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Feb 45

DESIGNATION SHEET
HISTORICAL RECORDS

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COMMAND : XXII Tactical Air Command

WING : _____

GROUP : 57th Fighter Group

SQUADRON: 66th Fighter Squadron

OTHER : _____

OUTLINE HISTORY _____ X

WAR DIARY _____ X

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66th Fighter Sq.

OUTLINE HISTORY

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By Auth CO

66th Fighter Sq.

1 February 1945

C.C.I. Initials

28 February 1945

HEADQUARTERS 66TH FIGHTER
APO 650

SUBJECT: Historical Records.

TO : Commanding General, Twelfth Air Force, APO 650, U. S.
Army. Attention: A-2 Historian.THRU : Commanding Officer, 57th Fighter Group, APO 650, U. S.
Army.1. Outline History of the 66th Fighter Squadron for the
period 1 February thru 28 February 1945.a. Present designation: 66th Fighter Squadron, 57th
Fighter Group, XXI Tactical Air Command, Twelfth Air Force.

b. Changes in organization:

(1) Change in designation: None

(2) Change in Commanding Officer: None

(3) Change of Staff Officers:

(a) Major Stuart O. Van Slyke relieved of
duties as Executive Officer.(b) 1st Lieutenant Stanley M. Simkins
assumed the duties of Adjutant, vice 1st Lieutenant David S.
Ketchum relieved.

(4) Changes in T/O: None

c. Strength, commissioned and enlisted.

(1) Month of February 1945.

(a) 1 February 1945
1 Commissioned: 63
2 Enlisted : 247(b) Net increase:
1 Commissioned: 8
2 Enlisted : 1(c) Net decrease:
1 Commissioned: 13
2 Enlisted : 3(d) 28 February 1945.
1 Commissioned: 58
2 Enlisted : 245

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- d. Stations:
 (1) Name of station: Gresseto L. G., Italy.
 (a) Date of arrival: " A " party, 11 Sept. 1944, " B " party, 21 September 1944.
- e. Movements: None
- f. Campaigns:
 (1) Name: Italian
 (2) Duration: Still in progress.
- g. Operations:
 (1) Campaigns: Italian
 (2) Nature of operations: Dive bombing, armed recce, weather recces and area cover.
 (3) Number of missions and sorties for the period 1 February thru 28 February 1945.
 (a) Missions: 102
 (b) Sorties : 614
 (4) Result of most important mission: None
- h. Commanding Officer on important mission: None
- i. Losses in action.
 (1) Missing in action.
 (a) Name: 2nd Lieut. Guilford D. Greendycke
 1. Date: 4 February 1945
 (b) Name: 2nd Lieut. Edward J. Palevich
 1. Date: 4 February 1945
 (c) Name: 2nd Lieut. Alfred R. Lyth
 1. Date: 8 February 1945
 (d) Name: 1st Lieut. Theodore Matula
 1. Date: 8 February 1945
 (e) Name: 2nd Lieut. Donald C. Spalinger
 1. Date: 13 February 1945
 (f) Name: 1st Lieut. James L. Moody
 1. Date: 17 February 1945
 (g) Name: 2nd Lieut. Lincoln R. Sherwood
 1. Date: 28 February 1945
 (h) Name: 1st Lieut. Richard W. Kruse
 1. Date: 26 February 1945

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APO 650

(2) The following named pilots were reported MIA in Outline History of November 1944 and Outline History of January 1945 respectively have since returned to their squadron.

- (a) Name: Captain William C. Tench
 - 1. Date returned: 19 February 1945
- (b) Name: 1st Lieut. Theodore Matula
 - 1. Date returned: 19 February 1945

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

- (1) Name: Lieutenant Theodore Matula
 - (a) Basis: Wounded in Action
 - (b) Award: Purple Heart
- (2) Name: Captain William C. Tench
 - (a) Basis: Wounded in Action
 - (b) Award: Purple Heart
- (3) Name: Lieutenant Louis J. Pernicka
 - (a) Basis: Wounded in Action
 - (b) Award: Purple Heart
- (4) Name: Lieutenant Wayne S. Dodds
 - (a) Basis: Wounded in Action
 - (b) Award: Purple Heart
- (5) Name: Lieutenant Charles T. Paine
 - (a) Basis: Wounded in Action
 - (b) Award: Purple Heart
- (6) Name: Major Charles C. Leaf
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 13th Oak Leaf Cluster
- (7) Name: Captain George S. Irby
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 7th Oak Leaf Cluster
- (8) Name: Captain Leon E. Jansen
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 5th Oak Leaf Cluster
- (9) Name: Captain Quentin J. Gess
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 4th Oak Leaf Cluster
- (10) Name: Captain James P. Hartwig
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 4th Oak Leaf Cluster

