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S E C R E T

SQ-FI-66-#1

Dec 44

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DESIGNATION SHEET
HISTORICAL RECORDS

COMMAND : XXII Tactical Air Command

WING : _____

GROUP : 57th Fighter Group

SQUADRON: 66th Fighter Squadron

OTHER : _____

OUTLINE HISTORY X

WAR DIARY X

S E C R E T

12AF-AB1-H1

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ANA/cbb

HEADQUARTERS SIXTY-SIXTH F. S.

A. G. 314.7

APO 650, U S Army,
31 December 1944.

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 December thru 31 December 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: None

d. Change in Commanding Officer; None

e. Change in Staff Officers:

(1) Major Stuart O. Van Slyke assumed the duties
of Executive Officer, vice Major Alfred P.
Mallet relieved.(2) Major Stuart O. Van Slyke assumed the duties
of Transportation Officer, vice 1st Lieutenant
Donald J. Perkle relieved.(3) 1st Lieutenant James W. Wray assumed the duties
of Communication Officer, vice Captain Richard
L. Johnson relieved.

f. Strength, commissioned and enlisted:

(1) Month of December, 1944.

(a) 1 December 1944

1. Commissioned: 60

2. Enlisted : 247

(b) Net increase

1. Commissioned: 10

2. Enlisted : 4

(c) Net decrease :

1. Commissioned: 9

2. Enlisted : 3

(d) 31 December 1944

1. Commissioned: 61

2. Enlisted : 248

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

g. Stations:

- (1) Name of station: Grosseto L. G., Italy.
 - (a) Date of arrival: " A " party, 11 September 1944, " B " party, 21 September 1944.
 - (2) The squadron personnel moved from Grosseto Marina to Grosseto proper, where they are located for operations from Grosseto 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, armed recce, and area cover.
- (3) Number of missions and sorties for the period 1 December thru 31 December 1944.
 - (a) Missions: 96
 - (b) Sorties : 602
- (4) Result of most important mission: None

k. Commanding Officer on important mission: None

l. Losses in action:

- (1) Missing in action:
 - (a) Name: 1st Lieut. Charles S. Dehmer
 - 1. Date: 9 December 1944
 - (b) Name: Captain Thomas H. Callan
 - 1. Date: 9 December 1944
 - (c) Name: 1st Lieut. Robert C. Lown
 - 1. Date: 9 December 1944
 - (d) Name: 1st Lieut. Wayne S. Dodds
 - 1. Date: 9 December 1944
 - (e) Name: 2nd Lieut. Eugene F. Smith
 - 1. Date: 10 December 1944
 - (f) Name: 1st Lieut. Harry L. Gogan
 - 1. Date: 20 December 1944
- (2) Killed in action:
 - (a) Name: 1st Lieut. Donald Herdrich
 - 1. Date: 26 December 1944

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

- (1) Name: Captain Richard L. Johnson
 - (a) Basis: Gallantry in Action
 - (b) Award: Silver Star

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

- (2) Name: Captain Thomas H. Callan
 - (a) Basis: Extraordinary Achievement
 - (b) Award: Distinguished Flying Cross
- (3) Name: Captain George S. Irby
 - (a) Basis: Extraordinary Achievement
 - (b) Award: Distinguished Flying Cross
- (4) Name: Major Charles C. Leaf
 - (a) Basis: Outstanding Achievement
 - (b) Award: Croix de Guerre
- (5) Name: Lieutenant Charles E. McCreary
 - (a) Basis: Wounded in Action
 - (b) Award: Purple Heart
- (6) Name: Major Charles C. Leaf
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 12th Oak Leaf Cluster
- (7) Name: Captain Richard L. Johnson
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 7th Oak Leaf Cluster
- (8) Name: Captain Richard L. Johnson
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 6th Oak Leaf Cluster
- (9) Name: Captain Richard L. Johnson
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 5th Oak Leaf Cluster
- (10) Name: Captain George S. Irby
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 5th Oak Leaf Cluster
- (11) Name: Captain George S. Irby
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 4th Oak Leaf Cluster
- (12) Name: Lieutenant Anthony R. Knauf
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 4th Oak Leaf Cluster
- (13) Name: Lieutenant Quentin J. Goss
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
- (14) Name: Captain James P. Hartwig
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
- (15) Name: Lieutenant James L. Moody
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
- (16) Name: Lieutenant Theodore Matula
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
- (17) Name: Captain William H. Ehney
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
- (18) Name: Lieutenant Anthony R. Knauf
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster

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

- (19) Name: Captain Leon E. Jansen
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
- (20) Name: Captain James P. Hartwig
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
- (21) Name: Lieutenant Anthony R. Knauf
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
- (22) Name: Lieutenant Theodore Matula
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
- (23) Name: Lieutenant James L. Moody
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
- (24) Name: Lieutenant Quentin J. Goss
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
- (25) Name: Lieutenant Louis J. Pernicka
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
- (26) Name: Lieutenant Miller A. Anderson
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
- (27) Name: Lieutenant Joseph Angelone
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
- (28) Name: Lieutenant Harold A. Swanson
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
- (29) Name: Lieutenant Louis J. Pernicka
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
- (30) Name: Lieutenant Joseph Angelone
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
- (31) Name: Lieutenant Wayne S. Dodds
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
- (32) Name: Lieutenant Arno H. Heying
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
- (33) Name: Lieutenant Harold A. Swanson
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
- (34) Name: Lieutenant Robert C. Lown
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
- (35) Name: Lieutenant Harry L. Gogan
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
- (36) Name: Lieutenant David T. Hutton
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 1st Oak Leaf Cluster

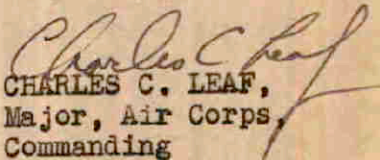
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Page 5., Outline History of the 66th F. S. December 1944.

- (37) Name: Lieutenant Charles E. McCreary
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
- (38) Name: Lieutenant George A. Mosites
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
- (39) Name: Lieutenant Gene Norris
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
- (40) Name: Lieutenant Carl J. Weisenberger
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
- (41) Name: Lieutenant Harold E. McDonnell
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 1st Oak Leaf Cluster

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


CHARLES C. LEAF,
Major, Air Corps,
Commanding

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War Diary of the 66th Fighter Squadron, APO 650, U S Army

Month of December, 1944. Prepared by Lieut. A. N. Apostolou, A. C.

- 1 The squadron started a new month with an " all out " day, flying thirty-nine sorties in five missions and taking a devastating toll of the enemy's communications in the Po Valley. Basketball practice is being held several times weekly in a local gym and it is hoped that enough hoopsters will be uncovered amongst the officers and enlisted men to send a team to the XXII T.A.C. elimination tournament in Florence.
- 2 Another day of intensified operations scored thirty-six sorties after five missions had crossed the bomb line to pummel the Hun. Our fighters have become formidable weapons of attack, more so now with the installation of rockets, and the pilots have the highest praise for their effectiveness. An attack by our Thunderbolts on a target now has three phases: first the demolition bombs crater the area, then the rockets are released to set installations afire and last, the eight .50 caliber machine guns are brought to bear on the personnel and transport in the area.
- 3 Unfavorable weather conditions reduced our activity to one mission, an armed recce to the Brenner Pass. K-25 cameras have been installed on four of our aircraft. This new camera shoots pictures in intervals and thus is able to cover the target area as well as the target itself. The pictures are developed in the new Group Photo Lab and are returned to the squadron three hours after the mission has landed.
- 4 Four missions kept the squadron busy until dusk when our last ship had safely returned with several flak holes in it to prove that Jerry's good eye is still looking up at the " Exterminators." Although everyone expected that the current cigarette shortage back in the States would affect us, our usual two week's ration of fifteen packs were distributed in the canteen tonight.
- 5 Bad weather in the target area curtailed our Thunderbomber efforts and only one ineffective mission was flown. Word was received to-day that Major Leaf, our Squadron Commander, has been awarded the French Croix de Guerre. For his leadership and accomplishments Major Leaf has also been awarded the Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross with Cluster, the British Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Air Medal

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War Diary of the 66th Fighter Squadron, APO 650, U S Army.

