

71st FIGHTER SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

71st Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) constituted, 14 Dec 1940
Activated, 1 Jan 1941
Redesignated 71st Pursuit Squadron (Fighter), 12 Mar 1941
Redesignated 71st Fighter Squadron (Twin Engine), 15 May 1942
Redesignated 71st Fighter Squadron, Two Engine, 28 Feb 1944
Inactivated, 16 Oct 1945
Redesignated 71st Fighter Squadron, Single Engine, 5 Apr 1946
Redesignated 71st Fighter Squadron, Jet Propelled, 20 Jun 1946
Activated, 3 Jul 1946
Redesignated 71st Fighter Squadron, Jet, 15 Jun 1948
Redesignated 71st Fighter-Interceptor Squadron, 16 Apr 1950
Redesignated 71st Tactical Fighter Squadron, 1 Jul 1971
Redesignated 71st Fighter Squadron, 1 Nov 1991

STATIONS

Selfridge Field, MI, 1 Jan 1940
San Diego NAS, CA, 9 Dec 1941
Los Angeles, CA, 12 Feb–20 May 1942

Goxhill, England, 10 Jun 1942
Ibsley, England, 24 Aug–23 Oct 1942
St Leu, Algeria, 8 Nov 1942
Tafaraoui, Algeria, 14 Nov 1942
Nouvion, Algeria, 21 Nov 1942
Maison Blanche, Algeria, 17 Dec 1942
Biskra, Algeria, 22 Dec 1942
Chateaudun-du-Rhumel, Algeria, 16 Feb 1943
Mateur, Tunisia, 28 Jun 1943 (detachments operated from Gerbini, Sicily, 5–18 Sep 1943, and Gambut, Libya, 5–15 Oct 1943)
Djedeida, Tunisia, 31 Oct 1943
Monseirato, Sardinia, 29 Nov 1943
Gioia del Colle, Italy, 8 Dec 1943
Salsola, Italy, 9 Jan 1944 (detachments operated from Aghione, Corsica, 11–21 Aug 1944, and Vincenzo, Italy, 10 Jan–18 Feb 1945)
Lesina, Italy, 14 Mar 1945
Marcianise, Italy, 26 Sep–16 Oct 1945
March Field, CA, 3 Jul 1946
George AFB, CA, 18 Jul 1950
Griffiss AFB, NY, 15 Aug 1950
Greater Pittsburgh Aprt, PA, 21 Oct 1950
Selfridge AFB, MI, 18 Aug 1955
Richards-Gebaur AFB, MO, 16 Jan 1967
Malmstrom AFB, MT, 18 Jul 1968
MacDill AFB, FL, 1 Jul 1971
Langley AFB, VA, 30 Jun 1975

DEPLOYED STATIONS

Osan AB, South Korea, c. 22 Dec 1968–c. 9 Jun 1969
King Abdul Aziz AB, Saudi Arabia, 7 Aug 1990–8 Mar 1991

ASSIGNMENTS

1st Pursuit (later, 1st Fighter) Group, 1 Jan 1941–16 Oct 1945
1st Fighter (later, 1st Fighter-Interceptor) Group, 3 Jul 1946
4708th Defense (later, 4708th Air Defense) Wing, 6 Feb 1952
500th Air Defense Group, 16 Feb 1953
1st Fighter Group, 18 Aug 1955
1st Fighter Wing, 1 Feb 1961
328th Fighter Wing, 16 Jan 1967
28th Air Division, 18 Jul 1968
24th Air Division, 19 Nov 1969
1st Tactical Fighter Wing, 1 Jul 1971
1st Operations Group, 1 Oct 1991

ATTACHMENTS

Eastern Air Defense Force, 15 Aug–24 Oct 1950

30th Air Division, 25 Oct 1950–3 Jun 1951

103rd Fighter Interceptor Group, 4 Jun 1951–6 Feb 1952

314th Air Division, c. 22 Dec 1968–c. 9 Jun 1969

1st Tactical Fighter Wing (Provisional), 7 Aug 1990–8 Mar 1991

WEAPON SYSTEMS

P-35, 1941

YP-43, 1941

P-38, 1941–1945

P-38D

P-38E

P-38F

P-38G

P-38H

P-38J

P-38L

P-80, 1946–1949

P-80A

P-80B

F-86, 1949–1958

F-86A

F-102A, 1958–1960

F-106A, 1960–1971

F-4, 1971–1975

F-15, 1976

COMMANDERS

Cpt Jack W. Hickman, 1 Jan 1941

1Lt Frederick C. Grambo, Jul 1941

Cpt Raymond F. Rudell, 1 Feb 1942

Cpt John D. Eiland Jr., 9 Mar 1943-unkn

LTC Horace A. Hanes, 27 Sep 1943

Maj Lee V. Wiseman, 9 Dec 1943

LTC Frank G. Jones, 20 Sep 1944

Lt Col Robert P. Baldwin, 10 May 1945-unkn

LTC Ralph J. Watson, c. 1946

LTC Walter C. Beckman, 14 May 1947

LTC Gerald J. Dix, 17 Jun 1947

Lt Col Robert L. Petit, c. Nov 1947

Cpt George A. Davis Jr., 28 Aug 1948

Maj Bruce L. Morrison, 30 Aug 1948

LTC Robert L. Petit, Dec 1948

Maj Bruce L. Morrison, Feb 1949
LTC Robert L. Petit, c. Mar 1949
Maj Donald S. Glover, 12 Apr 1949
LTC Jack W. Hayes Jr., 6 Jun 1949
LTC Robin Olds, Jun 1950
Maj Raymond Janeczak, 5 Feb 1952-unkn
Maj James N. Brink, 1953
Maj Edward L. Faison, 1953
Maj Walter B. Wacławski, 18 Aug 1955-unkn
LTC Robert Miller, 1957
LTC Montie A. Davis, 17 Jul 1959
Maj Louis R. Kupersmith, c. Aug 1959
LTC Robert D. Wallace, 1 Nov 1959
Maj Lewis Whargro, 15 May 1960
LTC Robert D. Wallace, c. 15 Jul 1960
LTC Paul E. McGill, 9 Jul 1961
LTC Glendon K. Dunaway, 10 Jul 1964
LTC Billy M. Minter, 1 Nov 1966
LTC Ellis E. Stanley, by Mar 1967
Maj John Cary, by Dec 1967
LTC Ellis E. Stanley, by Mar 1968
LTC Francis D. Leonard Jr., 4 Aug 1969
Col Albert J. Lenski, 26 Jun 1970
LTC David C. Smith, 1 Jul 1971
LTC Samuel H. Martin III, 10 Jul 1972
LTC Frederick H. Smith III, 21 Dec 1973
LTC Lawrence R. Brehm, 22 Dec 1974-29 Jun 1975
None (not manned), 30 Jun 1975
LTC William B. Fanelli, 1 Apr 1976
LTC Jon E. Lucas, 18 Mar 1978
LTC Ralph F. Wetterhahn, 16 Feb 1979
LTC Hiram H. Burr, Jr., 30 Jan 1981
LTC Ross L. Smith, 25 May 1982
LTC Ronald E. Keyes, 30 Mar 1984
LTC Jonathan Goldenbaum, 30 Sep 1985
LTC David J. Morrow, 2 Oct 1987
LTC Richard C. Tuseth, 21 Jul 1989
LTC Howard L. Pope, 9 Nov 1989
LTC Gilmary M. Hostage III, 20 Jan 1991
LTC Franklin D. Bjoring, 18 Jun 1992
LTC Blake W. Thomas, 18 Jan 1993
LTC Kent Traylor, 24 Nov 1993
LTC Jeffrey S. Brown, 19 Jun 1995
LTC David M. Rhodes, 12 Mar 1997

