# BATTLE COLORS

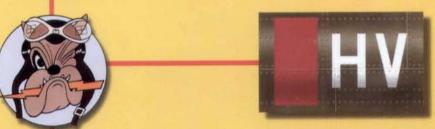
INSIGNIA AND AIRCRAFT MARKINGS OF THE EIGHTH AIR FORCE

IN WORLD WAR II

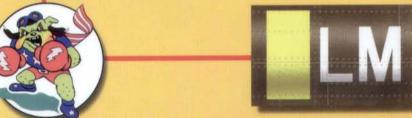
**VOLUME II: (VIII) FIGHTER COMMAND** ROBERT A. WATKINS

56TH **FIGHTER** GROUP

AVE TONITRU



61st **FIGHTER SQUADRON** 



62ND **FIGHTER SQUADRON** 



A SCHIFFER MILITARY HISTORY BOOK

# BATTLE COLORS

Insignia And Aircraft Markings Of The Eighth Air Force In World War II

Volume II / (VIII) Fighter Command



Robert A. Watkins

Schiffer Military History Atglen, PA



This volume is respectively dedicated to all the fighter pilots, bomber and ground crews of the US Eighth Air Force, especially those who never made it home.

Book Design by Robert A. Watkins.

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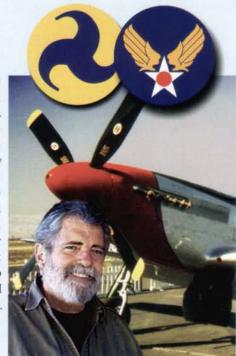
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This, the second volume in the Battle Colors series, concludes the focus on 8th Army Air Force insignia & markings. This in no way is meant to imply that the 'book is closed' on this matter, quite the contrary. After spending better than fifty years in an avocational pursuit of this subject, I am constantly amazed at the regularity with which new images and data relating to continue to surface. One would tend to feel that given this age of 'super information' in which we now live that just about anything and everything there is to know about the subject of World War II would by now be a matter of public record. This is simply not the case however. Much of this new material is uncovered by professional historians who spend untold

hours pouring over dusty archives, personal correspondence and photographic images. To these individuals the rest of us enthusiasts are truly indebted. However a surprising source of new or obscure information comes from either the veterans themselves or, in more recent years, a relative or close friend. For me personally this latter group has proven to be an invaluable source of data regarding the US Army Air Corps in the early to mid Twentieth Century, especially concerning the



squadron and group levels. Whether the information concerns an unauthorized insignia or a particular theater of operations aircraft markings, these private sources can often provide a fresh insight into matters long overlooked and nearly forgotten with the passage of time. In some cases the photos / documentation I receive may be completely new in nature, in others it may serve to clear up some issue previously in question. It is with these private sources in mind that I have included below my mailing address.

Robert A. Watkins 8462 Road 41 Mancos, CO 81328-8945 USA

It is my hope that any individual in possession of information relating to US Army Air insignia and / or aircraft markings will take the time to forward a copy of that information on to me. It makes no difference what time period is represented as I am constantly looking for material on this subject dating anywhere from between the years 1916 through 1947. All such materials received will not only be welcome but put to good use in future works in an ongoing effort to preserve the images of the US Army Air Corps.

### USAAF CAMOUFLAGE & MARKINGS

Since the advent of aerial warfare early in the Twentieth Century it has been observed that one can determine how close any given country is to going to war simply by observing their military aircraft. While this might be an oversimplification, there is nevertheless considerable merit in such a statement. As war clouds began to gather, once shinny military aircraft began to display an assortment of camouflage paint schemes. Although this adage may not necessarily apply today as much as it did in past conflicts, the fact is that in times of peace there simply were few logical reasons for the application of paint to the exterior of a metal finished aircraft. In addition to the obvious investment of materials and man-hours necessary for applying the paint, there is a decrease in fuel efficiency due to the additional weight and increased coefficient of friction or 'drag'. Slower and less maneuverable are characteristics one would not normally assign to any combat aircraft. It is thus easy to see why painting an aircrafts fuselage and wing surface area was something to be avoided unless so mandated by extreme necessity. That necessity arose, and still does arise, in time of war when opposing forces possess similar offensive capabilities i.e. the ability of both belligerents to attack each other's airfields. It was under these very conditions that air forces around the world learned very early on that it was not advisable to present an attacking force with shinny stationary



aircraft as targets. Unfortunately the most expedient, versatile method of diminishing the profile of an airframe is with paint. Even the most elaborate of camouflage paint jobs however was no sure guarantee against detection by an attacking

aircraft. The photo above how an airframes contour outline can provide convienant aiming points for enemy pilots.

The position of the sun, cloud cover, angle of attack, all were factors that could aid or detract from the effectiveness of almost any attempt to obliterate the profile of a stationary aircraft. Many alternate methods of concealment from attacking forces were utilized to one extent or another during the course of World War II including camouflage netting, foliage canopies and dugout revetments. Effective concealment involved man-hours, materials and a significant reduction to a fighters combat readiness response time. Given the highly mobile nature of WWII, surface paint proved to be the only consistently viable solution to the problem of profile disruption for most belligerents during the majority of this conflict. The ever-increasing presence of USAAF combat aircraft over the skies of Great Britain and Western Europe brought about the need for an improved means of unit identification for both fighter and bombers alike. Eighth AAF aircraft soon displayed a typical two-color overall paint scheme, brightly colored (and

highly visible) nose and tail patterns. These obviously offset any concealment advantages obtained with camouflage paint. By the time these high profile unit identification patterns began appearing however, Allied air power had seriously hampered the Luftwaffes ability to mount significant offensive sorties against Allied air bases in England. This was a transitional period in the European air war and the Luftwaffe would soon find itself incapable of virtually any offensive efforts whatsoever. Even so the Allied air forces were not about to become complacent where the Luftwaffe was concerned. There was considerable discussion regarding the advisability of issuing of SHAEF Operation Memorandum Number 23 of 18Apr44/Distinctive Markings-Aircraft, better known to the world as D-Day or Invasion Stripes. Admittedly there was a

definite need for an improved system of 'friendly identification marks Allied aircraft' during and immediately following the Invasion but a Vormandy series of large alternating black & white stripes on fuselage, wings and empennage conducive to concealwas hardly an enemy aerial attack. ment from There was considerable speculation time that the Luftwaffe at the might mount a massive retaliatory raid against air bases in East Anglia and these tactical recognition

markings would provide

German pilots, gunners and bombardiers with a prime aiming point.

Fortunately for the Allied cause the Luftwaffe found itself incapable of such a reprisal raid and the concern proved to be a mute point, at least until British and American fighter units were later redeployed to the European Continent. Once on European soil the new Allied air bases came within range of the Luftwaffe home defence fighters. The controversial D-Day Invasion Stripes quickly disappeared from the redeployed Allied units for the reason previously stated.

As the war continued to progress in the Allies factor, the combat aircraft of the Eighth began to take on a new look. With the threat of potential Luftwaffe attacks on Allied airfields based in England virtually eliminated, Eighth USAAF fighters and bombers alike began to rapidly shed their existing camouflage paint schemes and were soon reaping the benefits inherent with a natural metal finished fuselage and wing surface areas. Some ground crews would soon go as far as polishing and even waxing the entire fuselage and wings of the fighters in their charge. This was in an effort to maximize airflow over and around the airframe surface areas. The intent was to provide the men flying these aircraft with a little extra advantage, an advantage that in combat will often prove to be the deciding factor separating victory from defeat.

Prior to the outbreak of World War I the French Army foresaw the need for both national as well as individual markings on their aircraft, and thus brought into existence the first regulated and uniform method of aircraft identification. A tricolor circular devise, or cockade, was chosen to officially represent the air arm of the French Army. Germany would follow suit soon after with the introduction a Maltese or 'iron cross' selected to represent their country. This would eventually evolve into the Balkankreuz used by German military forces, air and land during World War II, which of course included the swastika on most tail surfaces. Great Britain's Royal Flying Corps originally adopted the Cross of St. George for its aircraft but a later revised WW I emblem was based upon the French cockade. The United States would similarly adopt a circular configuration for its national insignia but this was to undergo numerous changes up until and throughout World War II. Although though somewhat outside the immediate scope of this particular work, World War II specifically, a brief history of all US Army aircraft insignia has been included herein:

Circa 1916: Introduced at the North Island Aviation School in California, the first markings utilized by the Army Signal

Corps was the image in the foreground. The background image incorporating the white circle was a briefly used unauthorized variation. Neither design was ever officially adopted by the Army for use as a national emblem. There were no images displayed on either the fuselage or wing surfaces.

•May 17th, 1917•
First authorized insignia and tail markings for US military aircraft. The colors varied significantly and were loosely in compliance with those used in conjunction with the American flag. This combination was

used briefly on US aircraft in Europe during World War I.

•January 11th, 1918•
This cokarde pattern replaced the 'star in circle' design on US aircraft operating with Allied forces in Western Europe. This insignia was located on the right and left wing surfaces both top and bottom. The background image was

the first pattern tail marking which was later replaced by the overlapping image. All US military aircraft were directed to reinstate the original 1917 'star' insignia in May of 1919.



The tail configuration was modified in 1927 to display a blue vertical stripe positioned at the rudderpost. This device was accompanied by a pattern of thirteen alternating red and white horizontal stripes trailing the blue stripe. The US Army letter designator, adopted in 1924, were applied to the under surface area of the ships wing (lower wing of biplanes). Both the tail marking and letter designator were dropped within six months of Pearl Harbor and neither devise was to ever again reappear on US Army aircraft. In 1940 the national insignia was directed to be applied to both sides of the fuselage for the first time. Additionally this same devise was ordered removed from the top right and lower left wings tips. This directive was intended to unbalance what had been perceived as a convenient aiming point, from both above and below, for enemy gunners.

•May 28th, 1942•

The red inner circle device was ordered discontinued due to problems in the Pacific Theater confusing the American emblem with the Japanese Hinomaru or 'Meatball' insignia used by that country.

•October 9th, 1942• utline was directed to

A two inch yellow outline was directed to be added to AAF aircraft serving in both Great Britain and North Africa (Nov.'42). The use of this devise was discontinued in both Theaters of Operation by April 1943.

An unofficial variation that appeared with regularity within the Eighth AAF structure was that of a grayed-out star contained within the national emblem. This again was an attempt to reduce a convenient aiming point for enemy gunners and pilots.

•June 29th, 1943•

In an ongoing attempt to provide US pilots with an improved recognition factor, the new 'Star-and-Bars' insignia was selected to replace the existing

circular configuration. The red border was to be short lived and would ultimately be replaced with a blue outline. Another brief variation in the ETO was the addition of yellow inner 'bars'.



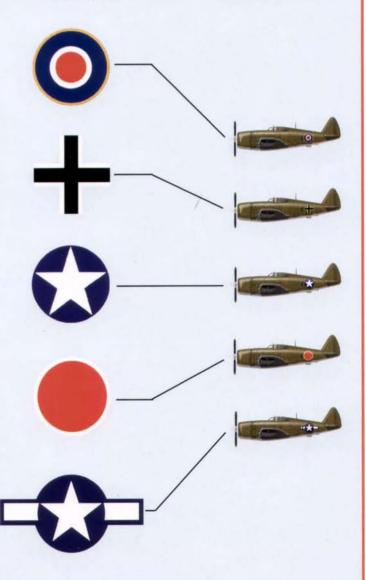
### August 14th, 1943

The final USAAF National Insignia pattern which would remain unchanged throughout the remainder of World War II. The graphics below provide the specific orders as they relate to the modification of each US National Insignia presented.



TYPE-1 TYPE-2A TYPE2B TYPE-3A TYPE-3B

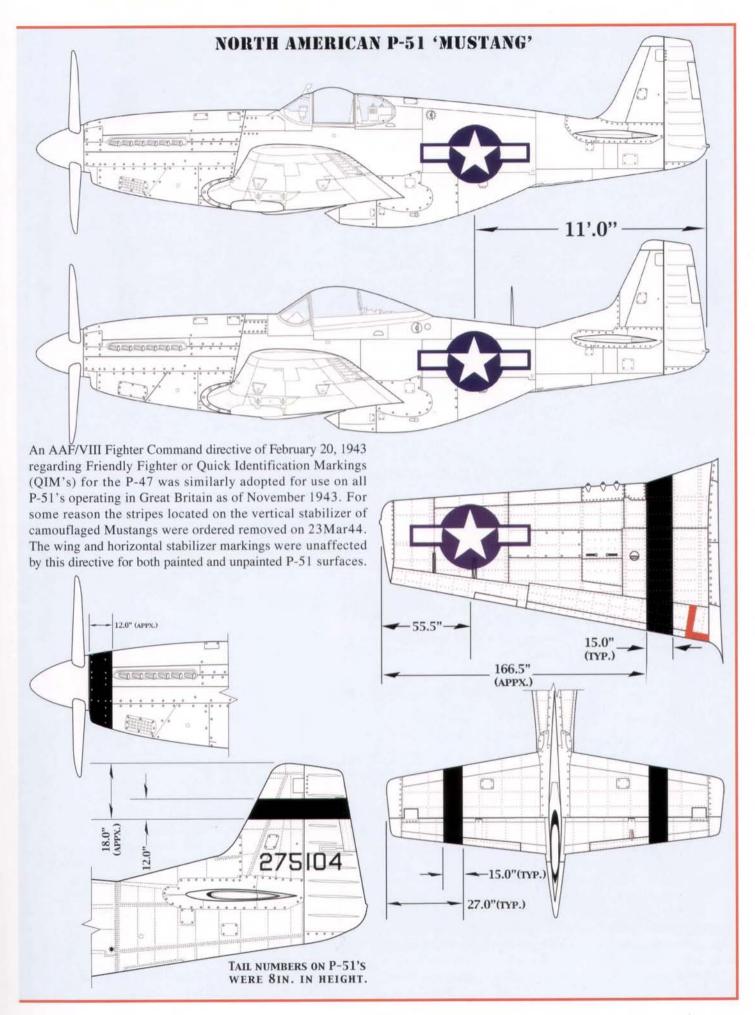
The many modifications to US aircraft insignia from December 1941 thru August 1943 were the result of a need to provide American aircrews with an extra margin of safety against friendly fire incidents. The dangers inherent with combat were bad enough without the additional risk of being shot down by your own people. In late 1942 thru early 1943 the Army/Navy Aeronautical board conducted a series of tests from air bases located in Florida. American aircraft, principally P-47s, were affixed with a wide range of insignia representing not only the US and its major allies, but the insignia of the Axis powers as well. In a series of fly-by runs at varying distances, selected observers were instructed to attempt to correctly identify as many of the national insignia as possible. Special emphasis was placed on the need to differentiate between US markings and those of other nations. At the time the 'white star on blue disc' (War Dept/Circular#141,)was the official insignia displayed on all AAF and US Navy warplanes. The results of these tests pointed out a definitive need to improve the 'quick recognition' characteristics of the existing insignia design. The answer was the addition of the 'bars' to the 'star and circle' design, a characteristic that has endured to current day US military aircraft. Although the graphics in the right hand column fall short of fully illustrating the problem of insignia recognition involving multiple aircraft traveling in excess of 150 miles per hour, it does present a general idea of the problem relating to instant identification faced by the AAF in early World War II.

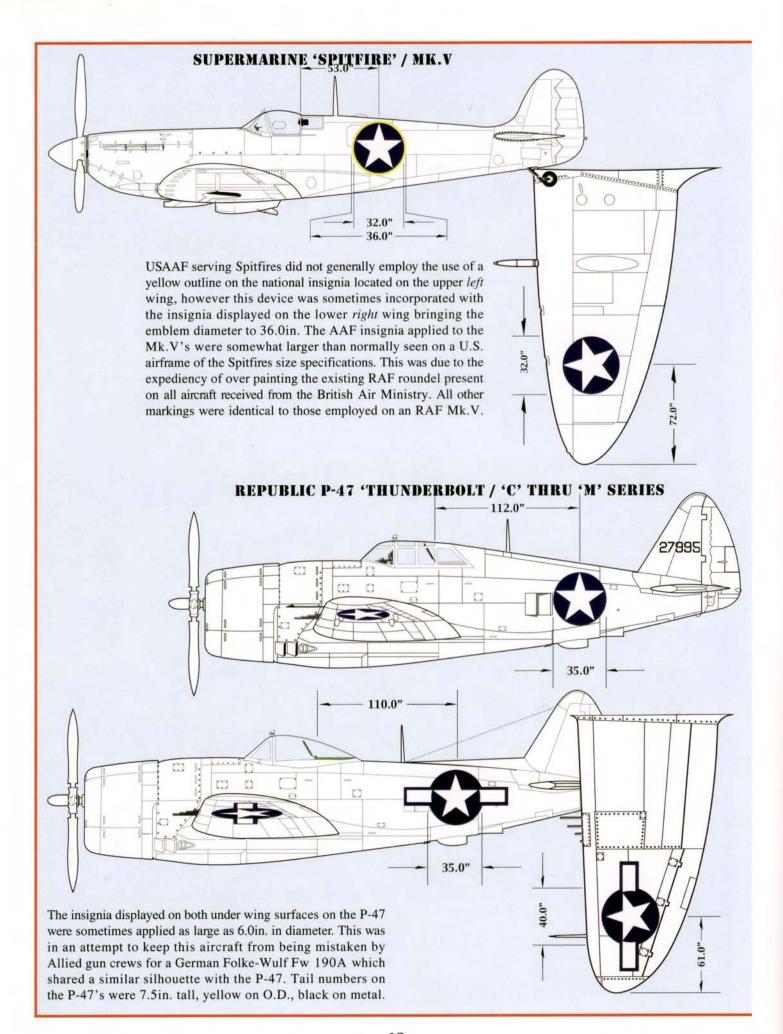


The following diagrams show the official WW II / USAAF specifications for placement of the national insignia and tail numbers as they applied to the fighter aircraft depicted. It is important to note that a combat aircraft might undergo any number of surface modifications, some of which would alter the original size and placement of the factory applications depicted on these diagrams. To those interested in a specific aircraft at a specific time in World War II, it is strongly suggested that a thorough study and comparative analysis of actual wartime photographs pertaining to that subject be conducted. Such research will often reveal variations in positioning, color and configuration of markings and paint schemes differing from those detailed in official USAAF or ANA directives. The three photographs in the adjacent column are included to address a marking scheme employed by the AAF prior to the outbreak of hostilities in 1941. These were colored cowling bands and fuselage command stripes. These devises were used to denote group, squadron and flight leaders but were not much used overseas. A few fighter units did utilize some form of command stripe during their wartime deployment, but these examples were rare. When applicable, and also confirmable, reference is made within this text to those groups/squadrons that employed such devices overseas regardless of how briefly.

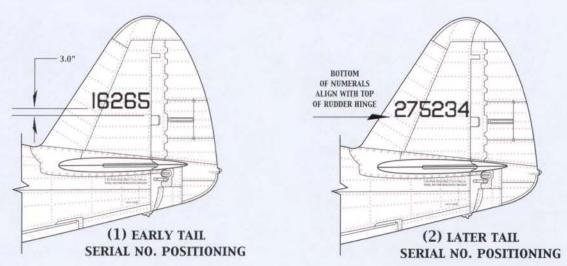


# Tail, or serial numbers, were factory applied and varied from an Sin. height on early applications to a 9in. height later in the war. The numerals were stenciled on using Insignia Yellow on camouflaged aircraft and Black on metal finished surfaces. Factory applied numerals invariably had the stencil lines filed while in-the-field reapplications often omitted this final step.



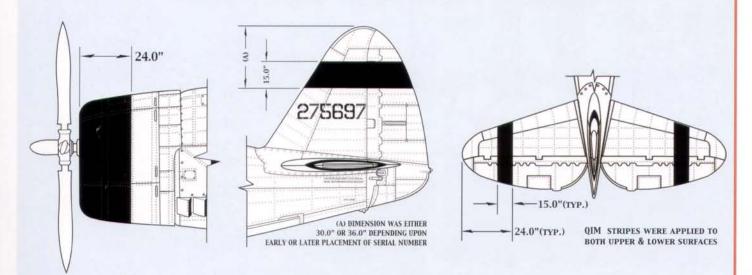


### P-47 TAIL NUMBERS



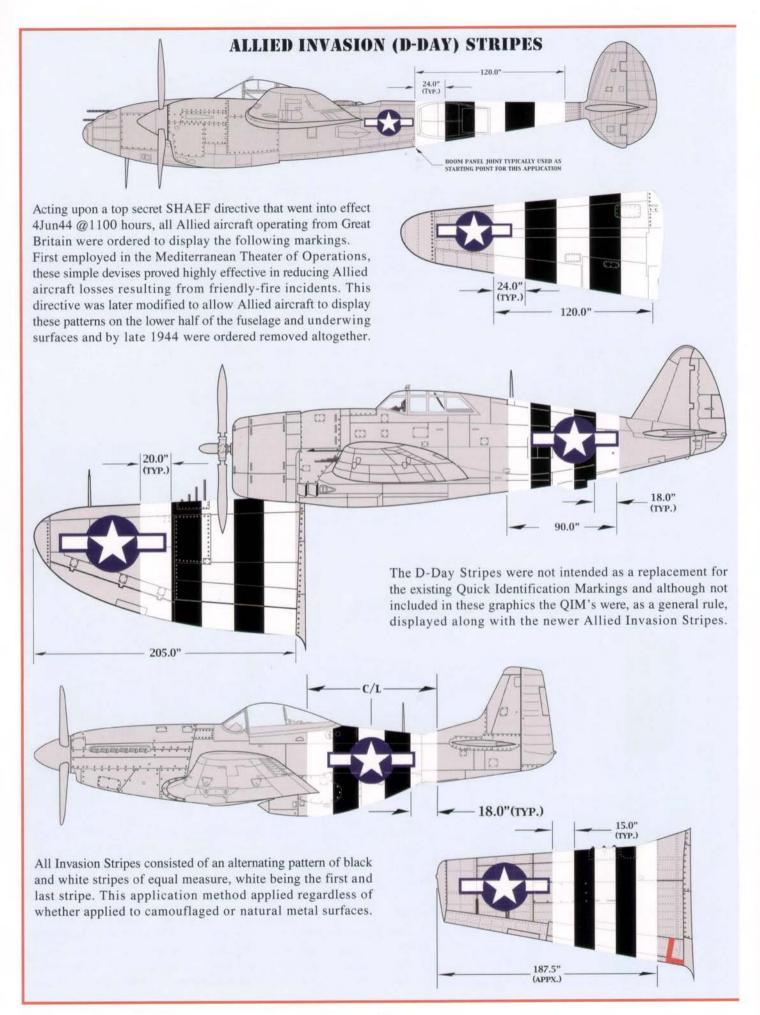
Increased wartime production resulted in higher aircraft serial numbers, and the addition of another digit to these numbers required a wider space than that of the original positioning (example 1). This minor space-fitting problem was solved by simply dropping the base line down three inches to align with the bottom of the central rudder hinge (example 2). The original location would have required a smaller stencil; this move negated a reduction in numeral size. Tail numbers (also referred to as call-numbers) were factory applied with yellow on standard camouflaged surfaces and black on metal finishes.

### P-47 ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY AIR FORCE MARKINGS



These markings, also known as U.K. Special Recognition, Friendly Fighter and Quick Identification Markings, were adopted early in the original deployment of the U.S. Eighth Army Air Force to Great Britain. Due to a number of friendly fire incidents it was determined that an additional form of recognition was needed to assist Allied gun crews in differentiating between German and American fighter aircraft. The Thunderbolt, as previously stated, was often mistaken for a German Focke-Wulf Fw-190A while the P-51's were just as likely to be erroneously identified as a Mersserschmitt Bf 109.

