

HISTORY

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~~33~~
457TH FIGHTER SQUADRON

July 45
Aug 45

PARTS I & II

■ 1 JULY 1945 ■

thru

■ 15 AUGUST 1945 ■

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DOD DIR #200.9

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Francis P. Schlegel
Capt., Air Corps,
Historical Officer.

George A. Breunyard
Sgt., Air Corps,
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HISTORY

457TH FIGHTER SQUADRON, SE.

506TH FIGHTER GROUP, SE.

VII FIGHTER COMMAND, ARMY AIR FORCES,

PACIFIC OCEAN AREAS & TWENTIETH AIR FORCE.

1 JULY 1945

TO

15 AUGUST 1945

George A. Brownyard
GEORGE A. BROWNARD
S/Sgt., Air Corps
Historical Clerk

Francis P. Schlegel
FRANCIS P. SCHLEGEL
Capt., Air Corps
Historical Officer

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A slight deviation from the normal procedure of presenting the Squadron History will be followed in this issue. The History is divided into two parts,- Part 1- 1 July to 31 July 1945 and Part 2- 1 August to 15 August 1945.

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PART ONE

July, 1945

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1. Negative

2. Losses in Action:

Missing: Captain John W.L. Benbow, O-792095
 Captain Benbow was last seen over the Empire on 26 July 1945 at
 34°48'N-136°18'E. (See Narrative)

Missing: 2nd Lt. Joseph B. Winn, O-2063122
 Lt. Winn was seen to bail out over the Empire after his plane
 was hit by flak on 28 July 1945 at 35°52'N-140°2'E. (See
 narrative)

3. Awards and Decorations:

The Air Medal was awarded to the following pilots of
 the squadron on the dates indicated:

10 July 1945-Captain Jack E. Folsom	O-742996
Captain Max S. Weill	O-799687
1st Lt. Webster H. Kimball	O-725164
1st Lt. Francis B. Clark	O-735747
1st Lt. William B. Lawrence	O-797849
1st Lt. William A. Hutchinson	O-825442
1st Lt. Evelyn K. Neff	O-737208
1st Lt. Denny O O'Hearn	O-692909
2nd Lt. Walter J. Cawley	O-830168
2nd Lt. George O. Donnelly	O-830189
2nd Lt. James E. Hinkle	O-829816
2nd Lt. William T. Moore	O-731409
2nd Lt. Robert M. Strain	O-830574
P/O Richard J. Ertmann	T-63048
20 July 1945-Major Daun G. Anthony	O-438000
Captain William H. King	O-803022
1st Lt. Thomas W. Carroll	O-669862
1st Lt. Henry M. Fletcher	O-26023
1st Lt. Cecil R. High	O-536846
1st Lt. John W. McHugo	O-826720
1st Lt. Francis G. Albrecht	O-704655
1st Lt. Thomas O. Massall	O-812464
1st Lt. Joseph H. Morrison	O-751403
1st Lt. Wesley A. Marphey	O-731408
1st Lt. Omar K. Skiver	O-686777

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3. Awards and decorations (cont'd)

Air Medal awarded to the following pilots on the dates indicated:

20 July 1945--	2nd Lt. Lawrence P. Dolan	0-722011
	2nd Lt. Ralph S. Gardner	0-716096
	2nd Lt. George R. Harville	0-721396
	2nd Lt. Jackie M. Horner	0-719341
	2nd Lt. Glen (NMI) Knisley	0-722111
	2nd Lt. John H. Lane	0-2067011
	2nd Lt. Harlan E. Mitchell	0-2067026
	2nd Lt. Clement S. Ross	0-719435
	2nd Lt. Charles G. Veitenheimer	0-829902
	2nd Lt. Joseph O. Winn	0-2063122
	2nd Lt. Curtis R. Worthen	0-829791
	F/O Jack E. Cronk	T-63044
26 July 1945--	1st Lt. Philip S. Alston	0-810705
	1st Lt. Alan J. Kinvig	0-732273
	2nd Lt. Warren A. Clayton	0-711949
	2nd Lt. Lawrence E. Grennan	0-829853
	2nd Lt. Warren E. Griffo	0-829980
	2nd Lt. Fred W. Johnson	0-719360
	2nd Lt. Charles A. Nix	0-2067029

The following named officers were awarded the First Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal:

28 July 1945--	Major Daun G. Anthony	0-438000
	Captain Abner M. Aust	0-742882
	Captain Francis B. Clark	0-735747
	Captain Jack H. Folsom	0-742996
	Captain William H. King	0-803022
	Captain William B. Lawrence	0-797849
	Captain Evelyn K. Neff	0-737208
	1st Lt. Francis C. Albrecht	0-704665
	1st Lt. William A. Hutchinson	0-825442
	1st Lt. Webster H. Kimball	0-725164
	1st Lt. Joseph H. Morrison	0-751403
	1st Lt. Denny O. O'Hearn	0-692909
	1st Lt. Omar A. Skiver	0-686777
	1st Lt. Wesley A. Murphay	0-751408

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3. Awards and decorations (cont'd)

28 July 1945- Award of First Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal (cont'd)

- 2nd Lt. Walter J. Cawley	0-830168
2nd Lt. Lawrence P. Dolan	0-722011
2nd Lt. George O. Donnelly	0-830189
2nd Lt. Ralph S. Gardner	0-716096
2nd Lt. George R. Harville	0-721396
2nd Lt. Glen (NMI) Knisley	0-722111
2nd Lt. John H. Lane	0-2067011
2nd Lt. Harlan E. Mitchell	0-2067026
2nd Lt. William T. Moore	0-731409
2nd Lt. Clement S. Ross	0-719435
2nd Lt. Robert M. Strain	0-830574
2nd Lt. Joseph O. Winn	0-2063122
2nd Lt. Curtis R. Worthen	0-829791
F/O Jack E. Cronk	T-63044
F/O Richard J. Ertmann	T-63048

The following named officer was awarded the Second Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal:

28 July 1945--1st Lt. Omar K. Skiver 0-686777 *

4. Negative

5. Strength, personnel: 1 July 1945-68 Officers
253 Enlisted men

31 July 1945-67 Officers
259 Enlisted Men

6. Strength, airplanes:-- 1 July 1945-28 P 51 D
31 July 1945-25 P 51 D

* The authority for all the mentioned awards and decorations were GO #45, GO #53, GO#56, and GO#58, Hq VII Fighter Command.

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7. Losses: Airplanes: (See Narrative for Details)

<u>date</u>		<u>How Lost</u>
1 July 1945	- 1 P 51 D	Mission 07-01-landing Accident on return from mission-material failure, pilot uninjured.
8 July 1945	- 1 P 51 D	Mission 07-06- Material failurepilot bailed out at RP and rescued.
16 July 1945	- 1 P 51 D	Mission 07-10-- Cause Unknown-Pilot missing over the Empire.
22 July 1945	- 1 P 51 D	Mission 07-13- Plane hit by enemy A/A. Pilot bailed out at RP and rescued.
28 July 1945	- 1 P 51 D	Mission 07-15- A/C hit by enemy A/A/ Pilot missing after bailing out over the Empire.

