted by Captain Campbell of the famous "Hat In The Ring Squadron," (1st Fighter Group) has been assigned to our group for photo recce work. He flies along as a spare ship behind the formation and immediately after the bombing or strafing run, he swoops down to a low level to photograph the results of the attack. In a recent issue of the European Theater Pictorial Service, it was revealed that 1st Lieutenant Howard W. Danks was the first pilot to land on the soil of Southern France; his aircraft had been acting up and he was forced to land at St. Raphael. Our squadron also holds the unique distinction of having dropped the first bomb during the invasion when Major Leaf went into his dive bomb run just as dawn was breaking on "D-Day."
-
- 4 Another day of relaxation and lassitude. This evening the men had a real treat for supper: fried chicken galore with all the trimmings. By a pleasant coincidence the beer ration was distributed after supper; each man received twelve bottles and a cheery glow permeated the camp area as dusk fell.
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- 5 To-day was our turn to fly again and early this morning we were scheduled to operate in support of the Fifth Army. A heavy rain cancelled our mission and, as the morning wore on, the low

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Sheet No. 2, War Diary of the Sixty-Sixth Fighter Sqdn., APO 650.
Month of October, 1944. Prepared by A. N. Apostolou, 1st Lieut.

ceiling and showers forced us to be stood down for the day. Fifteen eager enlisted men departed this morning for Rome to spend five days of relaxation in the Holy City.

- 6 Although a flight had been scheduled to take off at 0640 hrs., a heavy rain cancelled the mission and intermittent showers throughout the morning brought about our release for the day. Several of our veteran pilots left us to-day to return to the good old U. S. A. for a well earned rest. The fortunate ones were Lieutenants Bettinger, Carlson, Davenport, Casida, Fleming, Ridley and Williams. We all felt a pang of regret as they departed, for we have shared many pleasant hours at work and play with these pilots during the spring " Operational Strangle " in Italy and more recently, the invasion of Southern France.
-
- 7 Six missions were flown to-day - all under the direction of " Rover Joe " on the Fifth Army front. One of our squadron pilots, Lieut. David Hutton, is working at the control post with which " Rover Joe " is in contact. Lieutenants Mosites and Mayberry returned to the squadron after a close brush with the Grim Reaper. On a cross-country flight to Sicily, they flew through storms until out of fuel and, with every airfield within range closed down by the weather, they made successful belly landings on the beach at Reggio Calabria - unscathed. This afternoon, Lieut. Angelone blew a tire on take off and by presence of mind kept right side up and emerged from the cockpit smiling as the flames consumed the aircraft.
-
- 8 A busy day with eight missions had been scheduled but it was raining when we got out of bed at 0430 hours, so we just sat around on an hour's readinees as the clouds rolled above, occasionally sprinkling the deeply puddled taxi strip. At noon, a list of promotions of almost a score of enlisted men was posted on the squadron bulletin board and congratulations

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Sheet No. 3, War Diary of the Sixty-Sixth Fighter Sqdn., APO 650.
 Month of October, 1944. Prepared by A. N. Apostolou, 1st Lieut.

DAYEVENTS

were handed to the fortunate men concerned.

- 9 A heavy downpour of rain last night killed our hopes of operating to-day, and the field looks like a veritable lake. Although the sun peeped through the clouds for a few hours during the afternoon, we were stood down for the day. The enforced idleness on the pilots and ground men tends to leave all in a bad frame of mind that only can be corrected by a return to extensive operations.
- 10 Another "dry run" this morning - up at 0430 hours but a solid overcast had us stood down until noon. The weather cleared then and we flew three missions. Two shows were routine "Rover Joe" patrols and the third an armed recce. Only one aircraft of the four plane flight returned from the last mission although all pilots are reported safe. Lieut. Irby was forced to belly land at an airdrome near Florence after the weather had closed in.
- 11 It will be two days before we fly again but in the meantime maintenance of the aircraft must go on. Our present status now reads only twenty-one planes, the smallest quota we have operated with since our conversion from Warhawks to Thunderbolts. Replacements have been slow in coming through but we hope to find ourself back to full strength shortly.
- 12 Flying and ground personnel continue to depart for Rome on five and ten day passes. It is the consensus of the men that Rome has more to offer than any city we have visited overseas. St. Peter's Church, Vatican City with its museum and treasure room, various other collections of the world's greatest treasures can now all be seen by the troops. Every effort has been made to show the men a good time. M. P. restrictions are fair and sensible, good food can be had at Army resturants, and a high grade of various types of entertainment is always available.

