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SG-FI-6-HI
MAY 1944
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RESTRICTED

SECRET

HEADQUARTERS
SEVENTH AIR FORCE

DESIGNATION SHEET

(Official designation, including number, of
unit and of each echelon in chain of command)

AIR FORCE: SEVENTH

COMMAND: VII Fighter

WING: _____

GROUP: _____

SQUADRON: 6th Night Fighter

AREA: _____

BATTALION: _____

CENTER: _____

COMPANY: _____

DEPOT: _____

DETACHMENT: _____

DISTRICT: _____

DIVISION: _____

PLATOON: _____

REGIMENT: _____

REGION: _____

SCHOOL: _____

SECTION: _____

UNIT: _____

ETC.: _____

Has Security Classification of material been
checked? ✓

P.R.C.

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REPTON 11
SEVENTH AIR FORCE

Organizational History, 6th Night Fighter Squadron,
VII Fighter Command, Seventh Air Force.

1 May 1944 - 31 May 1944.

1. Organization:

Negative

2. Strength:

25 Officers
166 Enlisted Men plus 2 attached

3. Date of arrival and departure from each station occupied in this theater:

One officer put on detached service 14 May 1944 with 19th Fighter Squadron Detachment of one officer and 41 enlisted men departed 27 May 1944 for secret destination.

4. Losses:

Negative

5. Awards and Decorations:

Negative

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History of the 6th Night Fighter Squadron.

On 20 May 1944, Major Victor M. Mahr passed the Command of the 6th to Major Julius Alford. Major Alford had been the Operations Officer of the squadron, and joined the 6th in December 1941. He was born 26 July 1915, in Ashford, Alabama.

After graduation from High School in 1932, he attended the School of Commerce, University of Alabama. While there, Major Alford became a member of the Delta Sigma Pi fraternity. Leaving the University January 1941, Major Alford received his commission 31 October 1941. His arrival in the Hawaiian Department was November 1941.

This month was a full one for him, for in addition to the command of the squadron, he received his promotion to Major on the 3rd of May 1944.

Lt. Baldwin and Lt. Beyl were both promoted from 2nd Lt. to 1st Lt., the 3rd of the month. Lt's. Hichik, Gasda, Ketchum, Henderson and Wallace received their promotions from Flight Officer to 2nd Lt., on 27 May 1944. Cigars haven't run out yet!

Lt. Beyl went on detached service with the 19th Fighter Squadron on the 19th of May 1944. On the 27th, Lt. Watts and 41 enlisted men left for a secret destination.


Operations:

May was a month of unusual activity. Delivery of the long awaited P-61 began arriving 1 May 1944. In addition to regular training flights, including formation flying, gunnery and searchlight missions, extensive training was given in the P-61. Major Mahr was the first pilot to check out, and all the pilots and observers who were alerted for shipment to a secret destination had 25 hours in the new planes, of which an average of approximately 10 hours was at night. Altogether, the squadron participated in four searchlight missions. A total of seven hundred and eighty one hours and forty five minutes was flown by all type planes in the squadron.

There were two accidents during May. On May 3rd Lt. Francis and Lt. Haberman, each in a P-70 type aircraft had an accident while taxiing in for a takeoff on an Aerial Gunnery Mission. Lt. Haberman taxied into the rear of Lt. Francis' plane, causing considerable damage to both planes. One plane was transferred to Hickam Sub-Depot and the other was repaired by squadron personnel. No one was injured in the accident.

During the evening of 10 May 1944, the 6th Squadron furnished four P-47's for a Searchlight Mission. The enemy was simulated by B-24's. Captain Keene led the flight and Lt. Brunette was element leader. While taking off, Lt. Brunette had a little bad luck. The right tire on his plane blew out after he had obtained a ground speed of approximately ninety miles per hour. He tried to attain enough speed to take the plane off but was too close to the end of the runway and had to ground-loop the plane intentionally. After ground-looping, the plane hit a rock crusher at the side of the runway with the left wing and left side of the fuselage. The plane was pretty well washed out and was transferred to Hickam Sub-Depot. Lt. Brunette was Not injured in any way.

Engineering:

Perhaps at no time since the activation of this squadron in 1917 have events been more radical and aggressive in nature than those of this past month of May 1944.

With the gradual transfer of the P-61A's from AAF Air Depot, APO #953 to the squadron, activity and interest of the personnel involved in their maintenance and operation, heightened to a maximum of efficiency intent in the preparation of Northrop's Black Widows for combat duty. The task for the preparation of these ships involved far more than the usual routine inspections and first or second echelon maintenance. The ships were new; their peculiarities and complete particular operational constructions were unknown, and save for an unofficial Technical Order (01-15FB-2) published by Northrop, there existed an almost complete lack of erection, maintenance and operational technical instructions.... but thanks to the ingenuity and and the technical ability of M/Sgt. John Tribilla (Engineering Line Chief) and to the invaluable aid of Mr. D. Collins (Northrup Technical Representative) with his highly proficient methods of procuring necessary parts, the defects encountered were corrected. Only one defect, beyond control,

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the cracking of a preheater door resulting in an engine change because of nicks incurred in the normal stage impeller, slightly hampered the squadron's maintenance progress.

