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DOD DIR 5200.9

Organizational History, 45th Fighter Squadron, 15th Fighter Group, VII  
Fighter Command, Seventh Air Force, Army Air Forces, Pacific Ocean Area,  
APO #86.

P.R.C.

May 1, 1945 - May 31, 1945

1. Date of arrival at and departure from each station occupied in this theatre.

Negative.

2. Losses in action.

On 8 May 1945, 2d Lt ROY F. SALESKY, O-774404, was KIA over Tateyama Airfield, Honshu Japan, and 2d Lt LE ROY E. YAKISH, O-774402, is MIA over the same field.

On 22 May 1945, 2d Lt WILLIAM B. EDWARDS was KIA in an aerial collision 20 miles off Iwo.

On 29 May 1945, 2d Lt HUFUS S. MOORE, O-714983, was KIA on an escort mission to Yokohama, Japan.

3. Awards and Decorations.

Cpts BRUCE S. CAMPBELL JR, O-796081, and GEORGE H. HUNTER JR, O-677040, were awarded the Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal during the month.

4. Organization.

Negative.

5. Strength.

1 May 1945 - 66 Officers, 2 F/Os, 245 Enlisted Men.  
31 May 1945 - 62 Officers, 4 F/Os, 246 Enlisted Men.

6. Strength - Airplanes by Types.

1 May 1945 - 24 P-51Ds.  
31 May 1945 - 23 P-51Ds.

7. Losses - Airplanes by Types.

5 P-51Ds.

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Out of thirty-one days in May, only three offered sufficiently promising weather for missions to Japan. The lack of good flying weather, at base, over a 600 mile course, at target, and return during any seven hour period remains the worst obstacle to this organization's participation in the attack on Japan.

On the first of three missions against the enemy, 8 May 1945, our planes arrived at a target obscured by clouds and heavy rains. Well aware of the enemy's defenses, one flight flew through the worst of them without being able to locate themselves due to poor visibility. As a result, the Squadron suffered the loss of two pilots. 2d Lt ROY F. ZALESKY's plane was hit by flak over Tatayama Airfield. His plane was seen tumbling toward Tokyo Bay. He was not seen to bail out, nor was his plane seen to hit the water. 2d Lt LEROY E. YAKISH was shot down by fire from the same airfield. When hit, Lt YAKISH reported that something was coming out of his wing. He then reported he was on instruments without an airspeed indicator. No more was heard from him. It is possible that he bailed out. His status is MIA. It is emphasized that weather was directly responsible for this loss. The experienced flight leader reported visibility so poor that they didn't know they were over the field until the AA opened up.

Not until 25 May 1945 could another long range mission be successfully completed. On this date considerable damage was done to ground installations at Matsudo Airfield, Honsha, Japan. One enemy plane was destroyed in the air. The Squadron suffered no losses however, of the 16 planes scheduled for the target run, only 12 got through.

The last long range mission of the month was more successful tactically. The Squadron gave escort to B-29s to Yokohama. On this heavy incendiary

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attack, the Squadron scored 5 enemy aircraft destroyed, 1 probably destroyed, and 6 damaged. Exact effect their action had in protecting the bombers from attack is not determinable. However, such performance would indicate exceptional success. The results were not without cost to the Squadron. Second Lt RUFUS S. MOORE was shot down as he crossed the eastern coast of Honshu. His plane was seen to crash in the sea. Dye marker, carried on the pilot's person was seen among the debris. Lt MOORE is listed as KIA. Second Lt WILLIAM E. BROWN disappeared from his flight over Yokohama. He was reported as MIA. However, on the report from other squadrons that a friendly fighter was seen to crash over the target, higher echelon reported him KIA. Not until several days later did we learn that Lt BROWN had bailed out at sea. He had been rescued by a submarine in an hour and one half. A message of his rescue, never delivered, had been sent to a B-29.

Five routine missions to Chichi Island completed the month's combat operations. The airfield and harbor were kept inoperational.

