

513th FIGHTER INTERCEPTOR SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

629th Bombardment Squadron (Dive) constituted, 4 Feb 1943
Activated, 1 Mar 1943
Redesignated 513th Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 10 Aug 1943
Redesignated 513th Fighter Squadron, 30 May 1944
Inactivated, 20 Aug 1946
Redesignated 513th Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 25 Jun 1952
Activated, 10 Jul 1954
Redesignated 513th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 1 Apr 1954
Discontinued and inactivated, 8 Jan 1961

STATIONS

Key Field, MS, 1 Mar 1943
Congaree AAFld, SC, 18 Sep 1943-13 Mar 1944
Ashford, England, 5 Apr 1944
Tour-en-Bassin, France, 19 Jul 1944
Cretteville, France, 17 Aug 1944
St Leonard, France, 4 Sep 1944
Mourmelon-le-Grand, France, 22 Sep 1944
Metz, France, 2 Feb 1945
Asch, Belgium, 6 Feb 1945
Handorf, Germany, 15 Apr 1945

Nordholz, Germany, 5 Jun 1945-20 Aug 1946
Manston RAF Station, England, 10 Jul 1949
Phalsbourg, France, 16 Apr 1958-8 Jan 1961

ASSIGNMENTS

406th Bombardment (later Fighter-Bomber; Fighter) Group, 1 Mar 1943-20 Aug 1946
406th Fighter Bomber (later Fighter Interceptor) Group, 10 Jul 1952
406th Fighter Interceptor Wing, 1 May 1956
86th Fighter Interceptor Wing, 25 Apr 1958
86th Air Division, 18 Nov 1960-8 Jan 1961

WEAPON SYSTEMS

A-20, A-24
A-25, A-26
A-35
A-36
UC-78
BC-1
P-39
P-39A
P-39Q
P-40, 1943
P-47, 1943-1946
P-47C
P-47D
P-47G
F-84, 1952-1953
F-86, 1953-1960
F-86D

COMMANDERS

Maj Robert E. Good, #1955

HONORS

Service Streamers

American Theater

Campaign

Air Offensive, Europe
Normandy
Northern France
Rhineland
Ardennes-Alsace
Central Europe

Air Combat, EAME Theater

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations

France, 7 Sep 1944

Belgium, 23-27 Dec 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

31 Oct 1955-31 Oct 1958

EMBLEM

On a shield white, with a border pattern black, a red chimerical creature, with the head of a lion and the wings and body of a stylized eagle displayed, the feet black, the claws red, teeth and eye white, outlined black. (Approved, 28 Apr 1955)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

On December 1, 1943 the present flying personnel together with P-47 type planes were assigned. The Group's "modern" history may be said to date from this time. The period December 1, 1943 to March 1, 1944 was one of successive stages of training; principally gunnery, dive bombing, formation and mission (flying).

13 May—1st Lt. CHARLES B. HALL missing from operational mission over France. While leading his flight in escorting A-20 aircraft in bombing airdrome at Beauvais Lt. Hall's plane was seen smoking and a parachute opened beneath his plane. Lt. Hall bailed out in the vicinity of Gisors, France, and that was the last time he was seen.

The preceding installment of this squadron's history covered the period of transition from the States to becoming established in the United Kingdom. The first two weeks at our new location were weeks of pioneering and "breaking ground" for future operations. By the end of the month, however, things were beginning to take shape and we could see the ultimate end in sight.

The period of time from the 30th of April until the 9th of May might be termed the "polishing off" period; there were soon to be operational missions, and all had to be in readiness for them. The Intelligence Section received a quota of magazines and publications for the pilot's use in the briefing and interrogation tent; escape and evasion kits were obtained, the pilot's pictures taped on them, the kits put in individual pilot's compartments.

The receipt of new and additional material and the straightening up of the old was carried out in all departments. The Armaments Section finally got 500 pound bombs and some

ammunition; the Engineering Section drew external fuel tanks and fittings; the Communications Section received additional test sets and radio parts. It began to look as though we should soon be ready for our first mission.