LTC Jimmy R. Clark, 8 Jan 1999
LTC Robert Bledsoe, 2 Jan 2000
LTC Thomas Bergeson, 8 Jun 2001
LTC Mark T. McKenzie, 10 Jan 2003
LTC Matthew R. Fenton, 27 May 2004

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

World War II
Antisubmarine, American Theater
Egypt-Libya
Air Offensive, Europe
Algeria-French Morocco
Tunisia
Sicily
Naples-Foggia
Anzio
Rome-Arno
Normandy
Northern France
Southern France
North Apennines
Rhineland
Central Europe
Po Valley
Air Combat, EAME Theater

Southwest Asia
Defense of Saudi Arabia
Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations
Italy, 25 Aug 1943
Italy, 30 Aug 1943
Ploesti, Rumania, 18 May 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jun 1967–1 Apr 1968
15 Jun 1982–15 Jun 1984
16 June 1984–15 Jun 1986
1 May 1989–30 Apr 1991
1 May 1992–30 Apr 1994
1 Jun 1995–31 May 1997
1 Jun 1998–31 May 2000
1 Jun 2000–31 May 2001

EMBLEM



On a Medium Blue disc with Yellow border, a winged, mailed gauntlet in flight toward dexter base, with jet exhaust trail, all proper. (Approved, 10 Oct 1947)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Antisubmarine patrols, 15–30 Dec 1941; combat in ETO and MTO, 1 Sep 1942–3 May 1945. Air defense, Jul 1950–Jun 1971. F–4 replacement training, 1 Jul 1971–29 Jun 1975. Combat in Southwest Asia, Jan–Feb 1991.

11 May 41 While deployed to Alpinia Michigan for a gunnery exercise, Lt. Taylor of the 71st was flying a YP-38 when the left engine burst into flames, causing the plane to crash into the pine trees. Lt. Taylor died from his injuries a few days after the accident.

7-Dec-41 This Sunday, Japan attacked Hawaii and the Phillipines and declared war on the United States of America. The 27th and 71st squadrons were placed on the alert. All men on pass or furlough were ordered back to duty at Selfridge Field and work was begun to arm the airplanes. The 94th squadron stopped over in El Paso, Texas, en route to March Field, California, and heard the news of Pearl Harbor. The remainder of the Group, under command of Major Robert S. Isreal, Jr., was directed to proceed from Selfridge Field to March Field, California.

10-Dec-41 The 71st and 27th squadrons arrived at March Field with 12 P-38s and 24 P-43 aircraft. Note: it is unclear from the records whether the group travelled together to San Diego or split operations as separate squadrons. Only the detailed diary of the 71st is currently available to reconstruct timelines.

13-Dec-41 The bulk of the support element of 71st squadron arrived via train at Riverside, CA. For many of the men it was their first glimpse of an orange tree; several children came out to see the troop train when the 71st pulled into Riverside, California and were kind enough to bring oranges 'fresh from the tree.

14-Dec-41 The 71st squadron arrives at its final destination of Naval Air Station, Sand Diego. The 94th at March Field, California. 1st Fighter Group HQ at March Field.

15-Dec-41 The 71st Fighter Squadron began its first combat air patrols of the California coast from San Diego. Other forward deployed elements of the 1st Fighter Group likely had already been patrolling the California coast for a few days.

28-Dec-41 2d Lt Allan B. Scales, 71st, while on a routine patrol duty and machine gun practice flight over the Pacific Ocean, plunged to his death...

12 Feb 1942 The 71st Squadron left the Naval Air Station at San Diego, California by truck convoy, arriving at the Grand Central Air Terminal, Glendale, California.

5 May 1942 71st Squadron saddened by the split-up of their men, including many of the older men who were with the Squadron since its activation. These men were assigned to the 96th Pursuit Squadron of the 82nd Pursuit Group, and were transferred to Muroc Lake, California.

20 May 1942 The 71st FS planes and pilots left early in the morning for their cross-country flight, and 15 maintainers who were flying by commercial aircraft left about 8:00 A.M. The remainder of the 71st Squadron was on hand to give them all a big send-off. About 4:00 P.M., the balance of the 71st Squadron entrained at the Burbank Station of the Southern Pacific Railroad Station. Note: it is unclear from the records whether the group travelled together or as separate squadrons as only the detailed diary of the 71st is currently available to reconstruct timelines.

20-27 May 71 FS Air Echelon route across the USA: First stop El Paso, Texas, remaining there for two days, servicing the P-38s. Then to Barksdale, Louisiana for a stay of a day and a half. The next hop was to Patterson Field, Ohio. After a two and a half day stay here the planes took off for Mitchell Army Air Field, New York. A stop-over of one and a half days gave the men a splendid opportunity to spend an evening in New York City. Following this brief respite, the planes were readied for the final hop to Bangor, Maine, where the advance party (which had departed via train on May 17th from Glendale) was waiting.

23 May 1942 Privates Chmura and Domarack, were recently assigned to the 71st, were dropped as AWOL'ers, having left the train during the night. In mid-afternoon the train arrived in Chicago. The men's spirits were greatly enhanced by the friendly hand waves and horn-tooting of the civilians passed enroute. All seemed to express the sentiment: "We're with you boys, give 'em hell!"

Lt Charles Hoey (71st) personal logs reveals the following timeline:

19 May - Left Glendale for Biggs in a P-38F (Mission Symbol O-5) with duration of flight 3:00

22 May - from Biggs to Barksdale with duration of 2:55

23 May - from Barksdale to Patterson with duration of 3:15

26 May - Patterson to Mitchell with duration of 2:25

28 May - Mitchell to Dow with duration of 1:45

Most of June was spent flying Dow-Houlton-Pitts-Mitchell before leaving 28 June from Dow to Presque Isle.

5 July - Presque Isle to Goose Bay (3:25)

12 July - from Goose Bay to BW-1 (4:10)

15 July - BW-1 to Indigo (4:45)

25 July - Indigo to Stormaway-Ayr-Coxhill (7:25)

31 Jul 1942 The Bolero Status Report placed the 1st Fighter Group in England.. The Group Headquarters, the 71st, and 27th ground echelon took up station at Goxhill, while the 94th moved to nearby Kirton in Lindsay. Air echelon for the 27th still flew out of Iceland.

10 Sep 1942 The group received new ID letters and call signs. The 27th carried HV codes and the call sign "Petdog" while the 94th used UN, call sign "Springcap." The 71st used LM codes and the call sign assigned to them was "Cragmore."

2 Oct 1942 As the Group conducted an escot mission to Meaulte, France, 71st FS pilot Lt. William H. Young from Andrews County, Texas was shot down and killed over a German airfield in occupied France, becoming the squadron's first combat casualty in WW II (shot down on by Unterofficer Stoller, 2nd Staffel -2./JG26- three kilometers west of Coquelles, France near Calais at 1625hrs -- information courtesy of Belgian historian Luc Vervoort).

9 Nov 1942 1st FG ground element wades ashore in Arzew, Algeria. Sniper fire harrasses them for the next several days, and Sgt Loren Eck, 71st, is wounded. They were also strafed by "friendly" planes, which had landed at the nearby airport thinking it was in allied hands. The French, who had not yet decided which side they were on, simply refueled these planes and sent out with their own pilots to harass the "enemy."

13 Nov 1942 71st Fighter Squadron moves from St Leu to Tafaraoui.

20 Nov 1942 The Group dispersed over Northern Africa the headquarters and 27th and 71st moved to Nouvion (the 71st eventually to Maison Blanche) and 94th to Youks-les-Bains. A report from the 71st at Maison Blanche: "Left the field [Tafaraoui] about 1:00 AM tonight after loading up 15 trucks for the 3rd time. Unloaded our trucks after a 50 mile drive to our new field [Nouvion, Algeria]. This field is in a hell of a rough condition - just one shack for officers quarters and radio.