Life on Iwo Jima became more bearable as our new living area was developed. Mess continued to improve. A Squadron Movie was set in operation. Group Headquarters temporarily disrupted this recreation by appropriating the Squadron's projector. It was to be used for a consolidated Group movie. Capt FRANCIS L. ENNIS left the Squadron a reminder of himself when he organized a planting program. This included a large sodding project in the OP area. Shortly after, one of Iwo's torrential rains cut a wide swath through this and most of the Squadron area. Repairs have been made, and the future shows promise of many additions.

MEMORANDA OF SECTIONS

Command Post.

During the month of May, three pilots were KIA, and one MIA. On 5 May, 2d Lt ROY F. ZALESKI was KIA over Tatayama Airfield, Honshu, Japan. On 22 May,

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2d Lt WILLIAM B. EDWARDS was KIA as the result of an aerial collision about 20 miles east of Iwo Jima. On 29 May, 2d Lt RUFUS S. MOORE was KIA on a mission to Yokohama. On 3 May, 2d Lt LE ROY E. YAKISH was listed as MIA on a mission over Tateyama Airfield.

On 23 May, T/Sgt WILLIAM M. MAJOR, Sgt WILLIE F. SHELTON, and Pvt ROBERT W. EBBERHART parted for Guam pending assignment to the US for possible discharge under the new point system.

On 3 May, Capts FRANCIS L. ENNIS, FRED H. HENDERSON JR, ALBERT E. MALEBY, and GEORGE C. MOREY were relieved from assignment and assigned to AAFFOA unassigned pending further orders returning them to the continental US. On 9 May, Capt DWIGHT H. BUTLER who had been on DS with AAFFOA Rest and Recreation Center was relieved from assignment and assigned to AAFFOA unassigned pending further orders returning him to the US. On 19 May, T/Sgt ANDREW J. HYNEL was returned to the US on rotation.

On 10 May, S/Sgt CHARLES C. COVERT and Pfc JOE E. HILLMAN left for a 45 day TDR and R in the US. On 19 May, S/Sgts ARTHUR N. BASARNE and LELAND B WILLIAMS, and Sgt JOSEPH TILVICAS departed for a 45 day furlough to the US.

On 3 May, Pfc FRANK W. HANDEHL and NATHAN M. KALL (Medical Section) were relieved from attached service and returned to Hq, 15th Fighter Group. On 19 May, 1st Lt WALTER N. HARRIGAN JR departed for a Fighter - Gunnery Refresher Course at Foster Field, Texas. On 26 May, Capt MORTON M. KNOX, 1st Lt WILLIAM W. REBUS, 2d Lts EMERSON L. CYPHERS and ROBERT D. WRAY were dropped from the rolls when MIA since 26 April 1945. On 30 May, 1st Lt FARLEY W. WHEELWRIGHT was placed on DS with Hq and Hq Squadron, VII Fighter Command. First Lieutenant CHARLES R. GRANT was suspended from flying status on this same date.

On 7 May, Cpl KENNETH J. STEVENS who was sick in the 41st Station Hospital, APO #86, was evacuated by air to Guam. The S/R and allied papers were not forwarded as

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no information could be secured as to where the soldier was being sent. No orders were out. On 14 May, 2d Lts WILLIAM B. EDWARDS, ROBERT W FULLMER, and ROBERT G. HOOKS JR joined the Squadron. On 17 May, T/Sgt WILSON D. BOWDEN, S/Sgt JOHN VESS JR, and Sgt WILLIAM R. SMITH joined the Squadron, as rotational replacements. On 24 May, S/Sgt RICHARD P. GOTTSCHALK joined the Squadron as a replacement. On 26 May, Capt OWEEN J. HIGGS and FRED K. MARTIN, 2d Lt JOHN F.R. SCOTT JR, and F/Os GRADY L PATTERSON JR and ROBERT G. POOLE were assigned to the Squadron. Capt ROBERT W. MOORE was attached to the Squadron from the 78th Fighter Squadron. Capt HAROLD D. COLLINS, 1st Lts JOHN PATTERSON JR and ALBERT W. SHERRIN were assigned to the Squadron from the 78th Fighter Squadron. Sgt LEE H. HUGHES JR and Pfc FREDERICK W. YOUNG were assigned to the Squadron.

