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APR 45

DESIGNATION SHEET

Historical Records

AIR FORCE: Twelfth Air Force

COMMAND: \_\_\_\_\_

SUB-COMMAND: \_\_\_\_\_

GROUP: 57 Fth Sq

UNIT: 106 Fth Sq

R

Documents Transmitted:

(Period Covered)

OUTLINE HISTORY: Apr 1945

WAR DIARY: Apr 1945

\_\_\_\_ SPECIAL ACCOUNTS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ PHOTOGRAPHS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

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12AF-AB1-H1

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ANA/cb

66th Fighter Sq.

OUTLINE HISTORY

SECRETBy Auth CO  
66th Fighter Sq.

1 April 1945

C.C.A. Initials

30 April 1945

HEADQUARTERS 66TH FIGHTER  
APO 650

SUBJECT: Historical Records.

TO : Commanding Officer, 57th Fighter Group, APO 650, U S  
Army.1. Outline History of the 66th Fighter Squadron for the  
period 1 April 1945 thru 30 April 1945.a. Present designation: 66th Fighter Squadron, 57th  
Fighter Group, XXII Tactical Air Command, Twelfth Air Force.

b. Changes in Organization:

(1) Change in designation: None

(2) Change in Commanding Officer: None

(3) Change in Staff Officers:

(a) Major Robert L. McMullen assumed duties  
of Executive Officer, vice Major Watson A. Stains Jr., relieved.(b) Captain Paul S. Sexauer assumed duties of  
Adjutant vice 1st Lieutenant Stanley M. Simkins relieved.

(4) Changes in T/O: None

c. Strength, Commissioned and Enlisted:

(1) Month of April 1945

(a) 1 April 1945

1 Commissioned: 602 Enlisted : 244

(b) Net Increase :

1 Commissioned: 122 Enlisted : 3

(c) Net Decrease :

1 Commissioned: 132 Enlisted : 7

(d) 30 April 1945

1 Commissioned: 592 Enlisted : 240

d. Stations:

(1) Name of Station: Grosseto L. G., Italy

(a) Date of Arrival: " A " party, 11 Sept. 1944,  
" B " party, 21 Sept. 1944

(2) Name of Station: Villafranca L. G., Italy

(a) Date of Arrival: " A " party, 29 April 1945.

e. Movements:

(1) " A " party from Grosseto L. G., Italy to Villa-  
franca, Italy

(a) Purpose:

1 Change of Station.**RESTRICTED**

12AF-AB1-H1

SECRET

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30 April 1945

HEADQUARTERS 66TH FIGHTER  
APO 650

- (b) Date:  
1 Shown above under " d " ( Stations )
- (c) Mode of travel:  
1 Motor convoy
- (d) Condition of roads, conveyance, and weather  
1 Generally good
- f. Campaigns:  
(1) Name: Italian  
(2) Duration: Still in progress
- g. Operations:  
(1) Campaign: Italian  
(2) Nature of Operations: Dive bombing, Armed Recce, weather recce, and area cover  
(3) Number of Missions and Sorties for the period 1 April 1945 thru 30 April 1945  
(a) Missions: 257  
(b) Sorties : 945  
(4) Result of most important mission:  
Mission #1542 of 23 April 1945  
(a) Destruction of motor trucks and horse drawn vehicles.
- h. Commanding Officer on important mission:  
1st Lieutenant Wayne S. Dodds
- i. Losses in Action:  
(1) Killed in Action:  
(a) Name: 1st Lieutenant Louis O. Hays III  
1 Date: 8 April 1945  
(b) Name: 1st Lieutenant Aikens V. Smith  
1 Date: 29 April 1945  
(2) Missing in Action:  
(a) Name: 2nd Lieutenant Vernon R. Peterson  
1 Date: 17 April 1945  
(b) Name: 1st Lieutenant Robert B. Orcutt  
1 Date: 20 April 1945  
(3) Duty to Death:  
(a) Name: 1st Lieutenant Charles W. Mayberry  
1 Date: 16 April 1945  
(4) The following named pilot reported Missing in Action in the Outline History for the Month of December 1944 is now listed as a Prisoner of War: 1st Lieut. Harry L. Gogan.

SECRET

12AF-AB1-H1

SECRET

ANA/cb

66th Fighter Sq.

