

370TH FIGHTER SQUADRON  
OFFICE OF THE HISTORICAL OFFICER  
AAF STATION F-133

JMB/whr

May 31, 1944

SUBJECT: Squadron History, May 1, 1944, to May 31, 1944, inclusive

TO: Historical Officer, 359th Fighter Group, AAF Station F-133

1. Herewith is submitted a chronological account of the activities of the 370th Fighter Squadron, 359th Fighter Group, during the period of May 1, 1944, to May 31, 1944, inclusive. It is filed in accordance with VIII Fighter Command Memorandum 125-1, dated March 2, 1943.

May 1 - At 0630 briefing was held for an area-patrol support mission. Planes were to fly to Hazebrouck; the bombers' objective: 25 targets in NW France, including Amiens. 16 Squadron planes participated, all completing mission. Weather was poor from 20,000 to 30,000 ft. and communication difficult with bombers.

8 Squadron planes led by Capt. Brown, took off at 1340 for weather reconnaissance mission over enemy territory. Pilots on this mission all returned. Capt. Brown, interrogated at Group S-2, reported weather mediocre, 4/10, and no E/A.

Briefing was held at 1700 for an escort withdrawal mission over Belgium. The bombers' objective was multiple, in the vicinity of Nancy. 16 Squadron planes took off; one pilot returned early. No E/A were sighted. One B-17 was seen going down from flak, and one parachute was observed. Weather was very poor, with thick haze from ground to 15,000 ft.

7 pilots went to Wyndham for dinghy drill under direction of Lt. Downing. Pilots participating jumped into tank of water and, keeping themselves afloat, inflated their dinghies, climbed aboard, and erected mast with sail.

Capt. Carey H. Brown, Jr., killed in crash-landing of P-51 training flight.

Lt. Jack Bateman Detached Service to school, RAF Station, Bircham-Newton.

May 2 - Group informed Squadron that on Thursday morning, 4 May, Squadron would be temporarily un-operational while pilots were getting training flying P-51's.

Training flights for all pilots took place all day; P-51's used.

2nd Lt. Wilson K. Baker, Jr., and F/O Luther C. Reese, transferred from 495th Training Group, reported to this Squadron for duty as pilots.

News received of following enlisted men's promotions: T/Sgt. John A. Chumley to M/Sgt; S/Sgts. William J. Allen, Harvey A. Diacont, Jr., and Edward J. Sweeten to T/Sgt; Cpls. Audrey D. Lowe, Russell D. Over, Edward F. Palicka, John N. Platt, and Perry L. Young to Sgt; and Pfc's Hyman Bernfeld, Henry C. Campbell, Lewis J. Mc Carthy, Dave Nadelle, and Peter LoBiondo to Cpl. - effective as of 1 May.

May 3 - Lecture: "Flying of P-51's," given by Lt. Col. J.C. Myers, P-51 pilot, to Group pilots in Group briefing room. Col. Tacon also spoke briefly on this subject.

2nd Lt. Karl S. Elebash, detached service to this Squadron from 67th Fighter Wing, arrived; Lt. Elebash to be Assistant S-2 Officer.

May 4 - All pilots up on training flights of various types in transitional flying.

Services were held for Capt. Brown at the Base Chapel.

May 5 - Transitional flying continued.

F/L Geoffrey S. Darlington, Intelligence Officer, RAF, arrived to visit Group and Squadron S-2 Departments for a few days.

Twenty-four hour passes were restored to non-flying personnel of Base, two to be allotted a month to each enlisted man two weeks apart.

Lt. Will D. Burgsteiner transferred to 65th Group Headquarters, Detachment of Patients.

1st Lt. Raymond B. Lancaster, Jr., notified of promotion to Capt.

May 6 - Briefing was held at 0715 for area-patrol support mission over France. The bombers' objective was no ball targets, approximately twelve in number, Pas de Calais area. 18 Squadron planes took off; one pilot returned early. No E/A sighted.

T/Sgt Dwight B. Deal detached service to school at Farnborough, Hampshire, for 1 week.