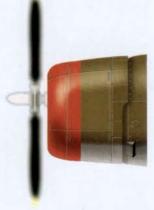
It was the hope of both the British Air Ministry and AAF / VIII Fighter Command that these markings would alleviate many, if not most, of these 'mistaken identity' problems. There is no way of determining exactly how effective these QIM markings proved to be in reducing friendly fire mishaps. However, even though gradually phased out as the war progressed, a substantial number of 8th and 9th AAF fighter units continued to display these markings until the cession of hostilities. The standard application for the QIM's on these fighters was white on camouflaged surfaces and black on natural metal finishes.



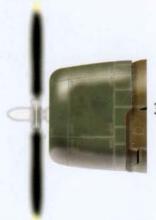
## \* P-51 Nose Markings index **355TH FIGHTER GROUP** 4TH FIGHTER GROUP PAGE 66 PAGE 20 356TH FIGHTER GROUP 20TH FIGHTER GROUP **PAGE 68** PAGE 28 357th Fighter Group 55TH FIGHTER GROUP **PAGE 72** PAGE 38 359TH FIGHTER GROUP 78TH FIGHTER GROUP **PAGE 78 PAGE 48 361ST FIGHTER GROUP** 339TH FIGHTER GROUP **PAGE 82** PAGE 52 352ND FIGHTER GROUP 364TH FIGHTER GROUP PAGE 56 **PAGE 86** 479TH FIGHTER GROUP **53RD FIGHTER GROUP PAGE 90** PAGE 62 including variations in color usage, are represented within each \*Note: Some of the Groups listed above adopted one or more

\*Note: Some of the Groups listed above adopted one or more nose patterns while deployed in Great Britain. The configurations depicted on this page reflect the final patterns adopted by each Group prior to the end of World War II. Earlier patterns, including variations in color usage, are represented within each Groups respective section. Additionally, unit identifying characteristics employed on any combat aircraft other than the P-51 Mustang, when applicable, are similarly depicted.

### \* P-47 Nose Markings index



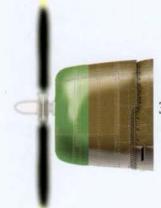
56TH FIGHTER GROUP PAGE 42



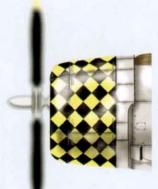
356TH FIGHTER GROUP PAGE 68



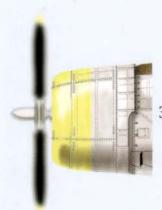
78TH FIGHTER GROUP PAGE 48



359TH FIGHTER GROUP PAGE 78



353RD FIGHTER GROUP PAGE 62



361st Fighter Group Page 82

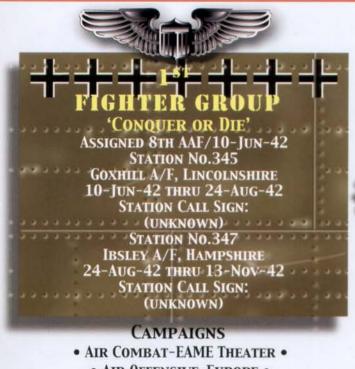
\*Note: Some of the Groups listed above adopted one or more nose patterns while deployed in Great Britain. The configurations depicted on this page reflect the final patterns adopted by each Group prior to the end of World War II. Earlier patterns, including variations in color usage, are represented within each Groups respective section. Additionally, unit identifying characteristics employed on any combat aircraft other than the P-47 Thunderbolt, when applicable, are similarly depicted.

This Index page is not inclusive as a of number of fighter groups assigned to the Eighth Army Air Force, in addition to those depicted above, conducted combat operations utilizing the Thunderbolt. Those Groups that did in fact operate the P-47 and are not listed above were omitted due to the fact that some units converted to the P-51 Mustang at a time when the dominant cowling identification devise in use was the 24 inch white UK/QIM band, prior to high profile Group markings.



### 8TH USAAF FIGHTER GROUPS





AIR OFFENSIVE-EUROPE

ALGERIA-FRENCH MOROCCO • TUNISIA •

• SICILY • NAPLES-FOGGIA • ROME-ARNO •

NORMANDY
 NORTHERN FRANCE

• SOUTHERN FRANCE • NORTH APENNINES •

RHINELAND
 CENTRAL EUROPE
 PO VALLEY

Although the 1stFG was assigned to the EighthAF 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 18in. 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 1stFG P-38s.

Of the three squadron insignia, the 27th FtrSqn 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 Sqdn. 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 Sqdn, this insignia went with them as that units insignia. The 103rd was subsequently consolidated with the 94th Aero Sqdn which had already adopted

the 'Hat In The Ring' devise. 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 groups deployment overseas in 1942, former 94th Aero Sqdn 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.





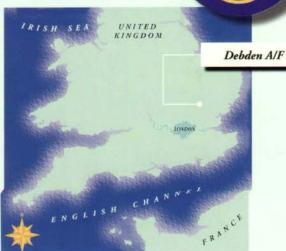
# 2<sup>ND</sup> BOMBARDMENT (AIR) DIVISION

### VIII FIGHTER COMMAND





THEREAFTER;
'A' GROUP: 'HORSEBACK'
'B' GROUP: 'AMBER'
'C' GROUP: 'MASCOT'





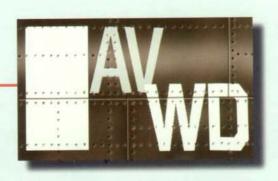


### 334TH FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALLSIGNS• 'PECTIN' UNTIL 29APR44 THEREAFTER;

'A' GROUP: 'COBWEB'
'B' GROUP: 'TIFFIN'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)





### 335TH FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALLSIGNS• 'GREENBELT' UNTIL 29APR44 THEREAFTER;

'A' GROUP: 'CABOOSE'
'B' GROUP: 'SUPREME'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)



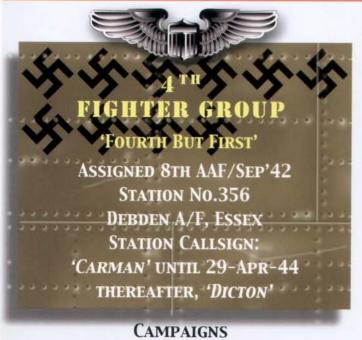


### 336™ FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALLSIGNS• 'SHIRTBLUE' UNTIL 29APR44 THEREAFTER;

'A' GROUP: 'BECKY'
'B' GROUP: 'RONNIE'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)

©Walt Disney Productions



AIR OFFENSIVE-EUROPE
 NORMANDY

NORTHERN FRANCE
 RHINELAND

ARDENNES-ALSACE
 CENTRAL EUROPE



Although originally developed for No. 71 Fighter Squadron of the RAF, it enjoyed wide use within the other two American Volunteer units as well. When all three Eagle Squadrons were transferred to the USAAF, this same design became the unofficial combat insignia for the newly formed 4th Fighter Group.



The squadron insignia depicted on the facing page were in fact approved by the British Air Ministry for Americans serving in No's. 71, 121 and 133 'Eagle' Squadrons of the RAF. These insignia continued to be displayed by each respective squadron long after their transfer to the US Army Air Force. The images at left represent the RAF insignia under which these Eagle pilots served.

These graphics depict variations of the original Disney design and became synonymous with 'The Eagles' throughout the war years. The lower of these two was officially readopted as the insignia of the 334th Fighter Squadron in 1950.





After assimilation into the U.S.A.A.F., the wearing of the British Pilots Wings over the right pocket of the US dress uniform was a unique source of pride for those select few who had the distinction of having flown with the former Eagle Squadrons.

The original **XR / AV / MD** codes which had been carried over from the squadrons RAF days were replaced in early April '43 with the now familiar **QP / WD / MD** designations.



Although reportedly developed for the unit prior to the end of WWII, this image was not officially adopted by the 4th FtrGrp until September of 1949 at which time the former Army Air Force had evolved into the present United States Air Force. Although this design

lacks the units former 'Eagle' image, the groups ties to the United Kingdom are nonetheless well represented by the symbolic indomitable British Lion surmounting the crest.

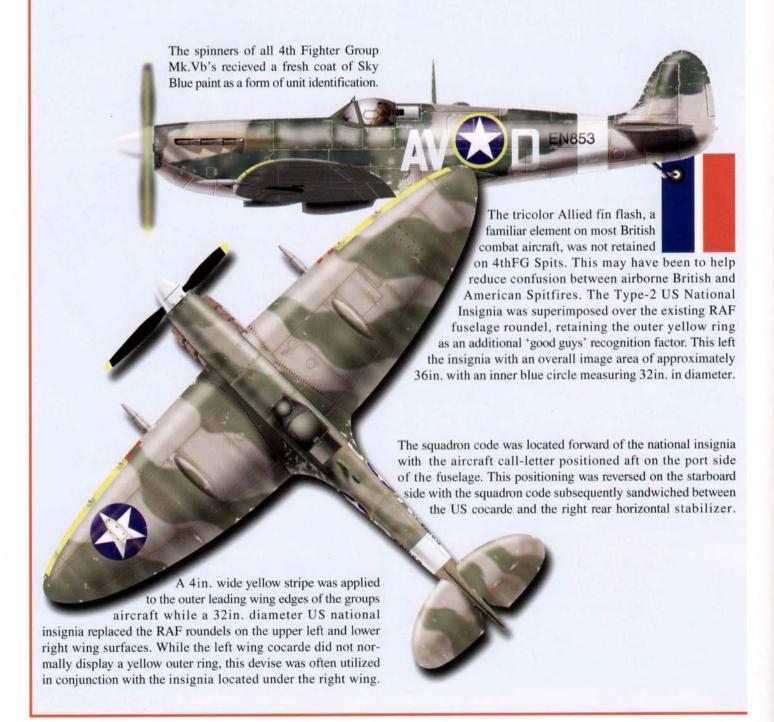
©Walt Disney Productions



### 'SPITFIRE' MK. VB c. Sep'42-Apr'43

For over six months after transferring to the USAAF, the former Eagle Squadron pilots continued to fly their familiar Mk.Vb Spitfire's. These were to retain the original RAF Temperate Zone camouflage paint scheme consisting of an Ocean Grey and Dark Green top surface over a Medium Sea Grey.

An additional 'friendlies' recognition element was added to the rear fuselage area of all 4thFG Spits. This consisted of an 18in wide band of color applied with RAF Sky Blue. The original fuselage identification number was often over painted and not subsequently reinstated. The squadron codes originally approved for the three Eagle Squadrons by the British Air Ministry were temporarily adopted by the group and applied in letter cap heights varying from between 24 and 30 inches in an RAF Sky Blue.

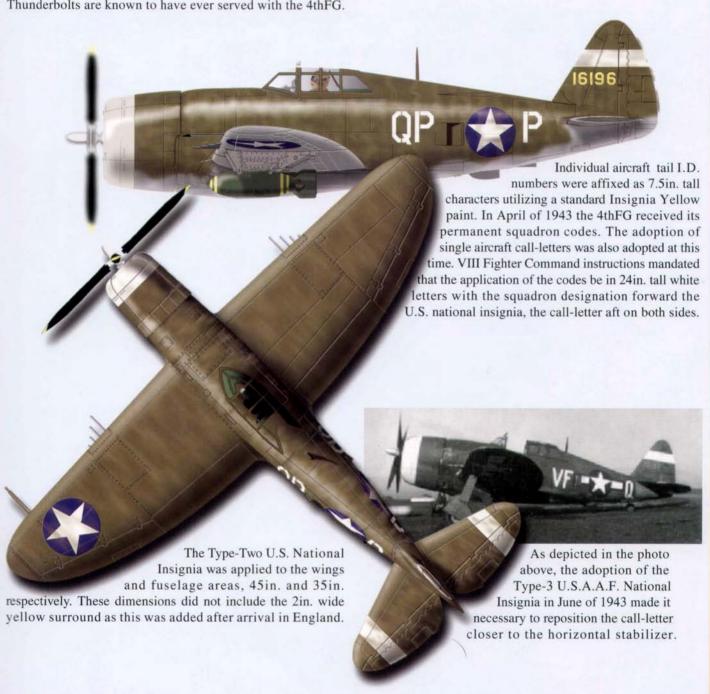




### P-47 'THUNDERBOLT' c. Mar'43-Feb'44

The entire inventory of original 'C' Series P-47s allocated to the 4th FG arrived with a factory applied two-color camouflage paint scheme. This Olive Drab over Neutral Grey would continue to be the standard for all the Groups P-47s including the later 'D' Series which began arriving in June 1943. No natural metal finish Thunderbolts are known to have ever served with the 4thFG.

For a brief period lasting little more than two months (C. Feb-Apr '43) the 4thFG adopted a temporary system for identifying its' aircraft. The last two digits of the tail number were affixed to the fuselage forward the national insignia which at this time displayed a 2in. yellow surround. The Eighth A.A.F. directive specified these codes be applied in white paint with an overall height of twenty inches. All 4th FG aircraft at this time displayed standard white Q.I.M.'s.







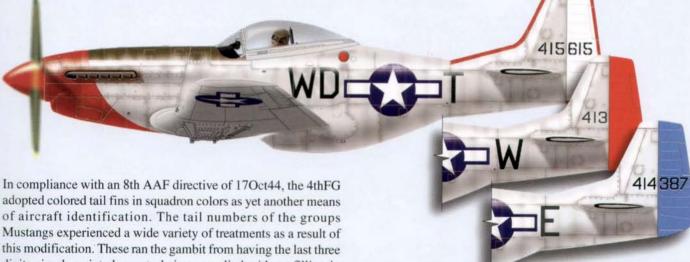
In early December, 1944, it was decided to extend the existing Insignia Red an additional 12in. further back on the engine cowling. This modification brought the rearward edge of the color band to a point approximately just aft the second exhaust port.

Sometime in the summer of 1944, the 334thFS began applying squadron codes and call-letters to a number of their aircraft using a thin red outline. The 336thFS followed suit by incorporating a red drop-shadow with its fuselage applications and in fact, by wars end, each respective squadron had unofficially adopted an



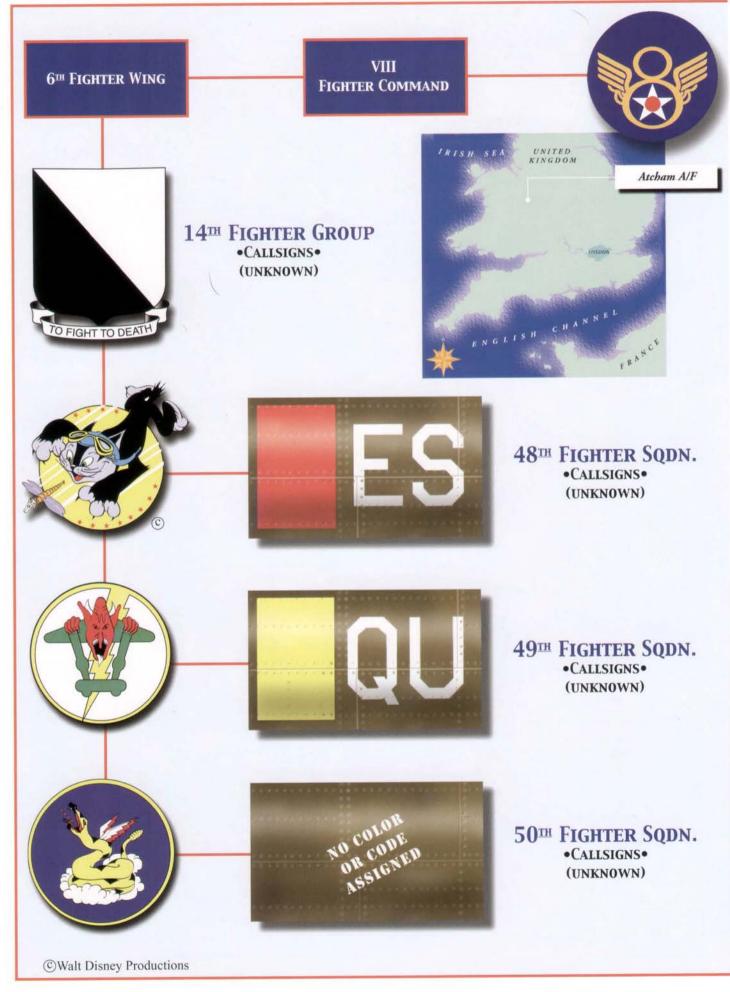
Due to a developing problem in differentiating 4th Fighter Group aircraft from similarly marked units within other U.S. Army Air Forces a new 'sweep' nose paint application was adopted in early January 1945. As the war neared its end, fighter groups once separated by literally thousands of miles, now found themselves operating in much greater proximity to one another. The similar color schemes employed by several individual squadrons began to result in erroneous allied unit identification reports.

Although never officially approved or universally adopted within the 4thFG, numerous individual aircraft within the unit had the main canopy frame painted in a respective squadron color.



adopted colored tail fins in squadron colors as yet another means of aircraft identification. The tail numbers of the groups Mustangs experienced a wide variety of treatments as a result of this modification. These ran the gambit from having the last three digits simply painted over to being reapplied without filling in stencil lines. Some numbers were fully restored to original specs while others were removed from the tail section altogether.

To further assist in recognition, 335thFS often outlined the tail and rudder with a red stripe, usually 1 to 2 inches in width. The 'medium blue' rudders of 336thFS Mustangs varied in shade from one aircraft to another and was possibly due to using what was available at any given time. Some applications were actually quite dark in value and appear to have been a mix of the Insignia Blue and white paint such as used for the Type-3 USAAF markings. The black rudder stripes were dropped at this time as were those on the horizontal stabilizers the following year (March, 1945).





- AIR OFFENSIVE-EUROPE
- AIR OFFENSIVE, EUROPE TUNISIA •
- SICILY NAPLES-FOGGIA ROME-ARNO
  - NORMANDY
     NORTHERN FRANCE
- SOUTHERN FRANCE
   NORTH APENNINES
- RHINELAND CENTRAL EUROPE PO VALLEY •

The 14th Fighter Group was another unit whose tenure with the 8th USAAF was brief and in fact did not survive its deployment to the UK intact. While enroute to England the 50th FS was held over in Iceland and destined never to be reunited with the 14th. The 50th was ultimately replaced by the 37th Fighter Squadron in March 1943, some time after the groups transfer to North Africa with the 15th Air Force.

A note concerning the squadron insignia; The 48th Fighter Squadron image depicted on the preceding page was designed by Disney Studios when that unit still carried a Pursuit Squadron designation (pre'42). It is believed that this image remained in the States when the group shipped out. At the time of this writing it is unknown what insignia, if any, replaced it during the war. The insignia for the 49th was never officially approved but was nevertheless displayed by this squadron for the majority of its combat tour. Ironically, the only official wartime combat insignia was that of the orphaned 50th Fighter Squadron which had been approved by the Army in April 1942, just in time for the 48th FGs' overseas deployment four months later.

The 14th Fighter Group P-38Fs utilized Command Stripes on their aircrafts boom area. The commanding officers ship bore twin 5"in wide Insignia Red vertical bands aft the radiator



The 48th and 49th were assigned their squadron codes while with the 8thA.F. and participated in a number of combat sorties, these being primarily fighter sweeps along the French coastline. For the most part these codes were applied as 20in, tall block letters in RAF Sky Blue but there were numerous variations to this rule throughout the group. Some aircraft within both squadrons even received a contour



1st Bombardment (Air) Division VIII FIGHTER COMMAND





20<sup>™</sup> FIGHTER GROUP 'THE LOCO BUSTERS'

•CALLSIGNS• 'DENTON' UNTIL 22-APR-44 THEREAFTER 'A' GROUP: 'WALNUT'

'B' GROUP: 'OATMEAL'
'C' GROUP: 'KATIE'







### 55™ FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALLSIGNS• 'TOWNTALK' UNTIL 22-APR-44 THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'SAILOR'
'B' GROUP: 'PATOR'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)



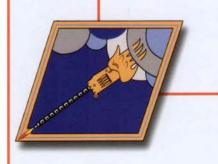


### 77TH FIGHTER SQDN.

• CALLSIGNS•

'REBUKE' UNTIL 22-APR-44
THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'OUTCRY'
'B' GROUP: 'GLORY'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)





### 79TH FIGHTER SQDN.

• CALLSIGNS•

CROWNWRIGHT' UNTIL 22-APR-44
THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'PRIMROSE'
'B' GROUP: 'SCREWGUN'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)



### CAMPAIGNS

- AMERICAN THEATER •
- AIR OFFENSIVE-EUROPE •
- NORMANDY NORTHERN FRANCE •
- RHINELAND ARDENNES-ALSACE
  - CENTRAL EUROPE •

The combat insignia displayed by the 20th Fighter Group during the course of World War II originated in the 1930's and were authorized by the Army. Approval dates were 18Dec32 for the group insignia, 4May32 and 29Aug31 for the 55th and 77th Fighter Squadrons respectively. The insignia of the 79th Fighter Squadron was of bit younger in origin and not officially sanctioned until a little over a decade later, 31Jan43. For whatever reason, the 20th Fighter Group never utilized any squadron colors but opted instead to finish the war with the geometric tail symbols originally adopted in January, 1944.

This is an interesting photo in that it illustrates the use of the 77th FS insignia. In addition to the ready room entrance sign, note the 77th patch on the flight jacket.



With the adoption of the new geometric pattern squadron tail markers, the aircraft ID numbers were often over-painted. This led to the application of the last three digits of those numbers to the nose section of the P-38s.

These were stenciled using yellow on camouflaged and black on metal finished aircraft and positioned over the original contractors number. The stencil break lines on the nine inch tall letters were seldom filled in on these particular applications.



The squadrons of the 20th Fighter Group were arguably the most prolific users of mission's symbols within 8th AAF Fighter Command. If the 20th didn't invent the use of these images, its squadrons certainly developed their application to a near art form. Whereas these two photos only show the use of these symbols on natural metal finished P-38s, they were also very much in evidence on the groups camouflaged Lightnings in addition to the units later P-51 Mustangs.



### P-38 'LIGHTNING' c. Dec'43-Jul'44

The 'Loco Busters' as the 20th Fighter Group would come to be known, underwent T/O training with Series 'H' P-38s and numerous pilots from all three squadrons flew missions with the 55th Fighter Group during the month of November. As the 55th was by that time operational, this allowed 20th FG flyers to gain some hands-on combat experience while awaiting receipt of their own allotment of current model combat aircraft.

Squadrons of the 20thFG were assigned their codes in October of 1943. During this time the application of P-38 code letters was standardized and called for the individual aircraft call-letter to be located centrally on the radiator housing while the squadron codes were positioned aft the radiator vent door. Specifications called for typical white 18in. tall block characters. A character width of 9in. was also called for but this varied somewhat in actual application. Geometric symbols, approximately 30in at their widest measure, were adopted by all three squadrons in January, 1944. These markers were applied with white paint to the groups existing inventory of camouflaged aircraft. Within a month the 20thEG began to receive

267

aircraft. Within a month the 20thFG began to receive metal finished 'J' Series P-38s and these symbols would be affixed to these aircraft with black paint.



The 20th waited in England for its combat inventory for four long months but with the arrival of their new 'J' Series 'Lightnings' they became combat operational and soon after engaged in the 20th Fighter Groups first mission of the war, a low level fighter sweep over Holland on December 18th, 1943.