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The month of July was marked by a large increase over the month of June in the squadron's effective VJR missions from Iwo Jima. The squadron was actually dispatched on fifteen VJR missions with thirteen completed. Two missions scheduled for the squadron were cancelled and five others were postponed before being carried out. All the postponements, cancellations and ineffective missions were due to weather. Three missions were flown to Chichi Jima in the Bonins, and 197 sorties were flown on combat air patrol, of which 190 were effective. No enemy a/c were encountered on CAP.

One important difference in activities from the month of June was that no escort missions were flown by the squadron. The squadron, with the rest of the Iwo based Mustangs concentrated on-

- (1) Destroying Japanese air power in the air and on the ground by fighter strikes and sweeps over the Empire;
- (2) Attacking the Japanese transportation system, by destroying locomotives, marshaling yards and RR terminals;
- (3) Hitting Japanese shipping near the island of Honshu;
- (4) assisting in keeping the Bonin Islands neutralized and
- (5) Protecting Iwo Jima by combat air patrol.

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The first combat mission in July was a bombing and strafing mission to Chichi Jima (07-01). A large ship had been reported in Futami Harbor. Six of our a/c including one Josephine for Air Sea Rescue and one escort took off at 0525. 1st Lt. Chauncey A. Newcomb led the flight. Finding a 70' craft in the harbor, three of the planes released their bombs, -two from 3500 feet and one from 2000 feet, resulting in six near misses within a 100 yd radius of the target. The vessel was then thoroughly strafed. Enroute home, the bombs of the fourth a/c, which had been hung up on the Chichi run, were dropped within 100 yds of a small fishing vessel in Higashi Harbor, Haha Jima. There was no damage to any of our planes, and flak was light, meager and inaccurate.

The second combat mission of July, 1945 (07-02), 1 July 1945, was one of the two having an early return to base due to weather fronts. The 15th, 21st and 506th Fighter Groups were to attack targets in the Nagoya-Osaka area. Twenty of our squadron's planes were airborne at 1150. A weather front was encountered at 1500 and decision was made to return to base. All planes landed by 1840. 2nd Lt. Charles G. Veitenheimer, 0-829902, was involved in a landing accident on returning at 1620. He made a normal wheel landing, but the plane swerved to the right momentarily, straightened out and swerved to the right again. Lt. Veitenheimer was not able

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to hold the plane, and it ran off the runway, hitting a small dirt embankment, turned 180° and finally stopped in a ditch about forty feet off the runway. The crash crew helped the Lt. out of the plane, which did not burn. Lt. Veitenheimer was uninjured, but the plane was turned over to the 81st Service Group as not repairable. Investigation proved that the right brake was frozen.

Mission 07-03 was flown on 4 July 1945. Major Malcolm C. Watters, formerly the squadron C.O. and now the Group Operations Officer, led our squadron and the 506th Fighter Group on a fighter strike against Tsukuba and Konoike Airfields in the area NE of Tokyo. The 457th Sq was ordered to provide top cover for the 458th Ftr Sq as it strafed Tsukuba A/F from the deck. Our Green Flight was equipped with three rocket ships and was dispatched to "flak-bust" for the deck squadron. The target was strafed in the dive and the rockets were released at 4500' at 450 MPH IAS, with unobserved results due to cloud cover. Weather conditions made it impossible for the squadron to provide more than area support while the 458th Ftr Sq strafed. Our a/c returned to RP and thence to base, without any special incident, landing at 1645. This mission demonstrated that well coordinated and effective ground strikes are extremely difficult to carry out under the handicap of the weather conditions which prevailed as

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it was extremely difficult to locate the targets.

By 0818, 5 July 1945, 24 a/c of the 457th Ftr Sq were airborne enroute to the Chiba Peninsula area. (07-04) Major Paul G. Anthony, Sq. commander, led our planes which were part of a two group strike against airfields in the NE Tokyo area. Weather made it impossible to find the assigned DP, and after orbiting, Lt. Col. Harley Brown, 506th Group Leader, instructed each squadron leader to attack any targets of opportunity enroute to the Rally point. Our squadron proceeded NW into the Tokyo Bay area without effect, crossed Chiba peninsula above a cloud layer, then proceeded down the SE coast to RP. Four a/c returned early because of mechanical trouble; the remaining twenty, of which four were sub cover, landed safely at North Field, Iwo Jima, by 1645. This was considered an ineffective mission owing to inclement weather.

The squadron flew its third VLR mission in three days on 6 July. This was a combined fighter strike in the Tokyo area by the 21st and 506th Ftr Groups. Captain Jack H. Folsom led 19 of our a/c into the air at 0950. The target assigned to the squadron was Katori A/F. Three planes remained with the Navigator B-29's at the RP. Capt. Folsom led the remaining sixteen planes down to the deck ten miles NW of Katori A/F. A very low approach was maintained to a point just short of the target where the squadron pulled up to 300'

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and made the strafing run line abreast from NW to SE. A large number of dummy a/c were noted, both in the open and in camouflaged revetments. Of the 10-12 operational a/c in the line of flight, four are claimed destroyed (3 flamers) and three claimed damaged. Ground installations strafed included 2 barracks west of the field, one radio shack with twin antenna, possibly set on fire, and a large power house. Continuing over the coast, two 20-30 foot fishing boats were strafed. The squadron reassembled, flew to HP, and thence to base, landing by 1710. Lt. Clement S. Ross, Lt. Joseph H. Morrison, Jr., and Lt. Ralph S. Gardner were each credited with a destroyed a/c on the ground.

Major Daun G. Anthony led the squadron and the 506th Fighter Group on its fifth VLR mission of the month, on 8 July 1945. (07-06) The mission was another two group strike (15th and 506th Ftr Gps) against airfields in the Tokyo area. Twenty of our a/c were dispatched, four remained as B-29 cover at the HP and sixteen were over the target area. Our squadron provided top cover for the 458th and 462nd Ftr Sqdns, who strafed Tokorozawa and Irumigawa Airfields. Losing sight of the two attacking squadrons after they had dived through the cloud cover to strafe, the 457th Ftr Sq. provided an area cover until rejoining the Group at Rally Point. 1st Lt. Frank H. Mekus, Hq. 506th Ftr Gp, who was flying one of our planes and acting as cover for Navigator B-29's, was forced to bail out over

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the RP due to malfunctioning of his coolant system which caused his cockpit to fill up with smoke. At 6000', he made two attempts to get out of the plane, but failed because of his seat pack. The third try was successful; he went over the right side of the plane after slowing the plane down to an indicated air speed of 120 MPH. The sub was directly below him at the time he bailed out. It picked him up in good condition in about three minutes.

On 9 July, 1945, (07-07), the squadron dispatched twenty P 51 D's, led by Captain John W. L. Benbow, Sq Operations Officer. Part of a two group strike against targets in the Nagoya-Osaka area, our squadron was assigned to fly top cover for the other two sqdns in the group over the targets, Hamamatsu and Mikatagahara A/F's. After doing this, two flights of the 457th Ftr Sq. strafed Oitsu A/F, and two flights strafed Toyohashi A/F, while the 458th Ftr Sq. provided top cover. No a/c were seen on Oitsu, and three operational a/c were seen at Toyohashi, one being severely damaged by Lt. Francis C. Albrecht. At the start of the strafing run, Lt. Francis B. Clark developed engine trouble, one magneto cutting out completely. He completed his pass at slow speed and four or five miles north of the target, he left the squadron, accompanied by his wing man, Lt. Clement S. Ross. Both proceeded directly to the RP and returned to base with a B-29. Lt. Clark landed with only eight pounds of fuel pressure. The rest of the squadron reassembled at RP and re-

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turned to base, landing by 1645. This was considered an ineffective mission due to lack of enemy a/c on pre-committed targets.