OUTLINE HISTORY

SECRET

By Auth CO

66th Fighter Sq.

1 April 1945

C.C.L. Initials

30 April 1945

HEADQUARTERS 66TH FIGHTER  
APO 650

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

(1) The following named member of this organization has been awarded the Silver Star for Gallantry in Action in combat against the enemy.

(a) Lieutenant Miller A. Anderson

(2) The following named members of this organization have been awarded Oak Leaf Clusters to the Distinguished Flying Cross for extraordinary achievement in combat against the enemy.

(a) Captain Leon E. Jansen

(b) Captain Richard L. Johnson (1st & 2nd)

(3) The following named members of this organization have been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for extraordinary achievement in combat against the enemy.

(a) Lieutenant Carl J. Weisenberger

(b) Captain Harold A. Swanson

(c) Captain Harold E. McDonnell

(d) Lieutenant David T. Hutton

(4) The following named members of this organization have been awarded the 14th Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal for meritorious achievement in combat against the enemy.

(a) Lieutenant Colonel Charles C. Leaf

(5) The following named members of this organization have been awarded the 9th Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal for meritorious achievement in combat against the enemy.

(a) Captain Leon E. Jansen

(b) Captain Richard L. Johnson

(6) The following named members of this organization have been awarded the 6th Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal for meritorious achievement in combat against the enemy.

(a) Captain Quentin J. Goss

(b) Lieutenant Miller A. Anderson

(c) Captain Harold A. Swanson

(7) The following named members of this organization have been awarded the 5th Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal for meritorious achievement in combat against the enemy.

(a) Captain George A. Mosites

(b) Captain Harold A. Swanson

(c) Captain Harold E. McDonnell

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12AF-AB1-H1

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ANA/cb

66th Fighter Sq.

OUTLINE HISTORY

SECRET

By Auth CO

66th Fighter Sq.

1 April 1945

C.C.I. Initials

30 April 1945

HEADQUARTERS 66TH FIGHTER  
APO 650

(8) The following named members of this organization have been awarded the 4th Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal for meritorious achievement in combat against the enemy.

- (a) Lieutenant David T. Hutton
- (b) Lieutenant Louis O. Hays III
- (c) Lieutenant Glenn H. Koelling
- (d) Lieutenant Eugene D. Kranzush

(9) The following named members of this organization have been awarded the 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal for meritorious achievement in combat against the enemy.

- (a) Lieutenant Kenneth R. Lewis
- (b) Lieutenant Eugene D. Kranzush
- (c) Lieutenant Louis O. Hays III
- (d) Lieutenant George M. Blackburn Jr
- (e) Lieutenant Matthew F. Heiman
- (f) Lieutenant Truman R. Heron
- (g) Lieutenant Samuel Z. Humnicutt
- (h) Lieutenant Glenn H. Koelling
- (i) Lieutenant Aikens V. Smith
- (j) Lieutenant James A. Jones

(10) The following named members of this organization have been awarded the 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal for meritorious achievement in combat against the enemy.

- (a) Lieutenant John A. Bowman
- (b) Lieutenant Louis O. Hays III
- (c) Lieutenant Matthew F. Heiman
- (d) Lieutenant Elvaughn E. Johnson
- (e) Lieutenant James A. Jones
- (f) Lieutenant John P. Miller III
- (g) Lieutenant Robert B. Orcutt
- (h) Lieutenant Ray O. Fandel

(11) The following named members of this organization have been awarded the 1st Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal for meritorious achievement in combat against the enemy.

- (a) Lieutenant Ignatius R. Markowski
- (b) Lieutenant Richard F. Sweeney

(12) The following named members of this organization have been awarded the Air Medal for meritorious achievement in combat against the enemy.

- (a) Lieutenant Harry B. Monsell
- (b) Lieutenant Richard F. Sweeney
- (c) Lieutenant Vernon R. Peterson
- (d) Lieutenant William F. Cunningham

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ANA/cb

66th Fighter Sq.

OUTLINE HISTORY

SECRET

By Auth CO

66th Fighter Sq.

1 April 1945

C.C.L. Initials

30 April 1945

HEADQUARTERS 66TH FIGHTER  
APO 650

(e) Lieutenant John B. O'Donoghue

(f) Lieutenant James H. Kizziar

(g) Lieutenant Robert G. Clay

(13) The following named members of this organization have been awarded the Oak Leaf Cluster to the Purple Heart for Wounds in Action.

