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HISTORY

458TH FIGHTER SQDN. (SE)
P.R.C.

506TH FIGHTER GROUP (SE)

21 OCTOBER 1944 — 30 NOVEMBER 1944

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H I S T O R Y

P.R.C

458TH FIGHTER SQUADRON (SE)

506TH FIGHTER GROUP (SE)

21 OCTOBER 1944 - 30 NOVEMBER 1944


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The 458th Fighter Squadron came into being on 21 October 1944 as one of the component members of the 506th Fighter Group, /1. The Organization's mission, as rumored, is to be very long range escort, presumably for B-29s under the Twentieth Air Force. The pilots first arrived at Group where they were assigned to the various Squadrons. Major Harrison E. Shipman, who was chosen to "ramrod" the 458th, tactfully picked experienced and qualified flying personnel to compose the organization. Considerable time was spent during the first few days in making up the flights, obtaining areas from which the Squadrons could operate, billeting men and assigning them to their various duties.

Major Shipman, chosen especially for the job of commanding the 458th is ably qualified to handle all the duties of Squadron Commander, and his first act after the choosing of qualified pilots, was the picking of men from this Group to fill the position of Operations Officer and the Flight Leaders. Flights were organized within the first three days after arrival at the Base and on 2 November aircraft were assigned to this Squadron and to the pilots, with ground crews assigned to pull acceptance checks and to pre-flight the ships. On 3 November the first flights were made and following this came the job of checking out pilots

/1. General Orders No 29, Hqs 3FG, dtd 21 Oct 44.

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who had not flown the F-51 aircraft in any model.

The ability of the Squadron Commander in picking his key personnel was evidenced by the short time taken to check out all pilots and to set up a program of flying training. On the first of November an area was assigned to the Squadron for its operations and the personnel and Supply Sections went into full swing, assigning men their duties, obtaining materiel and supplies for the immediate construction of the operational area. Tent frames were moved, and due to their condition, rebuilt and covered, new lumber obtained, new frames constructed and covered and within three days ground facilities were practically in full operation. Delay was occasioned on some of these operations by the unavailability of supplies and materiel. Much of the delay, however, was overcome by the co-operation of the Base Unit and its staff who did all in their power to obtain the items necessary to place the Squadron on a full operational basis. Communications were installed, supplies obtained, classroom and ready tent constructed and ground training in the form of aircraft recognition was instituted on the 14th. Since the original hustle and bustle of "putting the house straight", some delay has been occasioned as respects ground training for both pilots and enlisted personnel, by the failure of the immediate arrival of a training directive set up for this particular, and new type, Group. Reference

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was made, however, to previous training directives of the Third Air Force and the III Fighter Command, as well as scheduling of training on PON required subjects, in order that the training levels of the Squadrons and Group as a whole would be high, and all time available utilized. This situation applied as well as regards flying training. The experience of the Squadron Commander as well as his key flying personnel, stood them in good stead in choosing the particular training phases upon which to concentrate, training phases which could be put into operation with the then limited facilities, aircraft and personnel trained to work together as a unit.

Results of the efforts and long hours of hard work are clearly evidenced by the training level of the Squadron to date. While enlisted men have been confined to on-the-job training, flying training as well as ground training for flying personnel has progressed quite satisfactorily. Upon receipt of "confidential" training directive 50-100, III Fighter Command, it was found that many of the subjects covered in ground training previously scheduled was training required under 50-100. As a result, rater officer ground training is ahead of schedule if consideration be given to the fact that the training directive arrived thirty days after all training had been started.

Needless to say, as is always the case in a newly organized Group or Squadron, other difficulties were encount-

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ered. Proper location of tentage, latrines, hardstands and parking areas for aircraft were problems to overcome in the forming of this new unit. Changes in ground training schedules as well as flying training schedules were necessitated by not only weather, physical examinations necessary for personnel, but other things too numerous to mention, such as complete checking of old aircraft which were assigned to the organization, and the breaking-in of ground crews on the particular type of aircraft, it's armament, engines, etc. Again the capabilities of the Squadron Commander in making proper choice of personnel to head sections came to the fore, and thru the diligent work of both Officers and Enlisted Men the job of familiarizing themselves with their jobs and their equipment was accomplished.

The morale of the Squadron was high at it's inception and has continued for various reasons; the men composing the squadron were pleased with their assignments, the Squadron Commander clearly evidenced his ability to lead the men and last but not least, the personnel were pleased with the assignment of the Group as a whole. There are of course many other factors which further the cause of high morale in the organization; the Base itself, billeting and messing facilities, climate as well as personalities.