23 Nov 1942 "[27th and 71st FS] planes took off this morning to escort the fortresses to bomb Sardinia where the [Germans] are based that bombed the 14th's planes and 3 or 4 [B-17 Flying] Fortresses at Algiers. They got almost there and came back when wheather turned bad. 71st planes stayed at Algiers."

26 Nov 1942 Rained hard off and on all day. Weather closed in on a B-25C + B-17E and they dropped into Maison Blanche. Ditches had to be dug around the tents to prevent flooding, but some tents were flooded out. Lt. Bernard Muldoon taxied a 71 FS P-38 into a shell hole on the muddy field.

29 Nov 1942 The 94th made the group's first combat sorties in North Africa with a six ship strafing run on a German airfield at Gabes. On the flight back to Youks-les-Bains, Captain Newell Roberts and Lt Jack Ilfrey shared in the destruction of a Bf-110. Later, the squadron claimed responsibility for victories over two Ju-88s and a pair of Bf-109s. 27th and 71st P-38s escorted

47 C-47's which dropped 600 paratroopers on a field in Tunisia. The red, white and blue chutes all at once were reportedly a "very pretty sight."

1 Dec 1942 Aircrews met the delayed arrival of the ground echelon with cheers as the aircrews have been servicing their own aircraft. Lt Laurence Butler from the 71st was killed at Maison Blanche.

71st ground element begins to move to Maison Blanche, near Algiers, via airlift, train, and truck - with the move finally complete on 17 Dec 1942, only to start moving again on December 22nd to Biskra following the advance of allied forces across North Africa.

4 Dec 1942 The 27th lost three more over Bizerte- Lt David Everett and Lt Lawrence Pace were killed in action, and Lt Hubert Black was missing. Lt James Pate was reportedly wounded in action but managed to land in Algiers. Capt Joel Owens of the 27th was credited with a victory. The 71st claimed the squadron's first-ever combat kill, an FW-190 downed by Capt. John D. Eiland. (not credited). Lt. Russell, 71st, brought in a shot-up P-38 (canon shell thru cockpit canopy and dashboard, broken main hydraulic line) and made a belly landing.

25 Dec 1942 Christmas Day proved to be no more special than other days with "Limey steak and kidney pie, mostly kidney" being consumed. Sgt Gray (71st) was more upbeat: "Had our White Christmas after all today. Saw snow on the mountain tops. Most beautiful country I've seen for along time. Like New Mexico with nothing green - all dried brown."

26 Dec 1942 Lt Milton Sahl and Lt Richard Jones of the 94th were both killed in action. Lt Robert Sauer of the 71st shot down a JU. 88, and Jack Ilfrey (94th) shot down two FW-190s.

28 Dec 1942 Anthony Sgroi of the 71st took off in pursuit of a JU-88 (apparently damaged by AAA fire) which had just attacked the Biskra airfield. After several passes by Sgroi the bomber finally fell and the crew taken prisoner. Lt Allen Scales (71st) was killed in action.

1 Jan 43 Lts Sauer and Meldrum Sears from the 71st claimed victory over two Ju. 52s.

12 Jan 43 On a fighter sweep in the Gulf of Gabes, Lt Joseph Smith of the 71st bailed out after the Germans shot down his aircraft. He reportedly died by machine guns firing at his parachute.

21 Jan 43 Captain John Eiland Jr. of the 71st credited a victory

22 Jan 43 The 71st lost two pilots, Lt Alden Landers (KIA) and Lt William Dunn (MIA) during a strafing mission on vehicles on the Ben Gardane road.

23 Jan 43 The 71st moved to Ain M'Lilla. This would prove to be a fairly brief excursion and the last time one of the squadrons would be located separately.

Feb 1943 Captain Rimke of the 94th and Lt Lee Wiseman from the 71st each receive a single victory credit

10 Apr 43 "Spy gave word of JU-52's from Sicily to Tunis." The group launched 25 P-38s at 0620 on a fighter sweep of the Sicilian Straights with 4 returning early (2 spares, 2 mechanical troubles). Route: Base to Galito Island, to 20 miles ENE of Cape Ben Sekka and return to base. The 1st Fighter Group jumped a formation of 40-50 Ju-52s and an escort of 15 Macchi-200s (Mc-200) and FW-190s heading towards Tunis. The cover (provided by the 27th FS) engaged the enemy escort, while the remainder (71st FS) attacked the enemy transports carrying replacements for Rommel's Afrika Corps. Combat area was 15 miles east of Cape Bon to 10 miles off shore. Colonel Garman and Capt Eiland led the 71st and engaged most of the transports. Combat altitude was 200 to 500 feet. The Ju-52s, when attacked, spread out and went low on deck. 1st Fighter Group has no losses (2 P-38s damaged - Lt Moutier had an engine shot out but recovered to Duzerville, and Lt Jones, 20mm hit to the nose). Enemy aircraft losses: 20 Ju-52s destroyed and 3 damaged, 7 Machi-200s destroyed and 2 damaged, One FW-190 destroyed.

(Note: An unconfirmed account has SM-75 and SM-82 transports and Macchi 202s in the action)

Claims:

1Lt Joe Miles, Rhinelander, WS, (71st FS) 2 Ju-52s destroyed

1Lt Meldrum Sears, Paris, IL, (71st FS) 4 Ju-52s destroyed

2Lt George Brittin, Mankate, MN, (71st FS) 1 FW-190 destroyed, 1 Ju-52s destroyed

2Lt Walter Rivers, Paducah, KY, (71st FS) 2 Ju-52s destroyed, 2 Macchi-200s destroyed, 1 Ju-52 damaged

2Lt Lee Wiseman, Grand Rapids, MI, (71st FS) 2 Ju-52s destroyed, 1 Macchi-200 destroyed

2Lt Richard Ariano, Los Angeles, CA, (71st FS) 2 Ju-52s destroyed

2Lt Samuel Sweet, St Paul, MN, (27th FS) 1 Macchi-200 destroyed

1Lt Joe Ross, Ft Thomas, KY, (27th FS) 1 Macchi-200 destroyed

1Lt George Rush, Kansas City, MO, (27th FS) 1 Macchi-200 destroyed

2Lt William Royer, Jr., Miami, FL, (71st FS) 2 Ju-52s destroyed

1Lt John Moutier, Jr., Peoria, IL, (71st FS) 2 Ju-52s destroyed, 1 Macchi-200 destroyed, 1 Macchi-200 damaged

2Lt Leslie Garrett, El Dorado, AR, (71st FS) 1 Ju-52s destroyed, 2 Ju-52s damaged

2Lt Raymond Jones, Salt Lake City, UT, (71st FS) 1 Ju-52s destroyed

2Lt Arthur Franke, Cay, IL, (71st FS) 1 Ju-52s destroyed

Lt Col Ralph Garman, Mt Clemens, MI, (1st FG commander) 1 Macchi-200 damaged

25 Feb 43 Lt David E. Wilson, 71st, Killed in action in north Africa.

3 Mar 43 Five pilots in the 71st reach the 150 hours 50 combat sorties required for reassignment.

3 Apr 43 Lt. George Means, 71st, didn't return from a weather scouting mission. His body was found with the wreckage of his aircraft the next day and he was buried.

5 Apr 43 While the 71st provided top cover and engaged enemy escort fighters, the 27th, along with the 82nd group jumped an enemy force of 50-75 Ju. 52s, six Ju-87 Stukas, 20 Me. 109s and four FW-190s. The combined Lightning unit destroyed 11 JU. 52s, two 109s and two Stukas. In the melee two 27th pilots were lost, Lt Donald Field (MIA) and Lt Donald Hilgert (KIA). (Lt Newbury, 27 FS, credited with three downing 3 Ju-52s).

1 Jun 43 Six P-38s of the 27th FS escort Churchill and Gen Marshall (and Roosevelt?).
Early June Captain John Eiland relieved as 71st C.O. by Captain Joe Miles.