(a) Captain Charles E. McCreary

2. Enclosed is the Unit Journal of Events of the 66th Fighter Squadron for the period 1 April 1945 thru 30 April 1945 and Special Account of Mission 1542 of 23 April 1945.

*Charles C. Leaf*  
CHARLES C. LEAF,  
Lieut. Colonel, Air Corps,  
Commanding.

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Sheet No. 9, Unit Journal of Events - 66th Fighter Squadron.

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

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Special Account of Mission No. 1542 of 23 April 1945 from  
Grosseto Main, Italy

A/C PILOT

94 Dodds

75 Lee

2 P-47's of 66 Sq. carrying 4 x 500 lb. G.P. bombs with Inst. nose and non-delay tail fuses directed by H/F Joe D/B'd large tank in orchard just S. of Sermide. - no hits. H/F Joe directed a/c to strafe 20 plus M/T and 30 plus HDV's in wooded area at F-840105. 2 a/c made a total of 20 strafing passes leaving the whole area aflame with 15 plus M/T and 20 HDV's destroyed. Area continued to burn possibly dest. all M/T and HDV. In another wooded area just S. of this point 2 HDV were dest. 2 M/T and 10 HDV all flamers at F-837093. Area burning fiercely with black smoke. Dest. 6 HDV at F-835091. Just S. of this point 1 strafing pass brought a large explosion with white smoke from 1 M/T. A/c continued to strafe in area around F-8410 dest. in flames 20 more M/T with 15 plus dam. and 30 plus HDV dest. The whole area in the river bend was crowded with M/T and HDV and at least 3 large fires were seen from area when a/c left. The M/T were parked in dummy hay stacks, wooded area and well camouflaged. At least 20 personnel were killed.

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Sheet No. 1, Unit Journal of Events - 66th Fighter Squadron.

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

DAY	EVENTS
1	Despite heavy operations most of the men still found time to participate in Easter religious ceremonies. The spring sport season is gradually falling into swing and nightly one finds the men playing volley ball, softball, pitching horse shoes and some few are even contemplating training for a scheduled track meet. An inter-squadron softball league will start this week and shortly competition will be arranged for other sports. Our able Special Service man, S/Sgt. Marty Howard, is in charge of this program.
2	Behind our squadron operations building we now have a hundred foot square of "Country Club" atmosphere. A plot of grass has been transplanted on to this once barren ground and several home built chairs and tables help the pilots to relax while sipping their Red Cross coffee. Our squadron radio department has furnished a loud-speaker which supplies latest news reports and music.
3	With the impending drive by the Fifth Army due to commence shortly, several of our pilots are being trained to vector planes from "Rover Joe" and a few pilots will fly the L-5 and vector planes from the air. Only experienced pilots such as flight leaders will perform these duties as it entails a thorough knowledge of close support work. S/Sgt. Lester E. Frost has been accepted for Infantry Officers Training and shortly will leave for Rome for seven weeks of intensive training. Two enlisted men, Sgt. Henry M. Campbell and P.F.C. James A Turner, have been transferred to the Infantry as the squadron's quota of non-essential personnel.
4	For this weeks <sup>two</sup> "I & E" feature the picture "Tunisian Victory" was shown. To date the "I & E" programs have not met with the approval of the enlisted men. One hour is devoted weekly and it has been found impossible to work this time into the daily schedule due to confliction with operational activities. The men do not welcome the programs in the evening and with the lengthening daylight and operations, it will mean leaving the flight line in the evening to proceed to an "I & E meeting. The complaint against the Army Educational Pictures, mainly those pertaining to actual combat, is that they are stereotyped - if you see one, you have seen them all. What the men want are lectures by capable, well informed instructors on

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SECRET

Sheet No. 2, Unit Journal of Events - 66th Fighter Squadron.

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

DAYEVENTS

such topics as world economics and foreign policy, labor, government, subjects that will enlighten them on what has been happening since they left the States almost three years ago and may help to prevent the occurrence of another war.