The building of an organization, either Group or Squadron, covers a multitude of activities, duties and requirements, all of which it would be almost impossible to foresee or contemplate. As a result, as in every such in-

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stance, there are many shortcomings which could have been overcome were the job to be repeated by the same personnel after they had gone through a period of organization and training. After completing such a period, men are trained to their particular jobs and what is more important, are trained to cooperate and work together. Careful consideration should be given to the problem of supply, that is, the supplying of aircraft to a Squadron which are in tiptop condition as well as being of the operational class, or as near as possible to that with which the Squadron will ultimately be equipped. Availability of supplies for construction and training is of utmost importance. This, in every instance, should be given the highest priority, not only to shorten the training period, but more desirable still, to give the men more training in the same period of time and with the latest equipment. Every effort should be made to have ready and immediately available the training directives for the type of Group organized in order that they may mold themselves around the type of training necessary to fit them better for the accomplishment of their mission.

The 458th Fighter Squadron has experienced excellent progress in all phases of its training despite difficulties. It has overcome the ever-present delay of placing qualified men in key positions by virtue of the ability of its Commanding Officer and it is with eagerness that they look forward to the completion of their training and the ultimate accomplishment of their mission, the defeat of the enemy.

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As of the last day of November personnel of the Squadron numbered 330, of which 64 were Officers and 265 Enlisted Men. The key personnel of the 458th was as follows:

Major Harrison E. Shipman.....	Commanding
Capt Peter Nowick.....	Operations
Capt Earle P. Gray Jr.....	Executive Officer
Capt Gordon C. Roesch.....	Intelligence
Capt Kenneth J. Wheeling.....	Flight Surgeon
Capt J. B. Baker.....	"A" Flt Cmdr
Capt Francis G. Carmody.....	"B" Flt Cmdr
1st Lt Frank H. Mekus.....	"C" Flt Cmdr
1st Lt Nolen C. Johnson Jr.....	"D" Flt Cmdr
1st Lt Goldie Marcott.....	Asst Opns
1st Lt Robert M. Grant.....	Communications
1st Lt Irving Brein.....	Adjutant
1st Lt Robert K. Price.....	Ordnance
2nd Lt Clifford C. Blue.....	Sq Supply
2nd Lt Francis W. Hines.....	Engineering
2nd Lt Miles J. Jorgensen.....	Armament
2nd Lt James H. Roman.....	Tech Supply
2nd Lt William B. Shortley.....	Personal Equipment
2nd Lt George J. Wilson.....	Asst Intelligence O

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GENERAL ORDERS)
 NUMBER 29)

HEADQUARTERS III FIGHTER COMMAND
 Office of the Commanding General
 Drew Field, Florida
 21 October 1944

1. Pursuant to instructions contained in letter Headquarters Third Air Force, File 3AF 321 (19 Oct 44) AC, subject "Activation of 506th Fighter Group", dated 19 October 1944, the following I/O units are activated effective 21 October 1944 at Lakeland Army Air Field, Lakeland, Florida, as shown:

Unit	I/O and E	Authorized strength		
		Off	WG	ME
Hq. 506th Fighter Gp, SE	1-12, 22 Dec 43, C-1, 26 Feb 44	27	1	70
457th Fighter Sq, SE)	1-27, 22 Dec 43,	63	0	249
458th Fighter Sq, SE)	C-1, 26 Feb 44			
462nd Fighter Sq, SE)	plus 2 x Col 37			

2. The above units are assigned III Fighter Command.
3. Priority ratings for control items or equipment will be A-90-1.
4. Automatic issue of equipment will not apply.
5. Equipment will be in accordance with Table of Organization and equipment referred to in paragraph 1. Shortages will be requisitioned in the usual manner.
6. Cadre personnel will be furnished by the Commanding General, III Fighter Command.
7. Obligation of appropriate allotments published in Section II, Circular No. 43, WD 1944, to extent necessary, is authorized by letter cited in paragraph 1, thereof.

By command of Brigadier General BLACKBURN:

E. P. GAINES
 Colonel, General Staff Corps
 Chief of Staff

OFFICIAL:

/s/ Howard J. Gephart
 /s/ HOWARD J. GEPHART
 1st Lieutenant, Air Corps
 Acting Assistant Adjutant General

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JOHN Y. CAMERON,
 Major, Air Corps.

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[Signature]
 Captain, Air Corps.

EXHIBIT No. 1

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