

HISTORY

457TH FIGHTER SQUADRON, SE
506TH FIGHTER GROUP, SE,
VII FIGHTER COMMAND, ARMY AIR FORCES,
PACIFIC OCEAN AREAS & TWENTIETH AIR FORCE.

1 MAY 1945

TO

31 MAY 1945

DECLASSIFIED
DOD DIR 5200.8

00060599

PROFILM

RSI Contl No
C00223

CONFIDENTIAL

P.R.C.

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

FRONTISPIECE

1. Negative
2. Losses in action-- Killed, 1st Lt. Horace F. Bozarth,
O-711931. Lt. Bozarth, flying a test operational mission
was killed when his plane collided in mid air with a
plane from the 45th Fighter Squadron, 15th Fighter Group.
The accident happened at 1535, 22 May 1945, 95⁰, 15 miles
from Hot Rocks.
3. Negative
4. Negative
5. Strength, personnel--- 1 May 1945-- 64 Officers
253 Enlisted Men
31 May 1945--69 Officers
254 Enlisted Men
6. On 1 May 1945-- 27 P-51 D
31 May 1945--30 P 51 D
7. Destroyed during the month-- 1 P51-D-- lost in mid-
air, operational mission--22 May 1945.
1 P51-D-- destroyed in
crash on take-off-- Long Range Mission

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Narrative

May, 1945 found the 457th Fighter Squadron, SE, swinging into combat flying for the first (with the exception of the April Combat Air Patrol flown by the flight detachment over Tinian and Saipan). With the other squadrons of the 506th Fighter Group, SE, the squadron used North Field, Iwo Jima.

Flying Activities

The first and chief objectives of the month were to aid in the air defense of Iwo Jima, in flying combat air patrol and to participate in escort missions, strafing and/or bombing attacks as assigned by Command and Group. Twenty-seven P-51 D aircraft were flown to Iwo Jima by the flight detachment on 5 May 1945. On 7 May, the squadron was assigned its combat air patrol and alert schedule. Periodically, the schedule was readjusted to conform to mission assignments to the various fighter squadrons on the island. The squadron flew 99 CAP sorties during the month, with one sortie abortive. At other times, ships were on the alert in accord with stated requirements.

The first combat mission of the month, 05-01 was a strike on 19 May against Chichi Jima in the Bonins. The

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mission was a strafing and dive bombing attack on Susaki Airfield. Major M.C. Watters, the squadron commanding officer led the mission, which involved only planes of our squadron. Twelve P 51 D's, each with 2x500 lb. GP bombs, took off at 1300, arriving over the target at 1405. The planes released bombs at 4000', strafing at the same time. Twelve hits were observed, six on the runway, six in the airdrome area. No enemy aircraft were observed. None of our planes were damaged or lost. Meager, medium inaccurate flak was encountered. All aircraft landed at base at 1500.

Mission 05-02, on 24 May 1945, was a similar strike against Susaki Airfield, Chichi Jima. Capt. D.G. Anthony, squadron operations officer, led ten P-51 D's over the target at 1020 to 1030. Clouds covered the target but all bombs were dropped and hits were believed made on the island. Flak was meager and inaccurate.

Mission 05-03 was the first Empire mission flown by the 457th Fighter Squadron. The squadron furnished twenty planes out of a total of fifty-three a/c of the 506th Fighter Group. The mission was to strafe Kasinagaura a/f in the Mito area, Honshu, Japan. One of our planes, flown by Lt. Philip Alston, crashed on take off, cause undetermined. The plane was destroyed, but the pilot escaped serious injury. Four of our

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aircraft flew as submarine cover. Sixteen of our planes were over the target at 1355, led by Colonel B.B. Harper, commanding officer, 506th Fighter Group. Our two sections, two flights in each, attacked flak installations, diving and strafing from 8000' to 4500', then permitting the 458th Fighter Squadron and the 462nd Fighter Squadron to strafe the field. Flak was meager to moderate and inaccurate. Thirty to forty a/c were seen grouped around the operations building in the center of the field. At least seven large fires were observed in this area. Four to six Tojos made one pass on our second two flights, which were led by Major Watters. Hits were scored on two of the Tojos. One of our planes incurred slight damage. On the way to the Rally Point, the first two flights strafed Yachimata A/F. Flak, both black and white bursts, was moderate, medium and inaccurate. In all, three enemy aircraft were damaged on the ground by our squadron. All ships returned safely to base at 1730. This was the farthest north any United States fighter aircraft has yet hit on the mainland of Japan.