On 30 May, orders were received for the following promotions: Capt BRIDGE was promoted to Major, 1st Lts FISHER, HAGLUND, and LIGHTBOWN were promoted to the rank of Captain. Second Lt STATSMANN was promoted to 1st Lt. Capt MOORE, attached from the 78th Fighter Squadron was promoted to Major.

Soldier deposits for May totalled \$7,485. On 12 May, all EM were interviewed and their Adjusted Service Rating Cards made out. A report was submitted with their scores. A supplemental roster was later made for the EM as well as for the Officers.

During the month an SOP was established for night air raids.

#### Operations Section.

The Squadron aircraft strength at the beginning of May was 24 P-51D20NAs. The 47th and 78th Fighter Squadrons each transferred two P-51D20NAs to us and in addition five new P-51D25NAs for the Squadron were flown here from Guam by our pilots.

On the eighth of May 2d Lts LEROY E. YAKISH, O-774402, and ROY F. ZALESKY, O-774404, were shot down by enemy ground fire over the Tokyo Area. Lt ZALESKY'S

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plane was seen to crash but Lt YAKISH'S fate is not known so he is being carried as missing. It is possible that he was able to bail out.

2d Lt WILLIAM B. EDWARDS, O-831697, was killed in a mid-air collision with a P-51 from the 506th Fighter Group on the 22nd of May. The pilot from the 506th was making a simulated pass on a four ship flight in which Lt EDWARDS was flying fourth position. Extremely bad judgement and lack of foresight on the part of the 506th pilot are the only explanations for this mishap.

Two P-51DZONAs and one pilot were lost on the 29th of May on an escort mission to Yokohama. Second Lt HUFUS S. MOORE JR, O-714983, was shot down by an enemy fighter. His plane crashed in the sea and no parachute was seen in the vicinity. Dye marker was observed in the middle of the oil slick. Second Lt WILLIAM E. BROWN JR, O-716051, was separated from his flight during a skirmish with enemy fighters and failed to return to the home base. Several days later a report was received that Lt BROWN had been picked up by a submarine. No details are known as to the exact reason he bailed out or in what vicinity he was rescued.

In summary our losses for the month of May were three pilots killed and one missing. Five P-51DZONAs were lost.

Three pilots joined the Squadron on the date 14 May. Second Lts ROBERT C. HOOKS JR, ROBERT W. FOLLMER, and WILLIAM B. EDWARDS. Lt EDWARDS is now deceased. On 21 May, Capts OWEN J RIGGS, and FRED K. MARTIN were assigned to us. Captain MARTIN flew with us for a week and was then transferred to 15th Fighter Group for reevaluation. Three more pilots joined the Squadron on 24 May: 2d Lt JOHN F.R. SCOTT JR, F/Os ROBERT G. POOLE and GRADY L. PATTERSON JR. All the pilots that we have received this month are rapidly becoming proficient at flying a wing and will be used on combat missions as soon as their understanding of our tactics is complete.

Poor weather hindered our operations throughout the month of May and consequently only three long range missions to Japan were completed. However, such

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more local flying could have been accomplished, had the work toward completing the black top landing strip been expedited. The clay strip that we were using would become inoperative after a few hours of heavy rain and would remain that way several days, even after the weather had cleared. This prevented the pilots from receiving training missions that are so necessary in maintaining any degree of flying skill. Now that the black top strip is completed, an extensive training program has been put into effect and as much local flying will be accomplished as weather and aircraft maintenance will permit. This should decrease the number of accidents due to pilot error.

Training in the use of the K-14 gun sight has been incorporated in these local flights, but it will be several weeks before all the pilots are familiar enough with the sight, to use it under combat conditions. No pilot in this organization has used the K-14 sight in combat, so its value in attacks on enemy fighters has not been determined.

Conditions on our line are still unsatisfactory. The sections are crowded together with just barely enough space in which to operate. The area is considered temporary, so improvements which might relieve many of the problems, cannot be made. A pilots ready room should be constructed, but lack of space makes this impossible. Pilots would spend more time on the line if such a place were available.

The dusty condition of the parking area is still adding to the troubles of the maintenance crews. The general condition of the airplanes could be greatly improved if this situation was remedied.