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Sheet No. 4, War Diary of the Sixty-Sixth Fighter Sqdn., APO 650.
 Month of October, 1944. Prepared by A. N. Apostolou, 1st Lieut.

DAYEVENTS

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- 13 Another change in the schedule of operations will find us inactive for three more days. With the advent of fall, the camp area has once again taken on a appearance of a "squatter town." In the Army, a soldier's tent is his castle so by improvising, and scrounging, home made stoves, doors, floors and frames have insured comfort in every tent. The picture, "The Uninvited Guest," was shown in the evening.
-
- 14 In the absence of Major Leaf, who has been vectoring planes at "Rover Joe" for several days, 1st Lieutenant Richard L. Johnson has assumed the duties of Squadron Commander. 1st Sgt. Pettis returned to-day from a visit with "Rover Joe" and after listening to his experiences, we felt thankful for being in the Air Corps. No matter how well off a person may be, he is prone to gripe and groan, but to the last man, we, of this squadron, know well the hardships, filth, and danger under which the unsung heroes of the war, "The Doughboys," must live.
-
- 15 "G" suits which have been used successfully by both the Army and Navy Air Corps in aerial combat, have been issued to several of the pilots for testing in fighter bomber tactics. By means of cells installed in the suit, which starts at the waist and resembles a pair of flying pants, the flow of blood from the head to the lower parts of the body is stopped and thus lessens a pilot's chance of "black-ing out" after pulling up from his dive bomb run or a sharp turn.
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- 16 In coordination with an impending drive of the Fifth Army, extensive operations had been scheduled. However Hitler's personal friend, bad weather, set in and our early morning mission returned with its bomb load. By late afternoon, there were enough holes in the clouds for eight of our aircraft to become airborne on a "Rover Joe" mission. Despite the heavy overcast, Lieut. George S. Irby led the flight to the vectored target, bombed, and then received the message on the RT, "Good Show Jackpot, you have hit your target." In place of incendiary bombs, wing tanks filled with a strong chemical fluid were dropped to drive the Hun from a stronghold.

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Sheet No. 5, War Diary of the Sixty-Sixth Fighter Sqdn., APO 650.
Month of October, 1944. Prepared by A. N. Apostolou, 1st Lieut. A.C.

DAY

EVENTS

- 17 We were up bright and early for a 0720 hrs. take off but once again weather stood us down for the day. Air Corps engineers are working night and day on the taxi strips and dispersal area to render them serviceable on days following a rainstorm. An excellent picture " Destination Tokyo," was shown in the evening.
- 18 Although the weather continues to be bad, we managed to fly two missions, both in close support of the Fifth Army. Bombing and strafing in close support of ground troops requires keen observation and pin pointing by the flight leaders or else our own troops stand to suffer disaster. We feel proud of the work of our squadron pilots as there has been nothing but praise from the Army as to their performances.
- 19 Three bomb line shows were the extent of our effort for the day. Captain Eigil G. Olsen, Intelligence Officer, and S/Sgt. James W. Lamkin, ass't mess sergeant, are two happy men this evening for they were informed that they would be shipping Stateside under the rotation plan. 1st Lieutenant Leon E. Jansen, one of our senior pilots, is returning home on a thirty day furlough.
- 20 Good flying weather in the battle area of the Gothic Line favored our Thunderbomber efforts with one eight and three four ship missions being flown in close support shows. Orders are now being taken for alabaster placques and bookends with the squadron insignia carved on them. A dealer near Pisa has done an excellent job in reproducing the insignia and it will be a good souvenir to bring home with us.
- 21 For the past few weeks we have flown to the Gothic Line so often that it has now been added to that long list of " milk runs " which past and present pilots will remember in years

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Sheet No. 6, War Diary of the Sixty-Sixth Fighter Sqdn., APO 650.

Month of October, 1944. Prepared by A. N. Apostolou, 1st Lieut. A.C.