During the first few weeks of operation none of the 20th FG squadrons payed much attention to either the appearance or presence of individual aircraft tail numbers. If a given aircraft received a replacement tail rudder or simple routine painting maintenance, the original factory applied serial number was quite frequently not reinstated. This situation continued, albeit briefly, after the groups squadrons adopted their new geometric





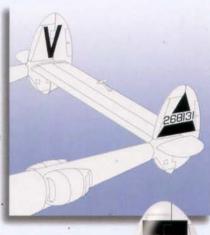
Note the tail sections of both these aircraft. The serial number on the camouflaged 55thFS ship at left has been fully reinstated after the addition of that units triangular identity symbol. In the example below, the serial number has been masked out with a solid stripe prior to the application of the 77thFS circle marker.

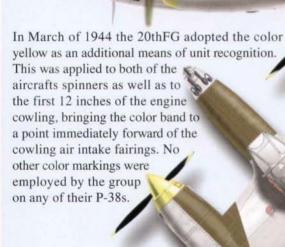
# 20TH FIGHTER GROUP

The group began receiving natural metal finished 'J' Series ' in February 1944. By early spring the practice of masking out a horizontal band directly over the existing a/c tail number had become an accepted practice within the all squadrons of the 20thFG. Aircraft whose tail numbers had previously been overpainted had those numbers reinstated, however in some instances the stencil lines of the reapplied numbers remained unpainted. Camouflaged aircraft whose tail numbers had previously been over-painted would have those numbers reinstated over the existing solid white geometric squadron markers. The horizontal masking technique employed with the metal finished aircraft was not utilized in the case of these camouflaged 'Lightnings'.

With the introduction of the Invasion Stripes immediately prior to the Normandy landings, both the squadron call-letter and the individual aircraft call-letter were over-painted. No attempt was made to mask-out these images before application of these stripes, neither were these codes reinstated after the stripes were applied. The commonly accepted practice among all 8th Army Air Force units flying P-38s was to relocate the aircraft call-letter to the inward facing sides of both vertical tail fins.

The new letters varied in size but were as a rule considerably larger than the ships original call-letters. In most cases the replacement images were nearly twice the size of the originals. There were those few applications however where the original 19in. fuselage stencils were utilized.





The application of mission panels to aircraft among the squadrons of the 20thFG was a wide spread custom. These symbols more often than not could be attributed to those missions conducted by the aircrafts primary pilot rather than the aircraft itself. It

was common practice to 'loan' a ship to another flyer if his regularly assigned aircraft was undergoing maintenance and/or repairs.

Those missions flown by the

ultimately be affixed to his permanent aircraft and not the 'borrowed' ship actually sed to perform those missions.

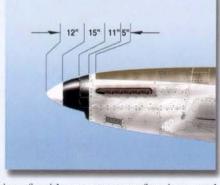
quest pilot would



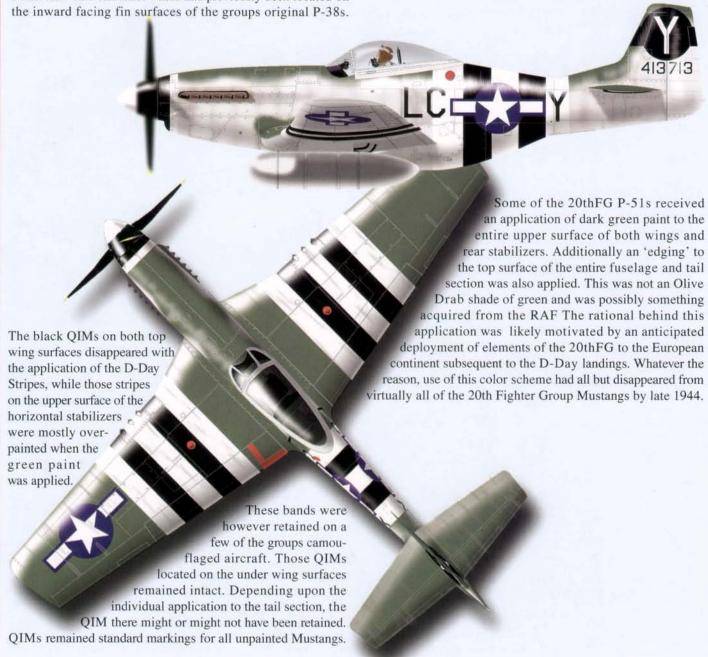
### P-51 'MUSTANG' c. Jul'44-Sep'45

All 'D' Series Mustangs delivered to the 20thFtrGrp were in natural metal finishes and were immediately adorned with full Invasion Stripes. The squadron code and aircraft call-letter on the fuselage remained of standard size and location and were either masked-out prior to application of these stripes or reinstated shortly thereafter. The respective geometric squadron symbol was affixed to either side of the fin and rudder area of all group fighters with black paint. Added to this squadron marker was a 30in. tall white call letter which had previously been located on the inward facing fin surfaces of the groups original P-38s.

With the transition to P-51s, the 20thFG adopted a nose pattern like that depicted in this illustration. While it may have lacked some of the style and pizzazz exhibited by other 8thAAF Fighter Groups at this same time, it was none-theless an early attempt



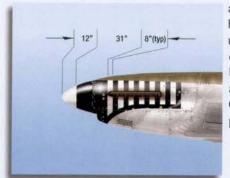
to provide the groups aircraft with some means of an improved 'friendly forces' recognition factor. This pattern would only be in use by the 20thFG until November 1944 when it was replaced with the higher profile configuration depicted on the facing page.



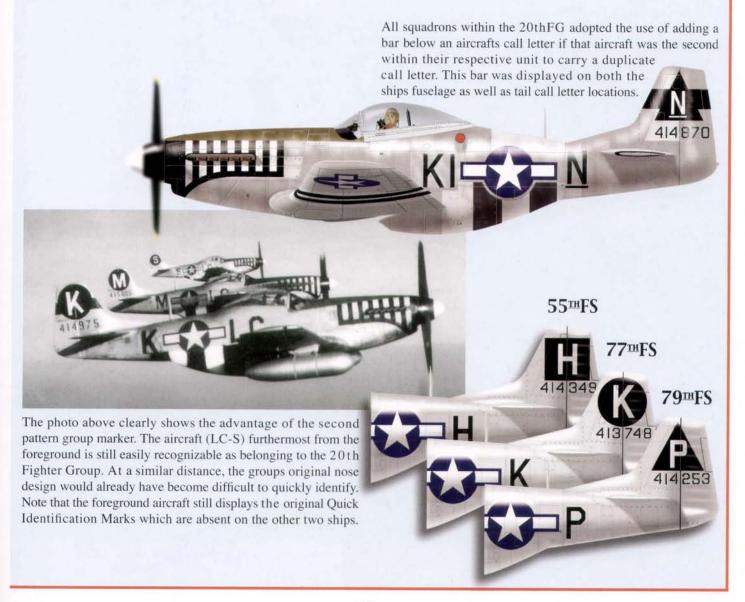


In November of 1944 a new nose marking configuration was adopted by the 20th Fighter Group. This new design was a major improvement over the original pattern in assisting with aircraft unit identification. The surface area of the forward fuselage necessary to accommodate this new marking all but eliminated the application of the groups traditional 'mission tally panels' and these once familiar symbols became a rarity after this date. The black & white D-Day Invasion Stripes, which by now had been reduced to the lower surface areas in compliance with the 8th AAF directive, were themselves removed from virtually all the groups combat aircraft by years end. The original Quick Identification Markers on the wing and tail surfaces were not ordered to be removed but not applied to replacement aircraft.

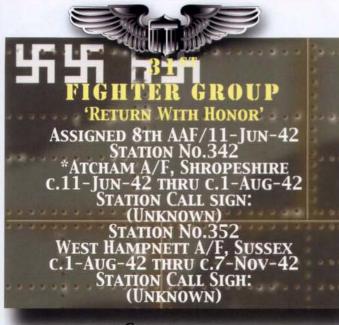
The second group nose pattern more-or-less picked up where the previous design had left off. With the exception of the spinner tip (which was either painted white or remained in a natural metal state) the remainder of this surface, in addition to the first 16in. (approximate) of the engine cowling were painted black. An alternating pattern of seven, eight inch black & white vertical stripes comprised the new configuration. As seen in the



adjacent diagram, the bars (stripes) emanated upwards from a diagonal curved to horizontal black bar, terminating at the junction of the Olive Drab antiglare panel atop the fuselage.







### **CAMPAIGNS**

- AIR COMBAT-EAME THEATER
  - AIR OFFENSIVE-EUROPE •
- ALGERIA-FRENCH MOROCCO TUNISIA SICILY
  - NAPLES-FOGGIA ANZIO ROME-ARNO
    - NORMANDY NORTHERN FRANCE •
  - SOUTHERN FRANCE NORTH APPINES •
- RHINELAND CENTRAL EUROPE PO VALLEY •

The same friendly forces marking scheme used by the 4th Fighter Group (also equipped with British Spirfires) was employed by the 31stFG. As with the 4thFG, the tricolored panel was removed from the tail sections of all 31st FG Mk.Vb's as were most of the original RAF fuselage numbers.

The adjacent insignia was a prewar Disney design and represented the 308th Fighter Squadron prior to deployment of the 31st Fighter Group to Merry Old England. This is yet another example of a stateside unit insignia being replaced by another image once actual combat operations commenced.

The reason for doing away with the little Trojan design is uncertain today. Its demise may have been the need for a more aggressive image or simply that the C/O of the 308thFS wasn't a fan of the University of Southern California.

This is reputed to be a later variation of the 308thFS insignia represented on the facing page. At the time this work was ready for press, the actual use of this image by the 308thFS had not been unquestionably authenticated. It is the insignia often used today for representing this unit, thus its inclusion within this text.

For the brief period of time that the 31stFG was attached to the 8th Air Force it was nevertheless issued squadron codes which remained with the unit throughout the course of the war. The Mk.V Spitfires the group flew while with the Eighth displayed these codes in RAF Sky (Blue) forward the roundel on the port side of the aircraft fuselage, aft on the starboard side. The reverse applied to the placement of the aircraft

call-letters. Letters were roughly 24in. in height.

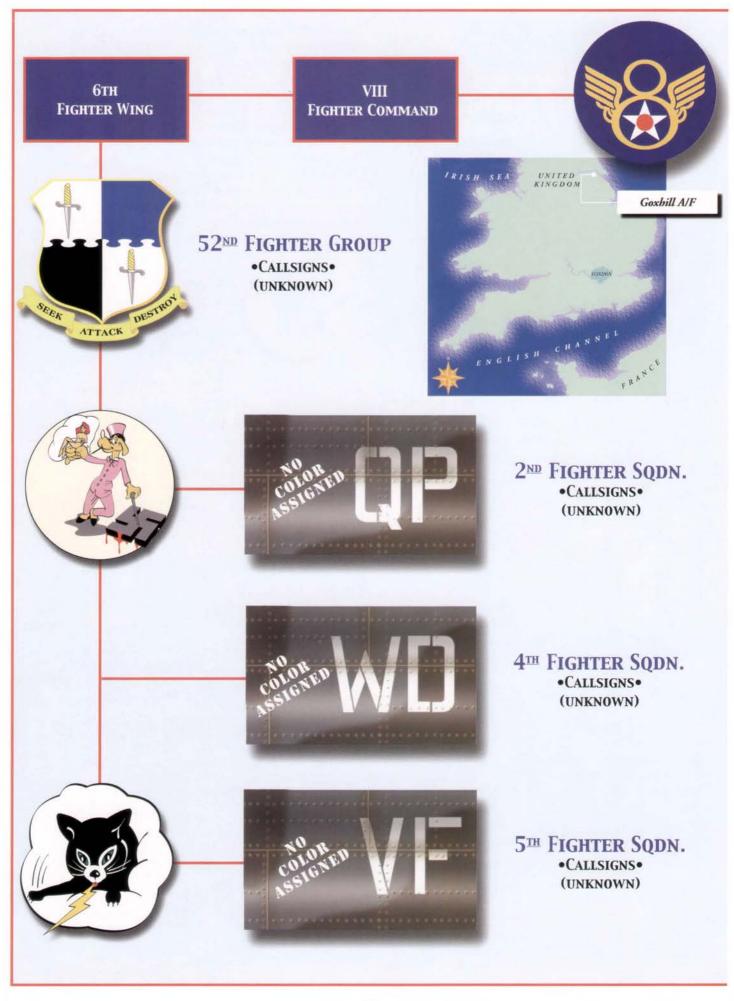


The photograph above of the 309th FS pilots was actually taken in 1942 at La Senia, Algeria shortly after assignment of the 31stFG to the 12thAAF. Note that the squadrons original Donald Duck image has been superimposed over a Type-2 U.S. national emblem. This modification reverted to the original configuration with the introduction of the new Type-3 emblem.

Taken while still assigned to the 8thAAF, this photo clearly shows the insignia of the 307thFS neatly painted on the cockpit access hatch of this U.S. serving Mk.Vb. This application was a common practice within the unit while with the Eighth.

\*SQUADRONS OF THE 31ST FG WERE OFTEN ATTACHED TO OTHER AIRFIELDS THROUGHOUT ENGLAND WHILE ASSIGNED TO THE 8THAAF

©Walt Disney Productions







# 3<sup>RD</sup> BOMBARDMENT (AIR) DIVISION

#### VIII Fighter Command

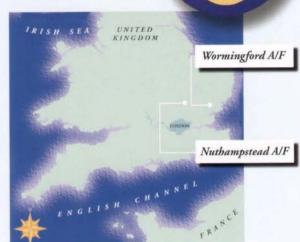


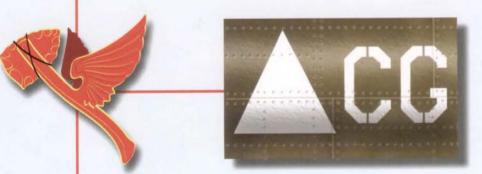


## 55™ FIGHTER GROUP

•CALLSIGNS• 'SMALLBOY' UNTIL 22APR44 THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'WINDSOR'
'B' GROUP: 'GRAPHIC'
'C' GROUP: 'KODAK'

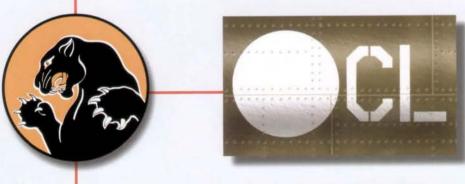




## 38™ FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALLSIGNS• 'SWINDLE' UNTIL 22APR44 THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'HELLCAT'
'B' GROUP: 'PROGRAM'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)

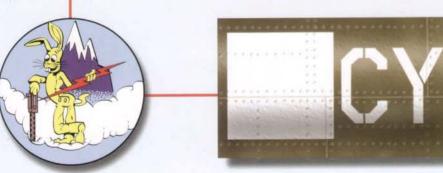


## 338™ FIGHTER SODN.

• CALLSIGNS•

'WARCRAFT' UNTIL 22APR44 THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'ACORN'
'B' GROUP: 'RICHARD'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)



## 343RD FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALLSIGNS•

'CAREFUL' UNTIL 22APR44
THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'TUDOR'

'B' GROUP: 'SAUCY'

'C' GROUP: (NONE)



## FIGHTER GROUP

'PURSUIT TO DEFEND'

ASSIGNED 8TH AAF/12-SEP-43
1.) STATION NO.131

NUTHAMPSTEAD A/F, HERTFORDSHIRE C.14-SEP-43 THRU 15-APR-44 STATION CALLSIGN: 'ROCKCREEK'

2.) STATION NO.159 WORMINGFORD A/F, ESSEX

c.16-Apr-44 thru 21-Jul-45 Station Callsign: 'Fusspot'

#### **CAMPAIGNS**

- AMERICAN THEATER AIR OFFENSIVE-EUROPE •
- NORMANDY NORTHERN FRANCE RHINELAND
  - ARDENNES-ALSACE CENTRAL EUROPE •

The 55th Fighter Group began operations with P-38H and later 'J' Series Lightnings and began their transition to the P-51D Mustang in July of 1944. As with other groups which had made a similar conversion, some of the aircraft earlier marking traditions were slowly discarded. In the photo to the immediate right we are afforded a good view of the forward fuselage area of one of the groups original P-38s. Note the mission tally panel, very much the same application as that employed by the 20th Fighter Group when that unit also flew the Lightning. And like the 20th, the use of these type of markings within the 55th Fighter Group dwindled with their transition to the P-51.



An interesting shot of what appears to be a mission tally panel applied just forward the canopy of this 55th Fighter Group P-51.

Although this image may seen redundant, its purpose here is to illustrate the often considerable chasm between initial design and ultimate application. The image on the facing page represents the original 38thFS insignia as it was submitted to the Air Corps for approval. This image is what more often than not ended up as representing this unit once overseas. Not exactly a match! This is the frustrating, and at the same time fascinating aspect of U.S. combat insignia research.





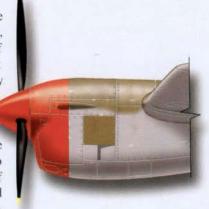
The most interesting feature in the photo at left is what's left of the original D-Day Invasion Stripes. Given the narrow beam of the Mustang fuselage, it causes one to ponder whether or not it might have made more sense to have simply dispensed with these markings altogether. As a recognition factor, they would appear rather useless beyond much more than rock throwing range. This does however serve to again illustrate the wide diversity of tactical marking applications that occurred within 8thAAF units during the war.



A considerable number of pilots within the 55th Fighter Group opted to have the white areas of the Type-3 national insignia 'grayed-out' which entailed reapplying a mixture of white and black over the existing white insignia areas. It was felt by some American flyers that the bright white star sandwiched the two horizontal white bars provided enemy pilots and gunners with a convenient 'aiming point' in combat situations. Whether this belief had merit or not is open to debate today, but as the Allies gained aerial supremacy over the skies of Western Europe, this issue diminished in importance and this practice discarded.

1944. These were applied in white paint with a specified size of 30in. at the greatest measure to the outward facing surfaces of both tail fins. This procedure obscured the original factory serial numbers and these were not reinstated on a number of the groups aircraft. In other instances these numbers were in fact repainted over the new symbols in either yellow or black.

In March of 1944 the 55th Fighter Group, in an effort to provide their combat aircraft with a greater aerial recognition factor, approved the application of red paint to the engine cowlings of the groups Lightnings. This was not an official 8th AAF unit color designation and lasted only briefly as word had already reached the group of its pending conversion to the P-51 Mustang. Ending almost before it began, this unit marking consisted of a red spinner with an additional red section applied to, and encircling, the forward engine cowling. Some estimates state that this cowling application was supposed to encompass approximately 20in. back from the leading edge of the cowling, other estimates state as much as 40in, of total cowling surface area was to allocated this marking devise.



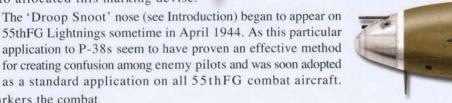
## D-Day

as a standard application on all 55thFG combat aircraft. With the exception of the squadron tail markers the combat aircraft of the 55th Fighter Group were the quintessential, generic, ETO serving P-38 Lightning. In point of fact, the 20th, 364th and 479th Fighter Squadrons, all flying the P-38 at this same time, utilized these same markings to identify their own

respective squadrons. By late Spring these other three groups

had begun to employ the use of color markings as a means of improving the unit recognition factor. The 55th Fighter Group however, with the exception of their brief dalliance with the red engine cowlings, never adopted a color scheme while

equipped with the P-38 Lightning.







P-51 'MUSTANG' c. Jul'44-Jun'45 While in transition training with their new Mustangs, the 55th Fighter Group made its first attempt at a group color recognition image. Without seeking higher approval the 55thFG began applying green paint to tail section including the rudder and top horizontal surfaces of a number of assigned aircraft. The paint used was most likely RAF Light Green or something

to reinstate them.

cooked up by the maintenance crews to approximate that particular hue. Tail serial numbers were overpainted with no attempt

White squadron symbols were applied and the once black

By the time the 55thFG had become combat operational with their new Mustangs, SHAEF had already proposed the gradual phasing out of these devises. Consequently the 'half-marker' post D-Day pattern was applied to virtually all the groups aircraft. QIM's located on the upper surfaces of the stabilizers were all repainted white. Although the same squadron codes from the groups P-38's were transferred to the new Mustangs, no such letter codes are known to have been applied during this period, which was to last just a little under two months.

While some units were very fastidious when it came to filling in the stencil lines on their aircraft, the 55thFG didn't appear to be much concerned with this particuliar detail.

Beginning in July 1944 the groups P-51s began to display the nose pattern depicted above. The same green as was used on the previous tail configuration was again employed for the new nose pattern. Although not unilaterally adopted within the 55thFG, the rather unusual configuration shown on this aircraft was applied to a number of the units Mustangs and made for a distinctive image. This particular 'camouflage' pattern would all but disappear by years end with a final image adaptation.

With the exception of the 38thFS, the other two squadrons comprising the 55thFG adopted recognition colors which began appearing on their respective aircraft by the end of 1944. The 338thFS employed green while the 343rd utilized yellow. The 38th ultimately began to apply red to its rudders but not until about a month and a half before



The 338thFS adopted the use of an additional 6in band of green aft the checkerboard nose pattern. The 343rdFS had incorporated the use of a thin red stripe which originally followed the contour of the camouflage paint scheme. Use of this devise was eventually modified to conform to the bottom edge of the antiglare panel. This application was soon expanded upon and, as depicted above, ultimately framed in the antiglare panel and entire canopy structure. This configuration was later adopted as a group identification element and by the end of March 1945, had been applied to all 55th Fighter Group combat Mustangs.

Tail numbers began to appear again on 55thFG aircraft with the adoption of the colored rudders. Another innovation of the 343rdFS, a mustang silhouette began appearing on a number of the squadrons P-51s in late 1944. Although placement and exact configuration varied slightly from one application to another, this symbol nevertheless became a recognizable image of that unit. A few of the Groups aircraft continued to display the black QIM's markings until the cessation of hostilities.



2<sup>ND</sup> BOMBARDMENT (AIR) DIVISION

#### VIII FIGHTER COMMAND

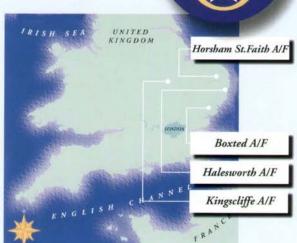




## 56<sup>TH</sup> FIGHTER GROUP 'THE WOLFPACK' 'ZEMKES WOLFPACK'

• CALLSIGNS •

'A' GROUP: 'YARDSTICK' UNTIL
22-APR-44. THEREAFTER 'FAIRBANK'
'B' GROUP: 'ASHLAND' UNTIL
22-APR-44. THEREAFTER 'SUBWAY'
'C' GROUP: 'PANTILE'
BEGINNING 23-APR-44







#### 61<sup>st</sup> Fighter SQDN.

• CALLSIGNS•

'A' GROUP: 'KEYWORTH'
UNTIL22-APR-44,
THEREAFTER 'WHIPPET'
'B' GROUP: 'HALSTED'
UNTIL 22-APR-44,
THEREAFTER 'HOUSEHOLD'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)





## 62<sup>ND</sup> FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALLSIGNS•

'A' GROUP: 'WOODFIRE'

UNTIL22-APR-44,
THEREAFTER 'PLATFORM'
'B' GROUP: 'GROUNDHOG'

UNTIL 22-APR-44,
THEREAFTER 'ICEJUG'

'C' GROUP: (NONE)





## 63<sup>RD</sup> FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALLSIGNS•

'A' GROUP: 'POSTGATE'

UNTIL22-APR-44,

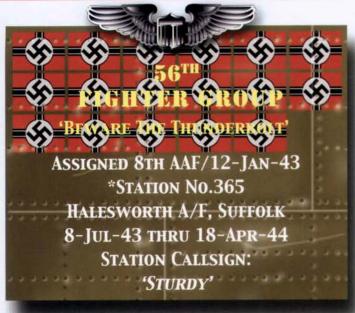
THEREAFTER 'DAILY'

'B' GROUP: 'NORTHGROVE'

UNTIL 22-APR-44,

THEREAFTER 'YORKER'

'C' GROUP: (NONE)



#### CAMPAIGNS

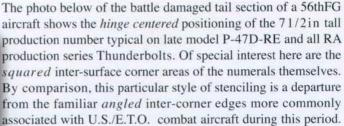
- AMERICAN THEATER
   AIR OFFENSIVE-EUROPE
- NORMANDY NORTHERN FRANCE RHINELAND
  - ARDENNES-ALSACE CENTRAL EUROPE •

\* The 56th FG was actually stationed at four different air fields during the course of the war, five if you care to include a post war assignment to Little Walden A/F from September 9th thru October 10th 1945. The first two war time stations were at Kings Cliffe A/F in Northhamptonshire (Station No.367) from 13Jan-5Apr, 1943. Next came Horsham St. Faith located in Norfolk (Station No.123) after which came Halesworth A/F which was followed by a posting to Boxted A/F, in Essex (Station No.150/call-sign 'Dogday') from 18Apr44 until 9Sep45.