S/Sgts. Carl J. Miller and Lucion Ruel detached service to school at Warrington, Lancs, for 2 weeks.

May 7 - Briefing was held at 0715 for escort penetration-patrol support-withdrawal mission. Squadron planes to penetrate to target: Osnabruck. 17 Squadron planes took off; 3 pilots returning early. Escort provided over briefed course. No bombs seen dropped, although bombers may have dropped them.

Lt. Elebash assigned and joined this Squadron to be Assistant S-2 Officer.

Lt. Col. Murphy on 7-day leave. Capt. Mc Kee Acting C.O. of Squadron.

Lt. Jack Bateman, S/Sgts James E. Adams and Stanley F. Wolochowica, Sgt. Perry L. Young, and Cpl. Seymour Smilow detached service to AAF Station 150, on Air Sea Rescue work.

May 8 - At 0645 briefing took place for escort penetration-target-withdrawal mission, Squadron planes to fly to, over, and from target: Brunswick. 13 Squadron planes took off; one pilot returning early. Escort provided over briefed course. In the vicinity of Eschede, about 100 E/A attacked the bomber formation; one B-24 was seen to spin down, apparently as a result of rocket fire. Fighter escort broke E/A attempt at second attack - result: Lt. Doersch destroyed 1 FW 190 and damaged another; he also destroyed 1 Me 109. Lt. Shupe destroyed 2 FW 190's. Lt. Shupe also destroyed 1 locomotive on RR at Strohen. Lt. Porter MIA.

May 9 - Briefing took place at 0645 for strafing and bomber-escort withdrawal mission. The target was the Laon Couvron A/F. 16 planes took off, and all completed mission. Strafing by designated flights observed, and withdrawal support provided for bombers to Knocke.

Cpl. Harold F. Brown detached service of Cryptography School at Oxford.

Time set for enlisted men's passes: 0630 to 2400 hrs.

At 1435 16 Squadron planes, led by Lt. Wetmore, took off for practice dive-bombing mission. Maj. Irvine led Group 100-lb practice bombs dropped on range near Thetford.

May 10 - At 0700 briefing was held for target and withdrawal support mission; Squadron planes to fly to Grasleber, near Brunswick. 16 Squadron planes took off, but bombers aborted, and fighters were recalled at point just before English coast.

Aircraft Recognition test for all pilots at Wretham Hall.

M/Sgt Speziale, detached service to school at AAF Station 521.

Lt. Major taxiing plane back after aborting collided with his Crew Chief, S/Sgt. O'Brien, on bicycle, injuring him in shoulder. S/Sgt. O'Brien taken to 231st Station Hospital.

May 11 - Briefing at 1200 for target and withdrawal support mission. Squadron planes to fly to target: Mulhouse. 18 planes took off from mission. Escort provided to target; bomber results observed at target observed to be good; explosions with black smoke were seen around a RR yard. Lt. Hodges was hit by flak while strafing an A/D NE of Reims, and since his A/C caught on fire, he was forced to bail out near Peronne. Lt. Hollis destroyed 1 Me 210 on ground during strafing at Reims. Lt. Tuchsherer crash-landed near Manston. Lts. Kibler and Maslow MIA.

May 12 - F/L Darlington in charge of Squadron S-2 during one-day leave of Lt. Benton.

Briefing took place at 0930 for ramrod penetration-target-withdrawal mission. Bombers' target: Merseburg. 13 planes took off. 6 pilots returning early. Bombers sighted, but strung out, so difficult to find. Bombing results believed very good. Several fires were seen in target area. No E/A seen, and no bombers seen to go down.

News received of permission to go on Liberty Passes preceding 24-hour leave.

May 13 - At 1215 was held briefing for withdrawal-support mission; the target was near Zamzow, Poland. 14 Squadron planes left for mission; 6 returning early. On arrival at planned R/V point, fighters advised that bombers were 40 minutes early. No E/A seen, nor any bombing results because of 8/10 cloud over R/V area.

Lt. Lochte detached service to school at Derby, Derbyshire.