On May 1st the field was given an inspection visit by Major General Breton, the Commanding General of the Ninth Air Force; later there was an all group air review of 30 airplanes in his honor.

The Intelligence Section undertook one job which it is thought will be of value to fighter pilots. It was the preparation of small maps showing the outlines of the French coast and visible landmarks for orientation by pilots in the air. The maps were drawn on 4x6" pieces of cardboard and covered with plasti-seal. The cards fit handily into flying suit pockets and reference data can be marked on the plasti-seal with grease pencil and erased at will.

On May 5 information was given to the Group that it had been alerted for overseas movement and all sections must be ready to move at any given time, after a 5-day final notice. This was a rather startling announcement and caused all to wonder whether the invasion was actually ready at last. At any rate, all sections of the squadron took stock of their packing facilities and made preliminary as to how material would be boxed, crated and marked. From then on nothing was considered a permanent fixture, and all was made ready for shipment at short notice.

The first pilots' briefing was held May 7th in the Group Briefing Tent. This was not a briefing for an actual mission but a practice briefing of a mission due for another Group. The session gave the pilots an idea of what to expect in future briefings, what to remember when they themselves went out.

Our squadron Communication Section contributed something worthwhile to better coverage of missions-to-be for use in connection with interrogation reports. They set up a monitoring loud speaker turned to the pilots' radios. This speaker is located at Group Intelligence and is avidly listened to whenever our planes are on missions.

Our first operational mission occurred on May 9th when the squadron went on a fighter sweep over France. This initial mission was in the nature of an orientation and neither flak nor enemy aircraft were encountered. The pilots were a little uneasy before the mission, not knowing what to expect, but after it was completed they realized it might not be so bad after all.

Three other uneventful fighter sweeps were flown over France: May 10th, 11th and 12th, before an unhappy incident occurred on the 13th of May. Flight Leader 1st Lt. CHARLES B. HALL failed to return from an escort mission of A-20s to Beauvais, France.

The plane piloted by 2nd Lt. WAYNE T. SWANBERY was also set afire by an encounter with an ME-109 during the same mission, but by "slipping" his plane, he finally succeeded in extinguishing the blaze and returned to base.

Missions have continued rather regularly since the initial one on May 9th. Some days they have been "scrubbed"; some days there are two missions, but all of them, with the exception of the mission of May 13th, have been rather uneventful. No enemy aircraft have been met, and in many cases, flak has been meager.

Capt. HENRY W. SHURLDS, JR., our Operations Officer, had an interesting, if frightening experience connected with the "train busting" mission of May 21, 1944. He is now a full-fledged member of "The Dunkers Club" by virtue of his experience in the cold blue Channel waters. The mission in itself was most successful. Claims of 7 locomotives destroyed being made.

On May 24th the squadron moved, in two sections, to Brinzette Airfield. The Air Echelon moved out at 0600 and the Ground Echelon followed at 1300, after the last plane had taken off on an operational mission. The move was done fairly smoothly, considering the little time for preparation and the lack of facilities, such as local transportation, boxes, and sufficient paint and brushes for marking cases. We know now, at least, that we can move in an expeditious manner when it is necessary. The squadron returned from Brinzette and upon its completion, landed at our home base. This completed a little overnight bivouac of "C" rations, pup tents, and all the rest of it.

During the past month, increased emphasis has been placed on security. The Intelligence Section has given three lectures on this subject, two to the enlisted men and one to the officers. The ground defense of the airdrome has been drawn up and rehearsed with the men so that everyone is familiar with its requirements and knows his position in case of emergency.

At the present date, the squadron has flown 20 missions comprising the following: 9 escorts, 4 fighter sweeps, 3 dive bombing, 1 target cover, 1 strafing, 1 area support, and 1 escort patrol. One pilot is missing, two planes have been lost, 4 planes have suffered minor damage from flak, one plane suffered damage from enemy fire.