- 5 The first long operational day of the year found the men up before dawn and it was seven thirty in the evening before the planes were parked for the night. From now on, there will be plenty of hard work, but everyone is well prepared as there has been no extra effort asked for during the last four months. The new Air Corps Technician badges have been issued to the hundred or more qualified men on the flight line who are aircraft mechanics, power plant specialists, armorers, or radio mechanics. The badge is really a decorative asset to our Eisenhower jacket and the men proudly sport them when they dress up evenings.
- 6 The weekly dance of the enlisted men has been held now for about two months and despite the best efforts of the "go getters" they have not been able to induce the nicer girls of Grosseto to attend. They have been more than successful in attracting the "run of the mill" females but the better class women still elude their most persuasive invitations. There is no question that the ever present sandwiches and coffee are a definite attraction to most of the signorinas as was evidenced by the fact that two women were seen at the last dance stuffing food into large paper bags.
- 7 As the result of two cases of malaria reported in the squadron to-day, malaria control efforts have been doubled. An inspection is being made to see that all personnel are using mosquito nets and a medical man stands in the chow line of the enlisted men to see that atabrine is taken daily. Unless it is a psychological reason, it is difficult to understand why some men use every known excuse and ruse in order not take their atabrine.
- 8 The good results of four missions to-day were overshadowed by the loss of one of our flight leaders. Enroute to base from a successful dive bombing attack on San Ambrogio in the Brenner Pass, Lieutenant Louis O. Hays flew directly in front of his leaders propeller and his entire empennage was sheared off. Despite a vain attempt to bail out, he plunged to his death about forty miles northwest of Grosseto. Lieutenant Heron

SECRET

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Sheet No. 3, Unit Journal of Events - 66th Fighter Squadron.

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

DAY

EVENTS

skillfully retained control of his aircraft and although he contemplated bailing out of the vibrating plane, he successfully landed at base with two of his propellor blades completely mangled.

- 9 U.S.O. Units often bring to town many famous movie and sport personages, actors and actresses, plus the many chorines who are easy on our eyes especially after being away from home so long. John Miljan, a Hollywood star for many years, spent a few hours on the line today talking to our pilots, and his feminine companion, Wendy Moncour, made the men forget all about the horrors of war. The pilots have always fared very well with the female U.S.O. Troupers and during their stay in town, the officers' club is the scene of many parties.
- 10 In the midst of all the post war planning, several of the enlisted men have formulated a unique plan. Eight men who went through all the excitement and adventures of the last three years decided some time ago to stage a reunion gathering after the war. The important factor would be the financial backing so every month they contributed eight dollars to a savings account maintained for them by a bank in New York. Recently they did some rapid addition and were amazed to find that their assets amounted to one thousand and forty five dollars. With a summer week end planned in the Adirondacks, that sum was considered quite adequate and contributions have been discontinued.
- 11 Colonel Leaf recently secured a thirty three foot crash launch at a nearby harbor from the Italians who had scuttled it thinking that it had been damaged by a German hand grenade. The launch was hauled to our field where pilots spent many hours scraping the hull, caulking it, doing minor repairs, and then a complete paint job. A trip was made to Palermo to procure an engine and through the generosity of the U.S. Navy, a Gray Marine 225 horse power engine capable of doing thirty five miles an hour is on its way. Radio equipment has been installed and as soon as the finishing touches have been completed and the official launching has taken place, the boat will serve as an Air Sea Rescue launch for the Group. On non operational days trips will be made to some of the scenic islands along the coast.
- 12 A novel stage attraction appeared at the Military Theater this evening and most of the squadron attended. The revue was a Rome

SECRET

SECRET

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

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

DAYEVENTS

Italian Troupe boasting of twenty beautiful women, a ten piece orchestra and several comedians. One hundred lire was the admission fee and it was well worth the money. The comedians had the audience rolling in the aisles with laughter and the beautiful chorines with their scanty attire had the G.I.s hanging from the chandeliers taking candid camera shots. Some of the U.S.O. shows could learn about entertaining an audience from these Italian Troupers