DAYEVENTS

to come. The weather closed in during the third mission and the four planes were forced to land at Florence, returning later on in the afternoon to our rain soaked field.

- 22 The heavy rains of the previous day which continued on throughout the early morning, left the field unserviceable. S/Sgt. Robert Bartosz and his three able assistants by their ingenuity and improvising have built a photo lab, completely housed in with two toned plywood, on an old Itie truck. The inside has been painted and designed by Private Karl A. Miller, a commercial artist in Civy Street. A central control switch controls plumbing, lighting, heating and ventilation. The plumbing system is all built in and an electric pump insures water pressure; all lighting is indirect. The laboratory equipment has been scrounged and a good word might be added for the excellent work produced by the men.
- 23 Weather conditions were satisfactory for flying but our dispersal area resembled a mud puddle and we remained bogged down. We now have a squadron barber, Corporal Danny Caputo, a tonsortorial expert of many years standing. His shop has been set up in a tent and he is using a barber's kit, which is now a squadron issue. His bill of fare reads " Haircuts, 20 lires; shaves, 10."
- 24 The directive called for three close support shows over the Gothic Line and for a change we were able to fulfill our entire schedule. Congratulations were in order to-day to Captain Donald A. Smith on his recent promotion from 1st Lieutenant and to Lieutenants Anderson, Angelone, Dodds, Hutton, Pernicka, and Knauf who have discarded their faded gold bars for those of shiney silver.
- 25 The day's flying activity consisted of two four plane missions over the Gothic Line and then at noon bad weather set in, cancelling the remainder of the scheduled flights. The mail clerk finally produced enough mail to keep everyone satisfied for awhile. In the evening, the picture " Murder In Times Square " was shown.

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Sheet No. 7, War Diary of the Sixty-Sixth Fighter Sqdn., APO 650.
 Month of October, 1944. Prepared by A. N. Apostolou, 1st Lieut. A.C.

DAYEVENTS

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- 26 Extremely bad weather curtailed our fighter bomber efforts for the day. As the result of the heavy rains of the last few days, the camp area of the enlisted personnel as well as the airdrome has taken on the appearance of a mud village. On the whole, though, the tents have weathered the storms in good shape as by now the men know all the tricks of preventing washouts.
-
- 27 Another day of bad weather with an unserviceable field but in the afternoon conditions had improved enough to send out an armed recce to the Spezia-Genoa Area. However, the flight returned a few minutes after take off due to mechanical trouble of the flight leader. During the past two months there has been a change from twelve ship flights to those of eight or four aircrafts. The targets in the area we are now operating warrant only small flights and during bad weather, it is much easier to maneuver with a small formation.
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- 28 It was early afternoon before our first mission was airborne but before darkness crept in, four armed recces had set course over the Po Valley. For the first time in many weeks pilots had ample opportunity to test their guns on worthwhile targets and numerous trucks and rolling stocks were left in the wake of destruction.
-
- 29 Our operations for the day consisted of a "dry run" to the field for a 1400 hrs. take off but inclement weather over the target area cancelled the mission. During the current lull, rockets have been installed on five planes by a service unit in Naples. It is not definitely known the number of rocket carrying aircraft that this squadron will have for future operations.
-
- 30 Although a four plane mission was able to reach the Gothic Line, the flight leader found the target area completely closed in and was forced to return to the home base with bombs. Major James G. Curl, one of our former Commanding Officers who returned to the States, dropped in to-day to renew acquaintances. He is now assigned to a P-51 outfit.

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Sheet No. 8, War Diary of the Sixty-Sixth Fighter Sqdn., APO 650.

Month of October, 1944. Prepared by A. N. Apostolou, 1st Lieut. A.C.

DAY

EVENTS

- 31 A hurried call from the Fifth Army to wipe out a Jerry stronghold in front of the bomb line found eight of our aircraft setting course immediatley. The flight leader, 1st Lieutenant James P. Hartwig, circled the target area for close to a half hour in the face of intense flak in an effort to pin point the well camouflaged target. However the result of the mission was clearly evident as, before the flight had reached their home base, a congratulatory wire was received from the Fifth Army. An armed recce to the Po Valley constituted the remainder of our efforts for the day.

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