11 Jul 43 Dive bombing and strafing continued. Four more pilots ended up missing. Lt Ernest Chapman (71st) and Lt David M. Diamond (71st) collided in mid air over Sicily. Chapman bailed out (MACR# 101) and returned to his unit on the 16th after evasion, but Diamond was listed as MIA (MACR# 109). On the second pass late in the afternoon anti aircraft fire from tanks hit Lt Dee A. Johnson from the 94th. Johnson managed to keep his plane flying for awhile until he plunged into the sea and was listed as MIA (MACR# 110). Lt Charlie W. Brown, a 27th pilot, bailed out over the target area when he was hit by anti-aircraft fire, resulting in a bizarre encounter with Italian troops, and eventually returned to his unit on 25 August 1943 (MACR# 112).

6 Aug 43 LMQ, Lt Butler's ship from the 71st, blew up the right engine after full throttle, and came in on fire. He made a dive for the field and dropped his wheels, came in about 180 M.P.H., tore off his wheels, and slid along far and fast, and the aircraft burned up.

9 Aug 43 All three squadrons escorted B-26s to Angitola on two separate missions. After the raid three enemy fighters challenged the 71st but were driven away. The 27th incurred more damage as two of the planes were hit so badly the aircraft needed to make emergency landings in Sicily.

10 Aug 43 The 94th suffered losses during a bombing/strafing mission near Bova, Italy with the 71st. Lt Glenn E. Terry, 94th, crashed and exploded on railroad tracks (KIA, MACR# 352), Lt William W. Grieshaber, 94th, caught fire from being hit and crashed (MIA, MACR# 350), Lt Garvin A. Peters, 71st, crashed into the Mediterranean Sea and became a POW (MACR# 348), and Lt. John H. Wilson, 94th, went down in the sea, but eventually returned (MACR# 370). Lt Roger D. Miller, 71st, went down near Ischia island, and eventually returned to his unit (MACR# 372).

12 Aug 43 After attacking Grazzianise Airdrome in Italy, Lt Roger Miller (POW) and Lt Gavin Peters (POW) of the 71st Squadron were forced to bail out over the sea (and were captured) when they encountered and tangled with an estimated 25 aircraft.

17 Aug 43 Lt Charles Simpson, 71 FS, MIA (returned to complete missions).

25 Aug 43 Major Gorge Rush led the mission to Foggia resulting in over 47 German planes destroyed with only two planes lost from the 1st group alone. Marcel Williams of the 27th bailed out after being hit by flak, Robert Viall of the 71st could not release his belly tanks, forced to leave the formation and never heard from again. For this mission the group received its first Presidential Unit Citation

28 Aug 43 The group escorted B-26s to Aversa and encountered 25-30 enemy aircraft. The group destroyed three but Lt Basil Rudnick (71 FS - KIA), Lt Russell Winegar (71 FS - POW), Lt Richard Catledge (71 FS - POW, returned), Lt Matthew Warren (71 FS - POW) and Phillips were reported missing. Phillips turned up the next day however, the other three, with the exception of one, Catledge, never did. When Catledge did return in the spring of 1944 he told of his downing, imprisonment, double escape and evasion. He also explained one of the aircraft, piloted by Rudnick, went straight down into the ground. While imprisoned Catledge met David Deisenroth from the 1st.

MACR # Date A/C Type Serial # Group Squadron Note

493 430828 P-38G 42-12951 1st Ftr Grp 71st CATLEDGE, RICHARD E. (POW)

494 430828 P-38G 43-2554 1st Ftr Grp 71st RUDNICK, BASIL S. (KIA)

498 430828 P-38G 42-15014? 1st Ftr Grp 71st WINEGAR, RUSSELL (POW)

501 430828 P-38G 43-2327 1st Ftr Grp 71st WARREN, MATHEW (POW)

30 Aug 43 An escort mission protecting B-26s to their target at Aversa marshalling yards. During this time two waves of German fighters challenged the bombers and P-38s in a battle which numbered 75 highly aggressive and persistent aircraft against 44 P-38s. The group ended up with 13 pilots not returning from the mission, and one wounded. Five from the 94th were lost: Lts John G. Cram (MIA), Ralph E. Peck (MIA), Charles A. Woodward (MIA), David O. Parlett (POW) and Harold D. Rigney (POW). Hal Rigney and David Parlett were captured, escaped and returned to the squadron in the summer of 1944. Lt Jack Pettus was the only #4 man to return. An interesting fact surrounds the downing of Hal Rigney. Rigney flew in a rear position and noticed a stray P-38 that flew in behind him. The P-38 fired and hit Rigney forcing him to bail out. A captured P-38 flown by a German was the culprit. Burned and bruised, Lt Parlett bailed out into the water where he was picked up and taken prisoner. He shared the same prison with Lt Catledge who was captured two days previously. The 71st lost five: Lts John Willey (KIA), Clarence Southgard (eventually returned) and Walter Morrison (POW), Lt Ralph Turrentine (KIA-presumed killed in a mid-air collision with German fighters). The 27th lost Lts Harry Warmker (KIA), Clifford Randol (KIA), Jerome Weinberg (KIA) and F/O Donald Deisenroth (POW), and Lt John Husby was wounded in action. This was the greatest loss the Group suffered in a single day thus far (and second only to the 10 Jun 1944 mission) and earned it a second Presidential unit citation.

MACR # Date A/C Type Serial # Group Squadron Note

483 430829 P-38G 43-2477 1st Ftr Grp 27th GRAHAM, Hilliard (MIA -Italy)

495 430830 P-38G 42-12935 1st Ftr Grp 71st WARMKER, Harry D. (KIA -Med.)

496 430830 P-38G 43-2524 1st Ftr Grp 71st RANDOL, Clifford E. (KIA -Med.)

497 430830 P-38G 42-12919 1st Ftr Grp 71st Deisenroth, Donald B.(POW-Med)
499 430830 P-38G 42-13465 1st Ftr Grp 71st MORRISON, Walter (POW -Italy)
500 430828 P-38G 42-13014 1st Ftr Grp 71st TURRENTINE, Ralph (KIA-Italy)
521 430830 P-38G 42-13412 1st Ftr Grp 71st PECK, Ralph (MIA -Italy)
522 430830 P-38G 43-2510 1st Ftr Grp 71st PARLETT, David O (MIA -Italy)
523 430830 P-38G 42-13258 1st Ftr Grp 71st WOODARD, Chas. A (MIA -Italy)
524 430830 P-38G 42-13061 1st Ftr Grp 71st RIGNEY, Harold (POW -Italy)
528 430830 P-38G 43-2364 1st Ftr Grp 71st CRAM, John C. (MIA -Italy)
551 430830 P-38G 42-13003 1st Ftr Grp 71st WILLEY, John S. (MIA -Italy)
552 430830 P-38G 42-13227 1st Ftr Grp 71st Weinberg, Jerome N. (KIA -Italy)

Dittaino airfield was near Mount Etna (Sicily). Our missions started very early in the morning, so we were taking off while it was still dark. In a combat area there were no runway lights on the field and we were not permitted to use our landing lights. We used a flashing beacon at the end of the runway to help us maintain directional control. Since we could not use our navigation lights, the only way we could locate and join our flight leader was for him to flash his identification light located on the underside of the plane. Red Flight Leader used his red light, White Flight Leader used his white light, and Blue Flight Leader used his green light. When there were 12 airplanes taking off at very close intervals and trying to locate their leaders in the dark, it got very exciting. On a 9 September mission later that day, one of my good friends, Lt Frederick B. Messmore of the 71st Squadron, flew into the side of Mt. Etna during the early morning take-off and form-up. There was a red beacon on top of Mt. Etna and I believe my friend mistook the beacon for his flight leader. There was no official explanation for his accident. [from Charles Hoffman's Diary]

10 Sep 43 The group flew ten missions Lt Stanley Stuber of the 71st bailed out after being attacked. F/O Joseph Boyd also went down. Both pilots returned to the squadron.

