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ENCOUNTER REPORTS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

Encounter Report (Con't)
 ALD-1288, BA-608, E.

bursts, and cleared my tail at the same time. As I closed in on him, at approximately 200 yards, I gave him a short burst and observed strikes on the right side of his canopy and wing-root, and he started smoking heavily. I saw him fall out of his turn but I couldn't follow him any further, as two more PB 190's were closing in on me from the rear. I claim this PB 190 destroyed, as from the observed hits and smoke, and as from the attitude of the E/A which was heading straight for the ground at 1500 feet when I left him. I broke sharply to the left and met another PB 190 head-on. I scored about a 3 second burst into him and saw my machinegun fire taking effect. Pieces of his wing and fuselage were flying off and I saw this plane start to smoke and flame. As he nosed under my plane I felt a terrific concussion. I believe the E/A blew up and it was this explosion that caused the concussion. It was impossible for me to observe results more accurately as I found myself in the middle of a bunch of E/A and I was occupied in evasive action. Shortly after the Squadron formed again and we returned base.

I claim two (2) PB 190's destroyed.

HAROLD E. ALD-1288,
 1st Lt., Air Corps,
 Element Leader.

1. Combat film exists.
2. Combat film forwarded 25 December 1944.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

395TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
Office of the Intelligence Officer

D-W-2

APO 508, U.S. Army
8 January 1945

COMBAT REPORT

- A. Combat
- B. 23 December 1944
- C. 368th Fighter Group, 395th Fighter Squadron
- D. 1600 hours
- E. Leacher Lake area
- F. CAVU
- G. 50 plus PW 190's and Me 109's.
- H. Two (2) PW 190's Destroyed, and One (1) Me 109 Destroyed.

CAPTAIN MORRIGAN'S and LT MATTHEWS' statements supporting
LT WAYLAND'S claims are attached.

- I. I was flying Blue Number Three in Flapper Squadron on an Armed Reconnaissance in the Coblenz area. We were at 8,000 feet, on course, when a formation of 18 E/A was called in at 1600 hours. We couldn't definitely identify them. They crossed in front of us and climbed into the sun. Immediately, a second group of 15 plus E/A attacked, and a break to the left was called. We climbed all-out to the attack which began on our left flank. My wingman lagged in the climb and immediately a PW 190 was in position on his tail. As I came into position on the PW 190, the Jerry broke off into me. I got strikes on his tail and the PW broke for the deck. My Flight Leader, LT MATTHEWS, picked this one up and shot him down in flames as the Jerry pilot bailed out. Immediately, I was engaged with 3 PW 190's and 109's. I got on the tail of one of the attacking 190's, closed to 100 yards, and got strikes on the tail and saw smoke. He cut his throttle on me and I couldn't slow my ship as quickly as he. I closed rapidly, firing, and flew through his left wing. My bomb-shackle ripped through his wing. I broke immediately after hitting him and as I looked back the PW was spinning down with 3/4 of his wing flapping in the breeze. The leading edge of my right wing was damaged and the bomb-shackle was

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Encounter Report (Con't)
 WAYLAND, WILLIAM, J. Pilot

tern almost completely off by the collision. I had separated from my Squadron by this time and was engaged with still 3 more PW 190's. I did everything I knew and managed to get on the tail of one or two; but then one would be on my tail. I got strikes on one PW 190 at about 250 yards with 20 degree deflection. He broke off and I saw him going down in flames. CAPTAIN FORBES confirms this claim. I still seemed to have 2 Jerry's with me, for by now a Me 109 joined the fight. I got numerous short bursts, but no damage observed. The 109 finally committed himself in the fight and we turned with each other. I got a 30 degree deflection closing from 250 yards to 150 yards. I fired a short burst and saw strikes around the cockpit. I sat on the trigger and fired a 4 second burst all into the engine and cockpit area observing many strikes and little flames from the fuselage. The 109 slid off in an easy turn, burst into flames and exploded as it hit the ground. LT GANNY had joined to help me and took one PW 190 off my tail. I engaged the last PW being as aggressive as possible, despite the fact I was out of ammo and very low on gas. I fought in violent turns, skids, snaps, etc., until I was in an advantageous position above him. When I split-essed toward Germany, rolled on the way down, and came out on the deck going home right in the tree tops. During the intense fight the Jerry pilots were extremely aggressive and good. I turned with all but one of the PW's but one did succeed in turning inside me. As he drew deflection I snapped into him.