On 13 July, Mission 07-08, the squadron put eight aircraft into the air at 1049, as part of sixteen planes dispatched by the group to bomb, rocket and strafe targets in the Bonins. 1st Lt. Francis B. Clark of the 457th Fighter Squadron, was the mission leader. Our eight ships carried two 500 lb. GP bombs each. Approaching the target northward, along the east coast of Chichi Jima, a flight of 4 a/c broke off when directly E of Radio Station #7, strafing intermittently from 10000' down to the point of release at 3500'. Shortly after takeoff, two bombs were accidentally released. The other six fell long within 1500' of the target. The second flight bombed Futami Harbor installations from NE to SW. Six bombs fell within 300' of a seaplane hanger; the other two hit near ground installations. Both flights then circled and strafed their respective targets. Flak was light, medium, meager and inaccurate. All our planes landed safely at 1340, but two a/c of the 462nd Ftr Sq were lost. One pilot was rescued by ASR facilities, the other presumed killed in action.

The next mission, 07-09, was originally scheduled for 13 July but was postponed until 14 July because of weather. The 506th Fighter Group and the 15th Fighter Group were to return

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to targets in the Nagoya area. Twenty of our a/c were airborne at 1010, led by Capt. Jack H. Folsom. The Group, flying at 15000' encountered a cold front between 31⁰-32⁰ N. Several possible holes through the weather were explored. Each time, the layers came together in solid cloud. Decision was made to return to base and all planes landed by 1440 without incident.

After searching for enemy planes in the air without result, mission after mission, the squadron finally found some on mission 07-10, 16 July 1945. Major Malcolm C. Watters led the squadron and the Group in a fighter strike with the 21st Group against Japanese airfields in the Nagoya area. Twenty-four of the squadron's planes were dispatched; two returned early, two were used as sub cover and four protected the Nav. B-29's at the RP. Sixteen of our a/c proceeded northward from landfall-heading towards our targets, Akenogahara and Suzuka A/F's. The mission was diverted W of Akenogahara at about 15000 ft when bogies were called out. The 21st Ftr Gp, having preceded us to the target area, was engaged in a series of dog fights with the enemy when our planes joined the fray. The squadron was split into two sections. Then, due to the numerous enemy a/c sighted, the sections were further deployed by flights. Over thirty Japanese planes were sighted. The enemy generally was unaggressive, although some attempted to fight back when caught and attacked. Major Watters, leading Red Flight, approaching from 6 o'clock low, damaged one Frank by getting hits in the

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right wing. The Jap split-essed into the clouds. Seeing another Frank at 10 o'clock low, Major Watters made a pass from 6 o'clock at 1500' range. He obtained hits in both wings and the cockpit area. As he closed to 500', the enemy a/c started a half roll into the clouds, directly in the line of fire. Major Watters put a good burst into the bottom of the enemy's fuselage. Fire streamed out of the cockpit and the plane spiraled down to the left, smoking badly. Lt. Wesley A. Murphey encountered a Tojo going away in a wide turn. Closing to 1200', Lt. Murphey opened fire with about a 70 degree deflection. The Tojo burst into flames and went down. A few minutes later, Lt. Murphey severely damaged a Zeke which came out of a nearby cloud, upside down at close range. After receiving hits in the cockpit area, the Zeke did a split-ess and went straight down. Lt. Murphey broke off his attack at 8000' because of the low cloud cover. Blue Flight, led by Captain Abner M. Aust, spotted six Franks at 9 o'clock low. Making almost a head-on pass, Capt. Aust damaged the enemy leader who broke away to the right. Finding himself almost on the tail of another, Capt. Aust split-essed with him and got hits around the engine and cockpit area. The enemy pilot then bailed out. Pulling up, Capt. Aust saw another Frank in front of him. The Jap did a split-ess and Capt. Aust followed him, getting hits all the way through. At this time, two Franks got on Capt. Aust's tail. As Capt. Aust pulled up, the ~~plane~~ plane he had been firing at, smoked and burned, going into the clouds.

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closing in on another a/c and following the Jap plane into a dive, Capt. Aust got hits in the left wing, causing it to smoke. Pulling out at 2000', he saw the Jap heading straight down, unable to pull out. Capt. Aust was credited with three Franks destroyed, one damaged. His plane was damaged by 2 friendly (?) .50 cal AP slugs during the fights.

Captain William B. Lawrence, leading Green Flight, sighted a bogey and the flight attacked from 15000 ft. on the enemy's tail in a wide turn to the right. Capt. Lawrence opened fire when in range and followed it down through a dive, a roll and a split-ass. The Jap smoked and large pieces commenced to fall off the enemy plane. Captain Benbow, Green #3, called Capt. Lawrence, saying, "That's enough, Bill, you've got him." Capt. Lawrence broke off and pulled up to assemble the flight. Regaining altitude, the flight circled and Capt. Benbow was then discovered to be missing. Lt. Winn, Green #4 and Capt. Benbow's wingman, said that during the dive, so many pieces of the Jap plane were coming at him that he was forced to weave to avoid them, thereby losing sight of Captain Benbow's plane. Captain Benbow was not seen again. About that time and in the same general area, what was believed to be a P-51, apparently in trouble and going down in slow gliding turns at an estimated 150 MPH was observed by another flight. This a/c disappeared into the clouds at about 8000'. At nearly the same time, another flight reported

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seeing one white parachute descending in the same area. It is possible Capt. Benbow's plane was damaged by pieces of the a/c shot down by Capt. Lawrence. He was not known to be under fire from the ground or air.

This mission was the first time we met a large number of enemy a/c airborne. A total for our squadron of five enemy planes destroyed in the air and six more damaged was the result.

Twenty of our Mustangs were airborne on 19 July 1945 as part of a two group Fighter Strike, again in the Nagoya-Osaka area(07-11). Major Daun G. Anthony, squadron commanding officer, led the squadron into the air at 0618. Four of our planes were used as sub cover over the RP, and sixteen were over the target. Our specific target was Nishinomiya A/F. The squadron, following the planned route, made a wide 180° turn NW of Osaka. The lead section strafed the target line abreast while the other section provided top cover. Four of the six a/c seen at the field, were damaged. Along the bay side of the A/F, three white Phosphorous land mines were detonated ahead of the flight. The top section followed down from 8000' to 4000' in a strafing run. The enemy directed intense fire ahead of the deck section into the water. Yellow Flight, led by Lt. Alan J. Kinvig, strafed a ship ½ mile off the shore S of the target and left it smoking heavily. The squadron reformed over the bay and then proceeded to strafe military targets in the valley from Kokowa to Shimochi town on the way to RP. All planes landed safely by 1420.

