

DECLASSIFIED
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42nd FS
History

March

P.R.C.

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VII FIGHTER COMMAND, ARMY AIR FORCES

PACIFIC OCEAN AREAS & TWENTIETH AIR FORCES

1 MARCH 1945

THROUGH

31 MARCH 1945

P.R.C.

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462ND FIGHTER SQUADRON (SE)

506TH FIGHTER GROUP (SE) A.P.O. # 86

VII FIGHTER COMMAND, ARMY AIR FORCES

PACIFIC OCEAN AREAS & TWENTIETH AIR FORCE

- 1 . The flight detachment departed San Francisco, California, on the U.S. CVE # 68 on 28 February 1945- Arrived Pearl Harbor, T.H., 6 March 1945 Departed there 7 March 1945- Arrived Guam 17 March 1945- Departed there for Tinian- Arriving 23 March 1945.
M.S. BLOEMFONTEIN was loaded with cargo and Personnel of the 462nd Fighter Squadron by March 16 1945, and left on that date from pier # 39, Seattle Washington. The ground Echelon arrived Bellows Field, Oahu T.H., A.P.O # 951 A, on 23 March 1945 and departed that Field on 28 March 1945.
- 2 . Negative
- 3 . Negative
- 4 . Negative
- 5 . On March 1 1945 there were 64 Officers and 256 Enlisted Men; on 31 March there were 65 Officers and 254 Enlisted Men
- 6 . on March 1 1945 the Squadron had 26 P - 51- D's
- 7 . Negative

642ND FIGHTER SQUADRON (SE)

506TH FIGHTER GROUP (SE) A.P.O. # 86

VII FIGHTER COMMAND, ARMY AIR FORCES

PACIFIC OCEAN AREAS & TWENTIETH AIR FORCE

The history that covers this month might be divided in two parts. One that covers the movement of the air echelon up to the time of arrival to Tinian, in the Marianas group. The information concerning this section of our Squadron, is rather succinct in content, because lack of adequate records and availability of a correspondent. The other describes the movement of the Squadron in its trek from Seattle to Iwo-Jima in the Volcano group.

The air detachment departed Lakeland Army Air Field, Lakeland Florida. On the sixteenth of February 1945. The trip lasted five days and arrival was made at Camp Stoneman, Pittsburg California, in the San Francisco Bay Area, February twenty-first 1945.

Its strength consisted of twenty-six Officers and twenty-eight Enlisted Men. (Ex 1)

Upon arrival, the group went through the routine that marks the processing of any unit that is going to a combat area. Clothing and physical check-up was made, chemical warfare indoctrination took place, and a final financial adjustment accomplished.

The stay in Camp Stoneman lasted eight days, in which the last passes were issued to our men, thus giving them the opportunity of bidding farewell to the United States.

The departure took place on the night of the twenty-eight. Embarkation was made from the naval pier located at Alameda, also on the San Francisco Bay, on the USS carrier Kalinin Bay on whose deck was deployed the airplanes allocated to our group.

There were a total of seventy-nine (79) P-51's.

After eight days of sea travel, during which the detachment went through air and submarine drills which characterize life on board ship. The carrier arrived at Pearl Harbor, T.H. pier # 12. There next to the carrier Saratoga, badly marked by scars of war, our men received the first impression of the effect of war on men and materiel.

After a day at Pearl Harbor, the ship pulled anchors and started its cruise to Guam, arriving there on March sixteenth, where the air detachment disembarked. In Guam they were assigned to the Croti Naval Airfield, where they began to "unpickle", put brakes on, and change spark plugs which had been damaged by cinders coming out of the smoke ~~stack~~ of the carrier. After three days of hard work seven of the airplanes were ready for the first test flight.

Gradually all of the twenty-six (26) aircraft assigned to our Squadron were in flying condition and the Unit was ready for the next lap to Tinian This time by air.

The ground crews left Guam partly by air, the balance proceeded aboard the USS Navy transport Stanton. Once in Tinian the detachment was directed to use for their testing and first Combat Air Patrol, the Tinian West Airfield, strip number 4.

The Tinian interlude lasted a month and ten days, the first Combat Air Patrol was flown on the twenty-nine of March. During this time the detachment had two accidents. Fortunately neither one of these mishaps resulted in fatalities to our unit.

The detachment was commanded by Major Thomas De Jarnette, Commanding Officer of the 462nd Ftr, Squadron.

Up to the thirty-first the Unit's strength was twenty-six (26) officers, twenty-eight (28) Enlisted Men. The total of combat time up to the same date was fifty-two (52) Hours and forty minutes (40).

The Squadron

On the first of march, the Squadron received orders to proceed to its staging area (Ex- 2)

The last days at Lakeland Army Air field were spent in making the necessary preparations to entrain for the trip to Fort Lawton, Seattle Washington. The facilities of the port of Seattle were going to be used to embark the Unit toward its combat area.

The train left Lakeland Army Airfield at four o'clock in the afternoon, 5 March 1945. The Unit arrived at Fort Lawton on the morning of the tenth of March and was immediately assigned to the casual area.

Almost immediately the complicated process of clearing a unit for overseas began. The Unit was released from assignment to the III Fighter Command.

The men were passed through a screening process, a physical and financial check-up was made. Chemical warfare lectures delivered, new gas mask and anti-chemicals protectives issued. All the men were urged any arrangement deemed necessary to enable their families and relatives to have clear-cut understanding of their individual financial allocations.

The unit was alerted on the fifteenth of March, and proceeded next morning to the Port of Seattle pier # 39. Men and materials were loaded on the M.S. Bloenfontein. This boat is of Dutch registry, with a Dutch merchant crew, and an American Navy armed guard.

The ship weighed anchors at 15.13 hours of the afternoon of March 16 1945, and began to cruise over the Pudget Sound toward open seas. The ship made the run from Seattle to Honolulu T.H. in seven days of tempestuous sailing.

It arrived at that port early in the morning of the twenty-third of March. There the Unit proceeded to disembark, to permit ship repairs and reloading.

At Honolulu the unit was assigned quarters at Bellows Field. This is an Army Air Force installation, located thirty miles west of that city.

In which it remained in casual status up to the time of returning to the ship March 28 1945.

At the end of March 1945 the Unit was back on board the M.S. Bloenfontein heading toward the next stop, which was to be Einewetok in the Marshall Islands. The Unit's strength was thirty-seven (37) officers two-hundred and twenty-one (221) Enlisted Men.