Shortly after arriving in England the 56thFG began identifying its aircraft with a *plane-in-group* method system. From the middle of February thru the end of March 1943 the following numerical sequences were directed to be applied in white paint on both sides of the fuselage, just forward the intercooler doors;

Headquarters / 01-09 61st FtrSqdn / 10-39 62nd FtrSqdn / 240-269 63rd FtrSqdn / 370-399

The paint would hardly have been dry on these numbers when they were ordered replaced with newly issued squadron codes.





Another battle damaged Thunderbolt, this one belonging to the 61st Fighter Squadron. Even at this early stage (as evidenced by the style of national insignia), the 56th Fighter Group had begun to express its individuality in regards to unit identity. Note the interesting application of the fuselage call-letter and squadron code. In most cases unpainted stencil lines were the result of haste or indifference, neither of which is the case in this example. Although the original stencil lines remain visible, they have been carefully filled in with the same paint used to outline the letters. Close examination of the aircraft tail number shows that the numerals have been reapplied with the same style stencil, albeit smaller size, as those used on the fuselage codes.





#### REPBULIC P-47 'THUNDERBOLT' C. FEB'42-SEP'45

Inasmuch as style is concerned, the 56th Fighter Group may well be referred to as the Beau Brummell of the Eighth Air Force. From the Groups earliest stages of deployment in England this unit began to establish a unique visual identity that would unmistakably distinguish itself, and its individual squadrons. In the latter part of February 1943, the Groups squadrons received their new fuselage codes and, with the exception of individual markings, spent the remainder of the year looking pretty much like the illustration below depicts. The only real change came with the introduction of the 'star &bars' national

insignia which necessitated repositioning the call-letter.

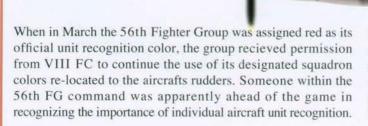


Beginning in March/April 1944 all three squadrons comprising the 56thFG began experimenting with a wide variety of paint schemes for their aircraft. These ran the gambit from a full coverage of 'dark' green, most likely an RAF Light Green,

some of which received an additional application of Ocean Grey in patterns varying from a more traditional 'stripping' to a 'blotching' motif. The photo above depicts the former style.

In the opening weeks of 1944 things began to change very quickly for the 56thFG, identity wise. The Group applied for and was subsequently granted permission to adopt the application of colors to its aircraft as a better means of aircraft recognition. Red, yellow and blue (light) paint were selected for the 61st, 62nd and 63rd Fighter Squadrons respectively. These colors were to replace the existing white QIMs on the engine cowlings. Some at VIII FC must have thought this a pretty good idea for the paint on 56thFG aircraft hadn't quite dried when a directive was issued assigning each fighter group within the Eighth AF its own specific recognition color, which in the case of the 56thFG turned out to be red. The Group HQ opted to adopt the same bright shade of red only recently put to use by the 61stFS. This may very well have been a conscious effort on the part of the Groups brass to reduce the repainting of its aircraft by one-third.





For reasons uncertain today the 63rd Fighter Squadron initially opted not to apply their light blue color to its aircraft. However, the following September of '44, the powers that be at 63rd HQ reversed their initial decision and ordered its ground crews to paint all squadron combat aircraft rudders in the original light blue it had previously displayed on its ships engine cowlings.



The 61st Fighter Squadron had perhaps the widest assortment of paint schemes applied to their ships during most of 1944. By the beginning of 1945 however all three squadrons settled on their own distinctive patterns for their respective aircraft. In the case of the 61stFS, a bluish-black paint was selected as that units dominant color. This particular shade of black does not match any existing hue within either British or American paint inventories. After reviewing available color photographs of the period, a best guess would be that this was most probably a 'home-brew' of an ANA Insignia Blue and Black with possibly

As evidenced in this relatively early photo in the Groups history, the squadrons of the 56thFG payed little attention to the matter of filling in stencil lines on their aircraft. This was true of both tail and fuselage applications and was in fact a feature that was to become almost a secondary signature element of this unit. While not all stencil lines were to remain unfilled on 56thFG aircraft, it was nevertheless a



prominent feature, and common on many of the Groups P-47's.







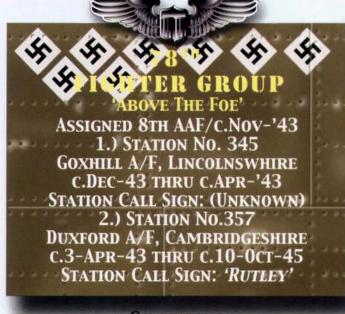
The 63rdFS developed arguably one of the most striking 'camouflage' paint schemes to be displayed on 8thAAF fighters. This effect was created combining two RAF colors, Azure Blue applied over Mediterranean Blue, in a disruptive pattern. While the concealment aspect of this particular color combination might come into question under the prevailing circumstances, it nevertheless made a definitive statement insofar as unit identification was concerned, and this was undoubtedly the primary, if not sole intention of this design.



This wheels-up landing shot provides an excellent view of an early 63rd Fighter Squadron Thunderbolt. This appears to be one of those ships that received an overall application of RAF Dark Green sometime in the spring/summer of 1943. Note the red outlined national insignia and white UK nose/tail markings.







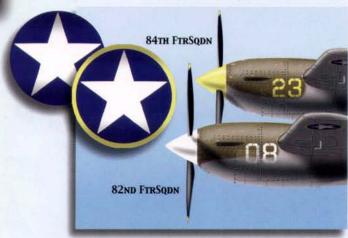
**CAMPAIGNS** 

- AIR OFFENSIVE-EUROPE •
- NORMANDY NORTHERN FRANCE RHINELAND
  - ARDENNES-ALSACE CENTRAL EUROPE •

#### LOCKHEED P-38 'LIGHTNING' c. Dec-'42

One of the first units trained and equipped with the P-38G, the 78thFG departed New York harbor for England on 24Nov42. Upon arrival the 78th was originally assigned to Goxhill A/F on 1Dec42 where they underwent additional training until 3Apr43 when they were transferred to their permanent base at Duxford A/F. However in February 1943, just prior to this transfer, most of the Groups pilots and Lightnings were reassigned to the 12thAAF for combat duty in North Africa. In the interim the 78th was re-equipped and retrained with P-47 Thunderbolts with which the unit would commence combat operations.

During their initial deployment in Great Britain the 78thFG adopted an aircraft identification system similar to that utilized when training in the United States. This entailed the stenciling of an aircraft-in-group number on both outside facing engine cowlings as well as both radiator housings. The groups P-38s bore the Type-3 USAAF National Insignia when first deployed to England however these were soon modified with the application of the now familiar 2inch UK friendly forces yellow surround. Additionally, both propeller spinners of each aircraft were painted in their respective assigned squadron color.





The *plane-in-group* method of aircraft identification utilizes by the 78th involved the application of specified numbers in same

respective squadron colors as those used on the ships propeller spinners. The numbers assigned are depicted in the graphic to the immediate left. As previously mentioned, these were stenciled onto both the radiator housing and engine cowlings in characters approximately 18 inches in height. In most cases the stencil lines remained in their original un-painted state.



#### REPBULIC P-47 'THUNDERBOLT' C. FEB'42-JAN'45

At the urging of the British Air Ministry, the white UK recognition stripes and yellow cocarde surround were applied to all 78thFG P-47C's shortly after arrival. It was widely feared that allied antiaircraft gun crews would too easily mistake the airborne Thunderbolt silhouette with the German FW190, thus greatly increasing the risk of friendly fire incidents.

The Thunderbolts, which replaced the 78thFGs Lightnings, were initially identified with the same *plane-in-group* number-

ing system as those originally utilized on the P-38s. The adjacent photo shows the remnants of such numbers just prior to being repainted with new code letters. This *plane-in-group* system was replaced with white 24in tall squadron code letter combinations in March 1943 and would ultimately be applied to the Groups P-51 Mustangs.



The 'checkerboard' cowling marking began to appear on the Groups P-47s at the same time the new squadron codes were adopted (Mar'43). The *squares* were in fact 8"x7" *rectangles* applied six *squares* per row

Unpainted P-47s began arriving at the 78thFG in April 1944 and in accordance with a VIII Fighter Command directive, painted the upper surfaces of these aircraft with a RAF Dark Green and a Sky Blue application applied to most under-surfaces.

Tail numbers were reapplied with 7in-8in tall yellow numerals. This was in anticipation of the Groups potential post D-Day deployment within Continental Europe and the 78thFG would continue to adhere to this camouflage policy until the end of 1944. Natural metal finished P-47s did participate in Group combat

operations during this time frame but only until time allowed for the application of the aforementioned paint scheme. When D-Day Invasion Stripes were applied, the fuselage codes were masked-out prior to the painting process and not obscured in any way. Squadron colors did not begin appearing on the Groups tail rudders until late October of '44. The existing

UK Marker on the tails was sometimes removed with this new application, in other instances these devises were simply

In late 1943, the 78FG squadrons inventory began to exceed the previous allotment of twenty-six. Aircraft falling into this 'overflow' category were so designated with the addition of a bar, which was located just below the fuselage call letter.





#### NORTH AMERICAN P-51 'MUSTANG' c. Dec'44-Aug'45

Tail rudders received squadron color almost immediately after the new P-51's arrived at the 78thFG maintenance areas. The 83rd Fighter Squadron quickly opted for an additional 2in. contour outline for added visibility. The original tail numbers were simply masked-over prior to rudder paint application leaving an unpainted horizontal strip on the rudder. This policy was soon modified with the numbers being removed entirely and repainted. In the case of the 82nd and 84thFS's, these were relocated entirely forward

83214

472386

463 248

78th Fighter Group spinners were equally divided into black & white halves. In flight these created an almost strobe-like effect, creating an illusionary slow motion visual effect.

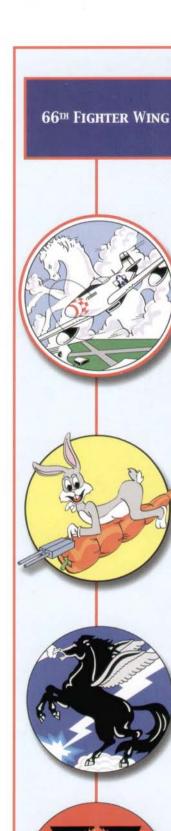
Squadron codes remained the same size and configuration as those previously used on the Groups P-47s with stencil lines invariably being filled-in. The 82nd and 83rd FSs often accented their fuselage codes with a thin Insignia Red contour outline.

series of 12"x 12" black squares upon a white background. The size of the squares was quickly modified down to an 8"x 8" motif. The stencils for this configuration were barely cut when the nose pattern was further modified to employ 6"x 6" black squares and this is what was ultimately adopted. The design for the Groups P-51's consisted of a checkerboard scheme similar to that used on the units Thunderbolts. Beginning at the top with equal rows of eight alternating b&w squares, these swept back in a downward arch intersecting at the base of the wing root. Between the wing root and spinner there were a total of twelve such alternating b&w squares. A two inch red border was eventually added to the trailing edge of this pattern to enhance the separation between the white of the pattern and the ships natural metal finish. The Commanding Officer of the 78thFG

began a practice which was ultimately adopted by several other Mustangs within the Group. This entailed a pattern of between seven and nine alternating vertical b&w stripes running along both wing tips. A variation on this theme was the application to the same area of respective squadron colors.

In the closing two months of the war the 84th Fighter Squadron adopted the practice of painting the main canopy frame of their Mustangs Insignia Red. This was the favored location of many 78thFG pilots for the application of their individual kill marks.

The original 78thFG nose marking consisted of a



3<sup>RD</sup> BOMBARDMENT (AIR) DIVISION

VIII Fighter Command



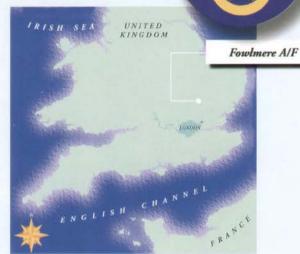


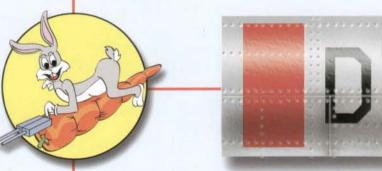
•CALL SIGNS•

'A' GROUP: 'ARMSTRONG'

'B' GROUP: 'STUDENT'

'C' GROUP: 'PRETEND'



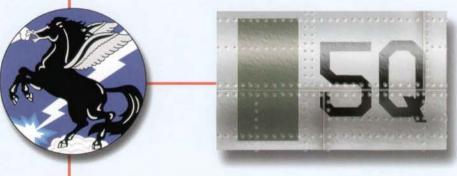


## 503<sup>RD</sup> FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'A' GROUP: 'BEEFSTEAK'
'B' GROUP: 'UNIQUE'

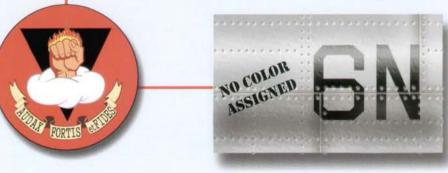
'C' GROUP: (NONE)



## 504TH FIGHTER SODN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'A' GROUP: 'COCKSHY'
'B' GROUP: 'GLUEPOT'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)



#### 505™ FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'A' GROUP: 'UPPER'

'B' GROUP: 'SLAPJACK'

'C' GROUP: (NONE)



- AMERICAN THEATER AIR OFFENSIVE-EUROPE •
- NORMANDY NORTHERN FRANCE RHINELAND
  - ARDENNES-ALSACE CENTRAL EUROPE •



When squadron aircraft inventories increased to numbers exceeding twenty-six, the application of a bar symbol to the call letter was used to denote a 'second-in-series' status. Close examination of the two photos above discloses the bar positioned above the call-letter in the top image clearly indicating that this aircraft was a more recent arrival to the 505thFS. It should be noted that while the bar symbol located above the call letter was the prevalent location within the 339thFtrGrp there were instances where this device was placed *below* the call-letter.

As was the case with most field applied aviation graphics during World War II, subtle variations seem to have been commonplace. Close examination of these three photographs supports this contention. In the top example the aft section of the red & white 'checkerboard' terminates at a point just a bit

forward the exhaust manifold cutout while the other two photos show the graphics overlapping the cutout area. Note also the variation in the positioning of the checkered pattern in relationship to this same exhaust cutout. Additionally, some of the *squares* have a decidedly rectangular appearance about them.



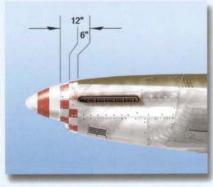


Of particular interest in the above photograph is the graphic image located just aft the call-letter. The aircraft is a P-51B, serial no. 42-006735 assigned to the 505th Fighter Squadron. The bird in flight superimposed over the crescent moon was the symbol denoting 'C 'Flight of the 505thFtrSqdn/339thFtrGrp. Just how wide spread the use of such symbols was among the squadrons of the 339thFG is uncertain at this time but is most certainly a subject worthy of more intense study in the future.



#### North American P-51 'Mustang' c. Jun'44

The 339thFG became fully operational with all combat aircraft decorated with the standard black UK/QIMs in addition to their own distinctive unit nose markings. The latter called for an application of Insignia Red over an Identification White base in a configuration very similar to that depicted



in the adjacent graphics. As discussed on the previous page however, actual applications within the Group's three squadrons displayed subtle design variations from one aircraft to another. Painting the spinner did not pose much of a problem as this simply entailed dividing the surface area into three equal parts.

Squadron codes were assigned to the 339th Fighter Group immediately upon the unit's arrival in the United Kingdom. Due to the relatively late arrival of the 339th to the ETO, all aircraft assigned to the Groups squadrons were P-51Bs of the natural metal finish variety and thus displayed their respective codes exclusively in black paint. These complied with VIII Fighter Commands prescribed size, letter style and placement for similarly equipped Mustang units. Later replacement aircraft would include the 'C', 'D' and 'K' Series P-51s. No individual squadron colors were assigned to the 339th Fighter Group the latter part of 1944. As with other British based USAAF units, full D-Day Invasion Stripes were applied to all of the Groups serviceable combat aircraft immediately prior to the Normandy Invasion and would continue to be displayed by all squadrons of the 339thFG until directed to convert to the ' half stripe' pattern later in the summer of 1944. The aerial photograph at the bottom of this page shows a flight of four 503rdFS Mustangs displaying the typical post D-Day Invasion Stripe pattern on the fuselages. An interesting feature of this photo is that the underwing surfaces of all aircraft





#### NORTH AMERICAN P-51 'MUSTANG' c. Dec'44-Aug'45

Individual colors were adopted by the 503rd and 504th Fighter Squadrons in November of 1944 and by early December most of their Mustangs rudders displayed respective unit colors. The 505thFS opted not to adopt a color for some reason and their rudders would remain unpainted for the remainder of the war. The majority of P-51s assigned to the 339thFG did not apply paint to the aircrafts canopy section. There were those few examples however where the Olive Drab antiglare paint used on the upper engine cowling was carried back to encompass the entire main canopy frame as evidenced in the photo below.



In addition to the impressive and well applied 'kill' markings in this photo is the red drop-shadow incorporated as part of this aircrafts squadron code. It should be pointed out that this was the personal mount of the 339th Fighter Groups Commanding Officer, Lt.Col. William C. Clark (circa Apr45), and as such is not to be considered as representational of all 339thFG aircraft.



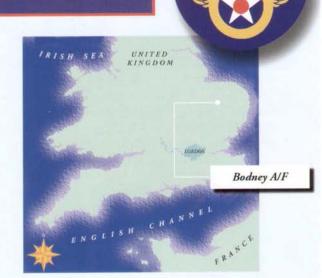
67™ FIGHTER WING

1<sup>SI</sup> BOMBARDMENT (AIR) DIVISION VIII FIGHTER COMMAND

#### 352ND FIGHTER GROUP 'THE BLUENOSED BASTARDS OF BODNEY'

•CALL SIGNS• 'HATFIELD' UNTIL 22-APR-44, THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'TOPSY', THAN 'PACKLOAD' FROM APRIL'45
'B' GROUP: 'BEARSKIN'
'C' GROUP: 'CLOISTER'







#### 328<sup>™</sup> FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS• 'TURNDOWN' UNTIL 22-APR-44, THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'DITTO', THAN 'SCREWCAP' FROM APRIL'45 'B' GROUP: 'TARMAC' 'C' GROUP: (NONE)





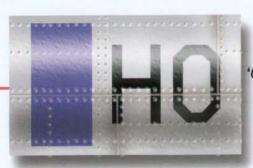
## 486TH FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'HANDSPUN' UNTIL 22-APR-44, THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'ANGUS'
'B' GROUP: 'ROCKET'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)

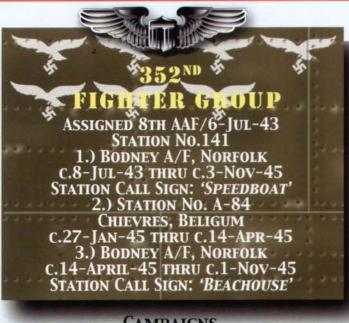




## 487TH FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS• 'CROWNPRINCE' UNTIL 22-APR-45, THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'TRANSPORT'
'B' GROUP: 'VICAR'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)



#### **CAMPAIGNS**

- AIR OFFENSIVE-EUROPE
   NORMANDY
  - NORTHERN FRANCE
     RHINELAND
- ARDENNES-ALSACE
   CENTRAL EUROPE

An interesting aspect of 352nd Fighter Group history is the fact that the unit did not adopt a combat insignia until long after the end of World War II, in 1954 to be exact. While this was not by any means a unique situation among USAAF units during the war, it is nevertheless surprising given the importance placed upon such imagery by some of the 352nd's squadron leaders. It is interesting that some commanders simply do not grasp the importance that imagery can play in a unit's esprit de corps, whether it's a sports team or military organization. Leaders, both past and present, too often lack the intuitive sense to recognize the correlation between a strong visual identity and good morale. To some this particular aspect of team identity is superfluous, a trite issue fully unworthy of their august attention. Ironically it is the unit that puts forth the effort to project a distinctive visual image that

ultimately succeeds in capturing the publics imagination, instills a sense of pride among its members and subsequently ends up leaving an indelible image in the annals of history

An example of just how attached some individuals can become to an image can be found in the history of the 486th Fighter Squadron. This unit traces its origins to the 21st Pursuit Squadron but was redesignated and reorganized as the 486thFS in 1942 and subsequently adopted the replacement insignia depicted on the preceding page. Many of the existing squadron pilots were so attached to the original insignia that they would continue to display this image on their personal clothing throughout the war.



One officer who was apparently cognizant of the importance of team imagery was than Lt.Col. John C. Meyer, commanding the 487thFS. 'Petie' as the squadrons icon was named was omnipresent in virtually every aspect of squadron life as these photos attest. Today this image has become one of the

more familiar combat insignia associated with the 8th AAF in WWII. It may not hurt to mention that as far as unit moral was concerned, the 487thFS under Col.Meyer's command was the only individual squadron within the 8thAAF to be awarded a Distinguished Unit Citation during the course of the war, all other such honors going to units of Group level or higher.



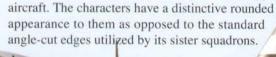
#### REPUBLIC P-47 'THUNDERBOLT' C. Jul'43-Apr'44

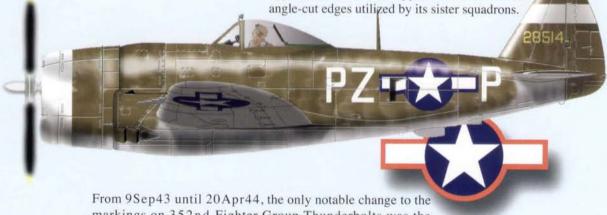


The 352ndFG were assigned individual squadron code letters almost immediately after their arrival in Great Britain. Note the dark blue contour outline on the fuselage insignia. It was a common practice among many units to simply over-paint the existing red outline of Type-3 National Insignia when the replacement Type-4 pattern was subsequently adopted.