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The squadron carried out its third July mission to the Bonins on the 20th of the month. (07-12) Captain Evelyn K. Neff led eight of our strike force plus a Josephine and one escort to Chichi Jima to hit installations in TA 247A. Two large revetments which a G-2 report had said stored mines were selected as targets for the squadron. Circling the island, the two flights made a dive bombing attack on the revetments. Twelve bombs landed near the revetments, four within 25-50', and started a landslide on the cliff just above the revetments. Then, five strafing passes were made on torpedo boats, communications installations and a command post. No damage was incurred by our planes, flak was inaccurate to accurate, meager to intense. All planes pancaked safely by 1415. The following day, we received the full text of the Field Order through channels and discovered that the specified targets were two camouflaged structures in TA 247 A. Naval photos taken two days after the strike showed one direct hit on the N revetment. Two MTB's were sunk.

The thirteenth mission of the month was distinguished by the fact that it was the first time the 457th Ftr Sqdn hit a target on Shikoku. The 21st and 506th Ftr Gps. were ordered to attack targets in the Kobe area. Captain Jack H. Folsom, new Squadron Operations Officer, led the squadron against its primary target, Takamatsu A/F. Twenty planes were airborne at 0955. Two returned early, two stayed at the RP as B-29 cover and sixteen were over the target. After passing the IP, the squadron started letting down from 13000' and made their passes by sections of eight. The first section, led by

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Capt. Folsom, followed roads to Takamatsu from W to E in an attempt to find enemy aircraft since it was beleived that the Japs might be parking their a/c a good distance from the field in revetments along the roads. The second section was on the left. Seeing no a/c on the approaches to the field or on the field itself, the squadron stayed low to hit shipping targets, just north, which were called out by Captain Abner M. Aust, section leader. One 100'-150' ship was damaged by Lt. Alan J. Kinvig, one Sugar Dog damaged by Capt. Folsom. Red Flight damaged a Sugar Dog, Yellow Flight damaged two barges; Blue Flight destroyed one Sugar Charlie and damaged two others; and Green Flight destroyed one Sugar Charlie and two Sugar Dogs and damaged one Sugar Charlie.

After completing the strafing run, 2nd Lt James E. Hinkle, O-829816, flying Sq a/c # 539, called out that his plane was hit and on fire. Capt. Folsom, Sq. leader, pulled up and joined him and both returned directly to the RP. Lt. Hinkle's plane had been struck by an explosive shell, probably 25 mm. From right to left, above and slightly in rear of the tail wheel, the shell severed the right rudder cable. It left a six inch hole where it emerged. Some other damage apparently was inflicted on the plane since the cockpit filled up with smoke. Sighting the sub at RP, Lt. Hinkle prepared to bail out. He experienced some difficulty, losing speed because of the loss of the use of his flaps and the

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right rudder. He finally went out over the right side of his plane. He delayed pulling the rip cord until he thought he was in a favorable position. The ensuing jolt knocked him off his seat pack so that he was supported by his leg pack alone. (In a pre-bail out check, the leg straps were thought to have fitted snugly.) The jolt also inflated his B-5 type Mae West and this made it somewhat difficult for him to unfasten the chest straps. After hitting the water, he inflated his dinghy, broke out his sea marker and trailed his chute behind the raft in order to make himself more visible to the P-51's that had followed him down. About ten minutes later, he was picked up by the submarine, Silversides. Lt. Hinkle was returned to Guam July 30.

The fourteenth mission of the month for the squadron (07-14) was a three group fighter strike against targets in the Nagoya Area on 24 July 1945. Eighteen of our a/c were airborne at 0803, led by Major Watters, Group leader. One plane returned early because of mechanical trouble and one stayed with the Nav. B-29's. Sixteen a/c were over the target area, performing as top cover from DP to Hamamatsu and back to RP as the other squadrons strafed shipping targets. The mission was considered non-effective as there were no planes on the primary target, Hamamatsu A/F, and weather prevented our forces from locating suitable targets of opportunity other than a few small ships, which are probably repairable. All planes landed by 1510.

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A fighter sweep in the Tokyo area was scheduled for the 15th Ftr Gp and the 506th Ftr Gp on 28 July (07-15). Our squadron was assigned an attack area between the areas of the 458th and 462nd Ftr Sqdns. The Group's attack area extended from a point 36°25'N-139°40' E southward and eastward, veering around Tokyo and then on down the Chiba peninsula. Major Anthony again directed the squadron, which had twenty-one a/c airborne, including four sub cover and one spare. Two planes aborted and returned to base early owing to rough engines. Nineteen of our planes plus a spare of the 462nd Ftr Sq made landfall at 1148, proceeding north to the turning point, where they separated into sections of eight. The second section strafed the Shimodate Marshalling yards while the lead section ~~strafed~~ flew top cover. Then the sections switched and the lead section strafed the marshalling yards.

While passing west of Shimodate A/F, heavy, meager, accurate flak was received from the A/F. Shortly after passing the field, 2nd Lt. Joseph D. Winn, O-2063122, called Green Leader, Lt. Joseph H. Morrison, and reported his oil pressure dropping and engine heating. He requested to be taken to the RP as fast as possible. Dropping back on Lt. Winn's wing, Lt. Morrison noticed that the belly of the plane was covered with oil. White, then black smoke poured from Lt. Winn's plane and he called out that he was on fire and that he was bailing^G out.

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This was about 1245 and at 35°52' N-140° 2'E, well over land. receiving
 Green Flight was ~~receiving~~ heavy flak at this time, but Lt. Morrison delayed long enough to see Lt. Winn's chute open. Some pilots from the 458th Ftr Sq. reported seeing a green tailed a/c go down burning at this point. These pilots observed the parachute and state that three heavy flak bursts were seen in its immediate vicinity. Lt. Clement S. Ross had the leading edge of his wing and his propellor nicked by m/g bullets and Lt. Raymond O. Miller had the left gun bay of his ship punctured from the lower side by a partially spent m/g bullet. Neither pilot was injured.

Reassembling, the squadron proceeded to base. A frontal zone was encountered on the return trip. Manoeuvring about, before some dissipation of the front had taken place and a way around was found which involved no climb above the 10000' level, cost quite a bit of gasoline and strict cruise control was necessary. All three fields on Iwo were cleared for emergency landing on the Group's return but only Lt. Denny O O'Hearn of this squadron was forced to land on Airfield #2. All planes pancaked by 1640, sixty-five minutes later than the original ETA.

On this mission, eleven locomotives were strafed by the squadron, four exploded. Seven spurted steam, oil and smoke. Large numbers of freight cars were strafed. Several burned. Eight to ten power line towers were shorted out, and one warehouse burned. An oil storage tank, estimated 100' in diameter, cut up by three

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passes, leaked badly but did not burn.

The squadron closed out a successful month of VLR fighter strikes with a mission on 30 July to the Kobe-Osaka area. With Captain Jack H. Folsom as leader, twenty of our a/c were airborne at 0850. Two planes aborted because of mechanical failure and two were dispatched to cover navigator B-29's at RP. Our target was Himeji A/F, NW of Osaka. The squadron followed the planned course to the IP, fifteen miles NE of Himeji A/F. The second section of eight let down to make their pass, line abreast, across the dispersal area N of the A/F. The first section remained as top cover at 12000'. No a/c were seen in the dispersal area. Reassembling, the Squadron went out over the water where it destroyed a tanker, probably destroyed a tug and damaged several barges under tow. Capt. E.K. Maff had his spinner dented by boat fragments. Finding no other targets, the squadron flew to RP and thence to base. One plane, that of Lt. John J. Coneff, Jr., was slightly damaged while taxiing after landing.