- 13 At 18:30 this evening six stalwarts (?) of the Squadron officers tackled a sextet of Group Hq. officers in what proved to be another "first" for 66th. The "first" happened to be the initial victory in any athletic contest for the 66 Officers. The first two volley ball games were hard fought but found our team victorious. The third, and cinching game of the three out of five set saw 66 finish in a blaze of glory by "skunking" our opponents by the score of 11 to 0. Not one to rest on their laurels of first blood of the season, the officers then took on, and defeated, a team of enlisted men from Group Headquarters. Spirits were high and were lifted as the officers celebrated their victory at the Club bar later in the evening
- 14 In conjunction with the Fifth Army offensive starting this morning, the squadron flew twelve missions today. Most of the flights were directed against enemy command posts and heavy artillery positions and the Flight Controller commended our Jackpot flights upon their accurate bombing several times during the day. The flight line was a beehive of activity from dawn till dusk but the men went through their paces with a renewed vigor that has been lacking for many months. Routine bombing of communication lines has a definite demoralizing effect on the morale of the ground crews as well as pilots but close support work during a drive finds the men giving their best without complaint.
- 15 Continuing close support of the Fifth Army offensive, the squadron flew ten missions today totaling forty seven sorties. No sooner had a flight become airborne than another flight landed and had to be refueled and reloaded - everyone was busy all day. Those members of the squadron who were not engaged in the flight line attended an Italian stage show at the Military theater featuring the world famous Buono Brothers. This extravaganza was the best seen overseas by the squadron to date, for entertainment, far surpassing any feeble U.S.O. attempt to entertain an audience, with their usual corny master of ceremonies, ever present accordion player and a sexy blonde tap dancer.

SECRET

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Sheet No. 5, Unit Journal of Events - 66th Fighter Squadron.

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

DAYEVENTS

- 16 No less than eleven missions crossed the bomb line to-day to soften the steel crust of enemy resistance against the Fifth Army's spring push " on another all out day. Ironically our sole casualty to-day occurred on a non-operational flight. Lieutenant Charles W. Mayberry while slow timing a new engine, crashed near Orbetello and was killed. The cause of the accident is unknown and the loss of the pilot was deeply felt by everyone.
- 17 Ground crews returning for their meals after a record breaking day which had us flying thirteen missions totaling fifty sorties were pleasantly surprised to find an ideal new mess arrangement. The dining hall consists of two large rooms and a third is used for a kitchen. Mess kits have been discarded in favor of tin trays which are carried by waiters to the men seated at tables. Even the much disliked " C " rations tasted good to-day in the pleasant atmosphere.
- 18 Extra Squadron activities and social affairs have temporarily taken a back seat as pilots and ground crews continued their extensive operations once again to-day. Nightfall finds one universal gathering spot, " the sack, " for no one has the desire or energy to be anywhere else.
- 19 The tension and sorrow which permeated the squadron since the sudden death of the President was announced have begun to dissipate with the passing of time. The loss of the Commander - in - Chief has been felt by the men. The goodwill message written by President Roosevelt ( distributed amongst the men coming overseas in 1942 ) and the three unit citation awards given to the organization for outstanding performance of duty had made every member of the squadron feel that the Commander - in - Chief was a " personal friend." Everyone shared the common thought: how ironical that President Roosevelt, who worked so hard to attain victory and peace for the United States and the United Nations, was not destined to live to see the fruit of his efforts.
- 20 The intensity of operations during the past week is best shown by the daily average of eleven missions and forty-six sorties during the period. This remarkable output has been accomplished only by a maximum of effort on the part of the entire squadron.

SECRET

SECRET

Sheet No. 6, Unit Journal of Events - 66th Fighter Squadron.

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

DAYEVENTS

The men have been plugging away at this " war business " for close to three years and as the result a closely knitted organization has been formed. An intricate piece of machinery never worked any smoother than our squadron has during recent weeks.

21 To-day we had proof that the terrific costs in Airmen and aircraft during the continuous, routine interdiction program have not been in vain. The Hun is finally retreating across the plain south of the Po but pilots and ground crews spent most of the day " sweating out " a ten-tenths cloud coverage. The temptation of the lucrative targets available proved too much for Captain Johnson and taking two aircraft off late in the afternoon, attacked a convoy of enemy vehicles. When his gasoline and ammunition began to run low he returned with a tally of no less than thirty four trucks destroyed in flames and thirteen damaged.

22 To-day proved to be a " red letter " day for fighter bombers in Italy and the Sixty-Sixth Squadron managed to share in the " killing." Flying twenty three missions totaling forty eight sorties between 0635 hours in the morning and 2025 hours in the evening, the squadron, in a virtual field day of destruction, streamlined enemy transport by destroying one hundred and thirty three trucks and damaging fifty six. Everyone on the flight line was on his toes all day, pilots were on alert in the intelligence room continuously, and as soon as an aircraft was refueled and reloaded, it was on its way into the air.