I claim Two (2) PW 190's Destroyed and One (1) Me 109 Destroyed.

WILLIAM J. WAYLAND,
 2nd Lt., Air Corps,
 Pilot.

1. Combat Film exists.
2. Combat Film forwarded 25 December 1944.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

395TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
Office of the Intelligence Officer

D-2-2

APO 898, U.S. Army
30 December 1944

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

- A. Combat
- B. 23 December 1944
- C. 388th Fighter Group, 395th Fighter Squadron
- D. 1800 hours
- E. Lecher Lake area
- F. CAVU
- G. 50 plus P-51's and Me 109's
- H. Statement confirming LT WAYLAND'S claims.

I. On 23 December 1944 I was flying Flapper Yellow Three position. All four Flapper flights were engaged in dogfights and the sky was filled with Luftberrys. I recognized LT WAYLAND'S plane as he passed by and I saw a large ball of flame below him. I could not tell what sort of a plane it was because of the flames and explosion.

VIRGIL MORRIS,
Captain, Air Corps,
Deputy Flight Leader.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

395TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
Office of the Intelligence Officer

D-M-2

APO 895, U.S. Army
30 December 1944

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

- A. Combat
- B. 23 December 1944
- C. 368th Fighter Group, 395th Fighter Squadron
- D. 1600 hours
- E. Leacher Lake area
- F. CAVU
- G. 50 plus FW 190's and Me 109's
- H. Statement confirming LT WAYLAND'S claims

I. On 23 December 1944 at about 1600 Flapper Squadron was engaged in a dogfight in the area over Coblenz. I was leading Blue flight and in the general melee I was engaged in several dogfights. Climbing up to help LT WAYLAND who had engaged a FW 190 and two Me 109's, I saw him shot one of these Me 109's down and observed it crashing into the ground.

HUGH P. MATTHEWS,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Flight Leader.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

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 395TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
 Office of the Intelligence Officer

D-1-2

AGO 585, U.S. ARMY
 29 December 1944

COMBAT REPORT

- A. Combat
- B. 23 December 1944
- C. 395th Fighter Group, 395th Fighter Squadron
- D. 1600 hours
- E. Leacher Lake Area
- F. GAVU
- G. 50 plus PW 190's and Me 109's.
- H. One (1) PW 190 Destroyed.

I. I was leading Flapper Squadron on an Armed Reconnaissance over Leacher Lake at about 10,000 feet. We had been in our area for about fifteen minutes when sixteen (16) E/A's came across in front of us and about 2,000 feet above us. As they crossed in front of us, they turned so as to get into the sun. In the meantime we were climbing to reach them when Flapper Yellow Two called a break. We were hit from six o'clock by about 15 more E/A. By this time Flapper lead flight and Flapper Blue flight had reached the other E/A and we were in the thick of it. My wingman called me to break, I broke left and right onto the tail of a PW 190. We made one complete 360 to the left. I was able to pull lead on this PW 190 and I saw my wingman pull up to wait for me to finish this E/A off. I pulled way inside this PW 190 and firing all the time. I let my lead drop off and the E/A drifted right through my gunfire. He straightened out momentarily, rolled off to the left on his back, plunging for the ground smoking and burning all the way. All the time I was firing at a range of 150 to 100 yards at this PW 190 and it began burning from my first hits and as he headed for the ground he smoked more than ever. I then started to look for my wingman who had called in that he had been hit and was going home. Though I asked him to rack his wings, I could not find him and could receive no answer over the R/T. About this time, I saw a P-47 go into a shallow dive smoking on the way down but since there were so many airplanes in the air, I could not positively identify it. Since LT WALSTON, my wingman, did not return from this mission, I assumed it must have been

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

Encounter Report (Cont)
IVEY, JAMES. Flight Leader

his plane I saw go down. Since he did not return, I can not state if anyone other than he saw this destroyed FW 190 I shot down.

JAMES W. IVEY,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Flight Leader.

1. Combat Film exists.
2. Combat Film forwarded 28 December 1944.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

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390TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
Office of the Intelligence Officer

D-P-2

APO 595, U.S. Army
9 January 1945

COMBAT REPORT

- A. Combat
- B. 23 December 1944
- C. 368th Fighter Group, 395th Fighter Squadron
- D. 1800 hours
- E. Leacher Lake area
- F. GAVE
- G. 50 plus PW 190's and Me 109's.
- H. One (1) PW 190 Destroyed and Two (2) PW 190's Damaged.

