

C O N T E N T S

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M A J O R
GEORGE S. ROBERTS,
COMMANDING

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I SPECIAL ACCOUNTS

May 1945.

As a tribute to the achievements accomplished in stalking a fiery foe from the rugged plains of Sicily to the lush valley of the Po, an armada of "Red Tails" participated in the Fifteenth Air Force Review which took place over Caserta and Bari on 6 May 1945.

With a tired and battered Wehrmacht completely defeated and driven from the battle fields of Europe and the once vaunted Luftwaffe forever driven from the skies, we of the United Nations turn to do homage to those among us who through their valiant deeds of loyalty and devotion helped to make this state of freedom possible. Climaxing a solemn but eventful VE Day, the 332nd Fighter Group, Commanded by Colonel B.O. Davis Jr., conducted a colorful ceremony during which awards were made to those sons of victory, who by their deeds and accomplishments had contributed in a great measure to the final and decisive defeat of the enemy, and who by their steadfast courage and consecration to duty had manifested the highest principles and ideals of the Armed Forces of the United States of America. The personnel of the Group gathered en masse upon the field from which only a few days previous these valiant airmen had winged forth in quest of a fleeing and disorganized enemy. These veterans of battle congregated to pay homage to pilots, who by their extraordinary and meritorious achievements had proven themselves worthy to be awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal, and to the ground personnel, who by their conscientious devotion to duty through long months of arduous toil had contributed so greatly toward the final victory and were to be awarded the Bronze Star.

Special Accounts Cont'd. [REDACTED]

The presentations were made by Colonel Y. H. Taylor, Commanding Officer, 306th Fighter Wing. As the pilots and ground personnel stepped briskly forward to receive their rewards for tasks superbly performed, an attitude of pride and reverence clothed the entire field. To the soldiers VE Day had more significance than merely the cessation of hostilities. On them was bestowed the privilege of seeing their comrades in arms receive commendation for tasks well done, and in their minds and hearts was the firm knowledge that their untiring efforts and unfaltering cooperation had made these attainments possible.

An added feature of the VE Day ceremony was the presentation of medals to the Group basketball team which won the Fifteenth Air Force championship and participated in the Adriatic Zone Finals.

As a fitting climax to an historical day in the history of the 332nd Fighter Group the Group formation passed in review as a final salute to their comrades and their commanders.

On 11 May the veterans of the famous "Red Tail" Mustang Fighter Group again assembled on their field to pay homage to those of their number who by their meritorious achievements had proved themselves worthy of receiving the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal and Bronze Star. This occasion was a momentous one in that the awards were presented to the honored personnel by Major General Nathan F. Twining, Commanding General of the Fifteenth Air Force. The assembled Group gazed with pride upon those who by their outstanding feats of daring and ceaseless efforts contributed so much toward the final crushing of the Axis foe. A background of "Red Tailed" fighter planes beamed in the noon day sun as these coveted awards were presented by General Twining. The exploits of these men are regarded as a re-

Special Accounts Cont'd. [REDACTED]

flection of the unfaltering loyalty and devotion of those whose efforts made possible these feats.

Once again Memorial Day called attention to the bitter cost of battle, seen in the many white painted crosses and Stars of David that mark the graves of American fighting men. To the men of the 332nd Fighter Group assembled upon Cattolica Airdrome, fanned by the breezes from the beautiful blue Adriatic, it brought a grim reminder of those valiant airmen who ventured forth across its broad expanses never to return. A consciousness of the eternal debt of gratitude for their sacrifices permeated the thoughts of the gathering. In commemoration of our fallen and the fallen of the United Nations, the program for the occasion was as follows:

1. Music----- America
2. Invocation----- Chaplain Cyrus W. Perry
3. Lincoln's Gettysburg Address---Captain Morris T. Johnson
4. Music----- God Bless America
5. Address-----Major George S. Roberts
6. Benediction----- Chaplain Cyrus W. Perry
7. Firing of Volleys
8. Taps----- Sergeant Calvin T. Dacus
9. One minute of silence
10. Music----- National Anthem

As a solemn hush fell upon the assembly at the conclusion of the ceremony, the spirits of our departed comrades seemed to whisper:

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from falling hands we throw the torch;
Be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders Field.

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II PERSONNEL NARRATIVE

May 1945

1. Personnel.

May marked the end of hostilities in Europe. Personnel of the 332nd Fighter Group observed a solemn two day holiday realizing that VE Day was only an anti climax to an end which had been inevitable for many days.

The movement to the new home of the 332nd Fighter Group was completed during the first week of May. Catollica Airdrome, the new home of the "Red Tails" reflected great credit on the advance party as spotless white buildings welcomed their new occupants. Soon, neat tents and houses surrounded these buildings in each area and the last campsite of the Group far surpassed any previous area.

First Lieutenant Herbert V. Clark, 99th Fighter Squadron, missing in action, since 16 August 1944 returned to the Squadron on 7 May 1945. First Lieutenant Clark successfully evaded capture for more than eight months and led a Partisan band that conducted raids against the Germans in Northern Italy.

First Lieutenant Hugh J. White, 99th Fighter Squadron, returned to the Squadron on 6 May 1945 after having been repatriated from Northern Italy.

Second Lieutenant James L. Hall, Jr., 99th Fighter Squadron, returned to the Squadron on 11 May 1945 having been repatriated from Romania.

Flight Officers James T. Mitchell and Leon W. Spears of the 301st Fighter Squadron were repatriated from Poland and returned to the Squadron on 10 May 1945.

During May twelve Officers were promoted as a reward for dilligent service

On 22 May 1945 Second Lieutenant Thomas W. Jefferson was released from

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duty with the 301st Fighter Squadron and put on DS at Fort Sheridan Replacement Center, Illinois and was further placed on TD with the Army Air Forces, Washington, D.C.