Shortly after becoming operational, the combat insignia of the 487th Fighter Squadron began to appear on the forward fuselage area and engine cowlings of several of the units Thunderbolts. Perhaps because of security concerns at that particular time, further application of this image to the squadrons combat aircraft was prohibited and all existing insignia, such as the one above, were ordered removed.

Very early on the 486th Fighter Group began to express a somewhat independent nature. This is reflected in the identification stencils utilized by that squadron to apply codes to its





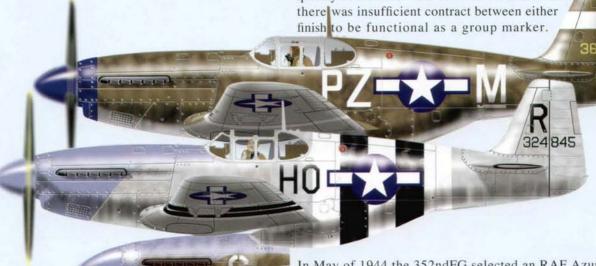
From 9Sep43 until 20Apr44, the only notable change to the markings on 352nd Fighter Group Thunderbolts was the transition from a red outlined Type-3 USAAF National Insignia to the final two color Type-4 pattern. The directive concerning this final modification came within just eleven days (17Sep43) of the Groups commencing actual combat operations.



#### NORTH AMERICAN P-51 'MUSTANG' C. MAR'44 / VE-DAY

In March of 1944 the 486th Fighter Squadron began receiving its allocation of 'B' and 'C' Series P-51's, all in a two-color camouflage paint scheme. The following month the 328th and 487th Fighter Squadrons began receiving their replacement Mustangs, all in a natural metal finish. For a very brief period the 352ndFG attempted to identify its new aircraft by replacing the white QIM cowlings with a substitute application of a

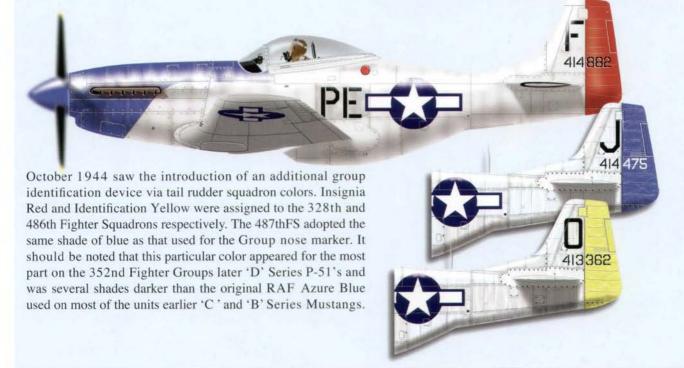
medium blue paint. This particular procedure was quickly abandoned when it was determined that



As was the case with many other units within the 8th Air Force, the 352ndFG adopted the use of a bar-code system as a means of identifying duplicate assigned aircraft. This particular devise was positioned below the call letter in all

Group applications regardless of the location of the call-letter.

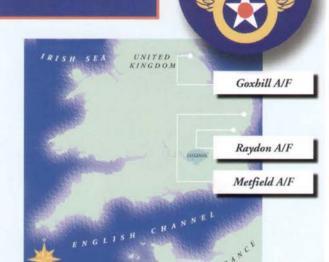
In May of 1944 the 352ndFG selected an RAF Azure Blue shade of paint to replace the original medium blue Group color. To enhance the visibility factor of this new color a sweep back pattern as depicted above was introduced as the official 352nd Fighter Group nose marker. With the introduction of D-Day Invasion Stripes later that month, the 328th and 487th Fighter Squadrons relocated their aircrafts call letters to the tail fin while at the same time the 486th elected to reposition this same symbol just above the wing root and slightly back from the exhaust cutout. This application was short-lived however and by late June the 486th FS had conformed to its sister squadrons and relegated their wayward call-letter on the tail fin as well.





3<sup>RD</sup> BOMBARDMENT
(AIR) DIVISION

VIII Fighter Command

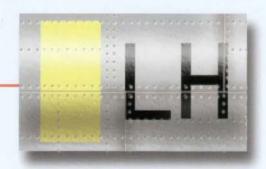


# 353<sup>RD</sup> FIGHTER GROUP 'BILL'S BUZZ BOYS'

•CALL SIGNS• 'SLYBIRD' UNTIL 22-APR-44, THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'JONAH'
'B' GROUP: 'KEYLOCK'
'C' GROUP: 'MUFFIN'





## 350™ FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'PIPEFUL' UNTIL 22-APR-44, THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'SELDOM'
'B' GROUP: 'PERSIAN'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)





#### 351st Fighter SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'ROUGHMAN' UNTIL 22-APR-44, THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'LAWYER'
'B' GROUP: 'SQUIRREL'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)





## 352ND FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'WAKEFORD' UNTIL 22-APR-45, THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'JOCKEY'
'B' GROUP: 'BULLRING'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)



'THE SLYBIRD GROUP'
ASSIGNED 8TH AAF/6-JUL-43
\*STATION NO. 157
RAYDON A/F, SUFFOLK
C.12-APR-44 THRU C.10-OCT-45
STATION CALL SIGN:
'COCKLE'

#### **CAMPAIGNS**

- AIR OFFENSIVE-EUROPE NORMANDY
  - NORTHERN FRANCE RHINELAND •
- ARDENNES-ALSACE CENTRAL EUROPE •

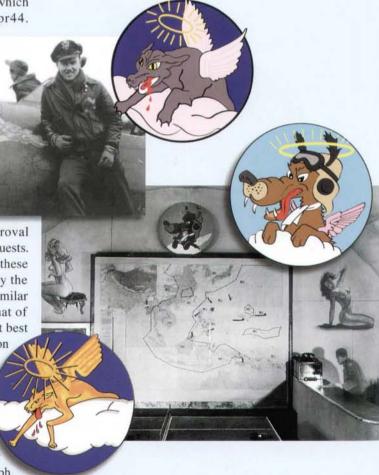
\* Prior to Raydon the 353rdFG was stationed at the former home of the RAF Group Bomber Command, Goxhill A/F (Station No.345) 7Jun43 thru 3Aug44. Goxhill or 'Goat Hill' as it was nicknamed by AAF personal, was the first airfield to be converted for USAAF use. The 353rdFG was next assigned to Metfield A/F (Station No.366, call sign 'Boyhood'), which would be the Groups home from 3Aug43 until 12Apr44.



What at first glance might appear to be another photograph of a 350thFS P-47 turns out to be a quite interesting image insofar as unit markings are concerned. The diamond pattern is easily discernible on this ships cowling, what is not as noticeable are the additional diamond applications painted on this aircrafts trim tabs. There is an additional diamond motif affixed to the rudder hinge, small and hard to see but there nevertheless. Just how wide spread this type of application was, if at all, is currently unknown. The same applies for the exact significance of these markings although it is *surmised*, based upon the history of this particular aircraft, that these markings may have had a connection with the flight leader status of the pilot.

None of the combat insignia adopted by the three squadrons comprising the 353rd Fighter Group were officially approved by the AAF. These 'in-house' designs were by no means unique among American fighter units but it is somewhat unusual in this case given the 353rdFGs early deployment to England. As a rule, insignia remained unofficial with units arriving late to the ETO simply due to the fact that

the war ended, and this before the normally slow approval process caught up to the preponderance of submission requests. Continuity of image was one of the major drawbacks to these unapproved squadron and group designs as evidenced by the composite image to the right. This image contains three similar yet very different visuals the same squadron insignia, that of the 350th. How does one then select a specific image that best represents a given unit? It is not always easy but the selection was simplified in this case by the fact that we have an excellent photo's of the man responsible for the design of his squadron's insignia wearing a patch of same on his A2 flight jacket. In spite of the fact that the photo of the 350thFS Op's Room clearly shows the insignia to the immediate right, the pilot, then Lt.Dwight Blickenstaff who did in fact design the 350thFS insignia, has clearly affixed to his jacket the insignia overlapping his photograph.





#### REPUBLIC P-47 'THUNDERBOLT' C. Jul'43-Nov'44

All of the 353rd Fighter Groups original allocation of P-47s were delivered with the standard two-color factory applied paint scheme. As such the squadron codes and individual aircraft call letters were affixed with white paint in compliance with the VIII Fighter Command directive of 15Jun43. SD110 Squadron codes were assigned to the Group shortly after that units arrival in Great Britain. White QIMs were also present on all of the 353rd Fighter Groups original combat aircraft.



Along with the arrival of metal finished P-47s also in late March 1944 came the 353rdFGs high visibility nose marking. The original pattern was quite distinctive in that it consisted of a series of 7in. black squares on a 45° angle, aligned horizontally over an Identification Yellow background. The visual impact of this configuration was impressive and it is unknown exactly why this was later modified to a 90° square rectangular pattern.

The photo above provides a good look at a field reapplied tail number resplendent with unfilled stencil lines. This was often the case when the original factory applied numbers were replaced under combat conditions.





Due to a purported confusion between the nose markings of the 55th Fighter Group, the cowling pattern of the 353rdFG was increased by an additional five rows of 'checks', thus extending the marker back to a point near the end of the exhaust cutout. This final cowling pattern modification was effected in Dec'44.

Shortly after their delivery a number of the Groups Mustangs received a disruptive camouflage pattern of dark green paint, possibly in anticipation of redeployment or partial deployment to forward Allied air bases located on the European Continent.



In January 1945 the 350thFS adopted the practice of outlining the code letters on their Mustang's with yellow paint, a practice that would similarly be adopted by the 352ndFS before wars end. Another practice, the use of which was widespread but by no means required, was the 'graying-out' of the white areas of the US National Insignia. This blue & white configuration was believed by many pilots to be a convenient aiming point for enemy gun crews. AAF fighter losses to antiaircraft fire were many times higher than those ships lost in aerial combat.

Black were adopted by the 350th and 352nd Fighter Squadrons respectively in November 1944. At this same time the black QIMs were removed from the tail sections. The 351stFS did not utilize an indentifying color. When applying paint to the aircrafts rudders the 352ndFS ground crews simply 'block-masked' out the tail number. 350thFS personnel sometimes elected to use the same masking technique, however, as often as not they would first paint the entire rudder, than reapply the last three numerals of the serial number over the solid Identification Yellow background.



# 2<sup>ND</sup> BOMBARDMENT (AIR) DIVISION

#### VIII FIGHTER COMMAND





#### 355<sup>TH</sup> FIGHTER GROUP 'THE STEEPLE MORDEN STRAFERS'

•CALL SIGNS•

'SUNSHADE' UNTIL 22-APR-44,

THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'UNCLE'
'B' GROUP: 'HORNPIPE'
'C' GROUP: 'BORAX'







## 354TH FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS• 'HAYWOOD' UNTIL 22-APR-44, THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'FALCON'
'B' GROUP: 'CHIEFTEN'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)



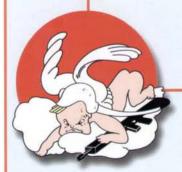


## 357™ FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'BLOWBALL' UNTIL 22-APR-44, THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'CUSTARD'
'B' GROUP: 'MOSES'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)





## 358™ FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'TROOPTRAIN' UNTIL 22-APR-45,

THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'BENTLEY'
'B' GROUP: 'BEEHIVE'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)

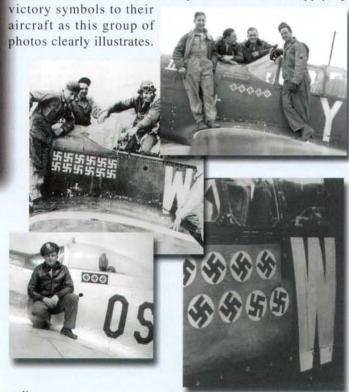


ASSIGNED 8TH AAF/6-JUL-43
STATION NO. 122
STEEPLE MORDEN A/F, CAMBRIDSHIRE
C.8-JUL-43 THRU C.3-JUL-45
STATION CALL SIGN: 'TOWROPE'
UNTIL APRIL '45
THEREAFTER 'TOOL ROOM'

#### CAMPAIGNS

- AIR OFFENSIVE-EUROPE NORMANDY
  - NORTHERN FRANCE RHINELAND •
- ARDENNES-ALSACE CENTRAL EUROPE •

Like most AAF pilots of the era, 355th Fighter Group pilots utilized a wide assortment of images when it came to applying victory symbols to their



These two photos illustrate most prevalent method of recording mission tallies on individual aircraft within the 479th Fighter

Group. A horizontal configuration of bomb and broom symbols were applied with yellow or white paint on camouflaged aircraft, while black or red was used on the metal finished ships. As of this writing, no photographic evidence has been found to confirm the use of additional mission symbols (i.e., locomotives, top hats, etc.) by the 355th Fighter Group squadrons.





USAAF during this early period, there was little to distinguish 355th Fighter Group aircraft from similarly equipped US units. Like many other Thunderbolt groups, an oversized national emblem (60in. diameter vs. a standard 40in.) was often applied to the wing surfaces, especially the undersides, in the hope that this would minimize the risk of their P-47s being erroneously identified by allied aircraft spotters and often nervous gun crews as a German Focke-Wulf /Fw 190 fighter.



#### NORTH AMERICAN P-51 'MUSTANG' c. Mar'44 / VE-Day

Nearly all of the original allocation of Mustangs received by the 355th Fighter Group bore a standard two-color camouflage paint scheme. Just prior to the D-Day landings, those few aircraft within the Group with natural metal finishes received an application of green paint to their upper fuselage and wing surface areas. The paints used varied somewhat from dark green to Olive Drab. Most subsequent replacement aircraft



Aircraft transition training had barely been completed when Invasion Stripes were applied to the Groups P-51's. White had been adopted as the 355thFG's official color in March '44 and consequently all black QIM's were removed from those Group aircraft so adorned. A 12in. wide section of the forward engine cowlings along with the spinners were painted white, thus becoming the 355th Fighter Groups new markings.





# 2<sup>ND</sup> BOMBARDMENT (AIR) DIVISION

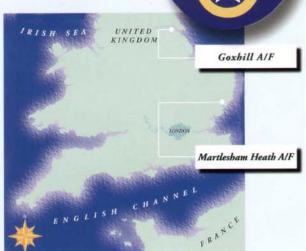
#### VIII FIGHTER COMMAND

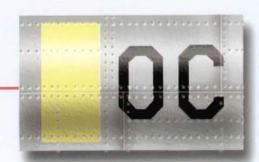


#### 356™ FIGHTER GROUP

•CALL SIGNS• 'SOUNDWAVE' UNTIL 22-APR-44, THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'LAMPSHADE'
'B' GROUP: 'NOTEBOOK'
'C' GROUP: 'SEAWEED'





#### 359<sup>™</sup> FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'BEACH HOUSE' UNTIL 22-APR-44,
THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'FARMHOUSE'
'B' GROUP: 'BUCKET'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)



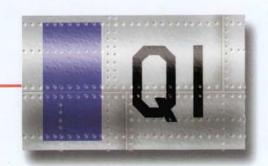


## 360<sup>™</sup> FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS•
'PLASTER' UNTIL 22-APR-44,
THEREAFTER
'A' GROUP: 'VORTEX'

'A' GROUP: 'VORTEX'
'B' GROUP: 'DEANSGATE'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)





#### 3611ST FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'MOLECAT' UNTIL 22-APR-45, THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'CHINWAY'
'B' GROUP: 'WEBBER'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)

ASSIGNED 8TH AAF/25-AUG-43
1.) STATION NO. 345
GOXHILL A/F, LINCOLNSHIRE
C.27-AUG-43 THRU C.5-OCT-43
STATION CALL SIGN: (UNKNOWN)
2.) STATION NO. 369
MARTLESHAM HEATH A/F, SUFFOLK
C.5-OCT-43 THRU C.2-NOV-45
STATION CALL SIGN: 'RECOUNT'

#### CAMPAIGNS

- AIR OFFENSIVE-EUROPE NORMANDY •
- NORTHERN FRANCE RHINELAND • ARDENNES-ALSACE • CENTRAL EUROPE •

#### 359TH Fighter Squadron

Of the original three combat insignia adopted by the squadrons comprising the 356th Fighter Group,

the sole image to remain unchanged throughout the war was that of the 360th Fighter Squadron. The image above belonged to the 359th Fighter Squadron until late 1944, and could have been easily modified to reflect the Groups recent transition from the P-47 Thunderbolt to the P-51 Mustang, but this course of action was not followed. The history of the two images representing the 361st Fighter Squadron is somewhat cloudy at the time of this writing. The design

at left was displayed by that unit at one time and is in fact sometimes used today in representing this

> squadron. The design depicted on the facing page however was submitted to the Army for approval in early 1945 and the original art work remains on file in offical USAAF archives.



#### 361st Fighter Squadron

A close examination of the photograph at lower right (once the bar area of the 359th Fighter Squadron) reveals that it was probably taken sometime after the 359th FG had converted to the P-51 Mustang. As noted in the accompanying text above, the 359thFS was more or less obliged to recreate or at least modify their original insignia due to the Thunderbolt image incorporated within that design. For whatever reasons, the

former course of action was selected and the replacement was the slingshot wielding chickenhawk depicted on the facing page. The new 359thFS image as well as the replacement 361st Fighter Squadron insignia were both submitted for approval at about the same time, in early 1945, thus narrowing down this photos time frame.

Although the enlarged inset has nothing to do with insignia or markings, the creative use of 'available materials' warranted a special notice. This puts an entirely





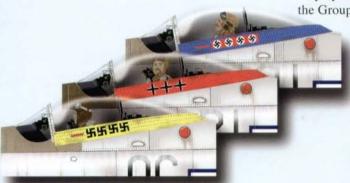


#### NORTH AMERICAN P-51 'MUSTANG' c. Nov'44 / VE-DAY

The 356th Fighter Group received their first 'D' Series P-51 in October of 1944 and entered combat with these the following month. Initially these aircraft bore no distinguishing marks save the original squadron codes handed down from the P-47's. Unlike its predecessors, none of the 356thFG Mustangs would receive the familiar two-color camouflage paint configuration.

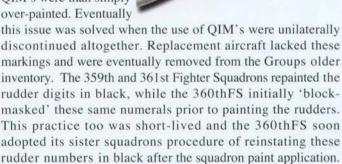


By the end of November, early December of 1944, the 356thFG adopted high profile color markings with a vengeance. All P-51 Mustang spinners received an overall coat of medium blue paint. The area just forward the prop cutouts was equally divided into 2in. segments of alternating red and blue horizontal color bands. The forward fuselage received an overall coat of red paint in the configuration shown above. This was accented with a series of elongated triangles, approximately 4in.x 8in. of the same blue shade as that used on the spinners. The exact application of this diamond pattern varied somewhat from one aircraft to another, but the overall effect created a very dynamic unit recognition pattern which was a far cry from the Groups initial lackluster days with the P-47 Thunderbolt.



In January 1945 all 356th Fighter Group Mustangs main canopy frames began to be adorned in squadron colors. These areas also came to be the location of choice of many of the Group's pilots for displaying individual victory or 'Kill Marks'.





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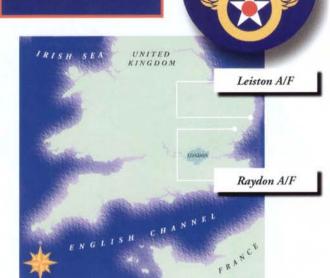
415528

Beginning in February 1945 all 356th FG Mustang spinners were repainted in proper squadron colors. The overriding factor behind this change was the additional time required to apply the original Group striped pattern.

This modification was undoubtedly welcomed by the Groups already heavily burdened ground maintenance crews, not to mention that squadron recognition became further enhanced.



1<sup>st</sup> Bombardment (Air) Division VIII FIGHTER COMMAND



# 357<sup>TH</sup> FIGHTER GROUP 'THE YOXFORD BOYS'

•CALL SIGNS•

'RIGHTFIELD' UNTIL 22-APR-44,

THEREAFTER
'A' GROUP: 'DRYDEN'

'B' GROUP: 'SILAS'
'C' GROUP: 'EYESIGHT'





#### 362<sup>ND</sup> FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS• 'Judson' until 22-Apr-44, thereafter

'A' GROUP: 'DOLLAR'
'B' GROUP: 'ROWNTREE'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)





## 363RD FIGHTER SODN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'CHAMBER' UNTIL 22-APR-44, THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'CLEMET'
'B' GROUP: 'DIVER'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)



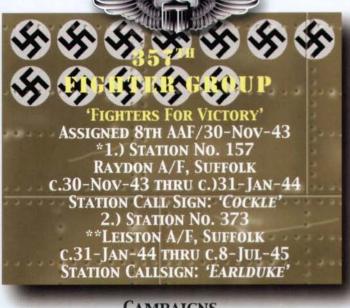


## 364<sup>TH</sup> FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'COWDY' UNTIL 22-APR-45, THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'GREENHOUSE'
'B' GROUP: 'HAWKEYE'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)



#### CAMPAIGNS

- AIR OFFENSIVE-EUROPE NORMANDY
  - NORTHERN FRANCE RHINELAND •
- ARDENNES-ALSACE CENTRAL EUROPE •

\*While the 357thFG was stationed at Raydon A/F, the Group had been issued its squadron codes, and at the time was serving with the 9thAAF. This was one of the first units within the 8thAAF to adopt SD110 squadron codes which departed from the previously standard 'double letter' system of identification.

\*\* Leiston was also known as Theberton/Saxmundham A/F.



The 362ndFS appears to have made good use of their combat insignia as evidenced by the images directly above. Research also turned up similar photographic records depicting the use of the 363rdFS insignia. All photos were taken at Leiston A/F.

Although the main canopy frame was the preferred location with many AAF pilots of the P-51 when it came to applying their individual 'kill marks', the men of the 357thFG tended to carry on with their

custom of displaying these images on the mid-fuselage area of their Mustangs. The Group had begun combat operations with the 'B' and 'C' series P-51s which did not offer a large main canopy frame as an option, thus all

victory marks were applied to the fuselage by necessity. This procedure seems to have become somewhat of a 357thFG tradition, which would be carried over to the later model 'bubble top' replacement Mustangs. Victory or 'kill' marks wit ran the gambit from a simp German Balkenkreuz to imagery such as that depict

Victory or 'kill' marks within the 8thAAF ran the gambit from a simple outline of the German Balkenkreuz to very elaborate imagery such as that depicted on the 362nd FS Mustang in the photo to the immediate left which is a stylized Luftwaffe insignia.



#### NORTH AMERICAN P-51 'MUSTANG' c. Nov'43 -Dec'44

The original consignment of 'B' / 'C' series P-51's allocated to the 357thFG bore a factory applied two-color paint scheme of Olive Drab over Neutral Grey. When the 357th began receiving replacement Mustangs that lacked this camouflage (April '44) the Group adopted a policy of painting all natural metal finished combat aircraft with their own two-color camouflage paint scheme. The colors used by the 357th varied considerably due to a wide assortment of supply sources. The upper colors ranged from O.D. to a dark green. The under surfaces ran the gambit from a standard U.S. Neutral Grey to a light grey. In June of the same year, a few of the Groups Mustangs received a partial green paint treatment to the upper wing and top fuselage/tail plane surfaces. This often included the full rudder surface area. Another handful simply had the antiglare panel extended to the rear of the canopy and

ultimately intersected the base

of the vertical stabilizer.

With the introduction of Invasion Stripes in early June 1944 the squadron codes were either masked-out prior to the application of the D-Day Stripes or removed entirely and later reinstated further forward on the fuselage using the original white paint. The photo below shows a combination 'contour / block masking' of the codes while the adjacent illustration depicts a typical repositioning application. A third, less used option, was 'image masking' the codes when applying the Invasion Stripes and than adding a contrasting black or white contour outline to these codes once the stripes had been applied and masking removed.



