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APR 1944

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HISTORICAL DATA

DECLASSIFIED  
OD DIR 5200.9

SQUADRON HISTORY  
396TH FIGHTER SQUADRON  
368TH FIGHTER GROUP

APRIL 1944

SQUADRON HISTORIAN - 1ST LT. MURRAY B. THALER  
RECORDER - CPL. THOMAS J. GRIFFIN

HISTORICAL DATA

DECLASSIFIED  
OD DIR 5200.9

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**SECRET****SQUADRON HISTORY**

1. a) Under the new T/O 1-27, dated December 1943, the Squadron is authorized, in addition to the 245 Enlisted Men, 7 more Enlisted Men as follows:

Two extra cooks:		Five Armorers:	
(1) Sgt - Cook	060	(2) Sgt	911
(1) Pvt - Cook's helper	521	(2) Cpl	911
		(1) Pvt	911

b) The above makes the total authorized Enlisted strength 252. The armorers (911) listed above are authorized due to: "An armament team will be authorized for the ground echelons of fighter squadrons equipped with a type of aircraft employing more than 6 machine guns (or equivalent).

**2. STRENGTH**

	OFFICERS	ENLISTED MEN
Beginning of the month	38	243
Net increase	3	6
Net decrease	0	0
Total at end of period	41	249
Total Officers and Enlisted Men	290	

**3. NEGATIVE****4. NEGATIVE**

5. The following named Officers of this organization have been awarded the Air Medal by authority contained in Par. 1, Section I, GO # 96, Hq, Ninth Air Force, APO 696, U.S. Army, dated 11 April 1944. (Copy of General Order attached)

Captain Joseph J. McLachlan	O-665844
Captain Leon D. Myers	O-732317
1st Lt. Meredith W. Henry	O-796388
1st Lt. Charles W. Romine	O-665447

**PERSONNEL CHANGES**

- Promotion of 27 Enlisted Men per par 2, SO #29, Hq 368th Ftr Gp, dated 1 April 1944. (Copy of SO attached)
- 2nd Lt. Robert E. Palm was transferred to the 8th Air Support Control Squadron on April 2nd.
- Pfc Harold W. Burhite and Pfc (237) Julius (NMI) Wolf asgd and jd April 4th by authority contained in par 1, SO # 30, Hq 368 Ftr Gp, dated 2 April 1944. (Copy of SO attached)
- Pvt (345) George H. Harris reported for duty to the squadron on 6 April per par 4, SO #31, Hq 368th Ftr Gp, dtd 4 Apr (Cpy atchd)
- 1st Lt. Meredith W. Henry transferred to Hq 368th Ftr Gp and Capt. John W. Baer transferred from Hq 365th Gp to this squadron on April 7th per VOCO, 368th Ftr Gp.
- Pvt (345) Anthony (NMI) Caristi and Pvt (521) Jess E. Spangler joined the squadron per par 4, SO #32, Hq 368th Ftr Gp, dtd 6 April 1944. (Copy of SO attached)

## SECRET

## Squadron History

## Par 5, pg 1 (cont'd) Awards and Decorations

In accordance with para. 1, Section 1, General Order 10, Hq. Ninth Air Force, dated 15 April 1944, the following named officers in the Squadron, have been awarded Air Medals:

PAUL P. BOUGLAS, JR.	MAJOR	Paragould, Ark.
ALFRED E. BENTON	1ST LT	San Marino, Calif.
JOHN L. CARTER	1ST LT	Jackson, Mich.
WALTER C. LOUGHRAN	1ST LT	Springfield, Mass.
CORRENTINE H. OLSON	1ST LT	Minneapolis, Minn.
DAVID C. PARRISH	1ST LT	Paris, Ky.
LAYTON A. RICE JR.	1ST LT	Baton Rouge, La.
GEORGE R. DAVIS	2ND LT	Danielson, Conn.
JAMES H. GARDNER	2ND LT	Burbank, Calif.
ALBERT L. LARSEN	2ND LT	Clinton, Ia.
EDWARD (SMI) HAUGHTON JR.	2ND LT	Lexington, Ky.
JOHN K. LOEB	2ND LT	Williston Park, N. Y.
IRVING (SMI) OSTROW	2ND LT	Marletta, Ga.
PAUL J. QUILTY	2ND LT	Quincy, Mass.
OLIVER S. RYERSON	2ND LT	McFarland, Wis.
JACK B. ROBBINS	1ST LT	Wichita Falls, Tex.
CHARLES J. KENNEDY JR.	2ND LT	Dallas, Tex.
GROVER V. GREENE	2ND LT	Dayton, O.
PAUL R. FISHER	2ND LT	Eureka Springs, Ark.

SECRET

RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS  
NINTH AIR FORCE

APO 696, U. S. ARMY  
11 April 1944

EXTRACT

GENERAL ORDERS)  
NUMBER.....96)

SECTION I: AWARDS OF AIR MEDAL.

\* \* \* \* \*

SECTION I

1. By Direction of the President, under the provisions of Executive Order No 9158, (Bull 25, WD 1942), as amended by Executive Order No. 9242-A, (Bull 49, WD 1942), and in accordance with authority delegated by the War Department, Air Medals are awarded to the following named officers of the IX Air Support Command, in recognition of meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight in the European Theater of Operations, each having participated in the required number of operational sorties against the enemy:

\* \* \* \* \*

368TH FIGHTER GROUP  
396TH FIGHTER SQUADRON

JOSEPH J. MCLACHLAN	O-665844	Capt	Stuebenville, Ohio
LEON D. MEYERS	O-732317	Capt	Cincinnati, Ohio
MEREDITH W. HENRY	O-796688	1st Lt	Philadelphia, Pa.
CHARLES W. ROMINE	O-665447	1st Lt	Waco, Tex/

\* \* \* \* \*

By Command of Major General BRERETON:

V H STRAHM  
Brig Gen USA  
C of S

OFFICIAL:

S/ C R BIRBARI  
T/ C R BIRBARI  
Lt Col AC  
Asst Adj Gen

"A TRUE COPY"

*Murray B. Thaler*  
MURRAY B. THALER  
1st Lt, Air Corps

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS  
368TH AIRBORNE GROUP

APO 595, U. S. Army  
1 April 1944

SPECIAL ORDERS )  
: )  
NUMBER.....29 )