Major GORDON W. FOWLER led Red and White Flights down for an attack on the trains which Green Flight had attacked and continued on the deck for 15 to 20 minutes without encountering any further targets or enemy opposition. During this time 1st. Lt. WENDELL D. BRADY and 2nd Lt. EDWARD BLAKELY became separated from their flight and returned to base. Major FOWLER led the remaining six planes over the French coast. A heading of 210° was given this flight from "Ballrace" homing, but after flying for 15 minutes on this heading without sighting land, a new homing was obtained from "Coachride" which brought the flight to Ford Airdrome.

20 June—2nd Lt. CARL L. GRAY entered in morning report as missing, after failing to return from operational mission over France. Captain HENRY W. SHURLDS, JR., Operations Officer, appointed Major, and 1st Lt. WENDELL D. BRADY, flight leader, appointed Captain per SO #161, para. 9, Hq. ETOUSA, dated 9 June 1944. 2nd Lt. WAYNE T. SWANBERY appointed 1st Lt. Per SO #161, para. 9, Hq. ETOUSA, dated 9 June 1944.

25 June—Squadron redesignated 513th Fighter Squadron (SE), per GO #160, para. 1, Hq. 9AF, dated 13 June 1944. 2nd Lt. DWIGHT HAGEN assigned to squadron from Hq. & Hq. Sq. 495th Fighter Training Group. 2nd Lt. HARRY NOCK appointed 1st Lt. Per SO #143, para. 43, Hq. ETOUSA, dated 22 May 1944. 2nd Lt. DEMERITT entered in morning report as missing, after failure to return from operational mission over France.

17 June—2nd Lt. CARL L. GRAY failed to return from an Armed Reconnaissance Mission in the Lessay area.

25 June—2nd Lt. RAYMOND DEMERITT failed to return from a rail cutting, dive bombing mission in the Chartres-Voves area.

The period of time from the 1st until the 6th of the month was not unusual in any particular way and gave no indication of what was to follow. Four missions were flown, 3 escorts and one dive bomb; they were uneventful. One indication that the "Big Push" was imminent was the painting of the planes with wide black and white stripes for identification. The engineering help the effort.

At 1900 on the evening of the 5th the officers of the Group were ushered into the Group Briefing tent, each man's identity checked as he went in. It was then we learned of the invasion and the part we would play in it. Major Larkin, Group S-2, presented the situation to a tense audience. We learned that the Group would fly four missions D-Day, patrolling the beachhead from 0530-0630, 1030-1130, 1530-1630, 2030-2130. The 513th Sq. would operate in the "Easy" area. Briefing was given on the ground situation, pilots were acquainted with the bomb line, recognition colors, authentication codes, and all else that would enable our support to be successful. We left the Group Briefing tent that night in a sober mood. The next day would be an important day in world history.

Takeoff time the next morning was 0430 and every pilot expected to come back an "Ace". Everyone was surprised when they discovered the Luftwaffe was not coming up to defend its beaches. There was some flak but even that had been fairly well neutralized. All pilots returned safely from the first patrol and succeeding patrols. On the 8th the squadron finished patrol duty and went on a 1-hour alert status with "Hurry Missions" of various types.

With the increased number of missions and increasing enemy flak the serviceable aircraft in the squadron became startlingly low. At one time only 12 aircraft were operational. An average of three planes would return from missions with flak holes in them. On two occasions planes returned from ground support missions after flying through trees.

On June 10th Lt. HOSKINS, returning from a mission hit a tree and tore a large hole in his right wing and damaged the tail. June 17th Lt. WHITMAN damaged his right wing and right elevator when he pulled up into a tree from a strafing attack. To look at his plane after they had reached ground safely, it would seem impossible that they could fly at all. Thus it is that time and again

the P-47 has exhibited its durability, its ability to "take it" and return. For these qualities the P-47 has won a place in every pilot's heart who flies it. The 513th pilots sear by them; they come back.

The engineering department deserves a great deal of credit for keeping the planes in repair and ready to fly day after day. It is worthy of recognition that the 513th Sq. has the best maintenance record of any Sq. in the Group. Lately the Sq. has received 4 D-25 model aircraft. These, as is usual with new planes, have more "bugs" to be taken out. The engineering department, we know, will soon have them ready for combat.

