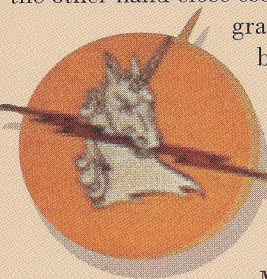


MUSTANGS & UNICORNS

ONE CONTEMPORARY aviation historian has described the 359th FG as a "colorless unit." I think that after reading this book you will find that statement is not true.

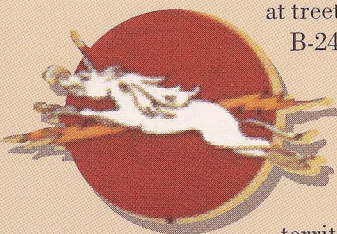
Certainly other fighter groups scored more air kills but it must be remembered that the 359th was one of the last groups to enter service. Also they would have undoubtedly scored more kills had not more than two-thirds of their missions been close escort for bombers, a job closely supervised by Col. Tacon who didn't tolerate a mass exodus from the bomber stream to chase small numbers of enemy fighters. On the other hand close escort earned them the undying

gratitude of the airmen in those bombers. This affection the bomber crews felt for their *little friends* is amply exemplified in the following story.



Lt. David B. Archibald spotted a crippled B-24 Liberator being attacked by a Me109 and dived on it, chasing it away. Archibald then moved in close to the bomber and motioned for the pilot to follow him.

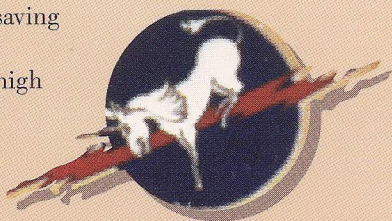
With two engines out and a third on fire, the bomber's crew began jettisoning equipment to lighten their aircraft. Flying through an overcast sky at treetop level Archibald led the B-24 towards an advanced



Allied airfield in France. After gaining enough altitude to safely bail out and assured by Archy they were over friendly territory, the crew jumped.

Archibald then landed at the airfield and minutes later met the bomber-pilot, who gave him a grateful hug. And that's what escorting is all about, saving lives.

The 359th ranked high as train killers, a very hazardous job. Likewise the unit excelled at destroying aircraft on the ground, another deadly undertaking. Any ground target is extremely dangerous for the fighter pilot.



Emblems from top to bottom: 359th Fighter Group, 368th Squadron, 369th Squadron and 370th Squadron. Cover painting is by Jack Smith.



T.P. Smith's Mustang being serviced. T.P. SMITH PHOTO



370th personnel pose with souvenirs during the closing of the base in September 1945. T.P. SMITH PHOTO

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