Of the eight P-61's supposed to have been assigned to this squadron, only seven were received. The eighth one was lost while enroute from the Air Depot to this field for transfer. Those who witnessed the accident affirmed that the aircraft's right engine died out while at an altitude of 2,000 feet. The pilot attempted to circle for a landing, but the plane lost altitude very rapidly and crashed into the sea about 200 yards offshore. Sgt. Jewell swam out to the ship which lay upside down with its tail slightly above water, but could do nothing in regards to the occupants.

Armament:

We received second P-61 airplane and commenced detailed instructions of personnel on Armament Equipment on 3 May 1944. Lt. Watts and T/Sgt. Laird started experiments to improve L-3 sight, which pilots found too bright for Night Firing. Personnel found Armament Equipment on these aircraft to be easy to work on.

On 7 May 1944, S/Sgt. Tetreault, Sgt. Snell, Cpl. Stimpson and Pvt. Petrie entered this section, having been transferred from other squadrons.

During the period from 11 May 1944 through 21 May 1944, firing was conducted (P-47) in which 7,096 rounds were expended without a stoppage.

On 24 May 1944, Sgt. Miozzi, Cpl's. Lucas and Rogan returned from Gunnery School at Hickam Field.

On 25 May 1944, installation began on electrical wiring for Cal. 50 guns on P-61 airplanes by this section.

Radar:

This section lived from day to day awaiting the arrival of the P-61 airplane, that would open to us a new field for work and study. In anticipation of the new equipment, Lt. Hanburg had very ably, taught us the theory and the rudiments of the maintenance that would be required of us. The section still had the SCR-540-A equipment to maintain in the P-70 at that time, but by arranging our time into line and shop hours we were able to spend a part of each day copying and studying the circuits of the new SCR-720 set.

The great day finally arrived and the first P-61 landed on our field. At this time we had only 12 enlisted men in our section, so we divided them into three flights of four men each. After one sad experience of trying to take up from where the installation men left off, it was mandatory that we start from scratch, improving on some of their work and completely rechecking and retuning the entire set. With 12 men, we were working at about half strength, and as it was necessary that much of our work be done at night, there were times when a flight would work all night and part of the next day, catching what sleep they could while their planes were up on a mission.

After working on the equipment for only a short time, 6 of our men left, leaving us with only 7 men. (We had a new man transferred into the section). At about this time we received orders to install the AN/APN-1. This equipment was entirely new to us, but under the direction of Lt. Hansburg, and with the aid of the sheet-metal worker, we got them installed and in working order. The first results with the APN-1 were rather disappointing. The lack of proper test equipment deprived us of the opportunity to give it a thorough check. It naturally followed that the equipment wouldn't give satisfactory results. In spite of our attempts at explanation, we were still met with raised eyebrows and remarks on the practicality of it whenever the set was mentioned.

By begging and borrowing, and the aid of an A-1 priority, we did get enough essentials together to put all the sets in good operating condition and to make several modifications that proved very efficient. It was with great pride that we bade farewell and good-luck to the planes and two more of our men, fully confident of the possibilities of the set in tactical work.

Communications:

Our linemen installed new telephones and lines when orders were given to move out of the ATC hangar. We also installed lights in the day-room to make pool shooting more convenient for the men.

Two mechanics went to ignition school which consisted of a 10 day course. One mechanic went to switchboard school, lasting four weeks. Two men, one a teletype operator, one a mechanic at present, are at gunnery school. A four week course.

Five radio mechanics detailed for kitchen police during the month of May for one week.

Switchboard and Teletype operators were exceptionally busy during the month, due to the fact that a shipment for down under was in progress. Message center chief decoded several messages.

The line chief, Communication chief, Communication officer, were very busy getting equipment in readiness for shipment. Communication clerks duties were about the same as the other months with the exception of a few more requisitions and many shipping tickets.

All men in the section took a physical fitness test.

Ordnance:

All personnel going down under have fired a qualification course. Weapon used was Carbine, Cal. .30, M1.

Detachment scheduled to leave have received all supplies authorized and are thoroughly equipped for combat duty.

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Eighteen different lot numbers of 20 mm ammunition was tested for tracer. Not one showed any signs of tracer. However, 20mm combat ammunition has been procured from the Navy. Lot #OOP-26. Tracer plainly visible. Combat ammunition has been belted in the ratio of 3 HEI - 1 APT (no tracer) - 1 APT (tracer).