LT SMITH'S statement supporting LT POLLOCK'S claim is attached.

- I. On 23 December 1944, I was flying Number Four position in Flagger Blue Flight on an Armed Recon near Coblenz, Germany. We were at 10,000 feet when we spotted about 15 PW 190's some 3,000 feet above us. We started climbing into them when about 15 more came in on us from behind. My Element Leader broke into the sun and I lost sight of him. I was climbing up toward him when I spotted 3 or 4 PW 190's coming in on my left. I broke into them, and in doing so snapped out of the turn, recovering at about 8,000 feet. PW's were all around me, so I picked out one and fired my rockets at him at about 20 degree deflection with no results. I broke into another and we both fired head on. I observed strikes on his cowling. I saw a PW 190 on the tail of a P-47 so started down after him. He saw me coming and broke, but he was too late and I managed to turn inside him. Firing at about 30 degree deflection, I observed strikes on the canopy and left wing-root. I flew wing to this PW 190 and saw that the pilot was slumped over in the cockpit. The plane was in flames and I watched it crash to the ground in a small valley. LT SMITH and I started after another PW 190. The PW broke into me and we fired head-on. I observed strikes around the cowl and

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

Encounter Report (cont)
POLKE, CHARLES, R.

wing-root. The PW 190 was firing too, and he put one in my engine knocking out my right mag. I started for home with LT SMITH escorting. A PW 190 came in on my tail, but LT SMITH got him. I managed to get back into friendly territory and belly landed about 20 miles northeast of Leon.

I claim one (1) PW 190 destroyed, and two (2) PW 190's Damaged.

CHARLES R. POLKE,
2nd Lt., Air Corps,
Pilot.

1. Combat film exists.
2. Combat film forwarded 25 December 1944.

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398TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
Office of the Intelligence Officer

D-8-2

APO 398, U.S. Army
9 January 1945

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

- A. Combat
- B. 23 December 1944
- C. 398th Fighter Group, 398th Fighter Squadron
- D. 1000 hours
- E. Leacher Lake area
- F. OAVU
- G. 50 plus FW 190's and He 109's.
- H. Statement confirming LT POLTER's claims.

I. On 23 December 1944, I was flying Number Four position in Flapper Yellow Flight when we got into a dog-fight with 50 plus FW 190's and He 109's over Leacher Lake, Germany. I was in a tailberry with a FW 190 when the enemy aircraft suddenly broke off and another FW 190 came in to get on my tail. I saw LT POLTER, Number Four man in Flapper Blue Flight, score a short burst on the 190 causing it to break into flames. The FW 190 crashed into the side of a hill in a small valley where it burned with a rather large fire.

EUGENE B. SMITH,
2nd Lt., Air Corps,
Pilot.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

395TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
Office of the Intelligence Officer

D-0-2

APO 595, U.S. Army
8 January 1948

COMBAT REPORT

- A. Combat
- B. 23 December 1944
- C. 363th Fighter Group, 395th Fighter Squadron
- D. 1600 hours
- E. Laacher Lake area
- F. CAVU
- G. 50 plus PW 190's and Me 109's.
- H. Four (4) PW 190's Destroyed.

LT IVEY'S, LT WAYLAND'S, and LT MATTHEWS' statements are attached in support of LT GARRY'S claims.

- I. On December 23 I was flying the element in Flapper Squadron's lead flight when we were bounced by sixteen (16) PW 190's. I called a break to the left and cut around the one coming in on me. About that time something like twelve (12) more hit us from a different direction and when we got through breaking my win man had been hit and lost me and I in turn lost the rest of the Squadron. My wingman called me saying he was hit and was on his way home so I began to climb all alone. This took place at around twelve (12) thousand feet near Laacher Lake just out of Coblenz. While climbing up I could see about eight (8) P-47's and twelve (12) PW's in a fight just east of me but there were also twelve (12) more PW's about ten (10) thousand feet above them so I did not join the fight then. I finally got about two thousand feet on the top German and was up-sun so I dove into the middle of them. Two of them broke right and the other six left so I tagged onto the last man going to the left. I took a couple of short bursts at him and he blew up in my face. Just then a P-38 came by with a PW 190 on his tail so I gave chase and after about three bursts I lost the 190 under my nose. When I looked back there was an explosion just under me, and as the Lightning was still flying it was the German who blew up.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