1. Under the provisions of AR 615-5, 30 Jun 1943, and upon the recommendation of their Grpn Comdr, the following named E1, 395th Pitr Sq, are promoted to grades as indicated:

TO BE STAFF SERGEANT (TEMP)

Sgt (862) Richard W. Weaver	35421892
Sgt (759) John H. Houlihan	31226462
Sgt (747) Dick T. McCurray	14156319
Sgt (747) Charles R. Mathews	13072929
Sgt (747) William (WIL) Demchuk	32505271
Sgt (747) Robert C. Griffith	33373026
Sgt (747) Joseph J. Hanson	32424763
Sgt (747) Allen E. Olson	37266802

TO BE SERGEANT (TEMP)

Cpl (941) Andrew A. Vanta	15019222
Cpl (911) Frank C. Darling	32192850
Cpl (239) William H. Anger	31135789
Cpl (685) Philip Marchese	33414990
Cpl (747) Joseph L. DiPicerno	12042818
Cpl (747) Clifford F. Dolan	32434647
Cpl (747) Herbert N. Carp	12145495

TO BE CORPORAL (TEMP)

Pfc (809) John T. Connolly	31230431
Pfc (911) Howard (WIL) Gutman	12093865
Pfc (809) George F. Bauer	36181045
Pfc (014) David M. Pallen	39297507
Pfc (056) Gilbert E. Stehlin	35800525
Pfc (405) Edward G. Fountain	12190244
Pfc (505) Charles A. Hotetz	32729549
Pfc (405) John (WMI) Furman	12083258
Pfc (932) Albert D. Hobbs	35360335
Pfc (747) Theodore D. Ruggiero	32731699

TO BE PRIVATE FIRST-CLASS (TEMP)

Pvt (610) Wilfred L. Milroe	32728874
Pvt (345) Chester H. Urie	36199366
Pvt (060) Stewart D. Ferr	12207805

## RESTRICTED

S O No 29, Hq 368th Fitr Gp, 1 Apr 1943 (Cont'd)

TO BE PRIVATE FIRST CLASS (TEAM) (CONT'D)

Pvt (245) Frederick A. Gaston	37478522
Pvt (521) Wallace G. Nelson	31176970
Pvt (747) Floyd T. Nelson	39835675
Pvt (747) Wilbur L. Faith	15069487
Pvt (405) Marvin V. Milam	16018013
Pvt (747) Francis (MIL) Reading	7026375
Pvt (747) Robert B. Olson	16018123
Pvt (747) Dinos E. McMutt	37303109

2. Under the provisions of AR 615-5, 30 Jun 1943, and upon the recommendation of their Orgn Cdr, the following named EM, 396th Fitr Sq, are promoted to grades as indicated:

TO BE STAFF SERGEANT (TEAM)

Sgt (911) Clarence N. Fowler	14133889
Sgt (747) Richard G. Gergel	35397743
Sgt (747) Charles E. McMiller	32474098
Sgt (747) Buford (MIL) Potter	13035202
Sgt (747) Raymond J. Rodgers	33307965
Sgt (747) Elno R. Schmid	37456172
Sgt (637) Stephen J. Zidek	36348455

TO BE SERGEANT (TEAM)

Cpl (941) Ellis N. Bassler	32449388
Cpl (050) Henry R. Bettin	36232792
Cpl (405) Robert F. Fitzgerald	32221162
Cpl (405) William C. Hunter	31105652
Cpl (932) Jack L. Harcor	38089240
Cpl (932) Oswald C. Thompson	32436203

TO BE CORPORAL (TEAM)

Pfc (144) Clyde H. Rour Sr	36610133
Pfc (650) Sam (MIL) Curcio	32809291
Pfc (345) Joseph A. Duffy	31096372
Pfc (405) Edward G. Fritz	35055285
Pfc (014) Curtis E. Fuller	33539413
Pfc (932) James W. Howard	35698805
Pfc (237) Carlton J. McCarter	31310179
Pfc (900) Robert T. Mead	18213936

TO BE PRIVATE FIRST-CLASS (TEAM)

Pvt (405) Fred W. Bennett	36590181
Pvt (405) Jerome H. Chocinski	36555484
Pvt (911) Arthur M. Klama	15354253
Pvt (900) Frank E. Koblinski	15376023
Pvt (050) Tige O. Lyons	15381984
Pvt (405) John C. Peffer	38332740

RESERVED

S O No 29, Hq 368th Fitr Gp, 1 April 1944 (Cont'd)

3. Under the provisions of AR 615-5, 30 Jun 1943, and upon the recommendation of their Orgn Comdr, the following named EM, 397th Fitr Sq, are promoted to grades as indicated:

TO BE TECHNICAL SERGEANT (TECH)

S/Sgt (911) Werner (MII) Lehman 38662051

TO BE STAFF SERGEANT (STAFF)

Sgt (747) Herbert F. Billinger 35187905  
Sgt (747) Charles G. Miller 39493960  
Sgt (673) Paul F. Fowcosenek 12016843  
Sgt (685) Joseph D. Lynch 37437407

TO BE SERGEANT (TECH)

Cpl (911) Walter P. Groder 31287551  
Cpl (667) John J. Jones, Jr 39106800  
Cpl (405) Francis T. DeLambert 32533948  
Cpl (747) John (MII) Hays 35398967

TO BE CORP ORAL (TEMP)

Pfc (361) Charles E. Check 31329091  
Pfc (405) Merlin J. Dickvoss 36317894  
Pfc (405) Harry W. Heath 35577230  
Pfc (932) Manuel (MII) Guerra 30455756  
Pfc (911) Michael T. Gyzdos 33666537  
Pfc (911) Harrison L. Havi 14175043  
Pfc (056) Archie (MII) McNeil 32285946  
Pfc (945) Thomas H. Lusker 31090880

TO BE PRIVATE FIRST-CLASS (TEMP)

Pvt (014) Marvin L. Adams 33242324  
Pvt (911) Edward M. Connor 33668876  
Pvt (345) Ralph R. May 34624963  
Pvt (759) Clarence D. Parrish 39327477

4. Under the provisions of AR 615-5, 30 Jun 1943, and upon the recommendation of their Orgn Comdr, the following named EM, Hq 368th Fitr Gp, are promoted to grades, as indicated:

TO BE STAFF SERGEANT (TEMP)

Sgt (502) Raymond (MII) Mazzero 31072498  
Sgt (755) Kenneth W. Oliver 11062216  
Sgt (275) Gerald H. Trudel 31125933

RESTRICTED

S O No 29, Hq 368th Fitr Gp, 1 April 1944 (Cont'd)

TO BE SERGEANT (SER)

Cpl (755) Henry S. Kornatoski 13055898  
Cpl (502) Charles I. Plante 31007368  
Cpl (056) Sidney C. Richards 31160763  
Cpl (405) Charles A. Stevens 35670133

TO BE CORPORAL (CORP)

Pfc (405) Carl H. Parsons 30539135

TO BE PRIVATE FIRST-CLASS (PFC)

Pvt (060) Clovis (NMI) Heffner 34432039

5. Under provisions of Par 1 c (4) (c), AR 345-415, Major JAMES S. HARRIS, AC, 0250856, is appointed Investigating Officer to investigate and report upon all the circumstances connected with the incurrence of injuries of Sgt Kick T. McMurray, 14156319, incurred o/a 21 Mar 1944, and to determine whether injuries were incurred in line of duty or as a result of his own misconduct. Complete Report of Investigation on TD AGO Form 51 will be submitted in quintuplicate.

6. Major FRANK S. BEBICO, CA2422, AC, is appointed Gp Air Inspector vice Major HUGH L. RICE JR, 0379295, AC, relieved.

7. VOOB 71st Fitr Wing, S/Sgt (813) Raymond F. McConnell, 13028819, 395th Fitr Sq, is placed on temporary duty for nine (9) days for the purpose of attending Ordnance Waterproofing School, IX AFSC, EG will proceed to Sternbrock House, one (1) mile north of Chipewah, so as to arrive before 1700 hours, 2 April 1944. Advance PX rations etc. Equipment to be taken: blankets, fatigues, flashlight, batteries, full field equipment, less weapons, motor vehicle, in good condition, accompanied by a complete technical inspection form and complete first echelon tools. Upon completion of temporary duty will report proper organ and sta. TDN by MT.

8. Under provisions of Par 1 c (4) (c), AR 345-415, Major JAMES S. HARRIS, AC, 0250856, is appointed Investigating Officer to investigate and report upon all the circumstances connected with the incurrence of injuries of Pvt Francis (NMI) Reading, 7026375, 13th Fitr Sq, incurred o/a 21 Mar 1944, and to determine whether injuries were incurred in line of duty or as a result of his own misconduct. Complete Report of Investigation of TD AGO Form 51 will be submitted in quintuplicate.

By O of Lt Col LEYERS:

HUGH L. RICE,

Adj AC

Adj

OFFICIAL:

HUGH L. RICE,

Adj AC

Adj

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RESTRICTED



HEADQUARTERS  
368TH FIGHTER GROUP

APO 595, U. S. ARMY  
2 April 1944

E X T R A C T

SPECIAL ORDERS )  
NUMBER 30 )

1. The following named EM, 73rd Station Complement, are transferred in grade to 368th Fitr Gp and further assigned to Sq indicated.

\* \* \* \* \*

396TH FIGHTER SQUADRON

Pfc (650)	Harold G. Burhite	3629425 <sup>7</sup>
Pfc (237)	Julius (NMI) Wolf	33586324

\* \* \* \* \*

By O of Lt Col MEYERS:

OFFICIAL:

HUGH L. RICE,  
Laj, AC  
Adj

S/ HUGH L. RICE  
T/ HUGH L. RICE  
Maj, AC  
Adj

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*Murray B. Thaler*  
MURRAY B. THALER  
1st Lt, Air Corps

HEADQUARTERS  
368TH FIGHTER GROUP

APO 595, U. S. ARMY  
4 April 1944

E X T R A C T

SPECIAL ORDERS )  
NUMBER 31 )

\* \* \* \* \*

4. Having been assigned 368th Fitr Gp per par 22, SO 75,  
Hq IX Air Support Command, dtd 2 April 1944, Pvt (345) George  
H. Harris, 36451663, is further asgd 396th Fitr SQ.

\* \* \* \* \*

By O of Lt Col MYERS:

OFFICIAL:

HUGH L. RICE  
Maj, AC  
Adj

S/ HUGH L. RICE  
T/ HUGH L. RICE  
Maj, AC  
Adj

" TRUE COPY "

*Murray B. Thaler*  
MURRAY B. THALER  
1st Lt, Air Corps

HEADQUARTERS  
36TH FIGHTER GROUP

APO 595, U. S. ARMY  
6 April 1944

E X T R A C T

SPECIAL ORDERS )  
                  :  
NUMBER        32 )

\*           \*           \*           \*           \*           \*           \*

4. Having been asgd this orgn per par 9, SO 76, Hq IX  
Air Support Comd, dtd 3 April 1944, the following named EM  
are further asgd to orgns as indicated:

\*           \*           \*           \*           \*           \*           \*

Pvt (345) Anthony (NMI) Caristi	12017664	396th Fighter Sq
Pvt (521) Jess E. Spangler	3656389	396th Fighter Sq

By O of Lt Col MEYERS:

OFFICIAL:

HUGH L. RICE  
Maj, AC  
Adj

S/ HUGH L. RICE  
T/ HUGH L. RICE  
Maj, AC  
Adj

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*Murray B. Thaler*  
MURRAY B. THALER  
1st Lt, Air Corps

**SECRET**

SQUADRON HISTORY

PERSONNEL CHANGES (CONT)

