## FIRST FIGHTER SQUADRON

"THE FIGHTING FURIES "

UNIT HISTORY

The 1st Fighter Squadron, 413th Fighter Group was activated on 15 October 1944 at Army Air Base, Seynour Johnson Field, Goldsboro, North Carolina. Lack of facilities and room with which effective operational training was not possible necessitated moving of the organization to Eluethenthal Field, Wilmington, North Carolina where the Squadron arrived on 9 November 1944. The Squadron has been under direct jurisdiction of the 413th Fighter Group (SE), which in turn comes under the 301st Fighter Wing. Lateral to the 1st Fighter Squadron within the 413th Ftr. Group are the 21st and 34th Fighter Squadrons.

The organization remained at Bluethenthal Field from 9 November 1944 until 7 April 1945. In that period we received extensive training readying us for overseas service. It was a period that saw the outfit working from fourteen to sixteen (14-16) hours a day. Along with the ground school -- orientation in combat activities and how to cope with them -- which required two to three (2-3) hours a day. Among all this feverish activity we absorbed as much of the training as is possible in such a short period of time and kept the planes in excellent flying condition.

On orders of higher headquarters the Squadron departed Blaethenthal Field on 7 April 1945 and arrived at FortaLawton, Seattle, Washington on 12 April 1945 for further processing. We enjoyed the size days it required to cross the country viewing the South, Mid-West, the plains and mountains. Considering the distance that had to be covered it was carried out in comparative comfort. We had thirty-five (35) men assigned to a car which afforded plenty of leg room and comfortable sleeping facilities, doubling the lower berths and single upper berths. The troop kitchen prepared excellent meals, highly palatable and, of course, there were frequent stops along the way where we were given the opportunity to get some fresh air and exercise our tired muscles.

At Fort Lawton the processing was expedited. All equipment was checked for quality and quantity and all records cleared. Plus the spiritual uplifting with several lectures completed our processing adequately. On 17 "pril 1945 the men of the organization, with helmets marked in chalk corresponding to the numbers of the ship's directories, embarked on the "USAT Kota Inten" for overseas duty. With the Transport Command Orchestra playing "One O'Clock Jump" the ship pulled from the dock at 1800 hours that day. All were topside watching Seattle's skyline get smaller and smaller until it passed from view. The trip went without incident, there were a few who did become seasick but these cases lasted but a few days. Our first stop over the long voyage was Hawaii. We came into port the morning of April 25th. It was nice to have the engines stop their steady throbbing and the coasing

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of the pitch and roll of the ship. Here the mail caught up with us and some of the Honolulu newspapers were brought aboard to give us some fresh reading material.

Personnel of the Air Echelon had stopped here twenty-five (25) days earlier. They left San Francisco, the 26th of March on the U.S.S. "Kwajalien", an aircraft carrier, arriving at Ford Island on the 1st of April and leaving the following day for Guam. It was on that carrier that they assembled, maintained and complied with T.O. changes on fortynine (49) aircraft.

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across the Pacific. Considering the heat, crowded conditions and abominable food that was served, all aboard seemed to "take it" in grand style.

After Pearl Harbor we had two more stops enroute. One at Eniwetok where we arrived the 6th of May and the other at Ulithi, 12th of May. Neither stop was exciting or noteworthy, rather, the stops proved very trying as the weather was unbearable. At Ulithi the Engineering Officer and eleven (11) enlisted men left the "Kota Inten" to join the Air Echelon at Tinian. Tinian is where the Air Echelon had going after leaving Guam the 22nd of April.

We came in on the heels of the invasion forces arriving at Ie Shima on 19th of May. It wasn't until 2100 hours of that day however that we had all our gear together and went over the side into an "L.S.M." which took us to the beach and terra firma after thirty-one (31) days on the sea.

The difficult job of unloading the equipment began the next day and continued for the next five days. It was made difficult because of the constant rain, lack of transportation and frequent air raids. While we were subjected to constant bombing attacks, no large scale force capable of doing extensive damage reached the island.

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Conditions were bad and getting worse; it continued to rain for the next ten days; made our living area untenable. We worked, slept and ate in mud. Through it all, we set up our permament area, uncrated and sorted the equipment and set up the various departments.

l6th of June the first contingent of the Air Echelon arrived and operational flying began two days later, June 18th. This is discounting of course, the raid the Air Echelon made on Jap-held Truk on May 21st in which fifteen (15) of our aircraft participated.

In our war against Japan the pilots flew Combat Air Patrol, bombing, strafing and escort missions totalling 1,037 sorties, 54 missions and 72 C.A.P.s., destroying twelve (12) planes in the air, five (5) on the ground, three (3) damaged and one (1) probable, along with the extensive damage done the enemy airfields, shipping, manufacturing centers and installations with its bombing and rocket attacks.

It should be noted also that our unit was the first to use Napalm against the Japanese homeland and the first to go on the longest fighter flight deep into Honshu.

August was a month that saw a unit such as ours change over from an all-out war machine to a peace time army organization. The organization carried the war to the Japanese homeland in the first two weeks of August

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in the same fighting manner it had shown from its first mission some two months previous.

There was no let-up in our efforts and a report of the apanese surrender on the 12th of August caught us unawares and proved an emotional shock -- the report also proved to be unconfirmed. However, the news we had been waiting for did not deter us from our objective and the pilots went on another mission the following day with renewed vigor and determination the make the succeeding announcement emphatically correct.

It is a fine combat record that the organization posted in the two months of operational flying prior to the war's end with the official announcement of the Japanese acceptance of the surrender terms on 15th of August. Considering that in this period this area experienced unusually adverse weather which kept the planes frounded for days at a time. There is to the tireless efforts of the pilots and the unstinted efforts of the ground crows in keeping the planes flying our bit in the war against Nippon is felt to have been of major importance in bringing about the rapid conclusion of the war. This is, of course, in retrospect that we are viewing our work because at the time of our labors no effort seemed to be too great.

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