Empire missions were scheduled for the 24 May, 1945, 25 May 1945, 29 May 1945 and 30 May 1945 but all were postponed or cancelled by the VII Fighter Command, due to weather or changes in tactical plans.

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A total of 44 sorties were thus made on missions, exclusive of CAP, by the 457th Fighter Squadron during May, 1945. No a/c were lost, one slightly damaged. All three missions were successful. Enemy installations were hit and at least three enemy planes damaged on the ground.

Command and Personnel

Major Malcolm C. Watters continued in command of the squadron and there were no changes in the staff during the month. Six pilots were added to the squadron on 26 May 1945. They were:

2nd Lt Ralph S. Gardner	0216096
2nd Lt. John H. Lane	02067011
2nd Lt William S. Goodhand Jr.	0687367
2nd Lt Harlan E. Mitchell	02067026
2nd Lt Charles A. Nix	02067029
2nd Lt Joseph D. Winn	02063122

Intelligence

During the month a very satisfactory amount of up to date information reached the section through Group Intelligence. This included current intelligence publications, aerial photographs, maps, target charts and folders, and other data on the enemy to facilitate successful operation.

The Intelligence Section, like many sections on the

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line had a limited space allotted, sharing a squad tent with Operations. Files, tables and cabinets were built; systems for filing the wealth of material were set up and the normal activities of an S-2 section were carried out. A ready tent, set up on the line for the pilots, was also used to display maps, pictures and publications, and also for briefings and interrogations. Briefings were conducted by the Commanding Officer and included the Operations, Intelligence, Communications, Engineering, Armament, Ordnance and Weather Officers. Chaplain Price of the 506th Fighter Group was always present at the squadron briefings. On group missions, in addition to the group briefing, the squadron always has its own briefing just prior to take-off. All interrogations are conducted by the Intelligence Officers of the squadron. During interrogations, the pilots are seated by flights, and each flight interrogated. Public relations personnel, attached to the group, are present to interview some of the pilots after each mission and interrogation.

Operations

Besides the regular CAP missions, short range missions to Chichi Jima, and long range missions to the Empire, some operational test missions were flown. Five new P-51 D's were delivered during the month; one transferred from the 458th Fighter

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Squadron, 506th Fighter Group and four from the Air Depot, APO 246. Two planes were lost, leaving thirty P-51D's on 31 May 1945.

There were two casualties during the month; Lt. Alston's crash referred to previously, and a fatal head on crash involving 1st Lt. Horace F. Bozarth O-711931, in his plane and another P-51 from the 15th Fighter Group, Two Jima, during an operational mission. Lt. Bozarth was a quiet, capable pilot, who had been in the squadron since its activation in October 1944, and was extremely well liked by all who knew him.

Tactics used by the squadron on most missions were to fly tight line astern formations to the target area and to attack either singly or in line abreast formation.

Material

Not all the equipment authorized under the T/O and E has been acquired yet owing to the fact that the equipment of the 81st Service Group, our source of supply, has not yet been uncrated. Most departments have shortages--none serious. The materiel already received has been acquired in good condition and on time. The 81st Service Group engineering section has been very helpful in furnishing engineering parts. Needs for equipment beyond the T/O and E exist. Of special need are more hand tools and air corps jacks.

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An F-2 trailer would be helpful.

Engineering

"Production-line maintenance is not used. Planes are being worked on all the time, so that enough will be ready for all missions. The number needed for alert are always ready. The personnel of the section is well above average ability and of sufficient strength.

There is no parts trouble. Parts from damaged planes and parts obtained from the 81st Service Group are sufficient.

Salt air and dust increase the maintenance problem. Each plane requires constant attention.

Some engineering equipment was lost on shipment overseas. This included a hydraulic test set. The squadron has been borrowing one from the 462nd until it can get one. One A-7 necessitates cooperation between the armament and engineering sections. (The A-7 frame is used for changing props and engines) The one allowed the squadron is also short at the present time, and is also borrowed.

Armament and Ordnance

The supply situation is good as far as the Armament

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and Ordnance sections are concerned. Storage facilities for bombs and fuses are furnished by the 81st Service Group.

The Armament Section is trying to work out a sealing method to eliminate dust getting into the gun bays. The salt and dust make cleaning more of a problem than the section has thus far encountered.

Paddle foot sway braces are used for bombs and 110 gal wing tanks. 500 lb GP bombs are loaded by two jacks and a cradle mounted on bomb lift trucks.

Communications

Telephone lines for the 506th Fighter Group were installed by the personnel of the 457th Communications Section during the month. Light lines were put up by communications men from all the squadrons,

The chief problem in line maintenance has been caused by bull dozers in their construction work. Lines have been run over and frequent repair has been needed.