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Encounter Report (Cont)
 LT WILLIAM J. DARRY

I fought a turning battle with about four 100's for a few minutes never firing a shot and some P-38's came over and scared them away. About this time LT WALKER called for some help saying he was on the tail of a Heinkel and two more were on him. I was still at twenty-four (24) thousand and LT WALKER said he was down at ten (10) thousand so I went down to have a look. I finally found him at twelve (12) thousand and took one of the Heink off his tail. I fired a ninety degree deflection shot and then got one in at about thirty degrees. After this second burst the PW broke into flames and was burning furiously when the pilot bailed out. I spotted three more PW's coming in at me from about ninety degrees so I broke in to them and after about two turns I was on the tail of one and the other two had disappeared. This pilot was probably a rookie for I only fired at him twice from pretty good deflection, about seventy degrees, hitting him with maybe five or six bullets when he bailed out and I saw the ship crash and explode. I was down to my tracer by this time so I started working west toward the comb-line trying to get back a little altitude to go home. On the way I joined another P-47 and we went out together joining three more on the way. The engagement lasted about twenty-five to thirty minutes.

I claim four (4) PW 100's destroyed.

WILLIAM J. DARRY,
 1st Lt., Air Corps,
 Flight Leader.

1. Combat Film exists on this encounter.
2. Combat Film Forwarded December 28, 1944.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

395TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
Office of the Intelligence Officer

D-3-2

AFPO 585, U.S. Army
8 January 1948

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

- A. Combat
- B. 23 December 1944
- C. 368th Fighter Group, 395th Fighter Squadron
- D. 1600 hours
- E. Leacher Lake area
- F. CAVU
- G. 50 plus PW 190's and Me 109's.
- H. Supporting statement confirming LT BARRY'S claim for Four (4) FW 190's Destroyed.
- I. I was at 8000 feet over Leacher Lake engaged with 3 FW 190's. I had given my position and asked for help. LT BARRY located the fight and engaged one of the FW 190's. After a series of turns LT BARRY succeeded in getting on the 190's tail. The next I saw was the 190 going down burning violently and LT BARRY still following it. The 190 exploded after going down in a tight spiral.

WILLIAM J. WAYLAND,
2nd Lt., Air Corps,
Pilot.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

395TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
Office of the Intelligence Officer

D-M-2

APO 598, U.S. Army
23 December 1944

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

- A. Combat
- B. 23 December 1944
- C. 368th Fighter Group, 395th Fighter Squadron
- D. 1600 hours
- E. Laacher Lake Area
- F. GAVU
- G. 50 plus PW 190's and Me 109's.
- H. Supporting statement confirming LT GARRY'S claim for 4 PW 190's destroyed.
- I. On 23 December 1944 I was leading Flapper Blue flight. At about 10,000 feet we were engaged in a dogfight over Laacher Lake with over 50 plus PW 190's and Me 109's. As I was climbing up to aid LT WAYLAND who tangled with three enemy planes, I saw LT GARRY come down from above. He destroyed the PW 190 and I saw it flaming to my right and saw it crash to the ground.

HUGH F. MATTHEWS,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Flight Leader.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

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395TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
Office of the Intelligence Officer

D-1-2

APO 898, U.S. Army
8 January 1945

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

- A. Combat
- B. 23 December 1944
- C. 368th Fighter Group, 395th Fighter Squadron
- D. 1600 hours
- E. Laacher Lake area
- F. CAVU
- G. 50 plus PW 190's and Me 109's.
- H. Supporting statement confirming LT BARRY'S claim for Four (4) PW 190's destroyed.

I. I was leading Flapper Squadron on 23 December on an Armed Ready flying over Laacher Lake just west of Coblenz at 10,000 feet when we were bounced by sixteen (16) PW 190's and Me 109's. The E/A crossed in front and above us. He circled in behind them climbing all the time, when Flapper Yellow Two called a break. He had been hit from behind by another group of some sixteen (16) or more E/A. My flight broke left. My wingman called another break to the left. I broke and shot down a PW 190 and I lost my element leader on this second break. My wingman had been hit so I broke off pursuit to help him out. I couldn't find him at around 12,000 feet. He had called in that he was heading home. Without a wingman I started climbing for altitude and also two E/A's I saw circling just above me. I reached 20,000 feet and saw two P-38's come in and take the two PW 190's. While at this altitude I was looking for a target and found my Element Leader, LT BARRY. He was in behind a PW 190 which was in turn on the tail of a P-38. LT BARRY was firing and then broke off. Just after he had broken away, the PW 190 exploded in mid-air.