During the month, the squadron destroyed six Jap a/c in the air and four on the ground and damaged eleven a/c (air and ground); destroyed or damaged 15 locomotives, 17 ships (mostly cargo vessels and tankers), numerous power lines, freight cars, radio installations, m/g revetments, barracks and other military buildings, along with damage to airfields at a cost of three of

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our planes destroyed and six damaged due to enemy action. One of our a/c was lost and one severely damaged due to operational causes.

COMMAND AND PERSONNEL

On 1 July 1945, Major Daun G. Anthony was appointed Commanding Officer of the 457th Fighter Squadron ⁽¹⁾ after acting as squadron commander for several weeks.

Captain John W.L. Benbow became Operations Officer. After Captain Benbow was missing in action over the Empire on the 16th of the month, Captain Jack H. Folsom, O-742996, became the Squadron Operations Officer.

Captain Vincent A. Gaudiani, originally Ass't Operations Officer and Gunnery Officer of our squadron, went on DS with the 21st Fighter Group on the 1st of the month. Effective 17 July, Captain Gaudiani was assigned to the 21st Fighter Group. ⁽²⁾

1st Lt. Henry M. Fletcher, 026 023, was appointed Aerial Gunnery Instructor, Photo Officer and Ass't Operations Officer on 2 July 1945.

(1) Par 6 SO 52 Hq 506th Fighter Gp SE - 4 July 1945
(2) Par 7 SO 65 Hq VII Ftr Comd - 22 July 1945

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Seven flying officers were added to the squadron during the month. They were:

1st Lt. Cecil R. High	0 536 846 (3)
1st Lt. Arne E. Nelson	01 052 900 (4)
2nd Lt. Raymond O. Miller	0 721 487 (3)
2nd Lt. Warren A. Clayton	0 711 942 (5)
2nd Lt. John J. Coneff Jr.	02 067 817 (4)
2nd Lt. Lawrence J. De Vries	02 066 978 (4)
F/O Martin E. Ganschow	T 130 640 (4)

A number of officers and men received promotions in July. Twenty-six enlisted men added an extra stripe. Among the officers, seven new Captains appeared on 16 July, rank effective 10 July.⁽⁶⁾ They were:

Captain Francis B. Clark	0 735 747
Captain William H. King	0 803 022
Captain William B. Lawrence	
Jr.	0 797 849
Captain Daniel P. Murphy	0 864 494
Captain Evelyn K. Neff	0 737 208
Captain Donald H. Reese	0 581 118
Captain Francis P. Schlegel	0 258 397

- (3) Par 2 SO 53 Hq 506th Ftr Gp SE
- (4) Par 1 SO 55 Hq 506th Ftr Gp SE
- (5) Par 3 SO 53 Hq 506th Ftr Gp SE
- (6) Par 1 SO 191 Hq AAFPOA

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Captain Daun G. Anthony, commanding officer, was notified on 7 July 1945 of his promotion to Major, effective 29 June 1945.⁽⁷⁾

five other officers exchanged their gold bars for bright silver. They were:

Lt. Francis G. Albrecht	0 704 655 (8)
Lt. John W. McRugo	0 826 720 (8)
Lt. Taylor C. Green	0 868 877 (9)
Lt. Thomas O Messall	0 812 464 (9)
Lt. Joseph H. Morrison	0 751 403 (9)

INTELLIGENCE

The Intelligence Section finally satisfied its need for more room when it moved into half of the first new Quonset hut in the Line area shortly after the first of the month. It shares the hut with Operations. Work was begun on two new Quonsets during the month. Half of one of these was planned as a briefing room. Until this is completed, the section continues to use the squad tent as before.

Complete target folders on over one hundred and fifty separate targets were made up. The use of aerial photographs played an important role as a briefing and interrogation aid.

All the latest publications were made available to all the pilots and articles especially important were listed as

(7) Par 1 SO 180 Hq AAFPOA

(8) Par 14 SO 193 Hq AAFPOA Date of rank- 12 July 1945

(9) Par 16 SO 193 Hq AAFPOA Date of rank - 12 July 1945

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required reading.

OPERATIONS

The section had quite a turnover of personnel during the month. Captain John W.L. Benbow, Captain J.H. Folsom and Lt. Henry M. Fletcher assumed their new duties during the period.

Moving into the Quonset hut gave the section ample file and desk space. A bulletin board was set up. A flak map was posted to show firing schedules and location of the gun batteries on Iwo Jima.

ARMAMENT AND ORDNANCE

The Armament section finally obtained K-14 A gun sight kits and could discontinue use of the K-14 kit, which was not as complete with parts needed for repair.

The Ordnance section obtained some Stellite lined barrels which proved much more durable than the regular gun barrels. While not enough have been obtained for all the planes, comparison showed that a Stellite barrel held up better during firing, and could take more wear and heat than the regular, unlined barrel before needing replacement.

Inspection showed that most of the ammunition received was poorly linked, necessitating that all ammunition be run through a linking machine which corrects any deficiency in linking. This fault is traceable to the arsenal in the United States which

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originally links the ammunition.

Some ammunition of questionable quality was received during the month and was tested to find out if it was serviceable. It was not. This caused a short period of ammunition shortage, but the section managed to have enough to meet the mission requirements until the situation eased.

The Ordnance Section made arrangements with the Island Ammunition Supply Dump #2 to store three bomb trailers, loaded with GP MN 64 500 lb bombs, in one of their revetments. This was necessary, because the original dump area the section had been using was remodeled by the amazing Seabees. The trailers are kept loaded so that they will be on hand in case any mission requiring bombs comes up suddenly. If used, they are reloaded immediately.

The use of rockets by the squadron on 4 July 1945 (Mission 07-03) was made possible only by borrowing planes from the 462nd Ftr Sq. None of the planes of the 457th Ftr Sq came equipped with rocket installations; nor were any kits issued.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

Each pilot in the squadron now has his own B-5 Life Vest. The pilots feel the chief improvement of this vest over the B-4 is that it is much more comfortable. The situation of June,

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in which not enough flying suits, life vests and dinghies were on hand to supply each pilot, has been remedied. All pilots now have the authorized amount of equipment, with the exception of gloves.

Oxygen equipment was constantly tested by the section, and averaged less than 1% leakage. Tech orders allow 12% leakage below 30,000 ft and 5% above 30,000ft. Getting a proper fit is the key to cutting down leakages. One mask tested less than $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1% leakage.

MATERIEL

The Tech Supply section had discovered that its tent, set up with those of most other sections, in the line area, gave crew chiefs too long a walk from the airplane parking area for top efficiency. So, the section moved its tent up on the line.

A tool crib was also set up, with Engineering and Tech Supply each furnishing a man to look after it. It now has one shop to keep engineering kits and special tools that are used regularly and one shop for parts and equipment for issue. This has facilitated more successful operation.

The 81st Service Group is now able to supply all the needs of the squadron supply section.