The original 357th Mustangs displayed the standard white QIM markings until the group adopted its dual color high visibility nose markings in March of '44. When Invasion Stripes were ordered immediately prior to the D-Day Landings, the 357th complied with the directive with one quite notable exception; the upper wing surfaces of all the Groups aircraft continued to carry the original white UK/QIM stripes instead of the normal two-color Invasion Stripes. Just how this came to pass is uncertain today but it is highly unlikely that such a course of action was an arbitrary decision at Group level. For whatever reason it would appear that the 357thFG received an

exemption insofar as the top wing surface D-Day Invasion Stripes were concerned.

Very early on the 357thFG adopted the use of a horizontal bar in conjunction with individual aircraft call letters to designate the 'Second-in-Squadron' status of any replacement ship exceeding the Groups original allocation of twenty-six P-51's. Although there were a few early examples of this devise being placed *below* the call letter, by far the majority of these bars were located *above* this letter. It is interesting to note that within the 357th Fighter Group, The 362ndFS left a good portion of the fuselage code stencil lines unfilled and a majority of the 363rdFS were likewise left unpainted. The 364thFS on the other hand rarely left any of these stencil lines unfilled when applying the fuselage codes to their aircraft.



#### NORTH AMERICAN P-51 'MUSTANG' C.JAN'44-V/E DAY

By the beginning of April 1944 the 357thFG was well on its way to completing the application of the Groups recently assigned high visibility nose markings to all squadron aircraft. As illustrated below, this marking consisted of a two-color spinner divided into three equal parts, which proceeded two rows of alternating 6in. (approx.) red and yellow rectangles that entirely encircled the forward fuselage engine cowling.

The application of two-color camouflaged paint schemes to 357thFG Mustangs (as depicted below) had ceased by early October 1944. By January 1945 all such paint had been in fact removed and the 357th displayed metal finishes until wars end.



The wartime photo immediately above is yet another example of the variation in marking applications that occurred within the 8thAAF under combat conditions. Note the uneven division of this aircraft's spinner, and this in spite of a clear directive calling for this very devise to be divided into three *equal* parts.

In October 1944 the 363rd and 364th Fighter Squadrons adopted colors to be applied to their aircraft's rudders to assist in unit recognition. These were Insignia Red for the 363rd and Identification Yellow was assigned to the 364th. The rudder digits on 364thFS aircraft were repainted utilizing the original black color while these same numbers were reinstated in both black and yellow on 363rdFS applications. The 362nd Fighter Squadron did not adopt an identifying color and their P-51's rudders remained in either Olive Drab, or later, natural metal finishes until the end of hostilities in the European Theater.





• AMERICAN THEATER • AIR OFFENSIVE-EUROPE •

• NORMANDY • NORTHERN FRANCE • RHINELAND •

• ARDENNES-ALSACE • CENTRAL EUROPE •

It has been noted earlier that the 357th Fighter Group was somewhat unique among 8thAAF Fighter units in that its squadrons displayed the *letter-number* combination squadron code designations that had been assigned prior to the 357th's transfer from the 9thAAF. Conversely, even after transferring to the 9thAAF, the 358thFG squadrons continued to carry the *double-letter* codes that had been assigned to them while with

the Eighth AF. These codes would remain unchanged throughout the remainder of the war.

The 358th Fighter Groups tenure with the Eighth Air Force was brief by any standards, less than three full months. Shortly after completing their UK training, the 358thFG was 'swapped' to the Ninth Air Force in exchange for the 357th Fighter Group. This was a mutually advantageous arrangement due to the specific needs of each air force. The 8thAAF was in constant need of additional fighter escort for its ever- increasing strategic bombing campaign against the Third Reich while the 9thAAF was busy stepping up its tactical assaults over Continental Europe in preparation for the pending D-Day landings. The 357th Fighter Group was equipped with P-51 Mustangs, the consummate high altitude US escort fighter, while the 358th Fighter Group flew the rugged P-47 which was ideally suited to the low level

page would eventually be used on each of the respective squadrons tail rudders and engine cowlings as tactical unit markings. It should be noted however that unlike the squadron codes, these colors were not displayed by the 358th FG ons until after that units transfer to the Ninth Air Force.

2838

The squadron colors depicted on the facing

squadrons until after that units transfer to the Ninth Air Force. In regards to the individual combat insignia displayed by each unit, the following information is available; neither the 358th Fighter Group nor the 365th Fighter Squadron insignia were ever officially approved for use. The 366th and 367th Fighter Squadron insignia on the other hand were both approved by the Army's Board of Heraldry on 6Sep43 and 1Mar44 respectively. While these dates confirm that the latter two insignia were in use, to date no written or photographic evidence has been located that would verify whether or not the first two *unofficial* designs were in use during the brief time that the 358th Fighter Group was assigned to the 8thAAF at either Leiston or Goxhill.

\*A final change of UK postings occurred on 13Apr44 when the 358thFG was transferred to Station No.411 / High Halden A/F, in Kent. After a brief stay at High Halden, the 358th was moved to the Continent where it would remain until wars end.

ground attack campaign than being conducted by the Ninth.



2<sup>ND</sup> BOMBARDMENT (AIR) DIVISION

VIII Fighter Command

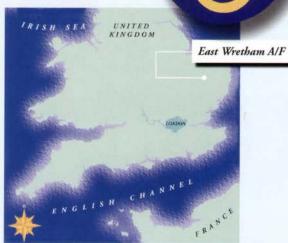




# 359<sup>IM</sup> FIGHTER GROUP 'THE UNICORNS'

•CALL SIGNS• 'WALLPAINT' UNTIL 22-APR-44, THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'CHAIRMAN'
'B' GROUP: 'CAVETOP'
'C' GROUP: 'RAGTIME'







## 368™ FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'BEESNEST' UNTIL 2-JAN-44, 'JACKSON' UNTIL 22-APR-44 THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'JIGGER'
'B' GROUP: 'HANDY'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)





## 369™ FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'TIRETREAD' UNTIL 22-APR-44, THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'TINPLATE'
'B' GROUP: 'EARNEST'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)



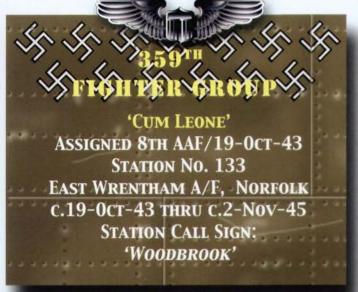


#### 370TH FIGHTER SODN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'WHEELER' UNTIL 22-APR-44, THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'REDCROSS'
'B' GROUP: 'ROLLO'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)



#### CAMPAIGNS

- AIR OFFENSIVE-EUROPE NORMANDY
  - NORTHERN FRANCE RHINELAND •
- ARDENNES-ALSACE CENTRAL EUROPE •

The three photographs below afford a capsulated overview of the 359th Fighter Groups nose marking history. Of special interest in these photos are the two lower images. The middle shot is of late war period and shows the yellow spiral added to many of the 368th Fighter Squadron spinners. The bottom shot is a group photo of the 370th Fighter Squadrons Engineering Unit and the interesting feature here is that the white engine

cowling should have been repainted Light Green by the time the 359th Fighter Group had received its first P-51s.



CR

Other than the change in squadron codes when the 4th Fighter Group made the transition from British Spitfires to Thunderbolts, this is the only other

known modification to a squadron code within the Eighth Air Force during World War II. The exact reason for this change is uncertain today but what is certain is that the other two squadron codes remained intact as first issued, the 370th being the only effected unit

within the 359th Fighter Group. Note the red outlined fuselage codes in the lower photo. This practice became quite common, although not standardized, among the 370th Fighter Squadron.





Flight Leader Rene Burtner (left) and two fellow pilots posed in front of Butners P-51D, 'Hubert' / IV-D / a/c number 472366. Note the Command Stripes on the dorsal fin fillet used to designate Burtner as 'D' Flight Leader of the 369th FtrSqdn / 359thFtrGrp.



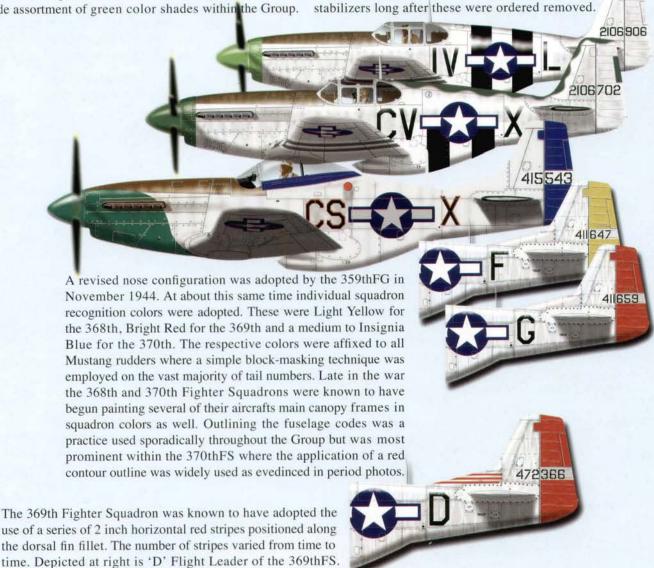


NORTH AMERICAN P-51 'MUSTANG' c. May'44 -VE Day After receipt of their replacement P-51s, most of which were delivered with a two-color camouflage paint scheme, the same light green paint shade used on the Groups P-47s was selected to decorate the spinner and initial 24 inches of all 359thFG Mustang engine cowlings. Numerous aircraft carried the wing and tail QIMs for some time after their 23Mar44 removal date.



As natural metal finished P-51s began to arrive, the nose areas originally received the same light green shade as previously applied to the camouflaged aircraft. It was quickly discovered however that this particular shade of paint lacked sufficient contrast against the metal finishes to be effective as a unit marker. As a result, by mid summer 1944, a medium green paint was chosen as the replacement color on all 359thFG aircraft. The nose paint tended to fade rather quickly resulting in a wide assortment of green color shades within the Group.

At about the same time the 368th Fighter Squadron adopted (albeit unofficially) the custom of painting its rudder trim tabs in the same green shade as that used on nose applications. A limited number of natural metal finished Mustangs received a disruptive camouflage application of dark green paint to the upper surface areas of the wings, horizontal stabilizers and emphannage. For whatever reason, many 359thFG aircraft continued to display the black QIMs on the horizontal





## 2<sup>ND</sup> BOMBARDMENT (AIR) DIVISION

#### VIII FIGHTER COMMAND



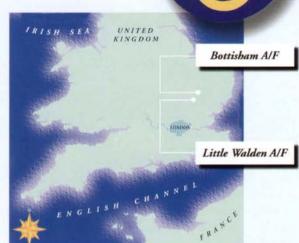


# 361<sup>st</sup> FIGHTER GROUP 'THE YELLOW JACKETS'

•CALL SIGNS•
'WILDCAT' UNTIL 22-APR-44,
THEREAFTER
'A' GROUP: 'CHEERFUL'

LATER 'GLOWBRIGHT'
'B' GROUP: 'MARBLE'
LATER 'FILLY'

'C' GROUP: 'MALTESE'
LATER 'MAGPIE'







#### 374TH FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'HUBBARD' UNTIL 22-APR-44 THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'NOGGIN' LATER 'AMBROSE'
'B' GROUP: 'KINGDOM' LATER 'RIPPER'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)





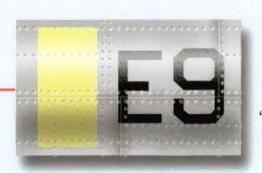
#### 375™ FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'WABASH' UNTIL 22-APR-44 THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'CADET' LATER 'DECOY'
'B' GROUP: 'DAYDREAM' LATER 'DISHCLOTH'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)





## 376™ FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'GAYLORD' UNTIL 22-APR-44 THEREAFTER

'A' GROUP: 'TITUS' LATER 'YORKSHIRE'
'B' GROUP: 'STYLE' LATER 'SKYBLUE'

'C' GROUP: (NONE)



#### CAMPAIGNS

- AIR OFFENSIVE-EUROPE
   NORMANDY
  - NORTHERN FRANCE RHINELAND •
- ARDENNES-ALSACE CENTRAL EUROPE •

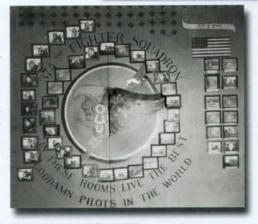
The 361stFG was transferred briefly (c.Feb-Apr'44) to Station No. A-84 located at Chievres, Belgium. A detachment from the 361st had been dispatched earlier to France (c.Dec'44-Jan'45) in support of Allied ground forces during the Battle of the Bulge.

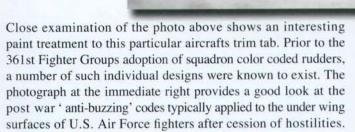
Of the two photos below the first image illustrates the typical upper surface camouflage 'edging' applied to most of the 361st FG Mustangs in mid 1944. Note that the lead aircraft is the only one in this flight displaying a second pattern high visibility paint scheme making it reasonably certain that this image could be dated from somewhere between July and August of 1944. The second photo shows the application of paint to the top edge of the vertical stabilizer as well as the trim tab and wing tips. This was a widely used practice among the squadron's of

the 361st until the application of squadron colors to the rudder areas was adopted in latter October '44.



This photograph depicts an interesting use of the 374th Fighter Squadrons combat insignia. Such applications were commonplace at most U.S. Army airfields but unfortunately, not photo documented nearly enough to suit those of us today interested in the study of this subject.









#### REPUBLIC P-47 'THUNDERBOLT' C. DEC'43-MAY'44

A close examination of this photo reveals what appears what could possibly be a camouflage blotching application to the surface area of this 374th Fighter Squadron Thunderbolt. There are however no records located to date that indicate that any of the 361st Fighter Group aircraft received such a camouflage treatment, thus leaving current and future students of this period with yet another unanswered question to explore.



A small number of P-47D's were assigned to the 361stFG in a natural metal condition. As the Group knew of its pending conversion to the P-51 Mustang, no attempt was made to paint these aircraft in conformance with the existing P-47 inventory, but they did receive the yellow engine cowling treatment. The fuselage codes were applied with black paint in a standard size and location consistent with the 361stFG's other aircraft.



67™ FIGHTER WING

1<sup>SI</sup> BOMBARDMENT
(AIR) DIVISION

VIII Fighter Command

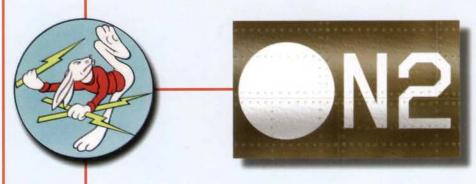


364TH FIGHTER GROUP

•CALL SIGNS•

'A' GROUP: 'SUNHAT'
'B' GROUP: 'WEEKDAY'
'C' GROUP: 'HARLOP'





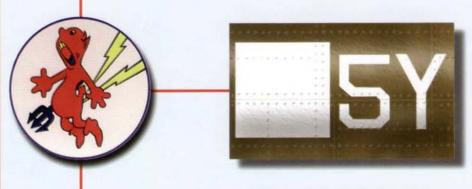
### 383RD FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'A' GROUP: 'ESCORT'

'B' GROUP: 'TANTRUM'

'C' GROUP: (NONE)



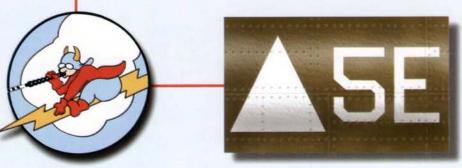
## 384™ FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'A' GROUP: 'GOLDFISH'

'B' GROUP: 'ZEETA'

'C' GROUP: (NONE)



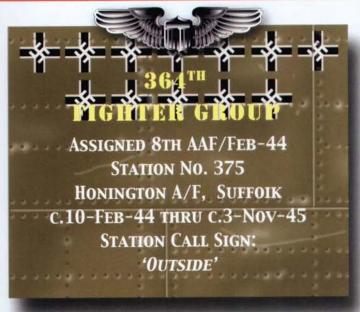
#### 385<sup>TH</sup> FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'A' GROUP: 'EGGFLIP'

'B' GROUP: 'PILLOW'

'C' GROUP: (NONE)



The 364thFG adopted the practice of applying the last three digits of the aircraft tail number to both sides of the nacelle nose. These numbers were normally eight to ten inches in height, painted yellow with most stencil lines remaining open.



An additional adaptation of the 364th was the 'Droop Snoot' (see #737 above) on many of its P-38s beginning in April 1944.

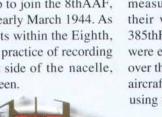
#### CAMPAIGNS

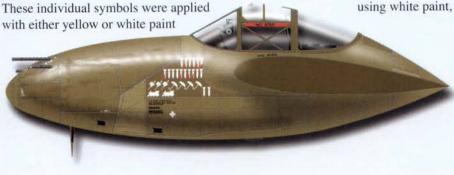
- AIR OFFENSIVE-EUROPE
   NORMANDY
  - NORTHERN FRANCE
     RHINELAND
- ARDENNES-ALSACE
   CENTRAL EUROPE

The 364th was the last AAF fighter group to join the 8thAAF, entering combat with venerable P-38J in early March 1944. As was the custom with other Lightning units within the Eighth, the squadrons of the 364thFG adopted the practice of recording individual mission tally scores on the port side of the nacelle, just forward and below the cockpit windscreen.

One thing the 364thFG did not adopt, even after converting to the P-51 Mustang, was the use of squadron colors. Instead the use of geometric symbols was incorporated as identifying squadron markers. As a general rule these devices measured 30 inches at

their widest point, the 385thFS triangle was equilateral in configuration. Tail numbers were either masked out prior to marker application or reinstated over these symbols with either yellow or black paint. Individual aircraft call letters were relocated to the inner surface fin areas, using white paint, and measuring approximately 30in. in height





The 364thFG continued to use white as the basis of their Group color nose markings. As an additional distinguishing feature, six-inch tall medium blue color bars were incorporated within the twelve-inch white nose section encompassing the forward area of the engine cowling. These bars corresponded to the horizontal axis of the fuselage and fully encircled the cowling.





#### LOCKHEED P-38 'LIGHTNING' c. Feb'44-Jul'44

Most combat aircraft assigned to the 364thFtrGrp received a Droop-Snoot treatment in addition to the duplication, usually in yellow, of the last three digits of the aircraft's tail number. These numbers were located on the forward center section of the nacelle, just aft the white vertical Droop-Snoot stripe.

The 364thFtrGrp adopted the use of geometric symbols as squadron markers verses a more typical color coding system. Specifications called for these markers to measure 30in. at the widest point. With the application of these geometric squadron symbols the existing tail numbers were handled in one of two ways: The entire number was either block-masked

ways: The entire number was either block-maske out, leaving an unpainted horizontal strip or reinstated in either black or yellow paint over the newly applied squadron symbol.



In March 1944 the 364thFG adopted the use of white spinners as its unit marker. The leading twelve inches of each engine cowling were similarly painted white for enhanced visibility.

All fuselage codes were applied with white paint in full

268013

compliance with existing AAF / T.O. No.07-1-1 (revised). Individual call letters were relocated to the inner fin areas and the radiator housings. A bar symbol was sometimes applied to the vent door separating the call letter and squadron code. A thin horizontal bar located beneath the call letter indicated a Second-in-Squadron aircraft inventory status.





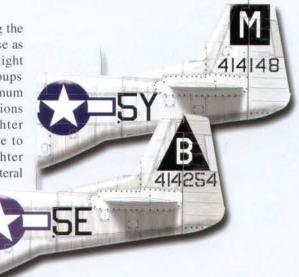
#### NORTH AMERICAN P-51 'MUSTANG' c. Jul'44 / VE-DAY

The average squadron marker sizes for 364thFG are as follows:

- 383rd Squadron: Varied between 28-40 inches in diameter with call letters between 18-30 inches accordingly.
  - **384th Squadron**: Approximately 24 inches square containing an 18 inch call letter.
- 385th Squadron: Consisted of an 28 inch base line with 36 inch diagonal sides and a 24 inch tall call letter.

With the 364th Fighter Groups transition to the Mustang the existing geographic symbols were adopted for continued use as official squadron markers. There were however some slight modifications to these symbols when applied to the Groups P-51s. Whereas the squadrons had utilized a 30in. maximum measure on their respective applications, the actual dimensions as applied to the Mustang were varied. The 384th Fighter Squadron significantly reduced the overall size of its square to accommodate the existing tail numbers. The 385th Fighter Squadrons original marker was transformed from an equilateral

to an isosceles triangle giving this symbol a narrower base but maintaining an approximate height equal to the original 30in. The 383rd Fighter Squadrons marker on the other hand varied in diameter from between 28in. to 40in. containing a call letter with a height anywhere from 18in. to 30in. In these larger marker applications the tail number was simply overpainted and no attempt was made to reinstate them.





An interesting characteristic, unique among the 364th Fighter Group, was the 383rd Squadrons policy of applying to its aircraft a squadron code with a height measuring 30in., this as opposed to the other squadrons 18in. to 20in. The reason for these applications is unknown but its use was consistent among virtually all P-51s assigned to the 383rdFS from the beginning.

This battle damage photo serves to illustrate a typical overpainting of the tail number with the application of the 383rd Fighter Squadrons circular marker. Note also the black QIM's on the horizontal stabilizer. These and the companion wing markers continued to be displayed on a good number of 364th Fighter Group Mustangs long after most other groups had abandoned their use. The UK/QIM's had been superceded by the Invasion Stripes in early June of 1944, and in most cases simply not reinstated on USAAF fighter aircraft when the D-Day markers were ultimately removed later that same year. Although not apparent in this photograph, some flight leaders within the 385th Fighter Squadron were known to have utilized decorated trim tabs and/or dorsal fin fillets. The latter consisted of a series of red stripes while the rudder trim tabs were either similarly striped with red and black or painted as a solid red.





# 2<sup>ND</sup> BOMBARDMENT (AIR) DIVISION

#### VIII Fighter Command





# 479<sup>TH</sup> FIGHTER GROUP 'RIDDLE'S RAIDERS'

•CALL SIGNS•
'A' GROUP: 'HIGHWAY'

'B' GROUP: 'SNOWWHITE'
'C' GROUP: 'FLAREUP'







#### 434<sup>™</sup> FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'A' GROUP: 'NEWCROSS'
'B' GROUP: 'REFLEX'

'C' GROUP: (NONE)





#### 435™ FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'A' GROUP: 'LAKESIDE'
'B' GROUP: 'HADDOCK'
'C' GROUP: (NONE)



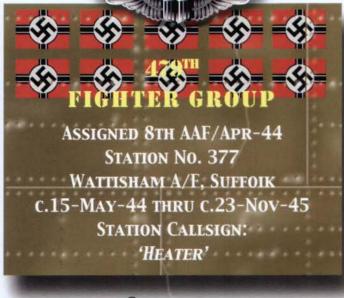


### 436TH FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGNS•

'A' GROUP: 'BISON'
'B' GROUP: 'SPRINGBOX'

'C' GROUP: (NONE)



**CAMPAIGNS** 

- AIR OFFENSIVE-EUROPE NORMANDY
  - NORTHERN FRANCE RHINELAND •
- ARDENNES-ALSACE CENTRAL EUROPE •

The 479th Fighter Groups first combat commander, Lt/Col Kyle L. Riddle, selected the geometric symbols depicted on the facing page to serve as his squadrons' recognition markers. On 10Aug44 Riddle was shot down while flying a mission and was replaced by Col. Hubert A. Zemke, former C.O. of the 56th Fighter Group. Upon assuming command Colonel Zemke immediately directed that colors were to replace the symbols as squadron identifying elements. Col. Zemke was himself shot down several months later and captured by the Germans. Kyle Riddle who had earlier evaded capture, returned to England and subsequently been promoted to full Colonel, once again assumed command of the 479th and retained the new colors.