23 Continuing the slaughter of German transport columns fleeing northward from the once stagnant Apennine battle-fields, the squadron flew twenty two missions totaling forty five sorties in another all out day. Ground personnel are reporting to the Orderly Room to state their preference as to whether they would like a discharge from the Army on " VE or V " day. Not too much credulity is placed in this questionnaire as most men feel it is just another one of the Army's " Gallup Polls."

24 With the Armies progressing at a rapid pace over the plains of the Po, we are left farther and farther behind the bomb line. Therefore, in anticipation of a move preparations are being made so that when the " go ahead " signal is given, the squadron

SECRET

SECRET

Sheet No. 7, Unit Journal Of Events - 66th Fighter Squadron.

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

DAYEVENTS

will be ready. The longer we remain overseas, the more difficult it becomes to break camp. On the desert it required two hours to put the show on the road but during the last year more and more equipment has necessitated more vehicles and time.

- 25 To-day, the squadron flew eighteen missions in support of the Fifth Army, which is still advancing in northern Italy. A number of the Group's former hunting grounds have been occupied by American troops and everyone is eagerly waiting to move up into the much worked-over country North of the Po River. The " A " party personnel know which vehicles they are driving in the forthcoming move and are all set for the " go " signal.
- 26 To-day the squadron increased its lead in the Group aircraft victory table; Lieutenant Lee shot down a now-rare Messerschmitt 109 to put us 23 victories ahead of 64 Squadron and 28 victories ahead of 65 Squadron. In addition, during one of the twelve missions flown to-day, two of our aircraft strafed Ghedi airdrome ( a former German hornets' nest ) and destroyed seven twin engined enemy aircraft on the ground in flames. The orders came this evening to move tomorrow morning, and the squadron was a veritable bee-hive of activity until mid-night - packing personal belongings and departmental equipment.
- 27 Solid overcast at base kept the aircraft grounded until 1400 hours when two missions braved the weather to reconnoiter the Lake Garda area. Several more of the enemy's fast-disappearing motor trucks were destroyed after an hour of hunting. At eight o'clock this morning " A " party left Grosseto and began its long trek northward toward Villafranca-Verona airdrome. The day trip was uneventful except for the scenes of destruction and devastation in the Gothic Line area. At nine in the evening the convoy pulled into a staging area a few miles outside of Bologna where the night was spent sleeping under the stars.
- 28 Teeming rain this morning forced us to postpone our first take-off until nine o'clock. The pilots made up for their late start by destroying fifty five enemy motor trucks in another strafing field day. An air echelon of mechanics and armorers has been alerted to fly to Villafranca via transport planes immediately

SECRET

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Sheet No. 8, Unit Journal of Events - 66th Fighter Squadron.

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

DAYEVENTS

after the Thunderbolts leave Grosseto. " A " party was awakened by rain early in the morning and as there was no immediate shelter in the area, everyone just stood around sweating it out. However, the rain continued throughout most of the day and it wasn't long before the area was one big mud puddle. Due to high priority traffic on the roads, the convoy was forced to wait until the early hours of the following morning to depart.

29 Once more our aircraft swept the skies throughout nine missions in search of opportune targets. One of our flight leaders, Lieutenant Aikens V. Smith, was killed to-day. His body struck the empennage of his aircraft as he attempted to bail out South of Florence for reasons unknown. The Po Valley proved a revelation to the members of " A " party who found the picturesque countryside much to their liking. The convoy pulled into Villafranca about eight in the morning after a five hour drive from Bologna. Shortly after their arrival Colonel Leaf flew in and immediately started looking for a suitable camp site. A cluster of six buildings, formerly occupied by German troops, was located about three miles from the field and camp was immediately set up. Until the buildings have been thoroughly cleaned and repaired, personnel will live in tents.

30 Operations continued from Grosseto but by early afternoon the planes had departed for Villafranca in time to fly a few missions from the new landing ground. Within view of the snow capped Alps " A " party spent the day putting the camp in shape but in the evening many of the men started a tour of the countryside. In contrast to the usual greeting by the inhabitants of our former station, the local populus are extremely affable. As we are the first American troops in this section, the people have opened up their homes to toast their " liberators " as we are called.

SECRET