News received that all passes canceled beginning 2400 hours 14 May.

May 14 - At 1400 all available squadron personnel at Decoration Ceremonies at Flying Field, opposite Group Operations Building. Enlisted Men under direction of Capt. Bears and S/Sgt Steel, marched from barracks area to field. There, under the direction of Lt. Col. Smith, Group Executive Officer, with Capt. Mc Kee in charge of Squadron, Group personnel witnessed the awarding of the DFC to Col. Tacon and the following Squadron pilots: Capt. Smith, and Lts. Wetmore, Doersch, Ambrose, Paul Bateman, Callahan, Downing, Hipsher, Hodges, Huskins, Borg, and Major. Brigadier General Anderson, C.O., 67th Fighter Wing, made the awards, and Major Nelson, Group Adjutant, read the orders. Various pilots of other two Squadrons were also awarded the DFC.

T/Sgt. Harvey A. Diacont, Jr., detached service to school at Warrington, Lancs.

S/Sgt. Armand V. La Marr detached service to school at Krikham Preston.

May 15 - Lt. Col. Murphy returned. Capt. Mc Kee relieved of command,

S/Sgt Morris Noskowitz assigned and joined Squadron from 67th Fighter Wing.

May 16 - From 368th Fighter Squadron Capt. Howard L. Fogg and 1st Lts. Andrew P. Lemmens and Robert E. Burton transferred to this Squadron, and Capt. Lester G. Taylor transferred from the 369th Fighter Squadron.

Notice received from Group of Group defense Missions from this date, each Squadron to furnish 4 pilots every third day, they to remain on alert 30 minutes before official daylight to official darkness.

Alert Schedule also received, the 370th Fighter Squadron to have alert pilots on duty May 18th and every third day thereafter until further notice.

Sgt. Robert F. Knoechel, Operations Department, transferred to Engineering Dept., Cpl. John R. Doney replacing him.

May 17 - T/Sgt. Marine, Group S-2 met with Squadron ranking S-2 NCO's at Group S-2 to discuss new maps for combat flying: 1:50,000 series to be used in interrogating, high altitude maps for flying, and the 1:250,000 series (folded) for target approach.

At 2100 hours Lts. Hipsher, Cunningham, Doersch, and Lemmens were in readiness for 1st Squadron Interceptor Alert, spending night in Alert Room. Access to telephone message, in case of notice to "Scramble," alert pilots to take off from run-way specified over phone. Pickaxe to direct them what altitude to fly at. Planes to fly not more than five miles away from base.

Twenty-four hour passes resumed beginning 0630 hours, 18 May

Lt. Francis W. Hankey (ORD) transferred to 368th Fighter Squadron; Lt. Lewis F. Major transferred from 359th Fighter Group to this Squadron in his place.

May 19 - Briefing at 0915 held for penetration-target mission, the target: Berlin. 18 planes took off. 7 pilots returned early. R/V at Neumunster. Beginning 1330 from Brandenbrug between 100 and 150 E/A seen, including Me 109's and long-nosed FW 190's. They attempted to attack bombers from 25,000 feet, but P-51 interception was so successful that no bombers were seen to be damaged. From 1330 to 1345, combat with E/A took place in the vicinity of Stendal. Here Lt. Wetmore destroyed 2 Me 109's, Lt. Paul Bateman destroyed a long-nosed 190, and Lt. Hipsher damaged an Me 109 - all in the air. Escort was continued after the combat. No battle damage was reported.

May 20 - At 0745 was held briefing for penetration-target-withdrawal mission. Target: Reims. 15 planes took off, 2 returning early. Escort provided over target and on remainder of bombers' course. Bomber results observed to be excellent. Other fighters observed in target area, but no E/A.

Group phoned following alert-flight data: (1) Piloted to be seated in cockpits of A/C 1/2 hour before and 1/2 hour after 1st light, also one hour before dark. (2) At other times, alert pilots to remain in place so as to be able to scramble in 15 minutes (3) Pilots to stay in 5 mile area when flying and not to leave to intercept unless actually engaged in combat. (4) Alert flights to be maintained, regardless of weather conditions. (5) Alert pilots to be briefed on armament and angles of attack of German A/C.