The need for a bore sight range cannot be over emphasized. Our ships have not been fired-in since January so the accuracy of the guns is probably not very high. The success of our long range missions is based on the number of Japanese aircraft destroyed; so it would be advantageous to send airplanes to the

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Empire with accurate firing guns.

#### Engineering Section.

The events that took place during the past month were not too numerous. First, considerable rainfall was received along with high winds. This necessitated tying down the airplanes on several different occasions. After heavy rains, it was necessary to power check each aircraft as well as give it a landing gear check.

There was a large turn-over in airplanes. New ones arrived, others were transferred to the Squadron. Losses were suffered during this period so that the end of the month found this Squadron with approximately the same number of aircraft on hand.

Many carburetor changes were made. Some were necessary due to the wrong type being installed in the new engines. Others were to correct engine trouble. Mixture controls were changed after one mission which indicated trouble at high altitude.

Dust is still a problem when this section desires to do a great deal of maintenance. Frequent sprinkling helps only during a short period. Black top will solve this problem in the future.

#### Communications Section.

May was the first more or less routine month since our arrival at Iwo. The building period was over and the section settled down to devote all its time to the problems of daily maintenance. This proved to be a difficult enough job in itself.

Most of the maintenance headaches encountered could be said to be peculiar to the local area. They arose from a combination of bad weather and the hours of operation. It was soon discovered that the only reliable radio checking was that

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done within a few hours of take off. This presents a major problem. Take off in the great majority of VLR missions is very early in the morning. Many times sets tuned the previous evening are found to have lost tuning during the night. This situation is aggravated by wind, dust, and rain which seem almost to be the rule rather than the exception. In several instances missions have taken off less than an hour after a rainy spell. In such cases even the simplest of pre-flighting was difficult. There is no solution to the problem except maintenance at all hours and prayers that the weather will give us a break.

Another source of VHF failures has been dirt. A break down shows that there has been an excessive number of relay difficulties. Covers were put on all SCR-522s and although this helped some, the sets still required constant cleaning. Dust seeped through any kind of cover that was loose enough to allow proper ventilation. This problem is being met now by the rule that every 522 must be in the maintenance shop at least once a week for a cleaning and tube check.

With each successive mission the great value of the AN/ARA-8 homing adapter becomes more and more apparent. The majority of pilots have had a personal experience which has sold them on the device. From the maintenance angle, the adapter has given almost no trouble and required only periodic inspections. The importance of reliable communications is underlined every day. In long over water flights a radio failure can prove as fatal as an engine failure. The basis of a successful mission is good communications.

Late in the month Sgt JOSEPH TILVICAS left us for a well deserved furlough in the States. We also received two men in the section; S/Sgt RICHARD P. GOTTSCHALK, a replacement from the mainland, and Pvt JOHN HAGMAN came to us from another section of the Squadron. These additions brought the section strength to 33.

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Ordnance Section.

During the month the Ordnance Section lost Pvt ROBERT BERHARDT through rotation and received SGT WILLIAM R. SMITH, a replacement. Sgt SMITH has had considerable experience with the aircraft cal. .50 machine gun, and his knowledge of this and other small arms will be of great benefit to the section.

A new experience was had by most of the personnel of this Section this month - the use of long delay bomb fuzes. The M124 tail fuze with one and six hour delay action was used with 500 lb. bombs in a strike against Chichi Jima. Only a few personnel of this section had previous experience with this type fuze, and through their knowledge the rest of the Section was able to learn something of its characteristics. It is hoped that in the future we will see more of the long delay fuzes.

Our welding equipment (part of our Ordnance Maintenance Load "A") has been in great demand this month. Pfc FORTNER has spent considerable time welding for our Squadron Mess and for the Transportation Section. Sgt MAY usually shares the welding work with him however, he is temporarily employed in the construction of huts in our living area. Sgt BILDER is pinch - hitting, learning the use of the welding equipment.

A quantity of Distress Smoke Hand Signals M41 has been requisitioned and received this month and has been issued to our pilots for use in Air, Sea Rescue. A small quantity of .45 cal. tracer ammunition has been received for the same purpose.