This section has belted 15,000 rounds of 20mm combat ammunition for the detachment going down under. Remainder of the ammunition will be shipped in sealed boxes, but will not be belted in this area.

All men in this squadron have been shown a training film on the Carbine Cal. .30, M1. In addition, men in the Ordnance and Armament Sections have been shown a training film on the 20mm Automatic Cannon.

Ordnance Officer, this squadron, has given instruction on the rocket to all men in the Armament and Ordnance Sections. All available training material has been used. Proper assembly, disassembly and functioning has been demonstrated on the Rocket, 4.5", Practice, M9.

All pilots have been instructed on the basic principles of the rocket launcher and the manner in which fired from the cockpit.

Courses in instruction for men in the Ordnance and Armament Sections have been started by the Ordnance Officer, this squadron. These are scheduled twice weekly. The enlisted personnel will be given a subject applicable to armament or ordnance and they are expected to talk intelligently, answer all questions and be thoroughly familiar with the topic they are assigned.

Intelligence:

This section has been primarily concerned with the indoctrination of the men scheduled for shipment with the area in which they will operate. Geographic education on the Marianas, Formosa, Palau, Yap, and the Bonin Islands, has been developed. Security has been stressed due to the departure of a part of the squadron for combat. All pilots and navigators going "down under" have attended the Bishop Museum lecture on self preservation on the Tropic Islands.

Mission reports, general information promotion, and orientation, are routine.

Medics:

There were no changes in officers or enlisted men assigned to this section.

Cpl. Jak B. Offenstien admitted to Tripler General Hospital as of 26 May 1944. Cpl. Offenstien is still hospitalized.

Pfc Harry A. Newman admitted to Tripler General Hospital 7 May 1944; discharged 13 May 1944.

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Pvt. Anthony M. Muti admitted to Tripler General Hospital 9 May 1944; discharged 30 May 1944.

Sgt. Gale T. Bradford admitted to Tripler General Hospital 18 May 1944; discharged 25 May 1944.

2nd Lt. Donald T. Evans admitted to Hicham Station Hospital 18 May 1944; discharged 22 May 1944.

Sgt. Arthur V. Madden admitted to Tripler General Hospital 18 May 1944; Sgt. Madden is still hospitalized, awaiting Medical Discharge from the Army due to bronchial asthma.

All officers and enlisted men transferred from squadron to secret destination were given typhus, cholera and tetanus immunizations.

Immunizations against smallpox, typhoid fever, tetanus, were maintained at authorized levels for all officers and enlisted men of the squadron.

There were 197 patients treated at the Dispensary.

There were 304 treatments given.

All officers and enlisted men transferred from the squadron to secret destination were given physical inspection prior to leaving.

Routine physical inspections of all enlisted men were held.

One litter, canvas, semi-rigid, was added to the squadron aid equipment as of 25 May 1944.

Jungle Packs of flying personnel leaving squadron for secret destination were equipped with medical supplies.

There were no cases of venereal disease in the squadron nor have there been any for a period of nine months prior to this date.

There are no cases of communicable diseases in the squadron.

Special Service:

The squadron bowling team placed second in the Wheeler Field League.

The Radar Section won an inter-squadron volley-ball Tournament. First prize consisted of a "beer-bust" at the Officer's Beach House. Success was evidenced by the consumption.

The baseball team placed second in the Hickam Field League. An average of two games a week are played.

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Morale: (Two quotes from section reports)

"Judging from the morale among the non-rated and low-ranking personnel, the problem of dissatisfaction arising from an "uneven" distribution of ratings seems to have increased noticeably. This has been especially true since the squadron's absorption of a number of first three graders. The most dominating contentions asserted by these so called "dissenters" are that they have been in the service two or more years; that they are graduates of technical schools, in many cases two or more, and that their proficiency acquired from long hours of actual experience has been recognized. (In many instances Pvts. Pfc's and Cpls have been awarded MOS's of Crew Chiefs and Specialists.) In their reasoning of these factors it seems hardly justifiable that they should be denied the ratings their duties are authorized by the squadron's Table of Organization, especially since certain "favored" elements are rated in excess to Table of Organization specification. To add insult to injury, the absorbed "rank" transferred into this section are given the positions which rightfully belong to these rating-neglected 6th squadron personnel, consequently denying them the opportunity to display their abilities.

This problem is resulting in a definite deterioration of ambition and initiative. The eventual consequence of the quality of maintenance performance remains to be seen."

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"Most men who have been stationed on the island for two years or more were anxiously awaiting results on the rotation plan. When results were published, it was a great disappointment to all the men".

Comment:

Morale is good. Furloughs are needed. Most of all there must not be reasons for few furloughs such as "lack of shipping space". Evidence of imported non-essentials to the islands are too evident.

D.P. Lightbown
D.P. LIGHTBOWN,
1st Lt., A.C.,
Historical Officer.