June 17th, the squadron had an armed reconnaissance mission in the Lessay area from which 2nd Lt. CARL GRAY failed to return. He was seen to bail out of his plane 2 miles east of Cherbourg. His plane had evidently been hit by flak. The morning of June 17th the squadron went on an armed reconnaissance mission in the Lessay area in which 4 enemy aircraft were destroyed and one probable. 2nd Lt. STEWART accounted for 2 ME-109s, Major SHURLDS got 1 FW-190, 2nd Lt. ELLIS shot down 1 FW-190, 2nd Lt. COOPER claimed an ME-109 as a probable. All of these planes were met at a position 10 miles southwest of Periers.

June 15th, after an armed reconnaissance mission to Vire and Mortain, 2nd Lt. JENE ATHERTON was forced to bail out into the Channel due to mechanical failure of his airplane. He was picked up by naval craft a short time later and returned to England.

The 513th Squadron received nationwide recognition when Capt. RAYMOND M. WALSH appeared over the British Broadcasting Company on June 19th and explained how he became the first American pilot to shoot down a pilotless aircraft. It occurred when Capt. WALSH was returning from a mission and encountered the "Flying Bomb" off the south coast of England near Brighton.

The Squadron suffered another loss on June 23rd when 2nd Lt. RAYMOND DEMERITT was forced to bail out 2miles south of Chartres. His plane had suffered heavy flak damage and was aflame when he abandoned it.

To round out the series of "dunkings" and bail outs, on June 25th, 1st Lt. WAYNE T. SWANBERY bailed out into the Channel 5 miles off Cherbourg, after developing engine trouble. Lt. SWANBERY had difficulty in being picked up even though planes circled over him for several hours and his position was radioed to Air-Sea Rescue. He was finally picked up after 6 hours in the water.

The armament section has been busy this month, installing 13 sets of A-2 bomb releases, installing Mark VIII gun sights and putting thermite incendiary bombs in the planes for use in security destruction of aircraft if forced down in enemy territory.

Perhaps the greatest excitement of the month was centered around the pilotless aircraft raids. The squadron's ground defense system was tested the first night the "robot bombs" came over,

when a ground alert was called and all men occupied their alert position. Everyone lost sleep that night but nothing developed other than the continual roar of the rocket bombs overhead. Since that time sleeping in foxholes has been a rule of the Group. It hasn't been too comfortable but it is a safety precaution against falling flak.

At this time the squadron is ready to move at a few hours notice. Boxes are stenciled and painted; "C" rations are on hand; transportation has been allotted and planes ready.

Up to the present time the squadron has run 60 missions; among those have been armed reconnaissance, dive bomb, and escort. We have dropped 700 x 500# GP bombs, 1450 fragmentation bombs, 16 x 1000# GP bombs, and expended 190,000 rounds of ammunition. With this armament we have destroyed 4 enemy aircraft, 99 vehicles, 8 locomotives, 54 horse-drawn carts, 8 tanks or armored vehicles, and 1 rocket bomb. Numerous vehicles and goods cars have been damaged.

After five years of many changes and two major movements, the 513th Fighter Interceptor Squadron emerged to assume its assigned role of watchdog over the defenses of south-east Britain and the English Channel.

Since being called to active service, the squadron has trained and become proficient in F-51, F-84, F-86F and eventually, after a rigorous period of transition training, the latest in the F-86D.

Squadron Commander Major Robert E. Good, recently replaced Major Jack B. Owen, who returned to the US. Major Hood, who holds the Silver Star, DFC, and Air Medal, is a veteran with much combat experience in Europe in World War II.

On December 3 1954, squadron operations officer, Major Larry Blesie, added another historic note to the annals of the 513th when he made the first operational flight on the new F-86D out of Manston.

Numbered among the most experienced F-86D pilots in the squadron are four captains, all flight commanders, who have been flying these aircraft since they were first accepted for operational duties by the USAF in 1952.