No time has been wasted since the cessation of the war. A training program for pilots and ground personnel was launched immediately. Classes, in Japanese aircraft and Naval recognition, Pacific Orientation, Weather and Topography and Tropical Medicine were held each day. Men of the Group not in attendance at these classes took selected courses at Naptha University. Training flights and supervised athletics rounded out the program for the pilots.

2. Visitors.

General Twining, Commanding General, Fifteenth Air Force, General Strother, Commanding General, XV Fighter Command, Colonel Taylor, Commanding Officer, 306th Fighter Wing attended ceremonies at the Group during the month to present awards.

3. Recreation.

With more time for play, diversified athletics and recreational activities took place on the Group and Squadron play areas. Men could be seen playing softball, baseball, basketball, volleyball and badminton. Swimming in the warm waters of the Adriatic was a favorite.

Tours were made to Venice, Genoa, Milan and Bologna in addition to regular rest periods at Naples and Rome.

4. Morale.

The anticipation of home coupled with a well organized recreational program kept morale high.

5. Outstanding Events.

See Special Accounts.

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6. Awards.

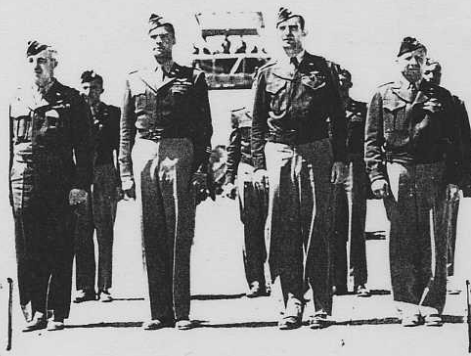
The Silver Star was awarded to Colonel B. O. Davis, Jr., for the following act: For gallantry in action as pilot of a P-51 type aircraft. On 15 April 1945, Colonel Davis led a group formation to strafe enemy rail targets in Austria. Keenly realizing the necessity for successfully accomplishing this important mission, Colonel Davis assigned himself to lead the mission. He exhibited expert navigational skill in leading his group through low clouds and haze to reach the assigned target area. Fully aware that the enemy could not be surprised because the area had previously been strafed during the day, Colonel Davis split his group into three squadrons in order to thoroughly cover the entire area. Without thought of personal safety, he led one squadron of twelve aircraft down to strafe despite the intense ground fire that blanketed the area and the difficult terrain features that made strafing hazardous. Leading his squadron gallantly on repeated passes, Colonel Davis courageously pressed his attack until he had destroyed or damaged six (6) locomotives. The thorough planning, outstanding leadership and professional skill displayed by Colonel Davis enabled the group to destroy or damage thirty-five (35) locomotives, eight (8) oil cars, forty-four (44) other units of rolling stock, four (4) barges, four (4) motor transports on a flat car and one (1) aircraft in the air, to thoroughly disrupt the enemy's transportation facilities. Despite the hazard presented and when he might have withdrawn, Colonel Davis remained in the target area more than an hour and only reformed his squadron when no further targets were available. By his conspicuous gallantry, and devotion to duty as evidenced throughout sixty (60) successful missions against the enemy, Colonel Davis has reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

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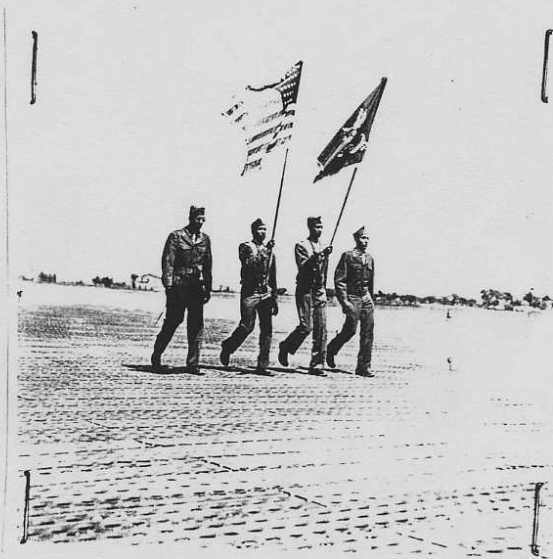
Major William A. Campbell, Commanding Officer of the 99th Fighter Squadron, became the first pilot of the Group to receive an Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Flying Cross.

During May pilots and ground personnel received:

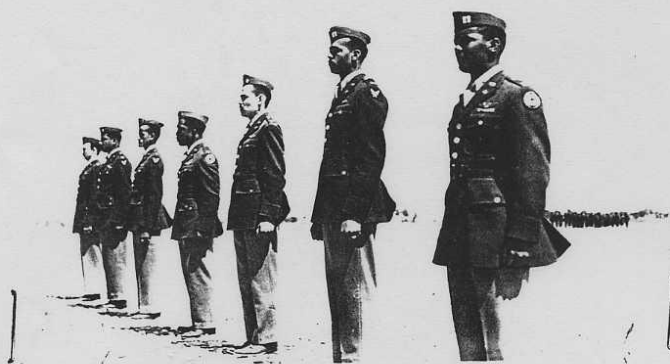
- 1 Silver Star
- 1 Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Flying Cross
- 16 Distinguished Flying Crosses
- 4 Bronze Stars
- 23 Oak Leaf Clusters to the Air Medal



Major General Nathan F. Twining, Colonel
B. O. Davis, Jr., Brigadier General D. C.
Strother and Colonel Y. H. Taylor watch
troops of the 332nd Fighter Group pass in
review.



Color Bearers pass in review



Pilots and Ground Officer who received awards