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OUTLINE HISTORY

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28 February 1945

HEADQUARTERS 66TH FIGHTER

- (11) Name: Lieut. Theodore Matula
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 4th Oak Leaf Cluster
- (12) Name: Lieut. Louis J. Pernicka
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 4th Oak Leaf Cluster
- (13) Name: Lieut. Miller A. Anderson
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 4th Oak Leaf Cluster
- (14) Name: Captain Leon E. Jansen
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 4th Oak Leaf Cluster
- (15) Name: Lieut. James L. Moody
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 4th Oak Leaf Cluster
- (16) Name: Lieut. Charles E. McCreary
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
- (17) Name: Lieut. Harold A. Swanson
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
- (18) Name: Captain George A. Mesites
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
- (19) Name: Lieut. Gene Norris
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
- (20) Name: Lieut. Carl J. Weisenberger
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
- (21) Name: Lieut. Harold E. McDonnell
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
- (22) Name: Lieut. Charles W. Mayberry
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
- (23) Name: Lieut. Wayne S. Dodds
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
- (24) Name: Lieut. Samuel Z. Hunnicutt
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 1st Oak Leaf Cluster

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HEADQUARTERS 66TH FIGHTER
APO 650

- (25) Name: Lieut. Glenn H. Koelling
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
- (26) Name: Lieut. Kenneth R. Lewis
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
- (27) Name: Lieut. Kenneth R. Lewis
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: Air Medal
- (28) Name: Lieut. Louis O. Hays
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: Air Medal
- (29) Name: Lieut. Truman R. Heron
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: Air Medal
- (30) Name: Lieut. Elvaughn E. Johnson
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: Air Medal
- (31) Name: Lieut. James A. Jones
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: Air Medal
- (32) Name: Lieut. Glenn H. Koelling
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: Air Medal
- (33) Name: Lieut. John P. Miller III
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: Air Medal
- (34) Name: Lieut. Edward J. Palevich
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: Air Medal
- (35) Name: Lieut. Donald C. Spalinger
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: Air Medal
- (36) Name: Lieut. Robert B. Orcutt
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: Air Medal
- (37) Name: Lieut. George M. Blackburn
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: Air Medal
- (38) Name: Lieut. John A. Bowman
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: Air Medal

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OUTLINE HISTORY

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By Auth CO

66th Fighter Sq.

1 February 1945

C.C.L. Initials

28 February 1945

HEADQUARTERS 66TH FIGHTER

- (39) Name: Lieut. Ray O. Fandel
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: Air Medal
- (40) Name: Lieut. James B. Richards
 - (a) Basis: Meritorious Achievement
 - (b) Award: Air Medal

2. Enclosed is the Unit Journal of Events of the 66th Fighter Squadron for the period 1 February thru 28 February 1945.

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

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Sheet No. 1, Unit Journal of Events - 66th Fighter Squadron, APO 650.
 Month of February, 1945. Prepared by A. N. Apostolou, 1st Lt., AC.

DAYEVENTS

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- 1 Unfavorable weather once again curtailed our efforts and we had to be content with one armed recce. Since Rome is out of bounds to all soldiers except those assigned to Rest Centers, the men are now taking passes to other focal points of interest.
-
- 2 With the Po Valley, as well as our home base, completely socked in, we were forced to cancel our four scheduled missions after a standby of several hours. The weekly enlisted men's dance was a howling success tonight with scores of signorinas all earnestly learning to " jitterbug." Perhaps the ever present Spam and Cheese sandwiches plus coffee and cocoa are the real drawing cards for the affair.
-
- 3 An early morning weather recce to the Po Valley found no break in the solid overcast and as a result we were stood down for the remainder of the day. Our Group Statistical Officer proudly informed us that our squadron was the first in the Group to fly ten thousand operational sorties, another impressive first to add to an already long list.
-
- 4 Our six missions provided one of the most hectic days in months. Flying escort to B-25's in the Vicenza Area, Lieut. Swanson's flight was jumped by 15 ME 109's and FW 190's coming in from out of the sun. During the ensuing engagement, Lieutenant Weisenberger damaged two enemy aircraft and Lieutenants Groendycke and Palovich are listed Missing In Action. On the last mission of the day, Lieutenant Hays' aircraft developed engine trouble and he was forced to bail out just north of Pontedera; he was seen to land safely in a swamp.
-
- 5 Once again weather was responsible for an inactive morning but conditions had improved by afternoon to fly three missions. A recent statistical report from the 22nd TAC pays a tribute to the work being done by the mechanics of our squadron. The report states that of the 1,355 sorties flown from the 20th of September thru the 30 of December 1944, only seven were forced to return due to mechanical failure - the best record in the Command.
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Sheet No. 2, Unit Journal of Events - 66th Fighter Squadron, APO 650.
 Month of February, 1945. Prepared by A. N. Apostolou, 1st Lt., AC.