May 21 - Briefing held at 0845 for strafing mission in area between Lubeck and Scherwin See. 15 planes left for mission. 2 pilots returning early. A/D strafed at Schwerin with following destruction and damage: 1 Ju 88 destroyed and another damaged by Lt. Callahan, 2 Ju 88's damaged by Lt. Newberg, 4 Ju 88's destroyed and 3 Ju 88's damaged by

Lt. Shupe (heard over R/T). The strafing at Warin brought the following: 2 locomotives destroyed and 1 Radar station damaged by these pilots, who shared in the strafing: Capts. Mc Kee and Lancaster and Lts. Lemmens, Hipsher, Doersch, Cunningham, and Wetmore. During strafing of RR yard at Bruel: 1 roundhouse damaged by Lt. Cunningham; Lt. Doersch damaged 1 locomotive, damaged 1 train of goods cars - without engine, damaged 1 roundhouse, damaged 1 oil tank, set on fire 1 electric transformer, and damaged 1 U/I T/E training plane on the ground. At Rehna: 1 radar station damaged by Lts. Borg and Newberg, who shared in the strafing. Near Lubeck Bay: 1 locomotive and 1 radar station were damaged by Lt. Callahan. Lt. Joseph E. Shupe was last seen by Lt. Thomas Lane of the 368th Fighter Squadron in the vicinity of Mecklenburg after hitting air scoop on ground during Schwerin strafing and subsequently damaged by flak.

May 22 - At 0900 briefing was held for Type 16 patrol mission in vicinity of Compiègne. 16 planes set out; one pilot returning early. 10/10 overcast at 10,000 feet, and no A/C friendly or enemy, were sighted.

May 23 - Briefing took place at 0530 for penetration-target-withdrawal mission. 15 planes participated, and none returned early. Escort was provided to target and on to withdrawal, despite overcast.

At 1345 was held briefing for skip bombing mission over Hasselt. 11 planes took off, all completing mission. Area reached, but target not located; so bombs not dropped. No E/A seen.

Sgt. Alter, Cpl. Lo Biondo, and Pfc. Carlson, Squadron Medical Department, detached service to school at Bolthead.

Cpls. Gribbon, Moylan, Soda, and Kendall, and Pfc Kindelan on detached service with Alert Detachment, 1141st MP Co, on Base.

May 24 - Briefing was held at 0715 for penetration-target-support mission. Target: Berlin. 14 planes took off; 6 returning early. Bombers were escorted from Neuminster to Berlin. On withdrawal, heavy flak was noticed over Hamburg. Persistent contrails 10/10 cloud over target area and haze arising 28,000 feet. Squadron planes climbed to 32,000 feet to get out of overcast. Bombers seen to drop bombs, but no bombing results observed.

From 1000 to 1110 hours a Base Gas Alert was held, Officers and Enlisted Men in proper uniform and with all necessary equipment at posts.

Pfc. Mitchell, Operations Department, detached service to Base Alert Detachment, also Sgt. Brodowski and Pfc. Yasek; Sgt. Seidel, Orderly Room, to replace Pfc. Mitchell in Operations.

May 25 - At 0630 briefing for target-withdrawal mission over Mulhouse, France. 15 Squadron planes took off, and one returned early. Bombing results were observed at Stasbourg, where two targets were observed. No bombers were observed in trouble.

S/Sgt. William Kelly injured hand while taking oxygen equipment from clec-track and was taken to 231st Station Hospital at Wyndham.

Transferred to this Squadron from 361st Fighter Group: T/Sgts. Norman B. Case and Percy M. Scott, S/Sgt. Paul A. Mulfers, Cpls. Edward L. Smith and William R. Thomas, and Pfc's., Robert G. Stephens, and Stanley \_\_\_\_ mands, Albert J. Bicheler, and Arthur Peterson, also Pvts. Carl E. Eyre and Roscoe Pamplin.