JAMES W. IVRY, JR.,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Flight Leader.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

395TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
Office of the Intelligence Officer

D-8-2

APO 895, U.S. Army
30 December 1944

COMBAT REPORT

- A. Combat
- B. 23 December 1944
- C. 368th Fighter Group, 395th Fighter Squadron
- D. 1600 hours
- E. Laacher Lake area
- F. OAVU
- G. 50 plus PW 190's and Me 109's.
- H. Two (2) PW 190's Destroyed and One (1) PW 190 Damaged.

LT POLTE'S statement supporting LT SMITH'S claim is attached.

- I. I was flying Number Four position on Captain Noriega's wing in Flapper Yellow flight, led by LT HUFF. We were at about 10,000 feet near Laacher Lake at about 1600 hours when we saw 16 bandits ahead and above us. We broke into them and mixed it up. The break put me slightly ahead of my element leader. He called me and said he would stick with me. We broke into several flights and singles, all attacking from above. I got in a Luffbury with a 190 and Captain Noriega was drawn off by other 190's attacking him. The 190 with whom I was engaged broke off and another was coming in to get on my tail. LT POLTE gave him a short burst and the E/A burst into flame. I saw it crash into the side of a hill causing a rather large fire. I was left alone after LT HUFF got hit. I broke into numerous attacks. Several E/A made head-on attacks. One made a high deflection shot at me and maneuvered to get on my tail. I turned with him until he broke off. At the same time another E/A came in front of my nose; so I turned on him. I gave him a couple short bursts, noting strikes on the fuselage and small flame and smoke. I pressed the attack into approximately 100 yards, setting the E/A on fire. It made one wing-over into the ground.

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Encounter Report (con't)
SMITH, EUGENE, R.

I noted smoke at the crash. I made several 90 degree passes at the E/A on the tail of some P-47. Even though I didn't fire on most of them because it was impossible to pull enough deflection, most of them broke off the attack. On one such high deflection shot, I noted several strikes in the wing of a PW 190. I then saw a P-47 diving down with a PW 190 close on his tail. I took off on his tail. I couldn't close very fast; so I fired a short burst pretty far out of range. By this time the P-47 had hit the deck, and the PW 190 was closing. The E/A pulled off the attack and broke into me. I continued turning and fired a couple short burst at about 60 degree deflection, getting several strikes. He straightened out for a second and started another break. I got him from about 20 degree deflection, getting many strikes. The E/A pulled up and I saw the canopy fall away. Through my fire may have shot it away, it's most likely that the pilot jettisoned it, because it seemed that he was trying to bail out. I let him have one short burst right in the cockpit. It flipped on it's back and spun once before hitting the ground. The enemy seemed very aggressive throughout the fight. Estimate at least 50 E/A in the fight. A few would come down at a time from what must have been their top-cover. After shooting down the second E/A, I tagged onto the plane from whose tail I had just removed the PW 190 to take him home. He seemed pretty badly shot-up. Said he had a bad oil lead and couldn't gain any altitude or speed. We flew along about 2,500 feet. It was necessary for me to weave and circle to stay with him as he was going so slow. We ran into intense light flak several times. I saw a PW 190 coming towards us from 180 degrees. I called LT FOLTE, the pilot of the crippled airplane and told him to hit the deck. I climbed up to keep the E/A from bounding us, at the same time seeing several others which I could not identify in the haze. The PW 190 flew within 200 yards of me at my same level. Neither of us made any aggressive move. I didn't want to be drawn away from LT FOLTE and hadn't identified the other planes in the haze. When I saw the PW 190 continue on his course, I climbed up to investigate the bogies. They were P-47's, and were very scattered, flying in singles to three's or four's. After that I made a couple orbits looking for LT FOLTE. Visibility was very bad, and I couldn't find him. However, I had radio conversation with him ten minutes later. At our last conversation he must have been no more than five minutes from the bomb line. He seemed okay. Throughout the fight I had a bomb hung up on my left wing. A few minutes after losing sight of LT FOLTE I called for a homing and returned to base. I claim two (2) PW 190's Destroyed and One (1) PW 190 Damaged.

EUGENE R. SMITH,
2nd Lt., Air Corps,
Pilot.

CONFIDENTIAL

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Incident Report (con't)
SAC, [redacted], [redacted].