7. Cpl Edward H. Spahn was transferred to Group Hq. on April 10th.
8. 2nd Lt. Robert H. Howie, 2nd Lt. John R. Spencer III and Flight Officer Benjamin L. Ruhl joined the squadron to fill in vacancies existing for pilots, per par 3, SO #33, Hq 368th Ftr Gp, dtd 9 April 1944. (Copy of SO attached)
9. Cpl (911) Bernard J. Kordel joined the squadron on April 15th having been assigned per par 4, SO #36 Hq 368th Ftr Gp dtd 15 April 1944. (Copy of SO attached)
10. Cpl Nolan J. Breaux and Cpl Rogers Date were transferred to the 6th Air Support Control Squadron on April 17th.
11. 2nd Lt. Edward Haughton, one of the pilots, and 2nd Lt. Calvin H. Smith, the squadron Communications Officer were notified of their promotions to 1st Lt. in the AUS, effective 15 April 1944, per par 5 and 6 respectively, SO #106 Hq, ETOUSA. (No copies of SO available)
12. 2nd Lt. Jerry R. Newman was assigned and joined the squadron per par 1, SO #38, Hq 368th Ftr Gp, dtd 18 April 1944. He is to be our Personal Equipment Officer, taking the place of 2nd Lt. Julian Loshin. (Copy of SO attached)
13. 2nd Lt. Julian Loshin was transferred to the 405th Ftr Gp at APO 595, U.S. Army on April 19th.
14. Pvt Floyd R. Decatur was transferred to the 597th Ftr Sq, 368 Ftr Gp. (Copy of Order not available)
15. On April 22nd, 2nd Lt. Frederick O. Russell, the Squadron Ordnance Officer was transferred to the 370th Fighter Group, Station 404, U.S. Army, per par 2, SO #56, Hq 71st Ftr WG APO 595, U.S. Army, dtd 18 April 1944. Lt. Russell was still on D.S. at Milfield at the time and left the squadron on 26 April.
16. Pvt Phillip S. Coy assigned and joined the squadron April 24th from the 12th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, Station 449, U.S. Army. (Copies of Order not available)
17. On 25 April, Cpl Glen R. Pelter and Cpl Charles P. Rickard were transferred to the 67th Reconnaissance Group. (Copy of O not available) Cpl Walter E. Oliver was assigned to the squadron from Hq & Hq Sq IX ASC. (Copy of SO not available)
18. 2nd Lts. Albert L. Larsen and Grover Y. Greene were notified April 27th that they were promoted to 1st Lts, effective April 21st.
19. On April 28th four enlisted men were assigned to the organization through Hq 368th Ftr Gp, per par 37, SO #113, Hq AFRD, dtd 22 April 1944. (Copies of SO not available) - - They are:  
 Pvt (521) Walter D. Graham    Pvt (521) Billy P. Rothe  
 Pvt (521) Richard S. Ross    Pvt (521) Henry R. Robinson
20. Two more pilots were assigned on April 29th. They are 2nd Lt. Richard J. Fox and 2nd Lt. Harold E. Glazier from the Hq & Hq Sq, 495th Tng Gp. (Copies of SO not available)

HEADQUARTERS  
369TH FIGHTER GROUPAPO 595, U. S. ARMY  
9 April 1944E X T R A C T

SPECIAL ORDERS )

NUMBER 33 )

\* \* \* \* \*

3. Having been asgd this orgn per par 5 SO 97, Hq AAF Station 342, dtd 6 April 1944, the following named officers are further asgd to Sq as indicated.

\* \* \* \* \*

2d Lt ROBERT H. HOWIE	0697202	AC	396th Fighter Sq
2d Lt JOHN R. SPENCER III	0693171	AC	396th Fighter Sq
F/O BENJAMIN L. RUHL	T223096	AUS	396th Fighter Sq

\* \* \* \* \*

By O of Lt Col MEYERS:

HUGH L. RICE  
Maj AC  
Adj

OFFICIAL:

S/ HUGH L. RICE  
T/ HUGH L. RICE  
Maj AC  
Adj"A TRUE COPY"

*Murray B. Thaler*  
MURRAY B. THALER  
1st Lt, Air Corps

HEADQUARTERS  
368TH FIGHTER GROUP

APO 595, U. S. ARMY  
15 April 1944

E X T R A C T

SPECIAL ORDERS )  
NUMBER 36 )

\* \* \* \* \*

4. Having been asgd this orgn per par 15, SO 84, Hq IX  
Air Support Comd, dtd 11 April 1944, the following named EM  
are further asgd to Sq as indicated:

396TH FIGHTER SQUADRON

Cpl (911) Bernard J. Kordell 36373754

\* \* \* \* \*

By O of Lt Col MEYERS:

OFFICIAL:

HUGH L. RICE  
Maj, AC  
Adj

S/ HUGH L. RICE  
T/ HUGH L. RICE  
Maj, AC  
Adj

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*Murray B. Thaler*  
MURRAY B. THALER  
1st Lt, Air Corps

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS  
368TH FIGHTER GROUP

APO 595, U. S. ARMY  
18 April 1944

E X T R A C T

SPECIAL ORDERS )  
NUMBER 38 )

1. Having been asgd this orgn per par 18, SO 87, HQ IX Air Support Ccmd,  
dtd 14 April 1944, 2d Lt (1042) JERRY R. NEWMAN, 01643923, Sig C is further  
asgd 396th Fitr Sq.

\* \* \* \* \*

By O of Lt Col MEYERS:

OFFICIAL:

MAURICE D. POWELL,  
1st Lt, AC,  
Ass't Adj.

S/ MAURICE D. POWELL,  
T/ MAURICE D. POWELL  
1st Lt, AC,  
Ass't Adj

"A TRUE COPY"

*Murray B. Thaler*  
MURRAY B. THALER,  
1st Lt, Air Corps

SECRET  
SQUADRON HISTORY

MORE GLIMPSES INTO THE TRAINING .....

Captain John W. Baer, formerly an Ass't Operations Officer at Group Headquarters, and assigned to the Squadron April 7th as our Ass't Operations Officer, left Group 14 March on D.S. to the RAF Station at Catfoss where he attended the Central Gunnery Instructor's School. Captain Baer was a classmate of Capt. Mazur at West Point, graduating in January 1945.

While at the School, Johnny Baer devoted almost all of his time to Aerial Gunnery, in preparation for qualifying to instruct others. Basically, the training was developed along three lines - a) Ground School, where they went through exercises in sighting, armament and the theory of gunnery. - b) Bomber Affiliation, when he flew in a Spitfire each time, taking pictures of a Wellington as he made passes at it - and finally, c) Air Combat, at which time the course brought the students in "Spit" against "Spit". This also included "Drogue firing", or what our boys would refer to as "Tow-target practice". He completed the course on 19 April and joined the Squadron on the 20th.

Captain Baer had the opportunity of meeting Wing Commander Allan Deere, another of the famous "Battle of Britain" aces, whom the Jerries couldn't keep down, although he had been shot down nine times. Also at the school was Wing Commander Lowe, the first Aerial Gunner to command an RAF Stirling Squadron. The quarters were provided for in an old English mansion where Captain Baer was treated very well. The evening before he left, they all had a big party, ending his stay there.