Month of December, 1944. Prepared by A. N. Apostolou, 1st Lt., A. C

DAYEVENTS

with 12 clusters.

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- 6 A continuation of bad weather forced us to remain idle for another day. The sixth battle star has been awarded to this group for its participation in the invasion of Southern France. We now share the unique distinction of being one of the few units that are entitled to wear the maximum number of stars issued thus far for the European-Middle East Theater Ribbon.
-
- 7 The day's effort of three armed reces found us continuing our successful assault against communication lines in the Brenner Pass. A rather amusing incident happened to-day when a P-51 returning from a long range mission force landed in a nearby field. A colored pilot climbed from the cockpit unscathed and his first question was "Where am I - in Yugoslavia?"
-
- 8 Non operational weather prevailing in base and target areas during the day kept our scheduled effort on the ground. The squadron basketball team crowned itself with glory in the tournament held in Florence. After eliminating their first four opponents, they were nosed out to-day in the finals by the 525th Squadron of the 86th Fighter Group.
-
- 9 To-day's operations proved to be the most costly in the squadron's history, for, when noses were counted after four missions, four pilots were listed missing in action. On our second mission, Captain Callan and Lieut. Dehmer's ships were hit by flak and both bailed out in the Eastern Po Valley. Later in the afternoon, Lieut. Lown's plane hit a tree while strafing and he was seen to mush in. On our last mission Lieut. Dodd's aircraft was hit by flak, but he made a successful forced landing just north of the Eighth Army bomb line. By grim coincidence, five new pilots were assigned to the squadron to-day.
-
- 10 Although we managed to leave a heavy toll of destruction on rolling stock during the four missions flown, once again we paid a heavy price by losing our fifth pilot in two days.

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War Diary of the 66th Fighter Squadron, APO 650, U S Army.

Month of December, 1944. Prepared by Lieut. A. N. Apostolou, A. C.

DAYEVENTS

Lieut. Eugene F. Smith suffered heavy flak hits on his aircraft and it was seen to crash and explode.

- 11 In the morning a Rover Joe and aerial cover missions were flown and then the weather closed in to stand us down for the remainder of the day. An " Information and Education Program " has been instituted by the Army and each soldier must now spend a minimum of one hour each week in attendance at one of the various classes. In the first of many lectures, a talk on the " G.I. Bill of Rights " was given this evening.
- 12 Poor weather forced us down again to-day. After several weeks of being the sole occupant of the drome, we now have the 47th Medium Bomb Group and their A 20's as our neighbors.
- 13 When Captain Johnson and flight set course on the third show for the day, it marked the one thousandth mission for the 66th Squadron. Flying with the R. A. F. from L. G. #97 Egypt on 31 August 1942, Colonel Fairlamb (then Major) led the first operational flight ever flown against the Axis Powers by any American Fighter Squadron in the Middle East. Approximately two and one half years have elapsed since then, during which time we have operated from and over Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Malta, Sicily, Southern Italy, Yugoslavia, Albania, Corsica, Southern France, and now Northern Italy. During these thousand missions, 9285 sorties have been flown, and our P-40's and P-47's have dropped 4,923,700 lbs. of bombs while spending forth 2,263,872 rounds of ammo.
- 14 During the last week many of our flights have operated in a new hunting ground, the Eastern Po Valley, and to-day's effort of five missions found us pounding communication lines in that territory. It has been decided to move the entire Group into buildings in Grosseto proper. The officers have already taken over their new quarters, a hotel, but it will be several days before the building for the enlisted men will be ready.

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War Diary of the 66th Fighter Squadron, APO 650, U S Army.

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

DAYEVENTS

15 In spite of poor bombing conditions, the offensive against enemy rail communications continued and for our part, we flew four missions. After a month of restriction, Rome and Naples are once again in bounds to the Group and passes have already started to those cities.

16 The weather of Northern Italy returned to its customary overcast, with the result that our Thunderbomber efforts were limited to two ineffective missions. The officers are now settled in their new living quarters and they have nothing but praise for their setup. Meanwhile, work on the building for the enlisted men is progressing well but it still will be several days before it can be occupied.