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CONFIDENTIALENGINEERING

In July more missions were flown by the Squadron than in June, with less aircraft. An average of 26 P 51 D's were assigned to the Squadron during the month. There was no occasion when the Engineering section did not have enough planes in commission for a VIP mission, requiring as high as 22 planes. The 457th Ftr Sq. was low in the 506th Ftr Gp in July in regards to the percentage of mechanical aborts.

"B" Flight established an enviable record at the close of the month. Flight Chief Technical Sgt. Marshall A. McKirgan had three planes in the flight which had never aborted. Holding at the end of the month records of eighteen and nineteen consecutive missions by their planes were crew chiefs, S/Sgt W.W. Ganson, S/Sgt J.P. Foley, and S/Sgt C.F. Grandfield.

Captain Daniel P. Murphy, Sq Engineering Officer, is of the opinion that the P 51 D has performed excellently,--operating from Iwo Jima, with the same plane called on to make seven or eight hour flights to the Empire and back several times, per week. Our planes on 31 July had an average of 200 hours per engine. Maintenance problems, on the whole, were no greater than in the States.

There is a thorough inspection system carried out on

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on each plane. Besides the crew chief's inspection work, the section inspection's team checks the plane before each VJR mission, and also holds 25, 50 and 100 hour inspections. Group makes a monthly inspection on each plane, VII Ftr Comd spot checks a plane each week. A quarterly major inspection by the VII Ftr Comd was made in July. It resulted in an "excellent" rating for the squadron.

There has been no trouble with parts; the 81st Service Group has furnished whatever was needed.

The section had some leakage trouble with props. The original props were equipped with a substitute seal, authorized to be used. These seals leaked a little and threw oil on the canopies, interfering with visibility. A factory representative prop specialist who came through had stated that he didn't believe the oil thrown was enough to be troublesome. Capt. Murphy believes this might not have been troublesome on a bomber, where the oil goes out on the wing. But it was troublesome on P 51's. So new seals, the type first listed to use, were obtained and installed by the section.

Most of the new planes the sq. received during the month showed a lack of previous proper maintenance. Many needed repair, such as prop changes, and repair of leakages in hydraulic systems.

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CONFIDENTIALCOMMUNICATIONS

The spare parts situation was still a problem to the Communications section. For the SCR-522, tubes were available but it proved impossible to get transformers, resistors and condensers. The section solved part of the problem by reclaiming parts needed from salvageable sets. In other cases, the only solution was to get a complete new set, which must be flown up from Guam. It is believed it would be much more economical of equipment and space to send up a few parts than to ship a 75 lb set each time a few parts are needed. The same situation exists with IFF parts. Tech order compliances require certain parts to be replaced, but the section can't do so, for lack of the new parts. To date though, a high standard of maintenance has kept the IFF sets operating efficiently. The Hercules Power Unit, PE 197, is new to the Command and no repair parts are available on the island. The unit, has 1200 hours on it and the life expectancy of such a unit without replacements is 1000-1500 hours.

Percentage of radio failure on VLR missions has been extremely low, considering the conditions operated under on Iwo Jima. Lt. Forest R. Shafer, section head, states that the maintenance by the enlisted personnel is of the best caliber of any Communications Section he has ever been in.

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An enviable record is that none of our planes have ever shorted because of faulty communications.

Two men of the section attended AN/ARA-8 classes given by the VII Ftr Comd. These classes furnished additional trouble shooting tips. Communications crew chiefs also attended familiarization classes on the AN/ARA-8 at the VII Ftr Comd.

MEDICAL

There has been no marked increase or decrease in dispensary treatments and/or hospitalization for the squadron since leaving the United States, according to Captain Theodore F. Paprocki, Sq Medical Officer.

GENERAL

The enlisted personnel moved into a new, more pleasant, less crowded living area shortly after the first of the month. (See enclosed picture) Wooden floors for tents and shower facilities have been provided for the new area--as well as a large Quonset hut mess hall. Until another hut is built, the Orderly Room has moved into the rear of the Mess Hall Quonset structure. This section will eventually be used for a day room.

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On the line area, Operations and Intelligence moved into the first Quonset completed and Personal Equipment was preparing to move into the second one, which was nearly completed. The other sections on the line built floors and part side walls for their squad tents.

The pilots started to receive the benefit of the Air Forces plan to provide rest leaves. Eight officers returned to Hawaii during the month for 7 day rest leaves.

There were no enemy air raids during the month.

Awards and decorations are shown on the frontispiece.

2nd Lt. Charles B. Williams, who had been on emergency leave in the States, was released from assignment in the POA and assigned to Camp Shelby, Mississippi. (10)

A good deal of entertainment was available to all personnel during the month. Several very good troupes were on the island, including the Charles Ruggles-Mary Brian show, and the Winged Pigeons cast with Peter Lind Hayes, plus other USO troupes and a wealth of good movies.

The officers of the Squadron built an Officer's Club, complete with bar, card room, music room and sun porch, that is a standout on the whole island. Pilots worked hard, building and improving the club during their free time. Formal opening was during the last week of July.

(10) Par 1 SO 134 ATC Pac Div West Coast WG Hamilton Field, Calif.



457TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
ENLISTED PERSONNEL-LIVING AREA
IWO JIMA
July- August 1945



457TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
ENLISTED PERSONNEL-LIVING AREA
IWO JIMA
July-August 1945

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PART TWO

1 August
to
15 August
1945

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CONFIDENTIALFRONTISPIECE

1. Negative

2. Losses in action: -2

3 August 1945-2nd Lt. John J. Coneff, Jr O-2067817-Killed in action. Flying sub cover on mission 08-02, Lt. Coneff, after his plane had been hit by fire of enemy a/c, crashed into the sea. Position-35° 00'N-139° 21'E.

5 August 1945-Captain Evelyn K. Neff O-737208 -Killed in action, on mission 08-03. Capt. Neff finished a pass on a fishing boat and then started to execute a tight turn over the water. His wing hit the water and the plane crashed and exploded. Position-35° 15'N-139° 11'E.

3. Awards and Decorations;

The following officers were awarded the Air Medal: (1)

1st Lt. Chauncey A. Newcomb	O 741 315
2nd Lt. William G. Hatland	O 829 860
2nd Lt. Chester F. Jatzak	O 829 869
2nd Lt. Raymond O. Miller	O 721 487
2nd Lt. William S. Goodhand Jr.	O 687 367

The 1st Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal was awarded to: (2)

Captain John W.L. Benbow	O 792 095
Captain Henry M. Fletcher	O 26023 (3)
1st Lt. Thomas W. Carroll	O 669 882 (3)
1st Lt. John W. Mc Hugo	O 826 720 (3)
2nd Lt. Thomas O Messall	O 812 464 (3)

The Air Medal was also awarded to the following: (4)

2nd Lt. Lawrence J. DeVries	O 206 0978
1st Lt. Arne E. Nelson	O 105 2900
F/O Martin E. Ganschow	T-130640

The 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal was awarded to: (5)

2nd Lt. Thomas O Messall	O 812 464
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- (1) Sec VI GO 61 Hq VII FC 31 July 45
- (2) Sec IX GO 60 Hq VII FC 30 July 45 (M/A)
- (3) Sec VII GO 61 Hq VII FC 31 July 45
- (4) Sec I GO 57 Hq VII FC 27 July 45
- (5) Sec IX GO 61 Hq VII FC 31 July 45