11 Sep 43 Lt Marion Phillips, of the 71st was lost on an early morning mission over the ocean. The 71st flew in intense Salerno operations the first of the four missions started at 0455 for beach area patrol. In mid morning 11 P-38s from all three squadrons dive bombed and strafed in southern Italy. At 11:15 11 more P-38s went on patrol and 12 27th P-38s departed Dittaino at 1540 hours assigned to the Capri-Salerno. Some 12 to 15 aircraft were encountered and Lt Rodney Fisher of the 71st shot down an FW 190 and two Me. 109s bringing his total victories to five. The Lightnings returned at 1930 hours to complete the ninth mission of the day. A typical day at Dittaino for each of the squadrons.

27 Sep 43 "Cleaned house in the group today. Appointed all new sqd commanders including Hanes in the 71st which is the poorest outfit. Many other changes in jobs. Hope I have made the right choices."

3 Oct 43 The 71st lost three pilots in dive bombing missions. Lts Hobart Vincent and James Commer collided in mid-air. Lt Ralph Parrish was killed in action.

21 Oct 43 P-38s from all three squadrons escorted B-26s to targets in Italy when they were jumped by about fifteen enemy aircraft. The P-38s claimed five 109s and one FW 190 at the cost of three 71st pilots, Lts Junior Downing (MIA, evaded and returned) and John Lion (MIA, later returned) together with Lt Jesse Spaulding (MIA) failed to return

23 Oct 43 The 27th engaged 20 enemy aircraft and downed three of them plus several probables. Lt Dwight Terry was killed in action. Planes from the 71st and 94th flying ahead of the 27th heard a fight had engaged but couldn't locate it.

7 Nov 43 Lt Paul Binsley of the 71st disappeared without explanation. Although a test flight, the loss of his horizon over the sea seemed the most probable cause.

9 Dec 43 The air echelon flew to Gioia del Colle, Italy. Major Hanes transferred to group as Operations Officer and Capt Lee Wiseman assumed command of the 71st.

Once established at Gioia, two escort missions to Greece were flown. The first to the Athens dock area Kalamki Airdrome 71st pilot James Ferguson turned back due to low oxygen and jumped on by three Me. 202s. He turned into them and hit the lead aircraft.

Dec 1943 While escorting B-26s two 71st pilots Lts George Parker and Edward Tanner collided in mid air and became prisoners of war. Lt Elson Bondra, a Petdog pilot was killed in a running 20 minute encounter with 15-20 enemy aircraft.

7 Jan 1944 The Group only managed to get 20 aircraft in the air after ground aborts. After the bombers they escorted diverted to their targets the P-38s contended with 50-60 enemy aircraft alone. From the 94th, Lt Meredith crash landed in Yugoslavia. Lts Griffis and Devenney, also of the 94th, went down in flames south of the target area, both surviving their shoot-downs and becoming POWs. Another pilot, Jack Pettus, couldn't jettison the belly tanks in engage the enemy aircraft and was further plagued with a small fire in the right engine. He overcame these problems by making sudden motions with the plane, dropping the tanks, and feathering the burning engine. After all this, Pettus even managed to strafe a train on the way back. From the 71st, Major Horace Hanes, squadron commander, went down with an engine fire but successfully bailed out, returning two and a half months later. Lt. Reed Owens became a prisoner of Stalag Luft 1 after his bailout, and F/O Lee Rowe, after being hit in the pilot's nacelle, went down, was captured, and became a POW as well. Another 71st pilot, Lt. Corbett, was shot down and killed in action. Of the 4 "tail-end charlies" in the 4 flights of P-38s, all 4 were shot down, graphically illustrating the dangers of this position in the formation [information on this mission updated 19 May 06 courtesy of Mr. John Burton, whose uncle 1 Lt Jim Corbett, flew on the mission but did not return].

MACR # Date A/C Type Serial # Group Squadron Note

1691 1/7/1944 P-38 42-13044 1st Ftr Grp 71st F/O Rowe, MIA

1692 1/7/1944 P-38 42-12887 1st Ftr Grp 71st 1 Lt Owens, POW
1693 1/7/1944 P-38 43-2399 1st Ftr Grp 71st 1 Lt Corbett, KIA
1821 1/7/1944 P-38 42-13370 1st Ftr Grp 71st Maj Hanes, returned
2030 1/7/1944 P-38 43-2507 1st Ftr Grp 94th 2 Lt Griffis, MIA
2031 1/7/1944 P-38 42-13403 1st Ftr Grp 94th 2 Lt Devenney, POW

8 Jan 1944 The air echelon moved to Salsola, north of Foggia with only 32 operable P-38s for the entire Group.

10 Feb 1944 The 94th and 71st flew a dive bombing and strafing mission to Montero Tondo, Italy. Twelve P-38s dropped 24 500-pound bombs on railroad sheds and tracks. Lt. Thomas Collier, a 71st pilot, was caught in the bomb blast from the plane in front him, which blew off his tail section. Collier spun into the ground and was killed.

25 Feb 1944 An escort mission from an attack on the Messerschmitt factory at Tegensburg resulted in the loss of Lt. William Parsons of the 27th and nearly killed Lt John Price, who was hit in the face with glass when a shell exploded in the cockpit. Despite the loss of his left eye and instrumentation in his cockpit, Price made a successful landing in a rain storm back home with guidance from Lt. Frank Williams.

Lt. Emmet Gresham, a 71st pilot and son-in-law of LtGen Carl Spaatz, was missing in action. Needless to say the Group received many inquiries as to any updates on Gresham's whereabouts. His P-38 was seen crashing into Prvic Island. None of his peers saw a chute, but Gresham did successfully bail out, came under the custody of two unfriendly Yugoslav nationals, escaped, and returned to the Group on 12 Mar.

March 13 missions, 12 escort missions and one strafing mission to Lavariano and Udine airfields. This mission, flown with other Groups to total 90 P-38s, claimed three Ju. 88s, three Ju. 52s, three Do. 24s and one He. 111 destroyed with numerous probables. In addition to the enemy aircraft, a locomotive, three motorcycle and five trucks were destroyed with extensive damage to a radar station.

30 Mar 1944 The 94th destroyed two Me. 109s, one each taken down by Lts. Barlow and Hopkins. and the 71st brought down two De. 520s while escorting bombers over Sofia, Bulgaria.
April 1944 The Group flew 18 escort missions and another single strafing run at Udine. The month totals included 31 enemy aircraft destroyed, ten probables at the cost of four pilots. The Group also received the J model P-38s. These aircraft improved the canopy design to a flatter version to decrease distortion, the flight controls in the form of a two handed yoke, fuel capacity of the internal tank, and overall performance with the elimination of the 60 pounds of paint used to camouflage the aircraft, giving a very shiny appearance.

3 Apr 1944 Lt Larsson of the 71st was killed in an accident.

23 Apr 1944 The Group sent up 36 aircraft on B-24 escort missions to Bad Voslau, Germany. Carlow and Harris from the 94th each damaged a single engine fighter. Charlie Howard shot down a Dornier 215 and Paul Vachon did damage to a single engine fighter. The 71st claimed it damaged four Me. 109s, in addition to an Me. 210 and one FW 190. The 27th destroyed three Me. 110s, two FW 190s and one Me. 109. Two probable victories, both against FW 190s, and damage on six other enemy aircraft were also claimed. Despite all this action, all P-38s returned safely.

