

HEADQUARTERS
318TH FIGHTER GROUP, AAF
A.P.O. # 245

28 August 1945

THE WORD # 4:

TO : All Group Personnel.

The following is the material presented to General GRISWOLD concerning the return of the group to the States. The first part is my letter to him, the second part contains some of our commendations, and the last part is his letter to the 8th A.F.

Here's hoping for a favorable reply from the 8th A.F.

H. E. McAFEE
H. E. MCAFEE,
Lt. Col., Air Corps,
Commanding.

P A R T I

Letter to General GRISWOLD:

1. It is suggested that the subject groups be returned to the U.S. intact and together.
2. Seventy-two percent (72%) of the EM in the 318th Fighter Group and Fifty percent (50%) of the EM in the 364th Service Group have been overseas more than two years
3. Sixty-four percent (64%) of the ground officers in the 318th Fighter Group and fifty percent (50%) in the 364th Service Group have been overseas more than two years.
4. Forty-three (43) of the key pilot personnel (including the Group Commanding Officer, Group Deputy Commanding Officer, Group Operations Officer, all Squadron Commanding Officers, Squadron Operations Officers and Flight Leaders), are eligible for return under the combat crew rotation policy.

5. In other words, if everyone in the Groups was sent home who should be, the Groups would be inoperative.

6. The personnel of these groups have been thru the Gilbert, Marshall, Marianas, and Ryukyus campaigns -- from Hawaii to Japan direct. These Groups arrived on each island immediately after conquest and had to operate under trying conditions. They underwent intensive bombings and had to fight snipers on Saipan and Ie Shima. Casualties on the ground were high.

7. Working hours for the enlisted personnel of these Groups have been from sunrise to sunset under all conditions. Night maintenance and preparations for missions have been extensive and arduous. Along with the long hours of work, food has been lacking in variety and appeal, to say nothing of the shortages of fresh foods of all types. For long periods "K" and "C" type rations have been the chief diet. Such items as beer and coke have been scarce at all times. Recreational facilities, with the exception of movies, have been inadequate. In addition, enlisted personnel of these groups have had no contact with the opposite sex for fifteen months or more.

8. Just as Groups were set up, they were moved. Best description -- "One damn island after another". Change of command so often has made personnel feel like forgotten men.

9. Notwithstanding, the Groups have done a superior job as evidenced by attached documents. They are in for Unit Citation. The Service Group has meritorious service plaque, and two commendations from Seventh Air Force.

10. In conclusion, the tremendous publicity and good will created for the Army Air Forces by the return of these Groups, justifies an all out effort to achieve this. The U. S. public is already acquainted with the 318th Fighter Group and its return, the first army fighter group to return from the Pacific, would cause quite a furor. The following is a list of some of the achievements of these Groups and their units:

- a. Present on Oahu on December 7th 1941 and shot down two Japs.
- b. Stationed on Midway, Canton, Makin, Saipan, Ulithi, Angaur, Peleliu, Iwo Jima, and Ie Shima Islands.
- c. First planes (P-40) flown off carriers (Saratoga).
- d. First P-47 catapulted off carriers.
- e. Were first to make longest entirely over-water strikes. -- Saipan to Iwo Jima, Truk, and Marcus.
- f. Longest over water ferry. -- P-47's from Oahu to Ie Shima, landing at Johnston, Majuro, Eniwetok, Saipan, Ie Shima.
- g. Pioneered use of napalm fire bombs and rockets in Pacific.
- h. Flew first strikes to Shanghai and Korea and Kyushu and Tokyo (from Ryukyus).

- i. Shot down 34 Japs in one day without a loss of any nature.
- j. Flew night heckler missions to Kyushu.
- k. The Service Group was the first one formed in CPA.
- l. Flew P-40's from Midway to Oahu.
- m. Had first P-61's in combat. (6th N.F.S. at Saipan)
- n. First P-47N in combat. -- Learned the hard way.
- o. Broke up the Jap Empire Day raid on B-29's at Saipan, shooting down seven (7).

P A R T II

The following are some of the commendations the group has received: . . .

- 1. - Please pass to Colonels OLDS and SANDERS for 318 Fighter Group the envious congratulations of all Air Force personnel in AAFPOA on their collaboration in assisting 34 Nip suiciders to attain the ultimate.

B. M. GILES,
Lt. Gen., U.S.A.

- 2. - When you jumped into the shoot down business you really did it in a big way. 33 Nips in the drink before noon is very fine going. Best wishes for greater success. Well done.

F. P. MULCAHY,
Maj. Gen., USMC

- 3. - The excellent air support of the squadrons of your Task Group has been a great boon to the ground forces. The attack at O715K 31 on Tinian was very well executed. Your losses are highly regretted. Congratulations and good hunting to the pilots, air-crewmn and ground crews who carry on. Well done.