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3. Awards and Decorations: (cont'd)

The Distinguished Flying Cross was awarded to:

Captain Abner M. Aust O 742 882 (6)

4. Negative

5. Strength, personnel: 1 Aug 1945- 259 EM
67 Officers

15 Aug 1945-259 EM
65 Officers

6. Strength, airplanes: 1 Aug 1945-25 P 51 D's
15 Aug 1945-23 P 51 D's

7. Losses, airplanes: Operational-1 Combat-2

Operational-

3 August 1945-1 P 51 D destroyed in landing accident.
2nd Lt. Jackie M. Horner O 719 341, aborting on VLR mission, crash
landed. Pilot slightly injured. (See Narrative)

Combat--

3 Aug 1945-1 P 51 D- Mission 08-02 See losses, personnel-
2nd Lt. John J. Coneff, Jr.

5 Aug 1945-1P51 D- Mission 08-03 See Losses- personnel-
Captain Evelyn K. Neff.

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The 457th Fighter Squadron continued to fly VLR missions from Iwo Jima to the Japanese homeland during the first fifteen days of August 1945.

Eight VLR missions were scheduled for the squadron (and the rest of the 506th Ftr Gp) during the period. Two missions were cancelled. Three fighter strikes and two B-29 escort missions were flown, all being effective.

In addition to the long range missions, the squadron continued to fly its share of day Combat Air Patrol over Iwo Jima. Twenty-five CAP sorties were flown, three being non-effective.

The first mission of the month, (08-01), was part of a three group fighter strike in the Kobe-Osaka-Nagoya area on 2 August. The 506th Ftr Gp was assigned targets in the immediate Osaka area with the 457th Squadron furnishing top cover for the 458th and the 462nd Ftr Sqdns. Major Malcolm C. Watters, Group Operations Officer, led the squadron and the Group. Nineteen of our a/c were airborne by 0942. Three planes were forced to return early owing to operational trouble. One other, that of Major Watters, was forced to remain with the Nav. B-29's at RP, owing to engine trouble. Cloud cover based at 2000' over the target area made inshore penetration difficult. No

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a/c being sighted on Himeji and Itami airfields, targets for the 458th and 462nd squadrons, our squadron continued as cover while the rest of the Group strafed shipping, RR yards, trains. Leaving the target area, a weather front up to 20,000' was encountered and it was difficult to rally with the Nav. B-29's. All but three of our planes climbed over the front at 20,000' and reached the RP (after flying SE and then NW). Lt. Francis C. Albrecht, having been separated from the rest of the squadron while checking his DU which had gone out, proceeded toward base by dead reckoning, and met two other planes from the squadron, also forced to dead reckon home. About 150 miles from Iwo, they received a DU homing. All our aircraft were down safely by 1755.

The next day, 3 August 1945, twenty of our a/c were airborne at 0815 as part of a two group fighter sweep in the Tokyo area. Major Daun G. Anthony, squadron commanding officer, led twelve of our a/c over the target area; three others having been forced to return early; one plane stayed with the Nav. B-29's; four a/c led by Malcolm C. Watters provided sub cover near the RP.

Low cloud cover prevented an attack on Kumagaya A/F, N/E of Tokyo, the assigned target. So, splitting into two sections, the squadron hit their respective secondary targets, Kawagoe and Omiya marshalling yards. Flights of the lead section alternated in strafing

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the Kawagoe yards and providing cover. The second section hit the Omiya lines in the same manner. Both sections were subjected to intense flak. The sections assembled separately at Land's End and returned to RP.

Lt. Thomas C. Messall, who had stayed with the Navigator B-29's was led to a cove, N of Yawata Saki Light, where he and a 458th Ftr pilot strafed a Sugar Dog.

About 1400, Pearl Flight, led by Major Watters, was vectored NW from RP to cover a life guard sub coming in to pick up a 458th pilot in a life raft, about ten miles from the N shore of Sagami Wan. A B-24 led them over. At 1417, while flying at 3500', Pearl Flight was attacked from high out of the sun, by ten Zekes. Caught without speed or altitude, ourplanes were at a disadvantage. Major Watters shook three Zekes off his tail and attacked a Zeke which was firing on the B-24. He followed the e/a down to 1000', where the Jap attempted to split-ess and splashed into the water. Lt. Thomas W. Carroll, porpoising, evaded four Zekes on his tail and, leveling out, met a Zeke in a head-on pass. The Zeke smoked, split-essed and is ~~believed~~ believed to have splashed. 2nd Lt. John J. Coneff, Jr. O 206 7817 was jumped by three Zekes who put hits in his wing. Losing control of his plane, Lt. Coneff crashed into the sea and is presumed killed in action. F/O Ganschow, #2 in the flight, was attacked from behind and above by several Zekes but got away without being hit or being able to fire. Lt. Carroll damaged another Zeke. Because of limited

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fuel, the flight had to break off the encounter. It had no trouble outrunning the Zekes. It returned to RP; thence to base, landing at 1701. The remainder of the squadron had landed at 1555.

The squadron destroyed eight steam locomotives, two electric locomotives and probably destroyed one Sugar Charlie Sugar, a transformer and power lines, and damaged buildings, RR cars and coaches, trucks, power lines and one Sugar Dog. Three of our planes were damaged by flak, with no injuries to the pilots.

2nd Lt. Jackie M. Horner, who had been forced to return early because of a rough engine, crashed upon landing. The plane appeared to stall a few feet off the runway. After hitting the runway, the aircraft bounced several times and the left wing dropped lower with each bounce. Application of the throttle seemed to pull the a/c to the left of the runway. The left wing hit the ground, causing the plane to turn over several times and land on its back in a ditch. The plane did not burn but was wrecked completely. Lt. Horner escaped serious injury.

Mission 08-03, 5 August, was part of a two group Fighter strike against airfields and military installations in the Tokyo area. The squadron was assigned Atsugi A/F and area for low level

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strafing. Finding Atsugi closed in, sixteen a/c of the squadron, led by Captain Jack E. Folsom, proceeded to the coast, hitting ground targets, including the RR yards at Minomiya and Odawara, en route. One steam locomotive was destroyed by Capt. Folsom and one electric locomotive was destroyed by 1st Lt. Arne E. Nelson. Another locomotive was destroyed by the squadron and three or four other locomotives were damaged as were freight cars, several buildings and trucks. On the way out, Green Flight, led by Captain E.K. Neff, strafed several fishing boats near the coast. As Capt. Neff attempted to execute a tight turn just above the level of the water, his wing hit the water and the plane crashed, exploding immediately. Lt. Wm. A. Hutchinson circled three or four times but could see no indication of survival. Capt. Neff must be considered killed in action. All other planes landed by 1645.