The communications section installed an AN/TRC-1 radio set for Inter - Group communications. A loud speaker is set up in the squadron operations tent.

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An SCR 624 was set up for VHF monitoring purposes.

DU homing was installed in May on all planes by the 81st and 386th Service Groups.

IFF maintenance was very effectively maintained.

The only difficulty was that there was a shortage of parts in Signal Supply, but by repair and adaptation, the maintenance was well handled.

Not all the items authorized on the T/O have been acquired, though requisitions are in. A need exists for two extra rectifiers; one for tests in the shop and one as a spare for the SCR 624. Absence of a squadron lighting kit made the job of furnishing lights to the squadron difficult, but by borrowing equipment and tools, the work was accomplished.

There are sufficient, well trained personnel. Some teletype and SCS-3 trained men are not being used as such, because other organizations on the base supply all these needs. These men are being used as radio mechanics and also for maintaining the power units.

Medical Section

The medical section shares the operation of a group dispensary and hospital. They also work with the Group in

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maintaining a line dispensary and manning two ambulances which are always present on the line. Shots were given regularly as the time warranted for each man.

General

The enlisted men of the squadron are quartered in squad tents. At present, twelve to fourteen men are in each tent. The present location of the squadron, about a mile and a half from the line is to be changed, at which time more tent space is to be allotted. Some flying officers were living in Quonset huts. Eventually, there will be a hut for each flight. The ground officers live in pyramidal tents, some of which had been screened and floored during the month.

A satisfactory one day laundry service was established with a Quartermaster laundry unit on the base.

A crying need exists for better shower facilities for the enlisted personnel. At present, the men share a shower with the 458th Fighter Squadron.

The food from the unit mess has been good. The men are anxious to get a permanent mess hall which will make eating more of a pleasure. At present, boxes in a tent furnish the only dining accommodations. A new mess hall, consisting of three Quonset huts was nearly completed during the month. At the start of the month, the personnel were still on C

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Rations, but the unit mess was a welcome feature soon after. Beer or coca cola is sold at minimum prices twice a week; three bottles a man each time. This has a lot to do with such an important item as good morale.

Mail has been coming in spasmodically, but an improvement was noted later in the month. Now, mail call is averaging about four times a week. It was noted that a long period of "no mail" has a decided effect on the men.

A need exists for a latrine on the line.

Transportation to and from the line has only been fair, at best. It was early realized that there are not as many vehicles as could be used, but the system used does not seem to work out in practice as well as it does on paper. All vehicles are handled by Group, although each squadron dispatched and serviced their own vehicles the first week of the month. Despite a schedule for trucks to go back and forth from the area to the line, men often can not find the vehicle where it is supposed to be at that time. Some improvement was noted during the latter part of the month.

Two enemy air raids occurred during the month, on the 23rd and the 31st; both at night. No casualties were suffered by the men of the squadron, but "fox-hole" time became

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a personal experience. Fox- holes were dug and sandbagged throughout the squadron area.

Lt. Taylor C. Green assumed the additional duties of Squadron Personal Equipment in the absence of Lt. C.B. Williams Jr who was given an emergency leave, 15 days plus travel time, to the United States (1)

The flight detachment arrived from Tinian 11 May 1945, and 1st Lt. Daniel P. Murphy reassumed his duties as Squadron Engineering Officer.

Fifty-five enlisted men were promoted on 4 May 1945, bringing the rated T/O up to full strength. (2)

Four flying officers went on temporary duty to Apo 234 on 20 May, 1945. They were Lt. T.V. Carroll, Lt. O.K. Skiver, Lt. W. E. Griffio and Lt. George L. Harville. They picked up new aircraft for the squadron, returning 23 May 1945. (3)

Six flying officers,-- Lt. F.B. Clark, Lt. W.A. Hutchinson, Lt. C.G. Veitenheimer, Lt. William T. Moore and F/O Richard J. Ertman,--- were sent to Ulithi on 20 May 1945. They were used for standby on possible CAP missions, relieving pilots of the 458th Fighter Squadron, ^{then} returning to base 23 May. (3)

(1) Morning Report, 457th Fighter Squadron, SE, 10 May 1945

(2) Par 2, SO 34, HQ, 506th Fighter Group, SE

(3) Morning Report, 457th Fighter Squadron, SE, 20 May-23 May 1945

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On the whole, a good spirit existed throughout the squadron. A policy of letting all the personnel know what is going on helps to achieve a spirit of teamwork.