

369TH FIGHTER SQUADRON HISTORY FOR THE MONTH OF JULY 1944

The month of July saw us participating in 23 bomber escort and strafing missions. During this period the only claim entered was for a damaged locomotive on the 28th by Capt. Burton and Capt. Orwig. While our presence undoubtedly was of great value as a deterrent, the lack of concrete results had a definitely depressing effect. The lack of targets and claims can be attributed to the failure of the Luftwaffe to come up and to bad weather on the 2 strafing missions assigned us. During the period E/A were encountered on only three occasions; the 19th, 21st and 28th. The gaggles seen on the 19th and 21st consisted of 15 to 20 E/A. We were unable on either occasion to make contact. The 28th produced the outstanding event of the month when we encountered, for the first time, 5 Jet-propelled E/A. Two separate gaggles were seen flying in formation. Altitude, position and speed rendered us unable to get a shot. The outstanding characteristics were their rapid acceleration, allowing them to achieve speeds of possibly 500 MPH in a very short time and their ability to climb at great speed.

The jet A/C, Me 163's were seen in the vicinity of Munich. Lts. Prewitt and Stevens saw the first 2 at 10,000 ft. climbing at a very sharp angle at an estimated 300 to 400 MPH speed. They continued to 30,000 ft. where they appeared to cut off their power and then split-ess. Lt. Smith and Mejaski flying at 27,000 ft. saw 3 Me 163's at about 30,000 ft. and 2,000 yds. behind them. The E/A were gliding in the direction of our planes. As we started to turn into them they rapidly accelerated and passed 500 yds to the left at an estimated speed of 500 MPH.

Squadron morale was at its highest peak. The reason for this was the tremendous results being achieved on the 3 European fronts. The Pacific front, while watched avidly, seems too far away to have much immediate morale effect. Good entertainment in the form of Aero Club with its snack bar and chorus singing, plays given by the enlisted men and the good brand, thou old, of movies were also contributing factors.

The pass situation improved during the 2nd week for the EM when the 25 miles limit was raised. Unfortunately the only town within a 25 mile radius offer little entertainment. The permission to go further afield is a vast improvement.

The EM softball team continued to excel as it trounced the 368th Fighter Squadron 5 to 1 on the 30th before the largest crowd of the year.

The play "Sack Happy" given by the EM of the base was a huge success. We had 12 participants who directly contributed to it. Cpl. Matthew Sciarillo provided 2 songs written by himself as well as serving as musical director. The bulk of the orchestra was composed of 369th EM. Sgt. Peter Tetradis was lead man on Saxophone, T/Sgt Earl L. Kanyok was on Alto Sax, Cpl. Donald A. Schoelles on Trumpet, Pvt. Lloyd Douglas strumming Guitar and the rhythmic beats of Pfc Joseph R. Lazzara on drums gave the band a scintillating lift. Pvt. Harold NMI Harris was hilarious playing the part of an RAF Sgt, and Sgt. Robert M. Schneider and Cpl. Wayne D. Chevalier played the parts of "Chorus Girls" excellently. Sgt. Frank J. Bonetti acted as Talent Scout and aided behind the scenes and last but far from least Pvt. William Orlando did a bang-up job as make-up artist and technical advisor.

On the 1st of July with Major Chauncey S. Irvine in command the Sq. strength was 244 EM and 43 Officers. On this day 2nd Lts. Joseph W. Majeski, 0-820297 and Roger W. Porter, 0-820570 were assigned and joined the Squadron for duty as pilots.

Gilbert E. Ralston, was promoted to 1st Lt. effective 27th of June 1944. Capt. Karl H. Kirk returned from D.S. to duty as Flight Commander.

Major Chauncey S. Irvine was promoted to Major AUS AC to Major AUS effective 29 June 1944.

Our next promotion on the 6th saw Eugene R. Orwig, promoted to Captain effective 4 July 1944.

Four new pilots joined the Squadron on 13 July for duty as Pilots:

2nd Lt. Harold R. Burt, 0-817889
2nd Lt. John F. Buniowski, 0-763485
F/O Thomas G. Bur, T-61576

Lts. Harry L. Matthew, Robert L. Thacker and Robert C. Thomson all received word on the 22nd that they had been promoted to Captain effective the 19th July. The same day Major Niven K. Cranfill, was transferred to Hq. 359th Fighter Group to serve as Group Operations Officer. Major Cranfill who had been with us as Operations Officer during our entire operational period had accomplished a splendid job. The promotion was well deserved.

The same day saw another personnel change which was felt deeply. Capt. Paul D. Bruns, 0-416602, was transferred to the 82nd Airborne Division. His decision to transfer, a well kept secrete, was motivated by his desire to contribute more heavily to the War effort. Believing that his services would be of greater value there he accepted a call for volunteers. His cheerful curiosity and red shining nose will be missed.

On the 23rd Capts. Matthew and Thomas left on D.S. for the Zone of the Interior. They were the first to go under the rule which allows pilots upon the completion of 300 hours of operational flying to return to the U.S. for a 30 day period of rest. They were followed on the 29th by Capt. Orwig.

Capt. Karl H. Kirk was on the 24th transferred to Hq. 359th Fighter Group.

On the 26th Major Irvine left on leave, Captain Lester G. Taylor Jr. assuming command in his absence.

On the 27th of July 3 more pilots joined the Squadron for duty as Pilots:

2nd Lt. Russell H. Jenner, 0-706589
2nd Lt. James R. Parsons, 0-79929

2nd Lt. Arnold F. Mettel, 0-707721

The 30th was marked by 1st Lt. Arthur H. Horowitz joining the Sq. as Medical Officer.

The Squadron strength on the 31st was 250 EM and 50 Officers with Captain Lester G. Taylor Jr. in command.

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Squadron Historian