In compliance with AGF regulations we have placed two fire barrels of water in the section area for use in case of emergency.

Three units of fire for all ground defense and small arms weapons in the Squadron have been turned in to Island Ordnance, leaving two units of fire in

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the Squadron. Our aircraft ammunition supply on hand remains at 50,000 rounds, this in addition to that which is already in our aircraft.

This Section has drawn from the 386th Service Group enough .50 cal. tracer ammunition to place ten belted rounds fifty rounds from the end of each belt of ammunition in our aircraft. This has been done so the pilot will know when he is running low on ammunition when in combat.

#### Armament Section.

The Armament Section has had its busy days this month, but for the most part our work has slackened, owing mainly to weather conditions reducing the amount of flying.

The Squadron has received some new aircraft this month and they have come equipped with the K-14A gyro gun sight. It is the first time we of this section have seen this type sight, and we were at a loss regarding its operation. We have received technical information which has been of great help to us. Also we were able to borrow a K-14 sight mounted on a platform, used to give experience in rebuilding and maintenance.

We have found in most cases that the firing pin springs in the guns of the new airplanes are weak. It is felt that the reason for this is that the planes are shipped from the factory with the firing pins in a charged position. Over such a long period of time the springs lose their strength and become weak, the result being that they cause stoppages in many cases when the guns are fired. As a result there is no way to be sure of the strength of these firing pin springs. We are sending the planes up for test firing of the guns before they are sent on a combat mission.

The Section has received some valuable information on the rockets we will be using in the future. Our aircraft are not equipped as yet to carry these

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projectiles, but when they do come into use by this Squadron this Section will be thoroughly familiar with their operation and characteristics.

In previous history supplements it has been stated that our aircraft, in most cases, are flying combat missions with guns which have not been proof-fired since late January. It was pointed out that this Section and the Armament section of the 78th Fighter Squadron constructed a 1000 foot range for proof firing purposes. However, a great deal of trouble was encountered from the 11st NCB who kept tearing down our range because it interfered with their work on the airstrip. Three attempts were made to set up a range following which the idea was abandoned and our trouble taken to VII Fighter Command. Since then a month has passed and we are still without a range. It certainly does not seem right that our pilots are forced to fly planes over Japan with guns which have not been fired-in for over four months. Several of our pilots have complained that the guns in their planes are not shooting straight. It is hoped by all concerned that something can and will be done at the earliest possible moment to relieve this very bad situation.

#### Personnel Supply Section.

A very much needed salvage day finally was arranged for 4 May. Many items including shoes, coveralls, socks, and CMC clothing were back ordered while in some cases odd sizes were issued instead of the sizes ordered. During the month some of the back ordered items were issued, not all. Twenty-five pairs of shoes were returned for repair. No repair facilities had been set up, therefore, the men had to make the best of the one pair they had, while others who had both pairs in a repairable condition had to continue to wear them because of this condition. A second salvage day, 20 May, also had many back items. Difficulty was also experienced with three tents that were turned in for salvage. They were returned to us for repair and in our opinion, these tents were not in a condition that

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would stand repair, the material was rotted. Heavy rains found many tents with holes. These tents were reported previously as being class B, they were issued as new tents at AFO #951. Waterproofing material was obtained in limited quantities, only a few of these tents could be waterproofed, the remainder are still in a condition that does not warrant living in, in adverse weather.

After many attempts to begin operation, the laundry finally did start, the Squadron laundry was turned in on 30 May. A truck was dispatched to pick it up at the scheduled time but it was not ready - we received it a day later than was scheduled. Instructions were then received regarding the handling of the laundry with six men per tent using one laundry bag instead of individual bags as was done with the first service. Using this system a great number of shortages were turned in, there is definite need for improvement.

Requisitions were submitted promptly for all S.S.I.O.E. equipment that was short and deemed necessary.

Paperwork involved in transactions on this island are doubled and in some cases tripled as compared with several other outposts we have been stationed on in the past. Most of it is unnecessary because better and more efficient results were obtained at previous stations, with a minimum of paper work. The repetition of reports that have been necessary is one of the worst headaches of this office. Four reports of the same nature, pertaining to Corps of Engineers Equipment, have been turned in. Repetition of this type involves much unnecessary paperwork.