1. Combat file exists
2. Combat file forwarded 23 December 1964.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

395TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
Office of the Intelligence Officer

D-F-2

APO 525, U.S. Army
3 January 1945

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

- A. Combat
- B. 23 December 1944
- C. 368th Fighter Group, 395th Fighter Squadron
- D. 1600 hours
- E. Leacher Lake area
- F. CAVU
- G. 50 plus FW 190's and Me 109's.
- H. LT POLTZ'S statement supporting LT SMITH'S claim is attached.
- I. On 23 December 1944, I was flying Number Four position in Flapper Blue Flight over Leacher Lake, Germany. My airplane had been damaged by enemy aircraft fire and I was forced to drop out of the dogfight in which our Squadron was engaged. I broke for the deck and was heading for home at low altitude with LT SMITH escorting me, when a FW 190 got on my tail. LT SMITH came in behind this FW 190 and shot it down. I saw the enemy aircraft make one spin and crash into the ground.

CHARLES R. POLTZ,
2nd Lt., Air Corps,
Pilot.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

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335TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
Office of the Intelligence Officer

D-2-2

APO 141, U.S. Army
11 January 1945

COMBAT REPORT

- A. Combat
- B. 23 December 1944
- C. 368th Fighter Group, 335th Fighter Squadron
- D. 1600 hours
- E. Lecher Lake area
- F. CAVU
- G. 30 plus PW 190's and No 109's
- H. Two (2) No 109's Destroyed and One (1) PW 190 Destroyed.

LT WAYLANDS' and LT GARRYS' statement supporting LT MATTHEWS' claim is attached.

- I. I was leading Flapper Blue Flight on 23 December 1944, in the vicinity of Coblenz, Germany. As we headed in a Northeasterly direction weaving around the heavy flak which peppered at us once in a while, eight bogies were called in high at 2 o'clock, and more were being called in all the time. We were flying at about 10,000 feet when they crossed in front of us too high and too far away to positively identify them as bandits. By this time they were at 3 o'clock to us and I had a good look at their small tail assemblies and noticed smoke trailing them as they poured on the coal to get even more altitude. As we turned left behind them they turned left into the sun to get behind us. We started climbing and were in a string of flights when I heard and saw Yellow Flight leader break left. I called Blue Flight to break left and to jettison bombs and belly-tanks. My wingman was with me and I fired my rockets into the gaggle of bandits with no results observed. Then I picked one out and started after him when my wingman called and said that he was hit. I broke off the attack to go to his aid, but could not find him in the melee. Bandits, about 30 plus, were all over the sky by this time and more kept coming in. I was by myself now and kept twisting and turning until I found a PW 190. I closed in on him, firing a long burst and getting strikes all over him. We were getting close to the ground and he was taking evasive action and going under a high tension

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Encounter Report (Con't)
 MATTHEWS, RICH, P

wire. I pulled up over the line, but he turned right and I had to firewall everything to get in close again. He went over a little village and I gave him another burst, getting more strikes. The next thing I knew I had started to overshoot him so I chopped everything back and fishtailed up to his right wing. He turned left away from me and I fired a 30 degree deflection shot at him. He started to burn and bailed out. His plane crashed and strewed burning wreckage for a hundred yards. I then started to climb up to find Blue Three who had three B/A and was calling me when I found a Me 109 in front of me who wasn't very eager. He bailed out before I started to fire on him. Finally I found LT WATLAND in a buffberry to the left with three enemy aircraft. I made a head-on pass at the leading Me 109. He returned my fire and I thought we would crash until he finally broke to my right and I observed strikes on his belly. I then got on his tail and we went 'round and 'round in a buffberry. I had a hard time staying inside the turn and thought the situation might become reversed. I called that he was turning inside of me, and at the same time I started rocking the stick back and forth. Each time I could get a temporary, but insufficient lead, I would fire. He broke out of the buffberry, jettisoned his canopy, bailed out, and landed on a Jerry airframe which was putting up plenty of light flak. As I looked up I saw LT GARRY shoot down a FW 190 which crashed into the ground, while LT WATLAND had shot down the remaining Me 109. I joined up with LT GARRY and several others and we returned to our base. There was a mixture of very talented and aggressive enemy pilots interspersed with others who were inexperienced and just followed the others around frantically and bailed out whenever a P-47 started to line up on them.

I claim One (1) FW 190 Destroyed and Two (2) Me 109's Destroyed.