To familiarize some more of our pilots with the technique and problems involved in Air-Support work, 1st Lts. Alfred E. Benton and Clarence W. Olson left April 6th on D.S. to Milfield. They flew up there in their planes to attend a similar course to the one which Major Douglas completed at this British School of Experimental Fighter - Bombing. The Enlisted Men who went to the school preceeded the Officers on April 4th. They were, T/Sgt William Malone, S/Sgt William H. Everett, S/Sgt Raymond J. Rodgers, S/Sgt. Edward P. Morgan, Sgt. Ralph Scaglione and Pvt. Harold Grose.

Lts. Benton and Olson had a variety of practice missions, which consisted of Dive-Bombing, strafing and general Ground Support. They participated in what were referred to as "Rover-Joe Problems". A flying officer, who was the "Rover-Joe," was the controller. He directed them to the targets by Pin-Pointing. They had the opportunity to work out problems by using grids and check-points to go after the targets. The importance of getting an aiming-point on an airdrome, for example, was brought out. Also practised was the technique of picking up the target while in a dive. During each practice mission, they were to get to the target and destroy it in as little time as possible. Critiques were held each day to help



SECRET

## SQUADRON HISTORY

MORE GLIMPSES INTO THE TRAINING..... con't

bring out all the important features.

An interesting feature while there, was the demonstration of Rocket-firing guns on Spits and Typhoons. Our pilots were very much impressed. At the school were outstanding men such as Brigadier General Strickland, who is attached to the higher headquarters of Ground-Air Support work, and Col. Salisbury.

T/Sgt. Malone was sort of an acting 1st Sergeant for the men while at Milfield. The men had a most enjoyable time and found their stay very interesting. The British were eager to learn about our "point-five", or 50 caliber machine gun, and our men tried to learn about the mechanism of the British 20 mm cannon and 303 machine gun. Our sergeants ate in the Airman's Mess but were afforded the privileges of the Sergeants Mess which was a combination mess, club, and recreation room. They were quartered in the same area as the British Flight Sergeants who had been trained in the United States. The stay at Milfield proved to be a very good one for all. They returned to the squadron on April 25th.

Captain Joseph J. McLachlan received his orders placing him on D.S. to Italy just as Captain Sparks did last month. Mac left the squadron on April 1st and arrived in Naples on April 8th, via C-47. On the morning of April 8th, he reported to the XII Mediterranean Air Support Command, which placed him in the 36th Fighter - Bomber Group in Pomigliano. From there he went to the 527th Fighter - Bomber Squadron, also located in Pomigliano where he lived in one of the Italian apartment houses.

Our Red Flight Leader flew the A-36, or Invader, Dive-bomber while on D.S. with this Squadron. It impressed Mac with the fact that it had very good dive-brakes. One could split-S and go into a 90° dive. The Captain went on four missions. On his first mission in this theatre, he went with the squadron to dive-bomb a bridge southwest of Viterbo, a town north of Rome. The second was the same bridge, and he got a little flak in the left wing this time. On the third, they went after a bridge just south of Viterbo. The fourth mission was against an airfield on the coast, about 10 miles north of the Tiber River. When April 16th came he started for our own home base, leaving Naples via C-47 to Casablanca and from there in a C-87 or a converted B-24, to England, reporting back to duty on April 19th.

On his trip to Italy Mac met Brigadier General Kincaid, a Wing Commander, with whom he exchanged "Short Snorter" signatures. While in Italy, Captain McLachlan saw only one FW-190 one day and four others on another mission, but neither time did they attempt combat with the Squadron. His stay with the squadron at Pomigliano was enjoyed very much, exchanging shop talk dealing with the A-36 and P-47.

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## SQUADRON HISTORY

## SCRUBBED.....

Briefing was held at 0730 on April 1st. The Group was to be escort for B-26s whose target for the day was the marshalling yards at Namur, Belgium. The Colonel had briefed, the situation was given by S-2, the weather was presented and finally the time check. Everyone rushed out to the line. The weather was pretty bad over England.

Major Douglas briefed the pilots in the Squadron S-2 hut. Some of the visiting Officers were going to fly with the squadron today. The telephone rang - the zero hour was moved up ahead two hours. Meanwhile, Major Douglas had an informal talk with the fellows on general topics. The mission was finally scrubbed after sweating it out.

Captain McLachlan left for Middle Wallop on his way to Italy where he was going to be on D.S. for a few weeks.

## "TRAINING AND MAINTENANCE".....

From April 2nd until April 5th, the weather was not favorable for missions. After supper on April 4th, there was a lecture given to the Officers and pilots by the Ninth Air Force Chemical Warfare Officers on tactical employment of smoke screens. They demonstrated the smoke tank which is carried by airplanes and showed movies of airplanes laying down a smoke screen or dropping smoke bombs and its effectiveness.

There was a briefing on the 5th at 0800. The Group was going to dive-bomb the Criel Marshalling Yards with our squadron as top cover. But - the weather was still bad and another scrub. There had been a release until noon, but one had come through releasing the whole Group for three days specifically for training and maintenance.

The weather was more suitable for flying on the 6th so most advantage was taken of it. For the first practice mission that morning, 18 planes took-off on a practice dive-bombing. The flying continued all day, the training included dive-bombing, slick-gunnery and aerial gunnery. The four attached Officers from the 405th Fighter Group left to go back to their home station, while Lt. Benton and Lt. C.H. Olson left on D.S. to Milfield in order to attend the course on Experimental Fighter-Bombing.

April 7th brought some more bad weather with it, which kept the pilots and planes down all day. 1st Lt. Meredith W. Henry, leader of Green Flight, was transferred to Group Headquarters as one of the Assistant Operations Officers and Captain John W. Baer, who was still on D.S., was transferred to the Squadron from Group Operations. Henry was another one of the lads whom we hated to see leave us. One could sense that this fellow was going to be missed as part of the squadron family.

## OPERATIONS CONTINUED.....

MISSION # 15 - Escort for B-26s and Dive-Bombing.