W. L. MCKITTRICK,
Colonel, USMC

4. - Please accept our hearty thanks for the extremely effective manner in which the army aircraft on Saipan have slashed the enemy on Saipan, Tinian, and Guam. Your eagerness to do what we have wanted you to do has impressed all of us tremendously. We hope that the boys who have been doing this work will give us an overhead guard when we walk down the Ginza in Tokyo on our way to the Emperors Palace.

This message is to all of you from Lt. Gen. HOLLAND SMITH and Vice Admiral KELLY TURNER.

5. - As Commanding General of the Strategic Air Force, Pacific Ocean Area, I desire to express my appreciation and congratulations to the 318th Fighter Group for the splendid manner which they carried out their assigned missions during the present emergency.

Though handicapped by insufficient maintenance and armament personnel and inadequate facilities, the 318th overcame these difficulties and executed its mission in a manner which reflects the highest credit on the fighter forces of the Army Air Forces.

Wherever future assignments or missions may take you and the Group, my best wishes and "God Speed" go with you. Good luck and good hunting.

WILLIS H. HALE,
Maj. Gen., U.S.A.

6. - It is appreciated that since the arrival of the P-38s in Saipan and their assignment to your command, the personnel of the 318th Fighter Group, already at reduced strength, have done a splendid job in so efficiently carrying this heavy additional maintenance and servicing load. It is a source of deep satisfaction to me and reason for justifiable pride in the accomplishments of our ground echelons that such additional burdens as these can be assumed and discharged so efficiently.

It is a further source of gratification that the pilots of the 318th Group have, during this period, operated with such a high degree of effectiveness and efficiency against the enemy, and that operational losses have been kept to a minimum.

Please extend my congratulations to all personnel of your command.

M. F. HARMON;
Lt. Gen., U.S.A.

P A R T III

General GRISWOLD's letter to 8th Air Force:

1. It is strongly recommended that action be taken designed to result in the return to the United States of the 318th Fighter Group and the 364th Service Group as units and, if possible, together.
2. These Groups were stationed on Oahu when the Japs struck Pearl Harbor and since that time have beaten a trail across the Pacific having been stationed on Midway, Canton, Makin, Saipan, Ulithi, Angaur, Peleliu, Iwo Jima, and finally Ie Shima. The personnel of both Groups have participated in the campaigns for the Gilberts, Marshalls, Marianas and Ryukyus. They arrived on the scene of battle early and consequently underwent extensive bombing and strafing attacks. On Saipan and Ie Shima personnel participated in ground fighting, locating and killing Jap snipers and suffering many casualties in return.
3. Joining the battle in the very early stages has resulted in these units undergoing the usual hardships associated with close combat. Maintenance was a 24 hour a day task. Sleeping and messing hours were irregular, food was monotonous, consisting largely of "A" and "C" rations. Small luxuries and recreational facilities were at the absolute minimum. The great majority of the enlisted personnel have had no contact with the opposite sex, of any color or creed, for fifteen months and more.
4. Seventy two percent of the enlisted men and sixty four percent of the ground officers of the Fighter Group have been overseas more than two years. Fifty percent of the enlisted men and fifty percent of the officers of the Service Group are in the same category. Forty three of the key flying personnel of the Fighter Group, including the Group Commander, Deputy Commander, Group Operations, all Squadron Commanders, Operations Officers and Flight Leaders are eligible to return to the United States under the rotation policy which was established by the Far Eastern Air Forces.
5. These Groups have outstanding combat records and have pioneered in many important "Firsts". The Fighter Group ferried P-47N aircraft from Oahu to Ie Shima landing at Johnston, Majuro, Eniwetok and Saipan enroute. They destroyed thirty four Japanese airplanes in one day without loss to themselves. They participated in the original P-47 catapult mission off a carrier. They were first to make the longest overwater strikes operating from Saipan to Iwo Jima, Truk and Marcus. They introduced the P-61 and P-47-N into combat. They introduced Napalm and rockets to the Pacific battles. They flew the first strikes to Shanghai, Korea, Kyushu and Tokyo from the Ryukyus. Many excellent commendations are on file indicating the appreciation of other units for the superior results obtained by these two groups working hand in hand. Both have been recommended for a Unit Citation.

6. In addition to solving an immediate personnel problem the return of these organizations to the United States as units would undoubtedly result in a great deal of favorable publicity for the Army Air Forces, especially if suitable arrangements are made for proper gathering and dissemination of pertinent news.

7. It is believed that any system of screening published by higher headquarters will result in rendering these units completely incapable of operations until suitable replacements are on hand and trained and it therefore appears that the foregoing recommended action presents an unusual opportunity to obtain prestige and good will for the Army Air Forces.

8. This Headquarters offers no comment on the necessity for and the means of securing replacement units.

FRANCIS H. GRISWOLD,
Brigadier General, USA.