#### Technical Supply Section.

During a storm in May the high wind levelled the Tech Supply tent. Most of the equipment was soaked with water. A new tent was immediately put up however, it is felt that this type of structure is unsatisfactory for the storage of

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the critical supplies carried by this Section.

Supplies have been received in good shape during the past thirty days. Very few cases were experienced where the airplanes were grounded for parts. It was always possible to draw equipment through the Materiel Squadron or the Engineering Squadron of the Service Group.

Transportation Section.

The month of May proved almost disastrous to this section. Our shops, office, and grease pit are set up on slightly sloping ground, and when the heavy rains came early in the month, our section was almost washed away. On two occasions our grease pit was completely filled with sediment. The flooring in our shop was almost washed out, and several deep gulleys were formed by the rushing water in and around our vehicle parking area. However, we have everything under control again and have taken measures to prevent such a thing from happening again.

Vehicle maintenance has been very good this month, none of our vehicles were sent to the third echelon shop. First echelon maintenance has been followed closely, and we feel that in a large measure this has cut down the necessary work formerly done. Four vehicles underwent a 6000 mile inspection this month and were found to be in good condition.

Cpl CRISTINO has continued in his painting of the vehicles and at the end of the month the two 1/2 ton trucks and the 1/4 ton trucks were finished. Only a few 3/4 ton trucks remain to be done.

Our section is minus the services, for the present, of two members. Pfc HARGRAVES is in the hospital as the result of an accidental shot wound, and Pfc CUNDIFF is aiding the Seabees in hut construction in our area.

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#### Chemical Warfare Section.

During the month of May the GWS was occupied primarily with squadron duties. These duties included hauling water and treating all latrines and the Squadron Mess hall with DDT solution.

On the last day of the month all personnel tested their gas masks in a Gas Chamber. Inspection revealed that almost all masks have been well cared for. They had been kept clean and very few showed signs of having been wet. Only two had to be replaced; one because of a damaged cannister and the other because of a torn face piece. All conditions taken into consideration, the gas masks were found to be in excellent shape. At this time all protective covers and eyeshields which had become lost or damaged were replaced.

#### Medical Section.

During May the health of the Squadron remained good. Personnel continue to be quartered in pyramidal tents with inadequate flooring, although Quonset Huts have been obtained for pilots' quarters. Construction of the latter will begin at once. A quonset mess hall is being erected for the Squadron. The same arrangement for Officers Mess is nearing completion and will soon be in use.

A steel hut containing tubs for hot baths was erected and will be used by the pilots following very long range missions. Medical Department personnel will be on hand to give massage following the baths.

During the month sick call was held at the 15th Group Dispensary which also provides a ward for quarters cases. A Quonset Hut replaced the Dispensary tent and additional attempts are being made to secure another for the ward. A total of 520 immunizations were given squadron personnel during the month. The dispensary on the line continued to be used as an auxillary dispensary and crash station.

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Attempts to improve the sanitary facilities are being continued. Routine spraying of the island by aircraft and local use of DDT - kerosene mixture have proven to be of great value.

#### Intelligence Section.

The Intelligence Section spent the majority of its time this month preparing for missions which never came off. Great patience has become a requisite for S-2. Local storms did considerable damage to the line area, and this Section suffered. However, most everything was salvaged and by comparison we were let off lightly.

Cooperation within the Squadron continues to improve. After three and one half months, we are completely set up except for a briefing room. It must be recommended to squadrons facing moves to forward areas that a large tent be acquired through any possible means and brought along. Without such a minimum of conveniences, displays are extremely limited. Briefings and lectures are possible for small groups only. The promise of a Quonset Hut has not materialized.

A great saving of time has been affected by having the Service Group photograph a master copy of the strip maps used for missions. Excellent printing has resulted in a map superior to the hand made ones.

On 30 May, 1st Lt FARLEY W. WHEELWRIGHT, Asst S-2, was placed on DS with VII Fighter Command with duty as Information Education Officer.

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