Briefing was at 1030 on the 8th. This was to be a combination escort and dive-bombing. The target - Hasselt Marshalling Yards in

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### SQUADRON HISTORY

#### MISSION # 15 (Continued).....

Belgium. After the B-26s had made their bomb-run, the Thunderbombers were to dive-bomb the yards and then rendezvous with the B-26s again to take them home. Our squadron was to fly top cover.

They taxied out and took-off at 1207. By 1515, they had landed at the base. The B-26s' hits were fairly good and the pilots claimed that our boys had done some really good bombing, especially on the building in the area and the cars in the yards.

In the afternoon there was another mission at hand. If it hadn't been scrubbed they were going to dive-bomb again but no escort was involved.

That evening there was a dance held at the Officer's Club. The lounge was decorated, a platform brought in for the band and everything was taken care of very nicely by Special Service. Wrens and civilians from nearby were invited. The orchestra was really GI, composed of two Officers and the rest were Enlisted Men from organizations in the vicinity who had gotten together. The music was very good and everyone present had an enjoyable time.

Easter Sunday, April 9th, brought a briefing for an armed patrol of a section of France. A time delay had come through on the zero hour, but the mission was finally scrubbed at about 1500. The men attended services by our Chaplain Cleary and a visiting Chaplain.

We had a very distinguished visitor with us Easter. Brigadier General Quesada, our Ninth Fighter Commander, came to Chilbolton to see how we were getting along. Lt. Davis, one of the wing pilots in Yellow Flight, was on the line working on his plane with his crew when the General came up to him and they had an informal chat.

On Monday April 10th, the Group was released for training. This gave the squadron an opportunity to practice some more dive-bombing and landing, gas-up, and take-off from the landing strip at Grove. The pilots were awakened very early that morning and were ready to T/O at 0630, but the weather was against it. They finally took-off at 1045 but came back to the base at 1215 instead of going to the landing strip since the weather closed in again. However, at 1520 they were in the air again, flew to the strip and came back to the base at 1800.

The squadron continued the practice missions on the 11th. The pilots left at 0650 and didn't land at home base until 1800. Flights were made to and from the landing strip at Grove. When they got back, they met Lt. Spencer, Lt. Howie and F/O Ruhl, three pilots who were assigned to the squadron filling in some of the vacancies existing under the new T/O. F/O Ruhl transferred from the RCAF to join the USAAF.

An Intelligence Officer and his staff visited the Group and other units of the station to demonstrate the differences between the types of German Uniforms. They used excellent visual aids and practical demonstrations.

#### MISSION # 16 - Penetration support for Eighth Air Force Heavies.

At 0630 briefing began for the mission on April 12th.

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## SQUADRON HISTORY

## MISSION # 16 (Cont).....

It was a penetration support for Eighth Air Force Bombers. After all the necessary information had been given and the pilots were all set; a time delay came in. The squadron took-off at 1147 and joined the rest of the Group.

Due to weather conditions, they could not escort the heavies as deep as originally briefed. By 1430, the squadron had come back. The Group stayed with the bombers upto a point near Liege. A critique was held at Group Headquarters to discuss the problems encountered.

1st Lt. James H. Griffin, a visiting Intelligence Officer from the 48th Fighter-Bomber Group stayed with the squadron for the day. Capt. Lowe from the IX Air Support Command, Anti-aircraft Liaison Officer, visited the Group and lectured to the Intelligence Officers on flak. He came down to the squadron just as the pilots were returning from the mission. During the interrogation, Capt. Lowe asked some of the boys some questions about any flak that they may have encountered over the Continent.

The three new pilots came under the tutelage of 1st Lt. David G. Parrish, the leader of Green Flight. He was to teach them everything needed in flying formations, diving, etc. so that they could fall in line with the rest of the squadron just as soon as possible.

## MISSION # 17 - Dive - Bombing

The Field Order called for a Dive-bombing mission on April 15th. The Group was going to do its part in helping destroy some of the Noball targets which were being constructed in Northwestern France for use against England. At the briefing, two installations were presented as the targets - one southeast of Montreuil, and the other in the St. Omer vicinity. They were to dive-bomb the first target, return to the landing strip at Kingston - Baguize, gas up, bomb up and take-off again on the same mission.

The squadron took-off at 0904, joined the Group and headed for the Continent. When they arrived at the target, the dive-bombing took place with excellent results, strikes being in the briefed area. The planes headed for the strip, but didn't take-off on the second mission because the weather had closed in. They returned home at 1350 since the mission had been scrubbed.

## MISSION # 18 - Fighter Sweep (Rail Movement as Prime Targets)

The Group had been released until noon on the 14th but at 0930 the Squadron was called and received a stand-by for a pending mission. Since the time element involved speedy action, there was no briefing at Group. Instead, Major Douglas and Lt. Dick gathered all available information so that the Major could brief the boys in our squadron S-2 section. They were going after all military and freight trains over the route to be flown.

When they returned from the operation, everyone was all excited and full of talk about the success they had.

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SQUADRON HISTORY

## MISSION # 18 (Con't).....

The score for the squadron was: 3 locomotives destroyed, 2 electric locomotives damaged, and 1 small locomotive destroyed, and 1 large locomotive destroyed. All of the action took place in the vicinity of Albert, Permerie and Arras in Northern France. It had been a regular field day for the boys. One of the boys was so low on the deck that he saw Luftwaffe personnel running in the streets of Albert.

This mission had been most exciting and one of the best the pilots had been on, feeling the real effort against Germany's transportation facilities. It also helped bring out importance of correct angle of dive to strafe and the proper evasive action necessary.

The weather during April 15th through the 17th was too bad for any operations. There were foggy mornings and overcast. Capt. "Bone" Myers went on Special Duty to Group Operations for two weeks starting the 15th to become familiar with field orders and the working of Operations. That same day, two visiting Officers from the 48th Fighter-Bomber Group (494th F-B Sq) - Capt. Moss R. Fletcher and Capt. Victor W. Cabas, were to receive some operational time with our squadron before their unit becomes operational.

On the 16th the squadron was notified of being released until daybreak the next day so the time was spent in training and maintenance. A film on Dive-bombing was shown to all the pilots at 1015 and in the afternoon, Major Kroencke, our Ground Liaison Officer was introduced to the men at Group. He lectured on the importance of cooperation between the ground and air forces in Ground Support and introduced the grid system on maps which we might be working with.