May 26 - S-2 and Operation C.O. List drawn up, one man from either department to be on duty in Building 160 at night henceforth.

Lt. Col. Murphy spoke to Line Ground Officer, Line ranking NCO's, and to S-2 and Operations personnel, ordering them to report any accident coming to their attention to Squadron Operations immediately.

All passes and Liberty Runs canceled.

New guard plan in effect 2200 hours. Two officers and twenty-four enlisted men to be equally divided in two main dispersal areas: A-B and C-D, the enlisted men to walk post in three three-hour shifts of four men each and to sleep in work shacks in dispersal areas when not on active duty.

Pvt. Thomas W. Carroll detached service with Station Provisional Defense Unit.

T/Sgt. Willaim J. Allen detached service to school at Derby Derbyshire.

May 27 - Briefing at 0900 for penetration-target-withdrawal mission, the target: Mannheim. 13 planes took off; 2 returning early. A/C, apparently not friendly, seen on way. R/V with bombers finally made NW of Mannheim. No bombing results observed, although grayish smoke, possibly from bombs, was seen at some U/I location.

May 28 - At 1015 was held briefing for penetration-target-withdrawal mission. The target was Magdeburg. 18 Squadron planes took off, and four returned early. Escort provided over target, where good bombing results were observed. Dense white smoke in target area indicated use of smoke pots to obscure visibility.

Lt. Benton spoke to Operations and S-2 personnel about new CQ plan, instructions for standard operating procedure in preparation for briefing, and keeping unauthorized personnel out of Alert Shack. He also stressed the necessity of divulging no information about combat flying.

May 29 - Briefing took place at 0835 for penetration-target-withdrawal mission over Poelitz. 18 Squadron planes took off, and three returned early. R/V in vicinity of Stettin. At time and place of R/V about 60 E/A, both Me 109's and FW 190's made attack on bombers at same level: 20,000 feet. 2 B-24's were seen to spin down as a result of the attack. 2

separate groups of E/A made attack in waves, and having attacked, hit the deck. At this point in the combat, the following was accomplished: Lt. Col. Murphy destroyed 1 FW 190 and shared in the destruction of another; Lt. Wetmore destroyed 2 FW 190's; Lt. Doersch shared in the destruction of 2 FW 190's. Lt. Grimes destroyed 2 FW 190's; Capt. Lancaster destroyed 1 Me 109 and probably destroyed another; Lt. Siltamaki shared in the destruction of 1 FW 190. Following the attack, the Pinnow A/D was observed, there located about 50 S/E and T/E E/A, some of the larger A/C possibly being heavy bombers with more than two engines.

May 30 - Briefing was held at 0835 for penetration-target-withdrawal mission, the target being Dessau. 18 Squadron planes set out, and 3 returned early. R/V was at 1100 over Dessau. Here E/A were engaged in combat following their attack on B-17's, during which attack, 1 B-17 was seen to explode as a result of enemy action. 2 parachutes were seen. In fighter combat 1 Me 109 was destroyed by Lt. Hipsher sharing with Lt. Grimes, and 1 Me 109 was probably destroyed by Lt. Siltamaki. Regular escort for the bombers was not provided, but intermittent escort was given to 3 combat wings: one at Dummer Lake, one at Lingen, and one over the Zuider Zee.

While landing at Base after this mission, Lt. Lemmen's A/C was destroyed in an accident, category "E", because of locked brakes.

CO plan for S-2 and Operations departments begun in Building 160.

May 31 - Briefing was held at 0800 for penetration-target-withdrawal mission; the target: Soest. 17 Squadron planes took off, but 2 pilots returned early, one of them, F/O Resse, because of damage sustained over English Channel from 50-calibre gun fire. Damage to right wing category "AC." Source of machine gun fire unknown. On mission, escort provided over target, where 1 B-17 was heard to call for help after it had been hit by flak about 1115. No E/A encountered.

At Enlisted Men's Pay Call, cards were given out for absentee voting.

JOHN M. BENTON  
1st Lt., Air Corps  
Historical Officer