DAYEVENTS

- 6 In spite of poor weather we succeeded in flying two missions, one of which was a Rover Joe, our first close support mission in several months. A meeting of " I & E " delegates from the Grosseto Area was held to-day in our squadron hall. Lieut. Ketchum, S/Sgt. Howard and Sgt. Katz represented the squadron and they will shortly set into motion the proposed program.
- 7 During a rather busy day in which six missions were flown, we pounded enemy rail targets in the Brenner Line as well as German military installations in the Serchio Valley in support of an impending Fifth Army drive. Returning from a mission Lieutenant McCreary stalled out upon his landing approach and crashed. He was promptly rushed to a nearby hospital and from reports, he is expected to live, despite a concussion of the brain. Later in the day, Captain Heying's aircraft suffered flak hits and with his entire tail control inoperative and his ship afire, he " nursed her home " and bailed out near the home base.
- 8 Eight two ship armed reces to the Serchio Valley proved a costly venture to us as the Germans brought down two of our ships. A secondary explosion from an ammo train badly damaged the aircraft of Lieutenant Lyth and he was forced to bail out. A short time later in the same area of the Serchio Valley, Lieutenant Matula's plane suffered flak hits and he, too, bailed out. S/Sgt. Max Miller, the squadron parachute specialist, is walking around with a broad smile as during the last few days, four of his chutes have successfully blossomed out during jumps.
- 9 To-day's operations were restricted to a two plane weather recce which found the Po Valley socked in solid and we were stood down for the remainder of the day. Our acting Operations Officer, Captain Irby is leaving for thirty days of temporary duty in the States and during his absence the position will be filled by Captain Jansen. The weekly dance in the enlisted men's " ballroom " was held this evening and at least two hundred persons tripped the light fantastic to the music of the " Hepcocks."

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Sheet No. 3, Unit Journal of Events - 66th Fighter Squadron, APO 650.
 Month of February, 1945. Prepared by A. N. Apostolou, 1st Lt., AC

DAYEVENTS

- 10 Our three ship missions to-day concentrated their attacks on communications in the Eastern Po Valley, and successfully bombed several bridges despite the umbrella of flak defending them. The K-25 cameras have proved invaluable in determining results of our attacks. Claims of destruction to bridges and rolling stock are definitely substantiated by the photos which are in the hands of the Intelligence Section a few hours after exposure and greatly assist in deciding whether a second attack is required on the same target.
- 11 Although no startling results were forth coming from our four missions, the every day pounding of communication targets has resulted in their continued unserviceability. Our first radar controlled mission was flown to-day with great success. After contacting the controller, the course of our fighter bombers was plotted to the designated target where bombs were dropped through a overcast in accordance with instructions.
- 12 Our effort for the day was expended in attacking enemy gun positions and communication systems in the Eastern Po Valley. Major Leaf has set up a drafting room in the enlisted men's building which may be used by any man who has talent along that line. The necessary equipment has been procured and Major Leaf hopes to have modifications of the P-47 on blue prints shortly.
- 13 Clear skies afforded us the opportunity to fly thirty two sorties during which we attacked enemy fuel installations and railroad bridges in the Eastern Po Valley. On our first mission Lieutenant Donald C. Spalinger's ship was hit by heavy flak and crashed near Lake Garda; the pilot is listed as missing in action.
- 14 Flying four missions to-day we met with considerable success in our assault against communication lines in the Eastern Po. Our claims of slight or moderate damage to railroad and highway bridges are rather conservative as Tac/R photos show complete destruction of targets following our attacks. When he led a flight out to destroy a railroad bridge near Cittadella, Major Leaf flew his two hundredth mission - the highest score any pilot in the Group has totaled.

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Sheet No. 4, Unit Journal of Events - 66th Fighter Squadron, APO 650.