17 A vain attempt was made to navigate through an overcast in both home and target areas but of the six missions that were airborne, only two were effective. The group of seven enlisted men and one ground officer selected for thirty days of temporary duty in the States departed to-day for "Utopia." Major Mallet, our Executive Officer, and one enlisted man were also among the happy gathering but they were returning as permanent rotation.

18 Another day of hopeful waiting for the weather to clear but at noon we were released for the day. Captain Wallace Martin of Group has been temporarily assigned to the squadron as Executive Officer until such time as the replacement for Major Mallet arrives.

19 Two eight ship shows ventured the dirty weather only to find the overcast too thick to locate the assigned targets. However, one flight did bomb an alternate target, gun positions in the La Spezia Area.

20 A total cloud coverage above the landing ground and in the target area afforded the enlisted personnel the opportunity to move their personal effects and equipment into their new living quarters in Grosseto. The building is a huge four storied school house located in the center of town and once the necessary improvements have been made, it promises to be an ideal arrangement.

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War Diary of the 66th Fighter Squadron, APO 650, U S Army.

Month of December, 1944. Prepared by Lieut. A. N. Apostolou, A. C.

DAYEVENTS

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- 21 Poor flying weather forced the cancellation of our many scheduled missions. Movies are now being held three nights a week in the auditorium of the Headquarters building and for a little diversion one may also take himself to one of the several local cinema houses which feature Italian pictures.
-
- 22 Five missions found us " loco hunting " in the Po Valley although the hunting was not as plentiful as in the past. " The Holiday Spirit " is now permeating throughout the squadron as is evidenced by the Christmas trees and wreathes in the living quarters. Packages galore have arrived the last few days and a box has been set out for donations of sweets and other delicacies to be distributed to the children in the local orphanage.
-
- 23 Another " all out " day in which five missions were flown against communication lines in the Po Valley. The weather has taken a sudden change and the days, as well as the nights, have become uncomfortably cold.
-
- 24 After a standby throughout a rainy morning, the squadron was released for the day. Trucks left at noon to transport men to Rome to attend midnight mass at St. Peter's, which will be celebrated by the Pope; the return trip will be made the following morning. In the evening, the enlisted men's club boasted the sign " All Drinks Baksheesh " and the club room was crowded with holiday merrymakers.
-
- 25 Two morning missions and then an opportunity to enjoy our third Christmas overseas in the true spirit of the day. Throughout the day many men attended church services in various churches in town. A delicious turkey dinner was served in the evening, followed by open house in the officer's and enlisted men's clubs.
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- 26 Although still a little weary from the holiday celebrations, we managed five missions in the continuation of our drive against enemy communication lines. During the third mission,

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SECRETWar Diary of the 66th Fighter Squadron, AP^O 650, U S Army.

Month of December, 1944. Prepared by Lieut. A. N. Apostolou, A. C.

DAYEVENTS

Lieut. Donald G. Herdrick was heard to say that he would have to return to base. No further word was heard until late in the day when a message was received stating that a plane had crashed north of Piombino.

27 Excellent weather permitted our fighter bombers to fly five missions in support of 5th Army Troops in the Massa, Area, Italy. " Lippy " Leo Durocher, Ducky Medwick, and several other sport notables kept many of the men amused this evening at a local U.S.O. show; a moving picture of the 1944 World Series followed.

28 Five missions to the Brenner Pass once again to-day. During the last week pilots have reported a dearth of worthwhile targets and as the result, the columns in our chart for damaged and destroyed enemy equipment have taken a decided drop.

29 Our Thunderbombers threw their strength against enemy occupied buildings and gun positions. Major Stuart O. Van Slyke, a veteran of many months of overseas service, has been assigned to the squadron as the replacement for Major Mallet.

30 Prevailing strong winds in the Massa, Area, Italy interfered with our pin point bombing of small bridges and results were not as good as should be expected. The musical comedy " Panama Hattie " featuring an all star cast with beautiful American girls, opened up this evening in a local theater where it will run for several days.

31 To our squadron went the honor of flying the three thousandth mission for the Group. The show an uneventful dive bombing mission in the Massa, Area, Italy was led by Major Leaf with Colonel Knight and Captain Johnson also members of the flight. Open house was observed in the enlisted men's club while the officers celebrated New Year's Eve with a dance.

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