28 May 44 Lt Robert Berg of the 71st was killed in an accident.

10 Jun 1944 Frustrated at the minimal effect of the high altitude raids on the refinery the 15th Air Force planned a low level dive bombing attack. At dawn, 45 aircraft from all three squadrons of the Group met 48 P-38s of the 82nd Fighter who led the attack. Air aborts took out of the attack a total of 21 P-38, nine from the 1st Group. A segment of the 71st, Blue flight ended up cut off by the 82nd through a series of navigational corrections. En route to the target the 71st spotted at least a half-dozen Dornier bombers. When the 71st attacked them, they underestimated the numbers of Rumanian IAR 80s, often mistaken for the FW-190s, escorting the bombers. Although six were credited as shot down, two by Shepard, two by Lt Hoenshell and one each by Hisey and Flack, the 71st lost nine aircraft within the minutes. The pilots lost were Willie Flack, Lts William Potter, Joseph Jackson, Vernon Baker, and Albert Smith. Rudolph Janci and Ralph Hisey were also shot down but became POWs. Later, Lt Carl Hoenshell who was credited with shooting down at least three aircraft, including the two bombers, was killed himself on the way home when he and Lt Hatch were caught without ammunition. While the 71st was fighting a desperate battle, the 94th literally busted through an unexpected covey of enemy aircraft at low altitude to include more Do-217 bombers, an FW-190 aircraft, and trainer type bi-planes.

Also at this time, the 82nd Group, along with the remaining aircraft from 27th and 71st Blue Flight still escorting them, climbed to prepare for the dive bomb run. Something, most likely communication from the aircraft the Group had already run into, tipped off the Ploesti defense forces and the beginnings of a smoke screen and a hail of anti aircraft welcomed what was supposed to be a surprise attack. The AAA fatally struck seven P-38s as the 82nd rained down 36 x 1,000 pound bombs on the cracking plant, storage tanks, and refinery units. Two more were lost in strafing attacks on the return to Italy. After the attack, targets of opportunity presented themselves. The 27th engaged 30-40 Me 109s resulting in four destroyed, four more damaged and two probable victories against the enemy. This happened at the cost of four 27th aircrews. Cpt August Bischoff caught a wingtip while strafing and was killed. Harry Noone fell into enemy hands. William McClellan ended up in partisan custody until late June, and James Joye died. One 94th aircraft, flown by William McClellan, went down but partisans returned him to Italy in June.

Overall, the 1st lost 14 of its own but claimed 18 aircraft shot down, including five from a single pilot, Lt Herbert Hatch, one of the few the 71st who survived. This mission to Ploesti resulted in the heaviest loss ever experienced by the Group in a single day during the entire war.

MACR # Date A/C Type Serial # Group Squadron Note

5634 10 Jun 44 P-38J 43-28704 1st FG 71FS HOENSHELL, Carl C. -KIA -Yugoslavia
 5637 10 Jun 44 P-38J 43-28812 1st FG 71FS BAKER, Vernon C. -KIA -Romania
 5642 10 Jun 44 P-38J 42-104089 1st FG 71FS POTTER, William L. -KIA -Romania
 5665 10 Jun 44 P-38J 43-28536 1st FG 71FS FLACK, Willie B. -KIA -Romania
 5762 10 Jun 44 P-38J 43-28732 1st FG 71FS SMITH, Albert F. -MIA- -Romania, Varasti
 5776 10 Jun 44 P-38J 43-28772 1st FG 71FS JANJI, Rudolph M. JR. -POW -Romania
 5778 10 Jun 44 P-38J 42-104072 1st FG 71FS JACKSON, Joseph H.- KIA- PLOESTI
 5781 10 Jun 44 P-38J 42-104058 1st FG 71FS JOHNSON, George J. JR. -MIA- Bucharest
 5855 10 Jun 44 P-38J 42-104330 1st FG 27FS MC CLELLAN, William D. -WIA/POW- Romania, Gaesti
 5857 10 Jun 44 P-38J 43-2874 1st FG 71FS HISEY, Ralph W. ,JR. -POW -Romania Bucharest 1
 6030 10 Jun 44 P-38J 42-104009 1st FG 94FS GEYMAN, R. J. -POW- Romania, Bucharest
 6036 10 Jun 44 P-38J 43-28549 1st FG 27FS BISCHOFF, August J. JR. -KIA- Romania, Gaesti
 6322 10 Jun 44 P-38J --- 1st FG 27FS NOONE, Harry -POW- Romania, Gaesti
 10 Jun 44 P-38J 1st FG 27FS JOYE, James. -KIA- Romania

13 Jun 1944 The 1st FG flew a B-24 escort mission on June 13 to Munich with two P-38 losses:
 Lt Donald A. Kuske (71st FS) P-38J-15-LO Serial.No. 43-28764 -- Assumed dead, not found. Crash site located in 1950 near Reichsbach - Engersberg, Bavaria (Bayern). OHAM MACR #6082.
 Lt Frank J. Gerry, Jr. (27th FS) crashed 1km west of Edenthal, 10 km S.E. of Dingelfing, and became a prisoner of war. (OHAM MACR #5780, P-38J-15-LO, Serial-No. 42-104245, target Landshut Germany) POW Stalag 7A Moosburg Bavaria 48-12 (Work Camps 3324-46 Krumbachstrasse 48011, Work Camp 3368 Munich 48-11).

30 Jun 1944 Lt Robert Yaryan of the 71st was killed in an accident.

Major Francis "Bucky" Harris, a veteran of the 71st FS, assumed command of the 94th. Major Francis Pope relieved Cpt Thomas Rafael of command of the 27th.

14 Aug 44 Lt Paul Kimball, Jr of the 71st died of injuries.

18 Aug 44 Lt. Harold Kline (MIA) of the 71st failed to return from a mission over France. MACR# 8629. The Group left Corsica to return to Italy

31 Aug 44 The Group flew an unusually delightful mission to escort B-17s used to transport nearly 1,000 repatriated Allied airman from Popesti, Rumania (outside Bucharest) after the Russian army overran the area. The repatriated airmen included six pilots from the 1st: Lt Harry Noone (27th) , Edward Ulrich (27th), Herbert Foor (27th), Ralph Hisey (71st), and Raymond Geyman (94th). Lt Jesse Rae Dorris (71st) KIA during the mission.

2 Sep 1944 Lt Arthur Hoodecheck, Jr of the 71st missing in action near Belgrade (evaded and returned). MACR #8271.

Lt Vern D Nixon of the 27th killed in action over Belgrade Yugoslavia MACR #8272.

12 Sep 44 Lt Leo M. Brindley of the 71st missing in action near Munich, Germany.

20 Oct 1944 During a escort mission of B-17s attacking oil targets near Ragensburg, Germany, the Group encountered heavy and accurate Flak near Bolzano, Italy. Two aircraft from the 71st piloted by Lts Virgil Olsen (KIA) and Lowell Twedt (KIA) collided, and debris hit Lt William Wisner (MIA), and all three went down without any visible signs of pilots bailing out. Two other 71st aircraft were hit by Flak. Capt Elliot, in one of the aircraft hit by ground fire, crash landed at Duress, Italy uninjured.

23 Oct 44 Lt Richard Decker of the 71st missing in action in Germany (POW).

16 Nov 1944 Lt Chester Heien led the 94th on a strafing attack against truck convoys near Sarajevo, Yugoslavia. Two pilots, Evert Johnson (MIA - MACR #9892) of the 27th and Edward Steffani (MIA - MACR #9893) from the 71st, were lost over Yugoslavia. A third pilot landed safely in a damaged aircraft at Salsola.

18 Mar 45 Maj Paul Ash, 27th FS, missing in action. Lt Steve Dostal, 71st FS, shot down over Yugoslavia and listed as missing in action. Lt Dostal eventually returned to the unit with a very interesting story.