The fourth mission in this period was flown by twenty a/c of the squadron on 7 August. Twelve planes, led by Major Watters, were over the target area; four others were used as sub cover, and four a/c as B-29 cover. The 15th Group had been sent on the mission to escort Marianas based B-29's in the area west of Tokyo. The 506th ptr Gp was to orbit at the IP and escort the bombers to Yokosuka Naval Base, if the bombers did not hit their primary target. Since the bombers went to the primary target with the 15th Gp, the 506th proceeded to stage a fighter sweep, which was the

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alternate plan. The 457th Fighter Squadron flew top cover for the other two squadrons over Atsugi and Sagami A/F's. Flak was heavy, meager and inaccurate. No enemy a/c were seen in the air. None of our planes were damaged, all landing by 1548.

Mission 08-05 was a VLR escort of B-29's to Tokyo by two Fighter Groups, the 15th and the 506th. Eighteen of the squadron's a/c were dispatched by 0708 on 10 August, led by Major Paul G. Anthony, squadron commander. Three ships aborted and returned early. Meeting the bombers at the scheduled Rendezvous point, the squadron, assigned to protect the last box of bombers, flew on the right of the stream, about 24,000' alt., flights line astern.

About halfway between the IP and the target, Green Flight of the squadron was dispatched against three Zekes approaching the rear of the bomber formation at 23000'. Green Flight did a 180° whereupon the Zekes dived to 14000' and broke formation. Lt. Chauncey A. Newcomb, Green Leader, fired on a Zeke from 600' to 150', securing many hits. He flew by the enemy a/c, noting that the cockpit was completely aflame. This plane is claimed as destroyed. Lt. Francis C. Albrecht, Green 3, caught the other two Zekes heading N and E of Tokyo. He opened fire on the last plane, and pieces of the wing came off. The enemy a/c went into a spin and the

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pilot bailed out. Going too fast, Lt. Albrecht passed the first Zeke, which got on his tail. Heading down, Lt. Albrecht gained airspeed, and then climbed away from the enemy plane, and proceeded to the RP. Lt. Newcomb assembled the rest of the flight and headed for the RP. Sighting a lone Zeke north of Tokyo, Lt. Newcomb fired on it, and black, oily smoke came from its cowlings. Lt. William A. Hutchinson, his wing man, also got damaging hits. The Zeke, in a deep diving spiral, went into a cloud at 1500'. Shortly after, there was an explosion on the ground at the position toward which the a/c was heading. It is credited as probably destroyed.

NW of Tokyo, Yellow Flight was dispatched to attack three Zekes at 3 o'clock, and 500' below. Captain Francis B. Clark, Yellow Leader, going into a dive, got damaging hits on the fuselage and wings of one of the bogies. Climbing up, Capt. Clark and his wing man, Lt. Clement S. Ross made a head on attack on two more Zekes, noting hits on the engines and wings of one ship. Receiving an explosive shell in his own left wing, Capt. Clark, with Lt. Ross, headed for the RP. The two bogies followed, until our planes were three miles ahead and 1000' above. Capt. Clark and Lt. Ross made another turn into them and the enemy a/c rolled over and went below the clouds.

Meanwhile, Captain Abner M. Aust Jr., Yellow 3, with 2nd Lt. Jackie M. Horner on his wing, pursued one of the three original bogies which broke away on its own. Capt. Aust shot the

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left wing off this a/c which blew up and the pilot bailed out. Capt. Aust and Lt. Horner saw another Zeke and they made three passes on it, hitting it in the wing root, canopy, engine and external gas tank. This e/a disappeared into a cloud at 500' in a flat, slow glide, trailing smoke and apparently without power. The two pilots then started to circle N of Tokyo. Spotting a silver Zeke at 500', Capt. Aust came in from high and behind, observing strikes. The a/c turned to the left, and making another pass, Capt. Aust hit him with a long burst, passing over an A/F, which put up moderate AA fire against him. Captain Aust pulled up into a cloud and waited for the enemy a/c which made a turn and came right under him. Dropping down on his tail, Capt. Aust set the Zeke on fire and it dived into the ground, exploding. Lt. Horner, who had been flying top cover, had lost his leader. Seeing another e/a, he put hits in the fuselage and wing. The enemy plane turned low over an A/F, but Lt. Horner had to head for the FP.

The squadron claimed 4 Zekes destroyed (Capt. Aust 2, Lt. Albrecht, Lt. Newcomb), one probably destroyed (Lt. Newcomb), and six damaged (Capt. Aust, Capt. Clark 2, Lt. George B. Donnelly, Lt. Horner, Lt. Ross). If confirmation comes through for both a/c for Capt. Aust, he will be the first ~~ace~~ ace in the squadron. One of our planes, Capt. Clark's, was damaged. All planes landed safely at North Field, Iwo Jima, by 1440.

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The final combat mission of the period, and possibly our last VIP mission of the war, was flown 14 August by seventeen of our a/c. Eighteen were airborne at 1030, led by Capt. Jack H. Folsom, as part of a B-29 escort to Osaka. One plane was forced to return early. One other a/c stayed with the navigation B-29's. Sixteen a/c of the squadron escorted the bombers, with one flight on each side of the last ~~in~~ two boxes. There was no aerial opposition. Flak was inaccurate. Assembly at RP and return to base were entirely uneventful.

COMMAND AND PERSONNEL

There were no changes in command or staff during the period.

On 12 August, promotion of Captain George R. Fleming, O 568 153, squadron executive officer, to the rank of Major, AUS, was announced, date of rank, 2 August 1945. (11)

Announcement was also made on the 12th of August of three other promotions. 1st Lt. Henry M. Fletcher, 026 023, Aerial Gunnery Officer and Asst. Operations Officer was promoted to Captain, AUS and 2nd Lts. Lawrence E. Brennan O 589 054, and Albert R. Sharke, O 870 748 were promoted to 1st Lt, all ranks reverting to 2 August 1945. (12)

(11) Par 2 SO 18 Hq US Strat AF (Adm)

(12) Ibid

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CONFIDENTIALDEPARTMENTS

only one change was made in the departmental set up. Decision had been made by higher headquarters to consolidate most of the Photography Equipment, and the majority of the Photo Technicians at VII Ftr Comd. Sgt. Marvel D. Thompson, 36 447 923 and Pfc. Merle E. Patterson, 32 586 817 were put on DS (13) and the squadron retained two men in the section to load and repair the cameras in the planes. Developing and printing is no longer done in the squadron.

GENERAL

Two new Quonset huts were completed in the line area. Personal Equipment occupied one, and built racks for life vests and new cases for keeping each pilot's parachute and oxygen mask in separate compartments. The second hut was divided into two sections by constructing a plywood wall in the center. One half was used by the Photo Section. The other half was used for the new briefing room.

An enlarged athletic program was set up. Teams have been organized throughout the squadron and plans exist for volleyball, softball, and basketball tournaments.

(13) Par 4 SO 77 Hq VII Ftr Comd 7 August 1945

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Captain Abner M. Aust, O 742 882 became the first and only pilot in the Group to date to receive the Distinguished Flying Cross. The specific basis was Capt. Aust's feat on 16 July 1945 (See Mission 07-10) when he destroyed 3 Japanese a/c in the air and damaged one other. See Frontispiece for the authorization.

At 0907 a.m. 15 Aug 1945, Iwo time, President Truman's announcement of Japan's acceptance of the Allied terms of unconditional surrender was broadcast here on Iwo Jima. Further developments were impatiently awaited, but nothing could check the joy and relief of all the members of the squadron.

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