This image is a enlargement of a larger group photograph which contains all of the pilots assigned to the 436th Fighter Squadron in early 1945. Although somewhat grainy, the combat insignia of the 436th can be made out on the left side of three of the pilots leather flight jackets.





Upon close examination the photo at left reveals both the official and unofficial insignia of the 434th FtrSqdn adorning the pilots leather flight jacket.

This assemblage of 434th FtrSqdn pilot photos carries the unofficial insignia (depicted in color, lower right) which was adopted after the 479th Fighter

Groups conversion to the P-51 Mustang. The original (and official) 'double trouble' image displayed by the 434thFS alluded to the twin boomed configuration of the units original P-38 Lightnings and deemed inappropriate for representing the replacement Mustangs, thus the advent of this newer design.







LOCKHEED P-38 'LIGHTNING' C. JUL-SEP'44 Those Lightning's within the 479th Fighter Group bearing a factory applied two-color camouflage paint scheme received the standard P-38 'Droop-Snoot' treatment. In addition to this, all paint was removed from the propeller spinners as well as a 12-18 inch section from the forward area of both engine cowlings.



When squadron colors were ultimately adopted by the 479th
Fighter Group there were actually only two; ANA No.619
Bright Red was selected for the 434th Fighter Squadron and
ANA No.505 Light Yellow was assigned to the 435th Fighter
Squadron. These colors were applied to both rudders and as a
rule, the aircraft tail numbers were repainted shortly thereafter.

The 436th Fighter Squadron was not originally assigned a
color and in fact did not utilize one until the Group converted
to the P-51 Mustang in mid-summer of this same year.

2317

It should be noted here that the 479th Fighter Group
received some of its P-38 inventory from other units, most
notably the 20th and 364th Fighter Groups. In both of these
instances the spinners and first 12 inches of engine cowling
were painted in those units colors, Light Yellow and Insignia
White respectively. These colors were generally not removed
and put into service with the 479th Fighter Group squadrons
'as-is'. This can sometimes prove confusing when researching
wartime photographs connected with this unit's history.



Even after complying with SHAEF Operation Memo No. 23 of July 1944 which confined Invasion Stripes to the under surface areas only of U.K. based fighter aircraft, the original 479th Fighter Group fuselage codes were not reinstated on the P-38s.



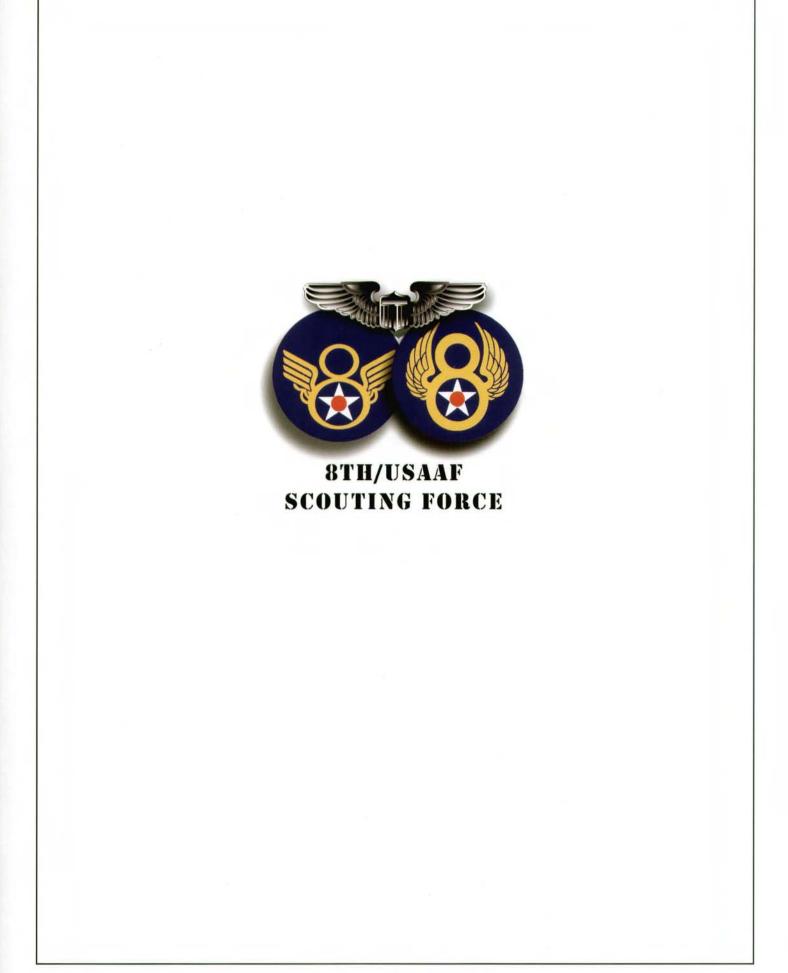
#### NORTH AMERICAN P-51 'MUSTANG' c. Sep'44 / VE-DAY

Upon receipt of their replacement P-51s, squadron colors were immediately applied to the rudder areas. These colors remained unchanged from those assigned to the Groups former P-38s. those being ANA No.619/Bright Red for the 434thFS and ANA No.505/Light Yellow for the 435thFS. The aircraft tail numbers were either removed entirely or simply over painted at this time. D-Day 'half-stripes' were initially applied as per SHAEF instructions but this practice tapered off considerably



Upon delivery all UK/QIM's were either partially or entirely removed from the nose and empennage areas of the new P-51s. One notable addition to the 479thFtrGrps identity was the introduction of ANA No.515/Gloss Black as the new color for the 436th Fighter Squadron. This unit originally adopted a checkerboard pattern consisting of a series of 12 inch squares applied to their aircraft's rudders. The serial numbers were completely removed from all tail sections with this application. Use of this pattern was discontinued however the following November in favor of a solid paint coverage of the entire rudder surface area. Later handling of tail numbers among the squadrons of the 479thFG ran the full gambit of applications and varied from complete removal, over painting, blockmasking to full reinstatement. In the latter case the 434th and 435th Fighter Squadrons used either black, yellow or in a few cases, a combination of the two when reapplying numbers over the newly painted rudders. The use of a bar positioned under a call letter was adopted to denote a Second-in-Squadron status.





he concept for the creation of a small advance aerial force to precede 8thAAF bomber formations on their missions was the brain child of Army Air Force Colonel Budd J. Peaslee, or 'Uncle Budd' as he was affectionately referred to by his subordinates. Peaslee was all to familiar with the many problems encountered by VIII Bomber Command on any given mission having commanded the 384th Bomb Group

from 18Dec42 until 6Sep43. As a result of this hands-on experience Col. Peaslee lined up all his ducks and submitted a formal proposal for the formation of a Scouting Force to the Commanding Officer/8thAAF, Brigadier General James 'Jimmy' Doolittle. Always a man of vision where his beloved Air Corps was concerned, Gen. Doolittle approved Peaslee's plan and ordered the formation of Scouting Force (Experimental) for immediate trial and evaluation and Col. Peaslee was appointed by Doolittle to head up the newly formed unit.

As Peaslee envisioned it the primary duty of the aerial scouts would be to proceed each bomber stream and evaluate existing weather conditions over the missions primary, and if

necessary, alternate target areas. The Scouts would then communicate this information to the Mission Commanders thus resulting in decreased mission duration, increased effectiveness and, more importantly, a reduction in the per mission casualty rate.

Secondary duties for the Scouts would be to assist the bomb groups at their respective assembly points with pre-strike formups and than help maintain a tight box formation once the bombers were enroute to their target. Eventually, the Scouts would also prove to be an effective asset in assisting the assigned fighter escort with fending off enemy aerial attacks. This however would come only after some of the units pilots gained enough fighter time to enable them to go head-to-head with the vaunted Luftwaffe.

But in June of 1944 all of this was somewhere off in the future if indeed the Scouts were to have a future at all beyond this crucial experimental phase.

Colonel Peaslee's first order of business was to recruit eight volunteer bomber pilots. A prerequisite for consideration to a posting to the Scouts was completion of one full combat tour within the ETO in heavy bombers. Rounding out the Scouts starting lineup required an additional eight experienced fighter pilots. Both the pilots and twelve P-51D's Mustangs (including the necessary maintenance crews) were supplied by the 355th Fighter Group at Steeple Morden Air Field. The Scouts were attached to the 355thFG for logistical support and as a training ground for the former bomber pilots. Because of their first hand experience with bombing missions, the exbomber pilots turned Scouts would assume tactical control of each sortie. However until such a time as these men became familiar with their new aircraft and well versed in current aerial combat tactics, actual encounters with the Luftwaffe would be handled by the seasoned fighter pilots.

Eventually many of the former 'Heavy Drivers' would themselves become accomplished fighter jocks, but in the meantime this system of rotating responsibilities would prove highly effective and undoubtedly saved many a young airmen's life.

The newly formed Scouts adopted a duel set of call signs to identify themselves. 'Borax' was an existing call-sign currently in use by the 355th Fighter Group and this was selected to

designate the fighter pilot contingent of the new unit. The former bomber pilots adopted 'Buckeye' as their respective call sign.

Deciding on visual means of differentiating the Scouts from other elements of the 355th Fighter Group became the next order of business. The Groups identifying color was white with the 354th, 357th and 358th Fighter Squadrons individual colors being red, blue and yellow respectively. These colors were applied as a twelve inch band on the leading edge of the engine cowling in addition to the entire rudder area of each squadrons P-51D Mustangs. As the Scouts would be flying the same type of aircraft and it was decided to adopt a twelve inch white engine cowling band as the unit marker. This

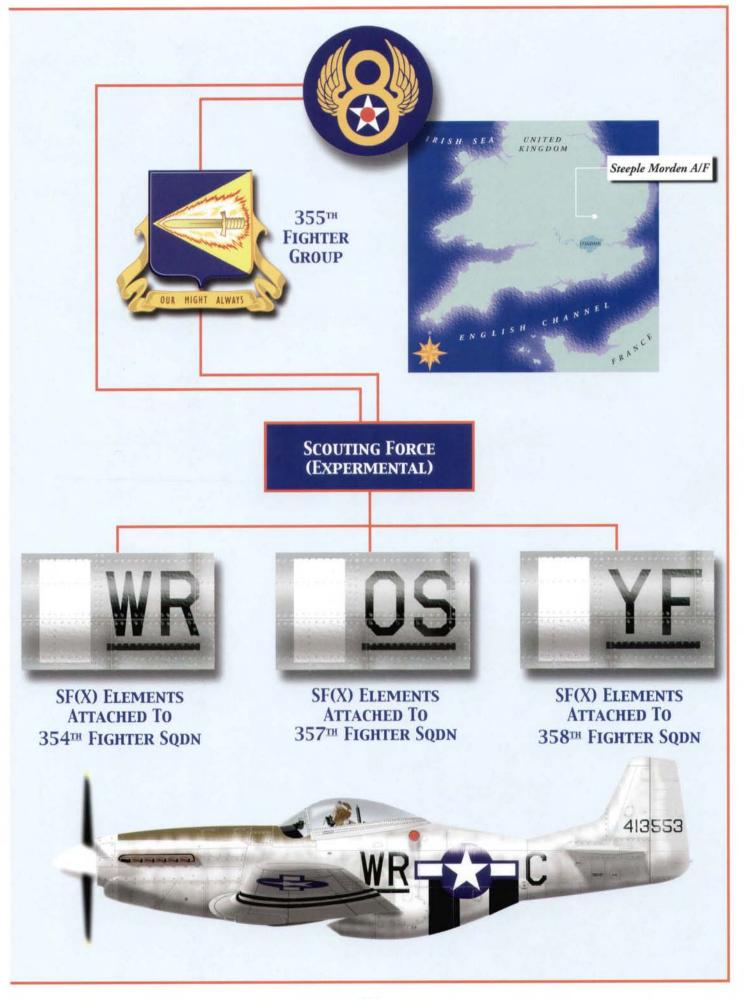
was reminiscent of the original QIM markings of the 355th Fighter Groups original P-51's. It was further decided that the rudder area of the Scouts Mustangs would remain unpainted, perhaps in an effort to keep from drawing undo attention from enemy ground observers. In place of a rudder color the Scouts chose to apply a black bar *under* their aircrafts fuselage code. These codes corresponded with that of the particular squadron a given Scout was assigned, i.e. 'WR'-354thFS, 'OS'-357thFS and 'YF'-358thFS. These fuselage code bars and the twelve inch white engine cowling would be the only distinguishing markers displayed by the Scouts during the remainder of their trial evaluation phase at Steeple Morden Air Field.

It didn't take the newly formed unit long to 'train-up' and the scouts flew their first bomber mission in July 1944. The effectiveness of the Scout concept became immediately apparent and General Doolittle, never a man to be accused of indecisiveness, ordered the formation of three Scouting Forces after only the fifth mission completed by the SF(X) unit. Each of the three Bombardment (later Air) Divisions within the VIII AAF structure was to have a Scouting Force attached to it.

The 1st Scouting Force would be stationed at Honington and later at Bassingbourn Air Fields under the command of Col. Budd Peaslee. The 2nd SF would be headed up by Lt. Col. John A. Brooks III and based at Steeple Morden. The 3rdSF was to be under the leadership of Lt.Col. Vincent W. Masters and this unit would call Wormingford Air Field its home. All three of the Scouting Force units began operations by the end of summer 1944 and would continue to serve the 8thAAF with distinction until wars end.

As for the original Scouting Force (Experimental) it flew its thirty-fifth and final combat mission September 12th 1944 having more than succeeded in proving the merit of an advance weather recon force for the 'Heavy's'.

COL.BUDD PEASLEE/384THBG





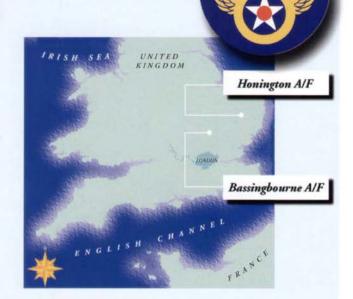
#### 1st Bombardment (Air) Division



## 1st Scouting Force

•CALL SIGN•

'CAVALRY'





# 1ST S/F ELEMENTS ATTACHED TO 383<sup>RD</sup> FIGHT→ER SQDN.

•CALL SIGN• (UNKNOWN)



### 1ST S/F ELEMENTS ATTACHED TO 384<sup>TH</sup> FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGN• (UNKNOWN)



# 1ST S/F ELEMENTS ATTACHED TO 385<sup>TH</sup> FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGN• (UNKNOWN)



364тн

GHTER GROUP

SCOUTING FORCE

The 1st S/F was attached to the 364th Fighter Group for logistical support at the beginning of September 1944 and would complete one hundred and seven scouting missions from this base before transferring to Bassingbourn Air Field.

The black UK/QIM's were removed from the tail area of all P-51's just as they had been from all 364th Fighter Group Mustangs. This was done in order to make room for the individual 18-30 inch tall aircraft call-letter which was applied with black paint. Unlike the 364thFG no squadron symbols were incorporated as part of the Scouts tail marking. The Scouts did however adopt the respective squadron codes to which each aircraft was assigned and, in keeping with Group policy, these were located aft the national

413686

insignia on both sides of the fuselage.

Equipped with the same natural metal finished P-51D Mustang

Equipped with the same natural metal finished P-51D Mustang as the 364thFG, the Scouts selected as their marking a red spinner combined with a 12in white engine cowling. As an additional identifying element the Scouts applied a red trim to the vertical stabilizer edge beginning at the forward dorsal fin fillet and terminating at, or near, the lower rudder area. The outside edges of the horizontal stabilizers received a similar treatment that would sometimes fully encompass front, side and back edges. Other applications terminated at a point intersecting the elevator on the outside edge of the horizontal stabilizer as depicted in the adjacent illustration.



The 1stSF transferred to Bassingbourn A/F, home of the 91st Bomb Group on 10Mar45 and was subsequently re-designated the 857th Bomb Squadron. The original 857thBS had been assigned to the 492nd Bomb Group, which had been disbanded on 11Aug44 (Refer to page 121, Battle Colors/Vol.I). The reconstituted 857th BS were to retain the

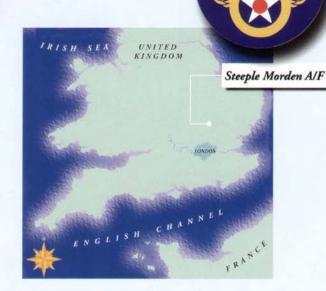
original '9H' squadron code that had been issued to its predecessor and this was to replace the 364thFG fuselage codes. The 857thBS continued to fly their P-51 Mustangs and retained the original nose and empennage markings. A total of twenty-four weather reconnaissance/bombing missions were flown from Bassingbourn A/F, the last of which occurred on 25Apr45.



# 2<sup>ND</sup> BOMBARDMENT (AIR) DIVISION



2ND SCOUTING FORCE
•CALL SIGN•
"BOOTLEG"





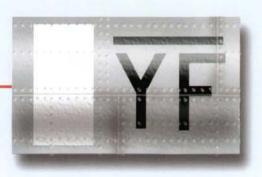
2ND S/F ELEMENTS ATTACHED TO 354<sup>TH</sup> FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGN• (UNKNOWN)



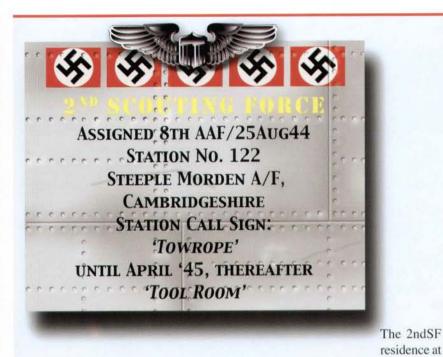
2ND S/F ELEMENTS ATTACHED TO 357<sup>TH</sup> FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGN•
(UNKNOWN)



2ND S/F ELEMENTS ATTACHED TO 358<sup>TH</sup> FIGHTER SQDN.

> •CALL SIGN• (UNKNOWN)



There are unfortunately very few distinguishing characteristics associated with the 2nd Scouting Force. The 2ndSF retained the white spinner and matching twelve-inch engine cowling originally utilized by Scouting Force (Experimental) but did not adopt any additional unit identification color marker.

#### 355TH FIGHTER GROUP



took up Steeple replacing

Morden the recently disbanded Scouting Force (Experimental). Whereas SF(X) had located a bar under their aircrafts fuselage codes as an identifying marker, the recently constituted 2nd Scouting Force elected to reposition this very same element above the codes. The codes themselves remained unchanged

and were the same 355thFG squadron codes

used by the new units predecessor, Scouting Force (Experimental). 414439

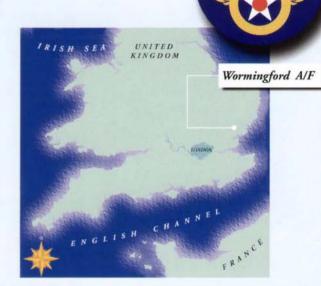
The U.K./QIM's were apparently removed almost immediately from the entire empennage area of virtually all-2nd Scouting Force Mustangs shortly after this units activation. At the time of this writing there was no evidence to indicate that the 2ndSF even bothered to apply the post D-Day' modified' Invasion Stripes to any of their aircraft. The wing QIM's do appear in some photos but these markers also disappeared in short order. Other photographs of the period indicate that at least some of the Scouting Force elements attached to the 357th Fighter Squadron may have applied that squadrons blue color to their trim tabs but confirmation on this is as yet still pending.



## 3<sup>RD</sup> BOMBARDMENT (AIR) DIVISION



3rd SCOUTING FORCE
•CALL SIGN•
'KODAK'





3RD S/F ELEMENTS ATTACHED TO 38™ FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGN• (UNKNOWN)



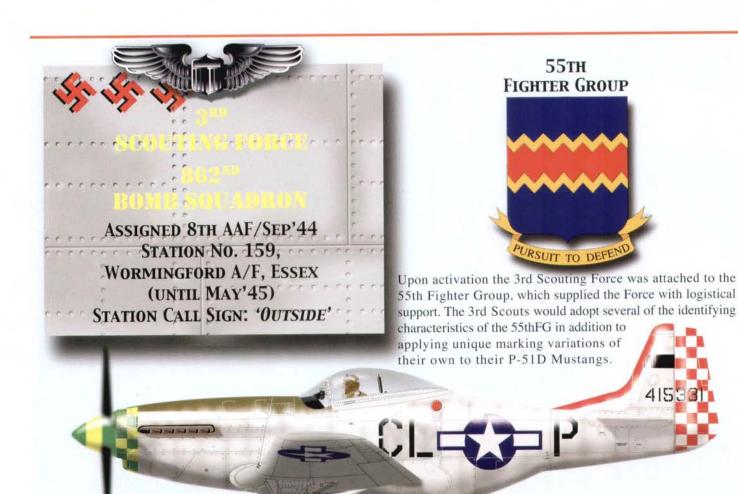
3RD S/F ELEMENTS ATTACHED TO 338<sup>TH</sup> FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGN•
(UNKNOWN)



3RD S/F ELEMENTS ATTACHED TO 343<sup>RD</sup> FIGHTER SQDN.

•CALL SIGN• (UNKNOWN)



Unlike the 1st and 2nd Scouting Forces, the 3rdSF readily adopted the entire nose markings of the fighter group to which it was attached. It chose instead to differentiate itself from the 55th Fighter Group aircraft by means of a distinct tail marking. The distinctive rudder markings adopted by the 3rd Scouting Force consisted of a checkerboard pattern consisting of a series of alternating red and white six-inch squares. The tail number was reinstated over this pattern. In addition to this colorful marking a red stripe was applied to the leading edge of the tail emanating at the dorsal fin fillet and terminating at the junction point with the rudder. Initially the existing tail QIM

marking stripe was simply over painted



As their inventory of Mustangs increased the 3rd Scouting Force employed the use of a black horizontal bar positioned immediately under an aircrafts fuselage call-letter in order to denote a second issuance of that letter within the 3rdSF. The 3rd Scouting Force adopted the fuselage codes of the 55th Fighter Groups 38th, 338th and 343rd Fighter Squadrons. These codes were of the same standard size and location as employed by these squadrons and like their counterparts, the 3rdSF was extremely lax when it came to filling in the stencil lines on both fuselage codes as well as re-applied tail numbers.

4153



On 17Feb45 the 3rd Scouting Force was consolidated with the 862nd Bomb Squadron, which had been recently assigned to Wormingford A/F. Equipped with B-17's, the 862nd would fly weather reconnaissance missions over and around the channel area. This unit adopted the checkerboard rudder pattern of the 3rd Scouting Force but supplemented red and white with the green and yellow colors used on 55th Fighter Group on nose markings. The 3rdSF would continue to fly their Mustangs with no change to their existing aircraft markings. The original bomber escort/recon assignment of the 3rdSF also remained unchanged and a total of 140 such missions were carried out from Wormingford, the last being conducted on 21Apr45.