31 Mar 45 During a fighter sweep in the Vienna area Col Arthur C. Agan, the group C.O. flew in a mission where the 94th and 71st ended up separated between cloud layers. When the aircraft dove through a hole in the clouds near the Russian front lines, a hail of anti-aircraft gunfire awaited them. Colonel Agan and Lt. Rolla G. Gillen both were hit. With his plane on fire the Colonel bailed out over German front line trenches and taken prisoner. Eventually he reunited with member of the Group in May (1945). Lt R. G. Gillen, 94th, was killed in action. Two more P-38s were hit but one managed to return to base. Lt Norman Crawford, 71st, piloted the second damaged aircraft and last seen heading into the Russian lines. He eventually returned at the end of April.

The 27th shot down a FW 190 and an He-111 in addition to destroying a large amount of railroad stock. This occurred at the expense of two of their pilots, Lt Cary Hendrix and Lt Edgar Coury, the latter from anti aircraft and the former during the Heinkel chase. The day resulted in a loss of five during a month where 10 total aircrews were lost.

MACR # Date A/C Type Serial # Group Squadron Notes

13484 3/31/1945 P-38L 44-24053 1st FG 27 Hendrix, MIA

13482 3/31/1945 P-38L 44-24183 1st FG 27 Coury, KIA

13480 3/31/1945 P-38L 44-24382 1st FG HQ Agan, POW

13481 3/31/1945 P-38L 44-24420 1st FG 71 Crawford, MIA after crash in Pecs, Hungary.
Picked up by Russians, returned late April

13479 3/31/1945 P-38L 44-24654 1st FG 94 Gillen, MIA

5 Apr 45 Lt Gerald Isbell, 71st FS, was killed in action in Italy.

MACR # Date A/C Type Serial # Group Squadron
13647 4/5/1945 P-38J 42-104405 1st FG 71st

second force of P-38s strafed rail lines in Southern Germany, specifically in Regensburg-Salzburg-Munich. After splitting up in squadron size formations., the 71st went to Lake Chiem toward Munich, the 94th went to Regensburg south toward Landshut, and the 27th strafed from Regensburg southeast parallel with the Danube toward Passau. In addition to the multitude of ground targets either damaged or destroyed, the group also claimed an aerial victory over an FW-190.

Five pilots did not return from this mission including all three squadron leaders. However one did survive - Capt Everett S. Lindley the 94th squadron and mission leader. The four fatalities consisted of Cpt Chester Trout, 27th leader, hit by flak just west of Passau and crashed in flames, Major Joseph Elliot, the 71st leader, also hit by anti aircraft fire, crashed at Feldkirchen east of Munich and was killed. Lt Edward Brickly, 27th FS, and Lt George McGrew, 71st, were both hit by flak, and were killed in ensuing crashes.

MACR # Date A/C Type Serial # Group Squadron Notes
13799 4/15/1945 P-38 44-24132 1st FG 94 Regensburg, Germany, Lt Lindley, POW
13802 4/15/1945 P-38L 44-24190 1st FG 71 Munich, Germany, Lt McGrew, KIA
13801 4/15/1945 P-38L 44-24632 1st FG 27 Trout, MIA
13797 4/15/1945 P-38L 44-25698 1st FG 27 Regensburg, Germany, Brickley, MIA
13800 4/15/1945 P-38L 44-25734 1st FG 71 Munich, Germany, Elliott, KIA

23 Apr 45 During this day's mission attacking targets of opportunity in northern Italy, Captain Larry Reynolds, 27th squadron leader and Captain John Hurst, flight leader, were both struck by flak and successfully bailed out. Both were on their second tour of duty with the 1st FG. The 71st leader, Cpt Clarence Knapp died when his aircraft was hit in the left wing at an altitude of only 50 feet, burst into flames, flipped over and dove in (wingman Steve Dostal's account on his first mission after rejoining the unit).

71ST FTR.SQDN
CALLSIGN
WWII

Although the 1 FG was assigned to the Eighth AF for a very brief period, June thru November of 1942, it flew numerous combat sorties while so assigned before going on to serve with distinction with the 12th and later 15th AAFs'. Squadrons of the 1st Fighter Group received their overseas codes in Sep '42 and these were soon applied to all aircraft radiator housings in 1 Sin. tall Sky or white letters. 'Plane-In-Group' assignment or 'Last Three' aircraft serial number digits sometimes adorned the fuselage nose or forward engine cowling area of 1 FG P-38s.

Of the three squadron insignia, the 27th Ftr Sqn was the only design with continuous longevity prior to WWII. Officially approved by the Army Board of Heraldry in 1924, this image can be traced back to WWI as the combat insignia for the 27th Aero Sqn. The 'Indian Head' insignia below is actually the oldest of all these images. This symbol was originally the combat insignia of the Lafayette Escadrille, those young American pilots who flew for France prior to the United States entry into WWI. When ultimately transferred into the U.S. Army Air Service as #, the 103rd Aero Sqn, this insignia went with them as that unit's insignia. The 103rd was subsequently consolidated with the 94th Aero Sqn which had already adopted the 'Hat In The Ring' device. This latter design was finally adopted as the official insignia of the 94th in 1919 only to again be replaced by the Indian Head motif in 1924. Just prior to the group's deployment overseas in 1942, former 94th Aero Sqn Ace, Captain Eddie Rickenbacker successfully lobbied for the reinstatement of the 'Hat In The Ring' symbol as the official Group insignia of the 94th Fighter Squadron.

The reorganization plan affected the 1st Fighter Group. The 1st Fighter Wing was activated at March Field and assigned to Twelfth Air Force and TAG on 15 August 1947. Headquarters, 1st Fighter Group and the 27th, 71st, and 94th Fighter Squadrons were assigned to the wing as its tactical component on the same date. The wing's subordinate maintenance, supply, and support organizations were also organized on 15 August. These included Headquarters, 1st Maintenance & Supply Group; Maintenance Squadron, 1st Maintenance & Supply Group; Supply Squadron, 1st Maintenance & Supply Group; and Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, 1st Airdrome Group, with six component squadrons, designated A-F, which handled communications, security, civil engineering, food services, transportation, and base services. March Field was also the home of the 608th Aircraft Control & Warning Squadron, Headquarters, 506th Aircraft Control & Warning Group, and Headquarters, 67th Reconnaissance Group. These units were also assigned to the wing.

In 1943 the different squadrons began to apply specific colors to their tail booms, wingtips and prop tips. The 27th FS used red, (Squadron Codes beginning with HV), the 71st FS used White (Squadron Codes beginning with LM,) and the 94th FS used yellow, (Squadron Codes beginning with UN.) When the Group began receiving P-38s in their natural aluminum finish, the 71st FS changed their color to black. Red spinners were also introduced sometime in 1944.

During the first night of the operation, Captain Steve Tate of the 71st Tactical Fighter Squadron, shot down an Iraqi F-1 Mirage, which turned out to be the wing's only kill during the war. It was also the first combat credit awarded to the wing under command of the U.S. Air Force. Upon its return on 8 March 1991, the 1st Tactical Fighter Wing had amassed a total of 2,564 sorties during Operation Desert Storm. The end of the Gulf War did not bring an end to the Wing's support in Southwest Asia. Monitoring the southern no-fly zone, the 1st provided six-month coverage every year under Operation Southern Watch. In October 1994, when Saddam Hussein tested U.S. resolve by placing forces near the Kuwaiti border, the Wing participated in a short-notice deployment, Operation Vigilant Warrior. When Iraqi troop movements began again in

September 1996, the Wing was prepared to deploy under Operation Desert Focus.

The training and experience gained, especially from Prized Eagle, was called upon in the summer of 1990, when Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait. On 7 August 1990, the 27th and 71st Tactical Fighter Squadrons began deploying to Saudi Arabia in support of the defense of Saudi Arabia from further Iraqi aggression entitled Operation Desert Shield. In all, the Wing deployed 48 aircraft to the Persian Gulf. By 16 January 1991, when Desert Shield came to a close, the Wing amassed 4,207 sorties.