At 1150 on April 17th, the Squadron was notified of briefing to be held at 1530. If the mission had not been scrubbed, they would have gone to the Nantes - Cassicourt Marshalling Yards to dive-bomb.

## MISSION # 19 - Dive-bombing and Escort for B-26s on the same target.

The mission on April 18th was a similar one to the operations on the 8th. After escorting the Ninth Air Force Marauders, our pilots were to dive-bomb the work-shop shed and the roundhouse in the Monceau-Sur-Sambre Marshalling Yards, near Charleroi.

The squadron took-off at 1720 and after making rendezvous with the bombers, they escorted the "box". After the bombers were through with their bombing, our pilots went down with their bombs. The results of the Thunderbombers were believed to be fairly good. All returned at 2010.

Major Joseph E. Kirkup, CO of the 22nd Fighter Squadron, 36th Fighter Group, and Capt. Charles J. Bowers, one of his Flight Leaders arrived this day and were to be with us a few days for some operational experience.

In the evening, the USO show "Bumps - A - Daisy" was shown to the Enlisted Men at the Aero Club. There was much frolic and enjoyment during the show. This was the first one to be shown to us since our arrival in the ETO.

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MISSION # 20 - Withdrawal Support for Eighth Air Force Heavies.

Lt. Col. Meyers, the Group CO, led the Group and flew with the Squadron. Briefing at Group was at 0830 and in the squadron by Major Douglas at 0925. The mission was accomplished according to plan, rendezvous being made and remaining with the Big Friends.

At 1455 there was a stand-by for a briefing at 1530 for another mission. It was the Criel Marshalling Yards again. However, no sooner had they started to take-off, the Recall was given at 1648 since the mission was scrubbed.

Captain McLachlan returned to duty from his D.S. in Italy, where he flew A-56 Dive-bombers. In the evening, a movie was shown at the Officer's Club and the "Bumps-A-Daisy" troupe performed at the Aero Club for the Officers and Enlisted Men who missed it the night before. It was an excellent review.

April 20th was devoted to training missions all day. The flights rotated in Dive-Bombing and Smoke Screen practice. Capt. Fletcher and Capt. Cabas, the visiting pilots left for their home station. Some of the pilots had some airplane and engine maintenance, working with their crews. Capt. John W. Baer, our new Assistant Operations Officer, transferred to our Squadron from Group, reported for duty from his D.S.

**OUR FIRST SQUADRON PARTY.....**

The evening of the 20th, our squadron had a dance and party for the Enlisted Men and the Officers were invited to attend. Sgt Lamont W. Rutan made sure that the arrangements for the beer, food and girls were taken care of. The affair proved to be a very successful one. Major Douglas showed the men that he could really "jitterbug" as well as fly. The drummer in the band, which was composed of all military personnel, including two officers, and calling themselves the "Premlins", kept up the rhythm as the Major and the pretty ATS girl did a wonderful job of "jive". Everyone was enjoying themselves. The music was as good as any professional one. And to top the evening off, our own S/Sgt Fowler with his famous guitar and music, together with two men from the 32nd Special Service Co. attached to the Ninth Air Force, entertained the gathering. Al Feet played the electric guitar, singing a song about the popular character "Mama, I'm A Sad Sack". T/4 Dudley Townsend's comedy and imitation of a drunkard was hilarious. The dance broke up about 2330.

MISSION # 21 - Dive -Bombing.

On April 21st, our squadron flew as top cover for the rest of the Group who were to dive-bomb the marshalling yards at Hasselt. They started engines at 0845 and were down at 1155. The mission was flown as briefed and accomplished according to plan.

In the afternoon there was to be a briefing at Group scheduled for 1600. If the weather had not closed in and the mission not scrubbed, they were going to be escort for Eighth Air Force Bombers.

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SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSION # 22 - Dive - Bombing.

At 0930, April 22nd, briefing was held at Group. The target for our Dive-bombers was the marshalling yard at St. Ghislain, Belgium. Today the bombs were two 1,000 pounders. Lt. Col. Meyers was leading the squadron. The results of the bombing were undetermined. On the way home Lt. Romine and his Yellow Flight strafed a freight train between Douai and Arras. Good hits were observed on the locomotive and the first two goods-wagons. This was confirmed later at the critique, when it was brought out that Maj. Quimby and his flight from the 395th strafed the same target, the locomotive being observed to blow up.

MISSION # 23 - Fighter Sweep Over Germany.

In the afternoon of the 22nd, the squadron was airborne again at 1655. This mission brought some Enemy Aircraft into the picture again. About 12 FW-190s bounced the 395th Fighter Squadron and combat followed. The action was taking place too far away for the squadron to cater up to. Lt. Romine's flight managed to follow one down but lost him on the deck after overshooting. This was the first time the pilots had been so deep into Germany itself, seeing such cities as Duren, Bonn and Koblenz. The rest of the sweep proceeded uneventfully, the squadron landing at 2020. At the critique, which lasted until 2215, Maj. Perego, who led the Group on this mission, Maj. Quimby and other pilots brought out many points of value gained from the attack.

MISSION # 24 - Dive - Bombing.

Two missions were accomplished on April 23rd. The first briefing was held at 0945. The Group was to dive-bomb the marshalling yards at Monceau - Sur - Sambre, near Charleroi, Belgium. This was accomplished according to the briefing, two 1,000 pounders being carried under each wing by the airplanes, Lt. Col. Meyers flew with the squadron. The results of the bombing were only fair. The trip was uneventful in and out.

MISSION # 25 - Fighter Sweep.

Briefing in the afternoon, April 23rd for the second mission of the day was held at 1615. Maj. Perego, the Group Deputy CO, briefed on the course. Lt. Reinthal gave the situation, pointing out enemy airdromes in Holland which could be strafed if they found some enemy aircraft on the fields. The sweep was accomplished but no E/A were seen either on the ground or in the air. This date was Major Douglas' 25th birthday and also his 25th mission. Lt. Parrish finished instructing the new pilots and flew with the squadron on both missions today, getting back into operations. Major Kirkup and Capt. Bowers left and Captains Ray C. Langford and Charles C. Lutman of the 40th Fighter Group visited.

In the evening, the "Song of Bernadette", starring Jennifer Jones, was shown after the critique was held in the Officer's Mess.