Rich P. Matthews

RICH P. MATTHEWS,
 1st Lt., Air Corps,
 Flight leader.

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388th FIGHTER SQUADRON
Office of the Intelligence Officer

D-1-2

APO 888, U.S. Army
9 January 1945

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

- A. Combat
- B. 23 December 1944
- C. 388th Fighter Group, 325th Fighter Squadron
- D. 1600 hours
- E. Leecher Lake area
- F. 2475
- G. SO plus PW 190's and Me 109's.
- H. LT BARRY'S statement supporting LT HAYES'S claim is attached.

I. On 23 December 1944, while I was climbing to help LT HAYES who was tangling with three enemy aircraft, I saw a P-47 with the letter "Y" flash by me and take off after an enemy airplane. The pilot of this aircraft was LT. W. J. HAYES. Just as he got on the tail of this enemy aircraft, a PW 190, and fired a short burst, the enemy pilot bailed out and the airplane crashed into the ground.

William J. Hayes
 WILLIAM J. HAYES
 1st Lt., War Corps,
 Pilot.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

395TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
Office of the Intelligence Officer

D-8-2

APO 898, U.S. Army
8 January 1948

Combat Report

- A. Combat
- B. 23 December 1944
- C. 368th Fighter Group, 395th Fighter Squadron
- D. 1600 hours
- E. Leacher Lake area
- F. CAVU
- G. 50 plus PW 190's and 100's.
- H. One (1) PW 190 Destroyed.

LT ALBRIDGER'S statement supporting LT HUFF'S claim is attached.

- I. On 23 December 1944 I was leading Yellow Flight on an Armed Recon in the Coblenz area. We were flying South from Leacher Lake at about 10,000 feet when many bogies were seen flying North at twelve o'clock. Flapper Squadron started to climb into the formation and then the bandits spotted us as they began jockeying themselves into the sun. It was just before they bounced us that I recognized them as PW 190's. This information was passed over the R/T and we all jettisoned our bombs. Immediately after we had done so, my Number Four man, LT SMITH, called a "break-left." I was watching about 16 plus PW 190's maneuvering to attack my flight from ten o'clock, and failed to see another 16 plus initiating their attack from six o'clock. Immediately after LT SMITH called for the "break," Yellow Flight turned into the attack. It seemed a very short time before we were being forced to fight singly because of the enemy's superiority in numbers. As I was making a right turn out of a "break," I noticed a PW 190 on the tail of a P-47. My wingman was covering my tail and gave me complete coverage as I closed to within 200 yards of the PW 190 and gave it a short burst. Immediately he started to smoke, and flames burst from his belly as he pulled up to gain altitude. Suddenly, he

C O N F I D E N T I A L

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Encounter Report (Con't)
HUFF, DONALD H.

rolled over on his back and then plunged straight down. I started to follow him, but got a direct hit in my left wing from a PW 190 making a head-on pass. The ammunition in my left wing blew up, and the explosion threw me into a half-roll. I recovered, and heard my wingman "break-left". I was unable to turn left as the damaged wing caused my airplane to go into a slight spin to the left whenever I attempted to turn left. I recovered and called that I was heading for home. Before I got straightened out for home I was jumped by another PW 190, but turned into him causing him to break away and disappear beneath me. I called for a "homer" and landed safely at my home base.

I claim one (1) PW 190 Destroyed.

Larry Spence Major
For DONALD H. HUFF,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Flight Leader.

1. Combat film exists.
2. Combat film forwarded 25 December 1944.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

395TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
Office of the Intelligence Officer

D-1-2

APO 505, U.S. Army
31 December 1944

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

- A. Combat
- B. 23 December 1944
- C. 368th Fighter Group, 395th Fighter Squadron
- D. 1600 hours
- E. Laacher Lake area
- F. CAVU
- G. 50 plus PW 190's and Me 109's
- H. Statement confirming LT HUFF'S claim for one (1) PW 190 destroyed.
- I. On 23 December 1944 I was flying Number Two position in Flap or Yellow flight. Near Laacher Lake we were bounced by 50 plus Me 109's and PW 190's. Just after "break" was called, I saw LT HUFF Yellow Flight Leader, shoot a PW 190 off Yellow's Four tail and I saw this PW 190 go down in flames and crash.

Marcus L. Aldridge
MARCUS L. ALDRIDGE,
2nd Lt., Air Corps,
Pilot.

C O N F I D E N T I A L