Month of February, 1945. Prepared by A. N. Apostolou, 1st Lt., AC

DAYEVENTS

- 15 After our third mission of the morning, the weather grew steadily worse and we were stood down for the remainder of the day. General Lindsay and several members of his staff stopped here to-day, returning from the Allied conference in the Crimea, and expressed high approval of our tactical set up. Night sentry duty on the flight line has been a cold and unpleasant job and everyone sighed with relief to-day when he learned that the detail had been taken over by a air base security battalion.
- 16 A solid overcast in the Po Valley forced us to bomb several targets by " Auntie " radar control and reports from reliable sources describe very favorable results. The nearby 316th Service Group Theater has become a Mecca for men of the Squadron where they can enjoy Hollywood's recent and aged offerings.
- 17 Four missions were flown to-day in which we attacked railroad bridges in the Eastern Po and the Brenner Pass. Flak in the Brenner Pass brought down one of our flight leaders, 1st Lieutenant James L. Moody, who crashed near Ala and is missing in action. The weekly officer's dance was held this evening and a good time was had by all present.
- 18 Despite only fair flying weather, our fighter bombers flew two dive bombing shows and two bomber escorts. Four enlisted men departed to-day for the States where they will spend thirty days of temporary duty. Also aboard the C-47 which flew the men to Naples were Sergeants Stanly B. Bentsen and Angelo M. Scardigno, returning on permanent rotation.
- 19 Once again poor flying weather gave Nazi communication lines a respite although two flights did bomb targets through overcast under control of " Auntie." Some of the gadgets and home made tools used on our flight line have saved our ground crews untold hours of labor. For example, our armament section has devised a wheeled dolly to assist in loading wing bombs on our Thunderbelts. This " gadget " replaces the eight man lifting bars and can easily be operated by two men.

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Sheet No. 5, Unit Journal of Events - 66th Fighter Squadron, APO 650.
 Month of February, 1945. Prepared by A. N. Apostoleu, 1st Lt., AC

DAYEVENTS

20 In aid of a Fifth Army drive for strategic positions in the Gothic Line, we flew several close support missions. Two pilots, 1st Lieutenants William C. Tench and Theodore Matula, returned to-day to the squadron after having gained their way across enemy lines. Although his story cannot be told due to security reasons, it is understood that Lieut. Tench encountered many unusual experiences.

21 Three missions were directed in conjunction with Army operations against enemy strong points in the Gothic Line and the remaining two flights flew the "milk run" to the Brenner Pass. S/Sgt Henry Baker of the Medical Department has been accepted by the 1st Emergency Rescue Squadron and will soon be flying in a Catalina amphibian engaged in Air Sea Rescue operations along the Italian Coast.

22 On the first of five missions flown to-day, Lieut. Lincoln R. Sherwood's plane was hit by flak and he was forced to bail out a few miles South of Bolegna. During the last few days there have been several changes in the administrative staff of the squadron. Major Van Slyke, Executive Officer, received the glad tidings that he is being rotated while Captain Ketchum, our Adjutant, has left the squadron due to medical reasons. We welcome Lieut. Frederick P. Dese to our Intelligence Department, replacing Lieut. Pirkl, Ass't I.O., who also will return home on permanent rotation.

23 Five missions totaling twenty eight sorties kept everyone on the flight line busy from dawn to dusk. Our fighter bombers successfully attacked railroad bridges and military installations in the Brenner Line and Piave River region of Northern Italy. A magical transformation took place this evening when the ground crew's oily coveralls were discarded in favor of Class "A" uniforms for the weekly dance of the enlisted men.

24 Although one anti flak mission was flown for B-25's, the major part of our day's effort was directed against rolling stock in the Central Po. A link trainer has been installed in one of the rooms of the enlisted men's quarters. Each squadron has been assigned specific days when pilots are scheduled for intervals of one and a half hours to brush

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Sheet No. 6, Unit Journal of Events - 66th Fighter Squadron, APO 650.
 Month of February, 1945. Prepared by A. N. Apostoleu, 1st Lt., AC

DAYEVENTS

up on their instrument flying.

25 Poor base weather held our planes on the ground for the morning but later in the day two routine missions were flown against communication lines. An Italian fire station located a short distance from the enlisted men's building has been taken over by our Transportation Department and is being used as a workshop.

26 Once again a high price was paid for the destruction being rained on the Germans in Northern Italy as 1st Lieutenant Richard W. Kruse's aircraft suffered flak hits and he was forced to bail out in the Brenner Pass Area. During Major Leaf's absence in Alexandria, Captain Jansen has assumed the duties of Squadron Commander.

27 Flak in target areas has become more intense and accurate than ever encountered before by this squadron. Each day planes are returning from missions with flak hits and crew chiefs and Service Group specialists are doing their utmost to insure our service ability. Despite this handicap we are flying our daily prescribed schedule and to-day our fighter bombers pounded rolling stock and communication lines in the Eastern Po.

28 Although hampered by an increasing haze in Northwest Italy, our four missions managed to inflict a fair amount of destruction to rolling stock and communication lines. 1st Lieutenant Stanley M. Simkins, formerly with the 64th Squadron, has now assumed the duties of Squadron Adjutant.

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