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### SQUADRON HISTORY

#### MISSION # 26 - Withdrawal Support for Eighth Air Force Bombers.

On April 24th, the mission for the day was escort for Eighth Air Force Bombers returning from their targets in Germany. The Group penetrated about 210 miles into enemy territory, crossing the Mosel River to the Northeast of Trier. The rendezvous was accomplished as briefed and escorted out of the Continent without any interference from enemy aircraft. The flak was pretty accurate though. Four of our pilots had to land at Rednan with low gas, but they returned to the base later that afternoon.

#### MISSION # 27 - Dive - Bombing.

At 0745 April 25th, briefing was held for the dive-bombing of the marshalling yards at Malines. Lt. Rienthal from Group S-2 pointed out the locomotive sheds in the yards as a pin-point target. The squadron was up at 0906 and down at 1140. The mission was not accomplished as briefed because the weather over the Continent hid the target. The squadron was top cover as the other squadrons went after target of opportunity on the way home, along the coastal belt between Dunkirk and Blankenburghe.

After they landed, the squadron was released for training and maintenance.

#### MISSION # 28 - Dive - Bombing and Escort for A-20s.

The target originally planned for on April 26th was the marshalling yards at Louvain. The squadron loaded up on two 1,000 pounders to each P-47 and took-off with the rest of the Group. However, the mission was officially scrubbed. Therefore, they had to jettison the bombs in the Channel on return.

At 1345, there was a briefing at Group for a practice dive-bombing at a target near Bournemouth, which was to be observed by some officials.

#### TRAINING.....

Squadron Operations recieved an Operations Order in the afternoon of April 26th. All squadrons in the Group were to be used in conjunction with the exercises being held by the First Army, VII Corps. An Infantry Division was going to simulate an assault on Slapton Sands Beach on April 27th. The situation was given in the orders and the IX Fighter Command was to furnish aerial reconnaissance, Fighter-Bombing, Convoy and Beach Cover in support of the assault operations.

Three flights were operated on the 27th in conjunction with the above exercises. During the day, the interrogations brought out the interesting features of the day's work. The Squadrons of the Group took-off in relays to provide the necessary cover over the beachhead at Slapton. The boys came back each time telling of the landing craft, convoys off shore with some warships, tanks that were seen on the beach and the employment of smoke screens. The first flight for the day was up at 0850 and the last one landed at 1915.



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SQUADRON HISTORY

TRAINING (CON'T).....

When they got back at 1915, all went to the hutment area to get some rest for the next-day, for the exercises were going to continue.

At 0430, April 28th, the pilots and men were awakened and all went to the line. It was still dark when we arrived at the dispersal area, with dawn just about to break. The first take-off was at 0537 and the planes had their wing lights on. The flight leaders had their canopy lights on as a guide to the others as they formed. When they returned from this first practice mission the report was that some landings were still being made but otherwise uneventful. These patrols continued all day, four flights being flown.

The same exercise was continued on the 29th. Two new pilots joined us this day - 2nd Lt. Richard J. Fox and 2nd Lt. Harold E. Glazier.

The 30th was devoted to maintenance. The men worked on the planes all day, inspecting and taking care of the necessary work.

The end of the month brought with it an alert status in case we should have to move. The departments were weighing, crating and marking everything that needed it, should the time come for a shipment. The Squadron ended up this month with twenty-eight operational missions against the enemy.

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## SQUADRON HISTORY

The following arrangement of Pilots by Flights has been made effective as of 17 April 1944.

NAME	RANK	SERIAL NO.	DUTY
DOUGLAS P.P. JR.	Major	O-432187	Sqdn CO
SPARKS, H.P.	Captain	O-432726	Sqdn Opns O
BAER, J.W.	Captain	O-25684	Asst Opns O
<u>RED FLIGHT</u>			
McLACHLAN J.J.	Captain	O-665844	Flight Leader
LAUGHTON, E.	1st Lt.	O-681661	Element Leader
KENNEDY, C.J. JR.	2nd Lt.	O-805635	Element Leader
QUILTY, P.J.	2nd Lt.	O-679943	Wing Pilot
RUHL, B.L.	F/O	T-223096	Wing Pilot
			Wing Pilot
<u>BLUE FLIGHT</u>			
MYERS, L.D.	Captain	O-732317	Flight Leader
OLSON, C.H.	1st Lt.	O-678908	Element Leader
RICE, L.A.	1st Lt.	O-802349	Element Leader
HAMILTON, L.D. III	2nd Lt.	O-745369	Wing Pilot
HOWIE, R.H.	2nd Lt.	O-697202	Wing Pilot
			Wing Pilot
<u>YELLOW FLIGHT</u>			
ROMINE, C.W.	1st Lt.	O-665447	Flight Leader
OSTUM, I.	2nd Lt.	O-680065	Element Leader
JASPER, P.R.	2nd Lt.	O-745244	Element Leader
KERCHNER, F.S.	2nd Lt.	O-805637	Wing Pilot
			Wing Pilot
			Wing Pilot
<u>GREEN FLIGHT</u>			
PARRISE, D.C.	1st Lt.	O-678912	Flight Leader
ROBBINS, J.B.	1st Lt.	O-674402	Element Leader
LARSEN, A.L.	2nd Lt.	O-677064	Element Leader
Olson, F.L.	2nd Lt.	O-815376	Wing Pilot
SPENCER, J.R.	2nd Lt.	O-693171	Wing Pilot
			Wing Pilot

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## SQUADRON HISTORY

## Arrangement of Pilots by Flights, con't.

NAME	RANK	SERIAL NO.	DUTY
<u>WHITE FLIGHT</u>			
CARTER, J.I.	1st Lt.	O-420500	Flight Leader
GREENE, G.Y.	2nd Lt.	O-805612	Element Leader
RYERSON, O.S.	2nd Lt.	O-680085	Element Leader
LOEB, J.M.	2nd Lt.	O-681664	Wing Pilot
			Wing Pilot
			Wing Pilot
<u>PURPLE FLIGHT</u>			
BENTON, A.L.	1st Lt.	O-447208	Flight Leader
LOUHARY, W.G.	1st Lt.	O-602321	Element Leader
GAMBLIN, J.H.	2nd Lt.	O-805607	Element Leader
DAVIS, G.R.	2nd Lt.	O-679837	Wing Pilot
			Wing Pilot
			Wing Pilot

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