71 FIS COMMANDER ACCIDENTALLY SHOT DOWN F-102 AIRCRAFT FROM HIS SQUADRON. F-102 AIRCRAFT ASSIGNED TO 71 FIS CRASHED WHILE ATTEMPTING TO LAND. 1959

The 71st FIS was transferred from SAC to ADC with F-80 aircraft at March AFB in December 1948. In May 1949 it went back to SAC for a year until its transfer to ADC again in April 1950 with F-86As. The squadron made three quick moves to George AFB, Griffiss AFB, and, finally to Greater Pittsburgh Airport in October 1950. In 1958 the unit received F-86D aircraft, and in August 1955 the 71st designation was transferred to Selfridge AFB. In the spring of 1957 the F-86Ds were traded for F-86Ls but, shortly thereafter, in the fall of 1958, the squadron transitioned into F-102A. Two years later in October 1960 a transition into F-106As took place. In January 1967 the unit moved to Richards-Gebaur AFB, but soon moved again in June 1968 to Malmstrom AFB. It remained at Malmstrom with F-106s until deactivation on 1 July 1971 when the 71st was redesignated as the 319th FIS and was transferred to TAC (Tactical Air Command).

Inactivating Langley Unit Loses First F-15s: Two F-15s from the 71st Fighter Squadron at Langley AFB, Va., on Monday departed the base for good as part of the unit's pending inactivation. The two aircraft were flown to their new home with the 433rd Weapons Squadron at Nellis AFB, Nev. The 71st FS is scheduled to lose all 20 of its F-15s before the end of September and then cease operations under the Air Force's drawdown of about 250 legacy fighters. Langley's remaining F-15s will transfer to Nellis, Kadena AB, Japan, and Air National Guard units in Louisiana and Oregon. The 71st FS completed its final deployment 2010

Last Time Away: The 71st Fighter Squadron completed its final deployment in late May when members of the unit and their F-15s returned home to Langley AFB, Va., after a two-week stay at Tyndall AFB, Fla. The squadron had participated in weapon system evaluation activities while in Florida. The unit is one of the Air Force's squadrons that will be deactivated in the fall as part of a drawdown of legacy fighter assets. Lt. Col. Joel Cook, 71st FS boss, said the unit's maintenance support during the stint at Tyndall "was the best I've ever seen in my 17 years of service." 2010

Ironmen Inactivated at Langley: Officials with the 1st Fighter Wing at Langley AFB, Va., on Thursday inactivated the 71st Fighter Squadron during a ceremony, completing the phaseout of the F-15 mission at the base. The unit, known as the Ironmen, traces its heritage back to the

71st Pursuit Squadron during World War II. It had been located at Langley since 1975 and operated F-15s from there since 1976. Lt. Col. Joel Cook, 71st FS commander noted its contribution in providing "that blanket of freedom" that protected Americans over the years. The squadron's inactivation was part of the broader restructuring of the Air Force's legacy fighter fleet that has resulted in the retirement of some 250 fighters. The 71st FS' drawdown began in June. In September, the last remaining F-15s departed Langley, leaving the 1st FW with two F-22 squadrons to carry on the air superiority mission. Friday October 01, 2010

Langley Says Goodbye to Final F-15s: The last two operational F-15s assigned to the 71st Fighter Squadron at Langley AFB, Va., departed the base for good this past week, ending decades of F-15 operations there. Langley shed the 20 F-15s of the 71st FS under the broader Air Force drawdown of 250 fighters in this fiscal year. The first F-15s departed Langley in June. With all of them now gone, plans are to inactivate the 71st FS on Sept. 30. "With the departure of the F-15s, the air superiority torch will be passed to the next generation of Air Force aircraft—the mighty F-22," said Col. Matthew Molloy, commander of the 1st Fighter Wing, parent unit of the 71st FS. The wing already has two combat-ready F-22 squadrons and is receiving six additional F-22s as part of USAF's F-22 basing realignment Tuesday September 07, 2010

The 71st FIS converted from the F-102 during the second half of 1960 at Selfridge AFB, Michigan. It moved to Keesler AFB, Mississippi, on January 15, 1967, then to Malmstrom AFB, Montana, on July 8, 1968. When the 71st squadron designator was assigned to TAC on July 1, 1971, the unit was redesignated the 319th FIS. The 71st FIS was known as the "Flying Fists." In this 1962 photo, taken at Selfridge AFB, the familiar red and white bands and blue V are seen on the tail. The First Fighter Wing crest is in the V, and the squadron insignia is on the nose. Today the Michigan ANG, flying F-4Cs, still sits alert in these same barns.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION F-15C, SERIAL NUMBER (S/N) 83-0017, 71 ST FIGHTER SQUADRON (FS), LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE (AFB), VIRGINIA AND F-16C, S/N 86-0269, 64TH AGGRESSOR SQUADRON (AGRS), NELLIS AFB, NEVADA EIELSON AFB, ALASKA 11 JUNE 2007

On 11 June 2007 at 1905 Zulu, or Greenwich Meridian Time, approximately 80 miles east of Eielson AFB, Alaska, Mishap Aircraft 1 (MA1), F-15C, S/N 83-0017, 71 FS, Langley AFB, Virginia collided with Mishap Aircraft 2 (MA2), F-16C, S/N 86-0269, 64 AGRS, Nellis AFB, Nevada. Both aircraft were participating in a RED FLAG-Alaska exercise. Mishap Pilot 1 (MP1) was flying MA1 as Blue air and attacking Red air. While attacking, MP1 descended out of his assigned altitude block of 30,000 to 35,000 feet. Mishap Pilot 2 (MP2) had been "killed" for exercise purposes and was exiting the airspace when MA1 and MA2 collided. MA1 immediately departed controlled flight, and MP1 ejected safely. MA1 crashed and was totally destroyed on impact, with the loss valued at \$33,174,003.72. MP1 was recovered approximately ninety minutes after the ejection. MA2 suffered damage to the left wing and tail section, but MP2 was able to land at Eielson AFB. The damage to MA2 was valued at \$1,041,595.00. Neither MP1 nor MP2 was injured. There were no civilian casualties or damage to private property. The estimated cost for clean-up of the crash site, a remote area on a vegetated hillside owned by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, is \$19,000. The Accident Investigation Board (AIB) President

found by clear and convincing evidence that the cause of the accident was the failure of MP1 to stay within his altitude block because of channelized attention on mission tasks. MP1 lost situational awareness of MA1's altitude and MA2's position relative to MA1. The AIB President found sufficient evidence to conclude that the particular angle of MA1 relative to MA2 made it difficult for either MP1 or MP2 to visually acquire the other aircraft and substantially contributed to the mishap.

12 November 1983 McDonnell-Douglas F-15A-16-MC Eagle, 76-076, of the 71st Tactical Fighter Squadron, 1st Tactical Fighter Wing, jumps chocks during an engine run at Langley AFB, Virginia, and collides with F-15, 76-071, of the same unit. Both are repaired. 76-076 is later placed on display in park near DeBary, Florida, marked as 85-0125, in memory of an airman killed in the Khobar Towers terrorist bombing.

1970 2 February An Convair F-106A-100-CO Delta Dart, 58-0787, of the 71st Fighter-Interceptor Squadron, out of Malmstrom AFB, (the Cornfield Bomber), piloted by Capt. Gary Faust, enters a flat spin during air combat maneuvering (ACM) over Montana. Faust follows procedures and ejects from the aircraft. The resulting change of balance causes the aircraft to stabilize, and it lands wheels up in a snow-covered field, suffering almost no damage. The aircraft is then sent back to base by rail, repaired and returned to service. Preserved initially at Griffiss AFB, New York, it is now on display at the National Museum of the United States Air Force.

Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources

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