41538

ithin the annals of military history it is an unfortunate fact that small, highly specialized units are all to often overlooked by post war historians focusing on the 'big picture'. Such was the fate of the 8thAAF Scouting Force. Despite the enormous contribution made by these small units they were virtually ignored in the annals of the European Air War. Fortunately, from time to time an individual will come along who possesses the determination to correct these oversights and in the case of the Scouting

Force that individual was a man by the name of Dick Atkins, himself an AAF/USAF veteran. It took Atkins over a decade to unravel the complete history of the Scouts, but the end result was well worth the effort. The Historical Branch of the United States Air Force is now revising its records to reflect the combat history and contributions made by this elite force.

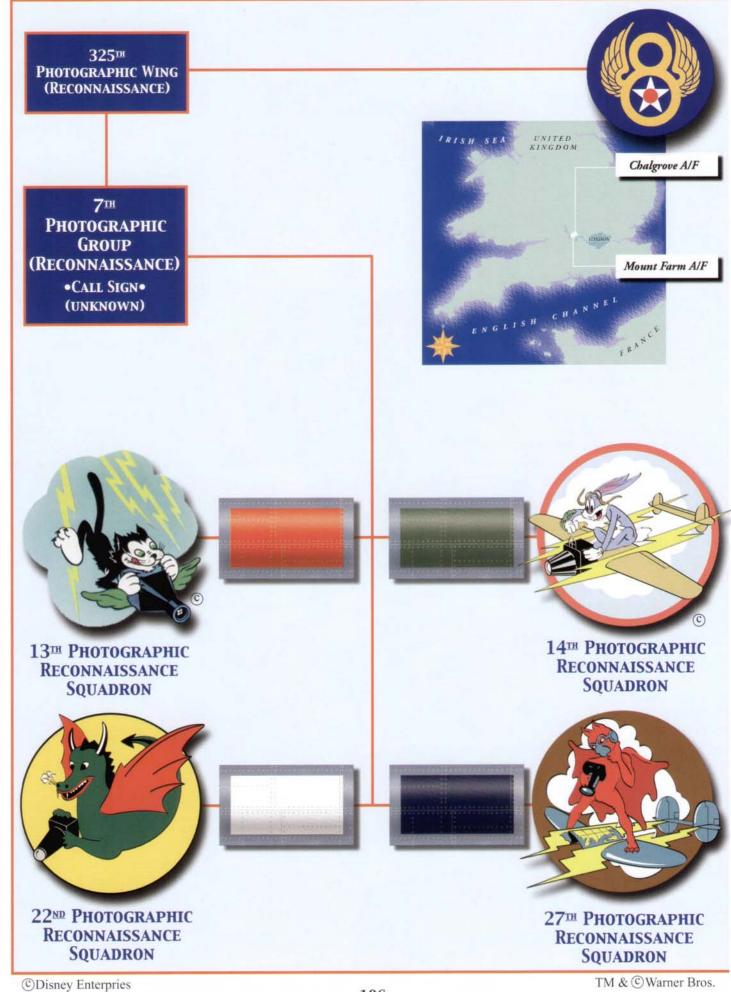


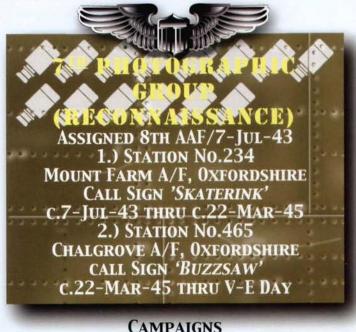
As brief as the Scouts involvement may have been when compared with other units serving in the ETO they nevertheless lost a total of twenty four of their pilots while at the same time racking-up twenty two victories against the Luftwaffe, and this in spite of the fact that the mission of the Scouts was not to function as a fighter unit. The insignia at left is of post war origin, very post war in fact. The formation of the Scouting Force Association is a rather recent development and one of the goals set by Scouts researcher Dick Atkins of

bringing together veterans, their descendants and supporters into a fraternal organization. For those interested in a detailed study of these units the following publication is recommended: 'Fighting Scouts of the Eighth Air Force /1944-1945' by E. Richard Atkins, 1996. This book is currently out of print but copies may still be obtained through various sources.



8TH/USAAF RECONNAISSANCE UNITS

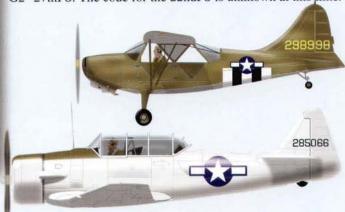




**CAMPAIGNS** 

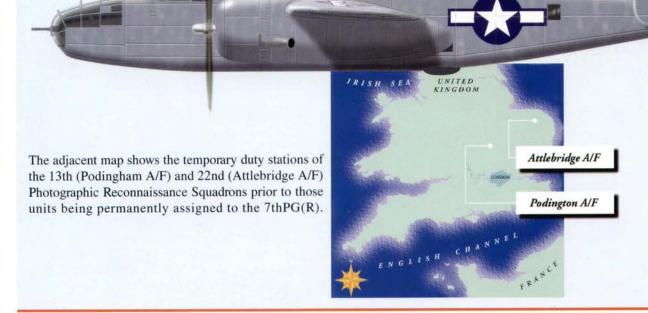
- AIR OFFENSIVE-EUROPE
- AIR OFFENSIVE, EUROPE TUNISIA •
- NORMANDY
   NORTHERN FRANCE
- RHINELAND ARDENNES-ALSACE
  - CENTRAL EUROPE

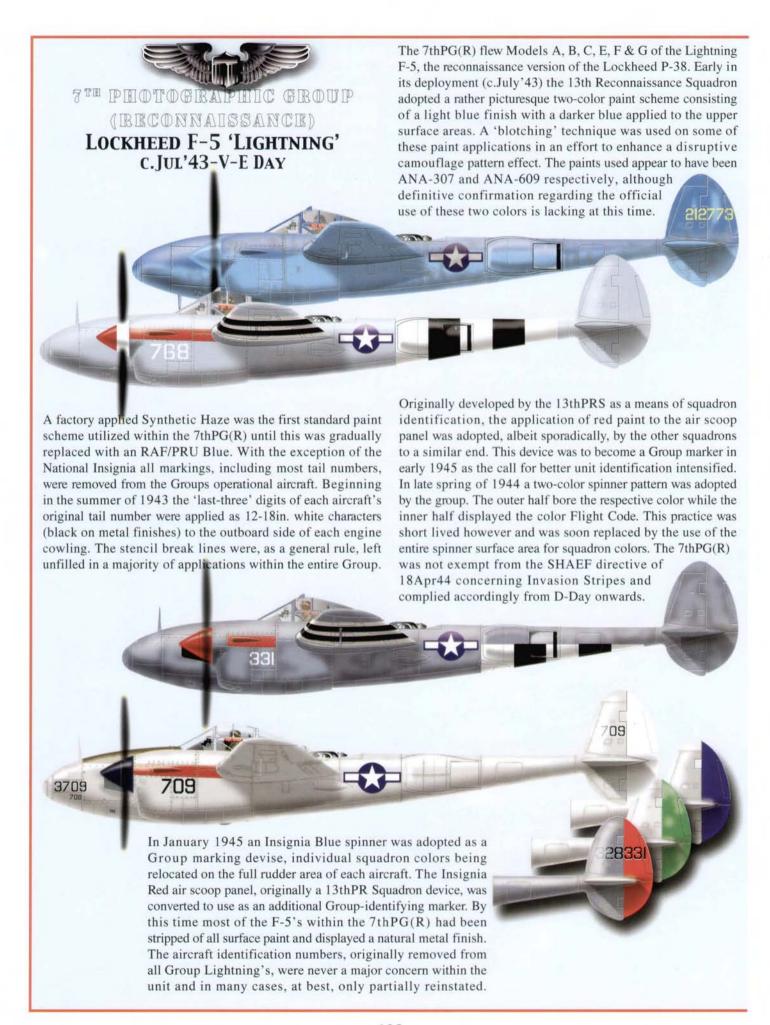
The 13th Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron actually arrived in England a good seven months earlier than the 7th Photographic Group (R) The 13th was originally posted to Podingham Air Field on 2Dec42 where it was attached to the 8thAAF for duty with the 1st Bombardment Wing. The 22nd Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron was temporarily assigned to the 5th Photographic Reconnaissance and Mapping Group prior to that unit's reassignment to the 12thAAF the following summer. With the arrival of the 7th Photographic Group (Reconnaissance) in Great Britain, both squadrons were subsequently transferred to that unit on July 7, 1943. If SD-110 Codes were assigned to the squadrons of the 7thPG(R), they did not appear on any of the Groups aircraft during the course of the war. Given the nature of this units operations, this ommission was most certainly done for security reasons. At the end of hostilities however the squadrons were assigned standard 'anti-buzzing' codes, which were displayed on the undersurface of the left wing of all operational aircraft. These codes were as follows; 'ES'-13thPS, 'QU'-14thPS and G2'-27thPS. The code for the 22ndPS is unknown at this time.

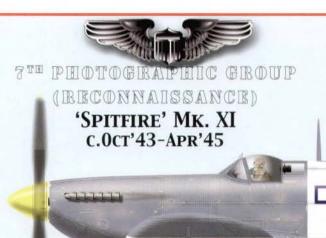


Additional aircraft flown by the 7th Photographic Group (R) included an L-5 Stinson 'Sentinel', a single AT-6D North American 'Texan' and a AT-23B (B-26) Martin 'Marauder' (not shown). The most interesting auxiliary aircraft of the 7thPG(R) was perhaps the B-25C Mitchell Medium Bomber assigned to the unit, which incidently was the single ship of its type within the entire inventory of the 8thAAF. Originally delivered to the Group adorned with a standard factory applied two-color camouflage paint scheme. This was quickly removed and supplemented with an overall application of RAF/PRU Blue. In addition to communications duty this ship was utilized for nighttime photographic reconnaissance missions along the French coastline prior to the D-Day landings. In the final

months just prior to V-E Day all surface paint was stripped from this aircraft and she finished out the war in an all-natural metal finished state.







Beginning in the spring of 1944 propeller spinners were painted a solid color in accordance with each aircraft's respective Flight assignment. At this same time the original four-inch tall Sky Blue fuselage codes were duplicated in white paint on the tails of all the Groups Spitfires.

Throughout their entire length of service with the 7thPG(R), the Spits' bore an overall RAF/PRU Blue color scheme. In numerous cases where the existing RAF insignia was not removed, the application of the USAAF Type-4 National Insignia was somewhat larger than normal when this devise needed to over paint the existing

These new letters were approximately six inches in the numerals measuring in at around twelve inches.

32in. RAF fuselage roundel.

These new letters were approximately six inches in height with the numerals measuring in at around twelve inches. As with the Groups F-5's, the Spitfires were not exempt from the SHAEF memo of 18Apr44 regarding the application of Distinctive Markings-Aircraft and thus, beginning 5Jun44, all 7thPG(R) Mk.XI's would display the proper D-Day Invasion Stripes.





NORTH AMERICAN P-51 'MUSTANG' c. Jan'45-V-E Day



The P-51 was a late arrival to the 7thPG(R) and only two models, the D and K Series, saw service with this unit. Serving as fighter escorts for the Groups unarmed photo reconnaissance ships, the Mustangs adopted the standardized Group spinner and cowling markers along with respective squadron markings.

As with the F-5's, no SD-110 fuselage codes were applied to these aircraft. At wars end however both the Groups P-51's and F-5's would display black post war 'anti-buzz' markings on the underside of the left wing. The units Spitfires were returned to the RAF in May'45 and thus not subjected to these markings.





The 652nd Bomb Squadron (H) conducted long-range weather reconnaissance missions over the Atlantic. Operating with both B-17's and B-24's, these aircraft originally carried a standard two-color camouflage paint scheme but were eventually flown with a natural metal finish towards wars end. A 24in (yellow on paint, black on metal) call letter positioned on the vertical stabilizer just below the identification number were the only identifying marks ever displayed on these aircraft. The original B-25's flown briefly by the 654th BG(S) in early 1944 lacked even a simple call-letter and several of these aircraft had the

serial number on the tail surface painted over in an attempt to maximize security. The B-26's operated by this squadron did adopt for a time an Olive Drab over an ANA-622 Jet (ANA Bulletin No.157, 28Sep43) camouflage pattern developed for night recon operations. Other than this however, the only other distinguishing characteristics consisted of an 18in. yellow call-letter painted on the tail surface just below the aircraft serial number. The small L-5's would, at different times, alternate between displaying the call-letter/serial number combination to showing nothing but the UAAF Type-4 National Insignia.

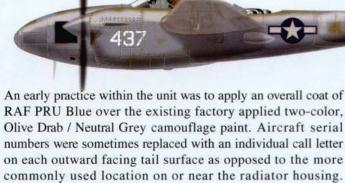




C.AUG'44-V-E DAY

photographic reconnaissance missions within the framework of the 654thBS(HRS), numerous models of P-38 Lightning's also saw service in a photo recon role with this unit. There does not appear to have been any hard and fast rules pertaining to either

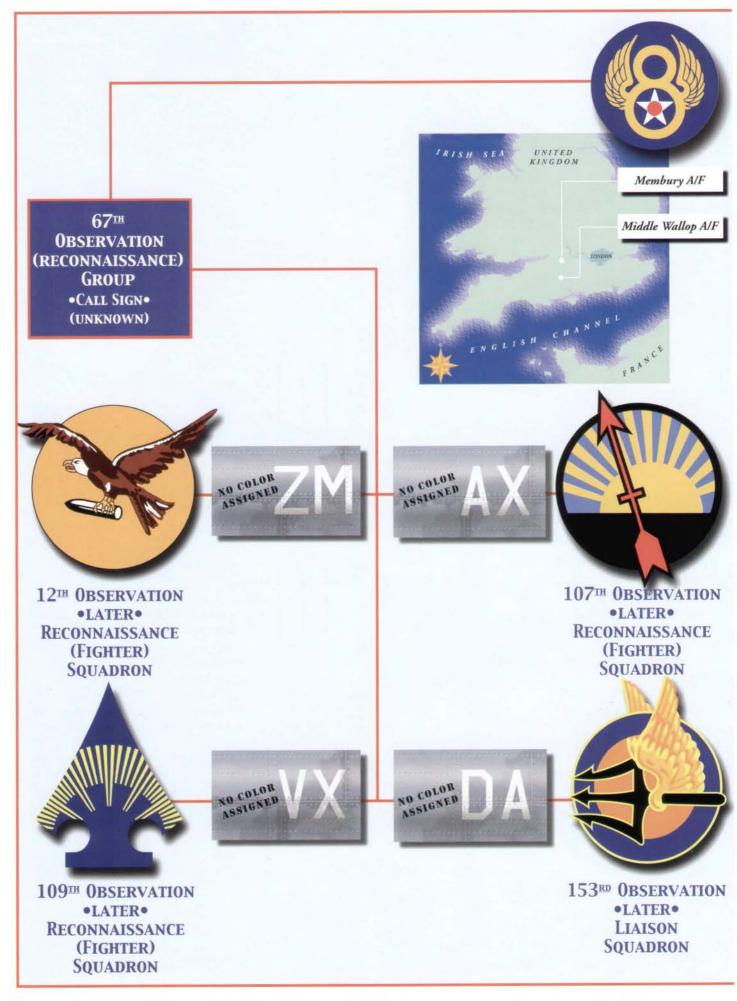
the painting schemes or marking methods employed with these particular aircraft.



An early practice within the unit was to apply an overall coat of RAF PRU Blue over the existing factory applied two-color, Olive Drab / Neutral Grey camouflage paint. Aircraft serial numbers were sometimes replaced with an individual call letter on each outward facing tail surface as opposed to the more commonly used location on or near the radiator housing. With these applications the 'last three' digits of the a/c serial number were affixed to the outward facing surfaces of each engine cowling. Both these and the call-letters were applied using white paint. The national insignia on many of these Lightning's were 'grayed-out' on both booms. As far as can be determined the use of P-38's within the 25thBG structure was limited to the 654thBS. While this was an excellent aircraft the Mosquito was better suited to the task of photo reconnaissance.

The story of the 25th Bombardment Group (Reconnaissance) is unique within the annals of 8thAAF history; there was really no other unit quite like it. The title Bomb Group is extremely deceptive and this was perhaps an intentional designation as it would tend to detract from the units real purpose during World War II. The missions carried out by the three squadrons varied from the gathering of crucial weather data over the Atlantic to top secret operations involving solo night flights over Berlin itself. These missions all had colorful code names such as Grey Pea, Mickey, Red Tail, Blue Stocking, Sky Wave, Frantic and other equally intriguing cryptograms. The men manning the aircraft of both the 653rd and 654th Bomb Squadrons were themselves noteworthy. All were volunteer pilots and navigators and most had previously completed the required thirty-five combat missions while serving with other USAAF bomb groups. Some of the volunteers were British serving airmen who had requested transfer to the units from either the RAF or RCAF.

Although the Mk XVI Mosquito conducted the majority of





**CAMPAIGNS** 

- •ANTISUBMARINE, AMERICAN THEATER•
  - AIR OFFENSIVE-EUROPE •
  - NORMANDY NORTHERN FRANCE •
  - RHINELAND ARDENNES-ALSACE
    - CENTRAL EUROPE •

This unit underwent three changes in official designation from its original formation in August 1941 until V-E Day, ergo the dual Observation/Reconnaissance listing. The 67th was designated as a Reconnaissance Group in May'43, and finally modified to the 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Group (Nov'43).

The 12th Observation Squadron insignia was unofficially adopted by that unit during World War I. When such matters became more formal, the image was formally submitted to the U.S. Army Board of Heraldry following the war and approved by that particular entity on 2Feb24. The 109th Observation Squadrons insignia was officially adopted on 7Mar39. Of the remaining two insignia, those of the 107th and 153rd Observation Squadrons, the only thing that can be said with any certainty is that the images presented on the facing page did in fact represent these units during most of World War II. The 107th was inactivated on 9Nov45 while the 153rd was redesignated as *Liaison Squadron* on 31May43 and similarly inactivated on the 15th of December 1945.



ZM

not officially adopt designating unit colors, the 12th and 107th Squadrons did utilize, albeit briefly, the colors indicated above. Insignia Red and Identification Yellow began appearing on the spinners of the respective squadrons Spitfire's in early summer of 1943. For some reason the 109th and 153rd Squadrons did not follow the example of there companion units, but the matter became academic as the use of these colors by the 67th and 107th was discontinued altogether by late fall of the same year.



\* The 67th newly redesignated (Nov'43) 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Group was transferred from the Eighth to the Ninth Army Air Force in October 1943. Shortly after the Normandy Invasion (Jul'44) the Group was relocated to a series of air bases located on the European Continent, and would continue operations from numerous Allied A/F's in France, Belgium and Germany until wars end. The following additional squadrons would be assigned or attached to the 67thTRG shortly after transferring to the 9thAAF; 15thTRS; 30thPRS; 33rdPRS. The 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Groups posting to Middle Wallop A/F was effected after the units transfer to the 9thAAF.

The 67th Observation/Reconnaissance Group were originally assigned approximately 48 L-4's similar to that depicted above. These were divided up evenly among the Groups four squadrons. Most of these aircraft were replaced by mid-1943 and subsequently transferred to other units, usually for liaison duty. Original fuselage code letters often remained unchanged once the aircraft had been reassigned. This can be the source of some confusion when researching photographic material for the various units to which many of these aircraft were transferred.



## 'SPITFIRE' MK.V c.0ct'42-0ct'43

When the 31st and 52nd Fighter Groups were reassigned to the 12thAAF in North Africa a number of the Mk.V's assigned to these units were transferred to the 67th Observation Group. These aircraft all displayed a standard RAF tricolor paint scheme consisting of an Ocean Grey/Dark Green upper surface with a Medium Sea Grey undercarriage. Initially the 67thOG conducted operations while their 'Spits' still displayed the fuselage codes of their previous unit assignments, i.e. MX/HL/WZ of the 31stFG, or QP/WD/VF belonging to the 52ndFG. Also retained was the RAF Sky spinners and the 18in. wide Allied Fighter fuselage recognition band near the aircrafts tail. Having previously served with USAAF units a 36in. diameter Spec.No.24102-K(Amend. 3) national insignia with yellow surround were existing elements on all Mk.V's so assigned.

Upon receiving their squadron codes, these were applied as 24in. tall RAF Sky letters forward the national insignia on the port side fuselage, aft on the starboard. The revised AN-I-9a insignia replaced the previous version on June 29, 1943. With the introduction of this new design the squadron codes were than both positioned forward the insignia on both port and starboard sides of the fuselage.

so retained

ere the 4in. wide

ellow stripes adorning the

outer leading edges of both wings



This aircraft was used extensively by the Allies throughout the war and was also known as the Boston by the British. The RAF designation for these aircraft were the Havoc Mk.I, Boston Mk.II and Boston Mk.III (Intruder) series depending on armament and configuration. Upon deployment to Great Britain the 67th Observation Group received an allocation of older Mk.I Havocs from the RAF for aircraft familiarization

and training purposes. These Mk.I's were delivered bearing an RAF two-color camouflage top surface configuration of Dark Earth and Dark Green. The under surfaces were handled somewhat differently depending upon an individual aircrafts previous service with the British. These consisted of an application of either an RAF Sky, black, or in some cases RAF Extra Dark Sea Grey to the lower fuselage surface areas.



### 8TH/USAAF SPECIAL OPERATIONS UNITS



the tail section of each P-47 and conformed to the original specifications for the call-numbers, i.e. 7.5in. tall with 1.5in. character spacing. In some instances the yellow tail bands were applied in a wider width than the specified 18in. The very rare natural metal finish Thunderbolts that operated with the unit were painted using identical marking specifications with the exception that all fuselage codes/numbers were painted black.

either masked out prior to the stripes application or reapplied

over the white area using black paint. The original white tail OIM's were replaced with 18in, wide yellow stripes with an

additional 13.5in. of the same color applied to each wing tip. The letters 'WW' (indicating war weary status) were added to



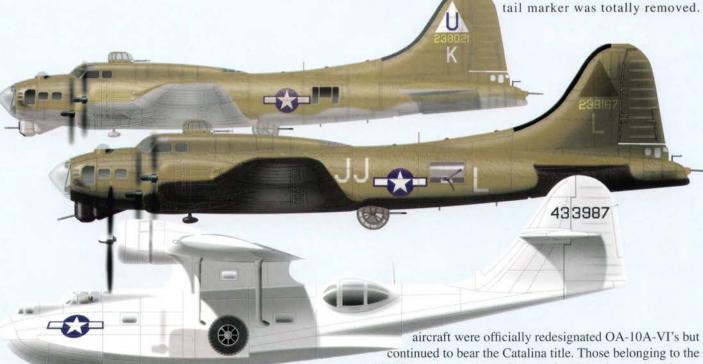
For much of the war the 8thAAF had relied upon existing RAF air-sea rescue capabilities for pilot recovery missions, but by May of 1944 these RAF resources were stretched to the limit. To meet an ever increasing need, the 65th Fighter Wing formed Detachment 'B' as an 8thAAF air-sea rescue unit. On January 26, 1945, after months of invaluable service, the detachment was officially redesignated the 5th Emergency Rescue Squadron and would remain so until wars end. The formal surrender of Japan on 14Aug45 cancelled a pending transfer of the unit to the Pacific Theater following the Allied victory in Europe.

In some instances the 5thERS insignia was applied to the engine cowling directly over the tricolor vertical group marking. With these applications a slightly lighter color shade than that found on the original artwork was used for the

outer disc to facilitate better visual separation from the colored background. It is unknown just how many P-47's assigned to the 5thERS incorporated this image as 'nose art'. What is certain however is that the units insignia was in fact utilized in this manner to some extent on their P-47 engine cowlings.

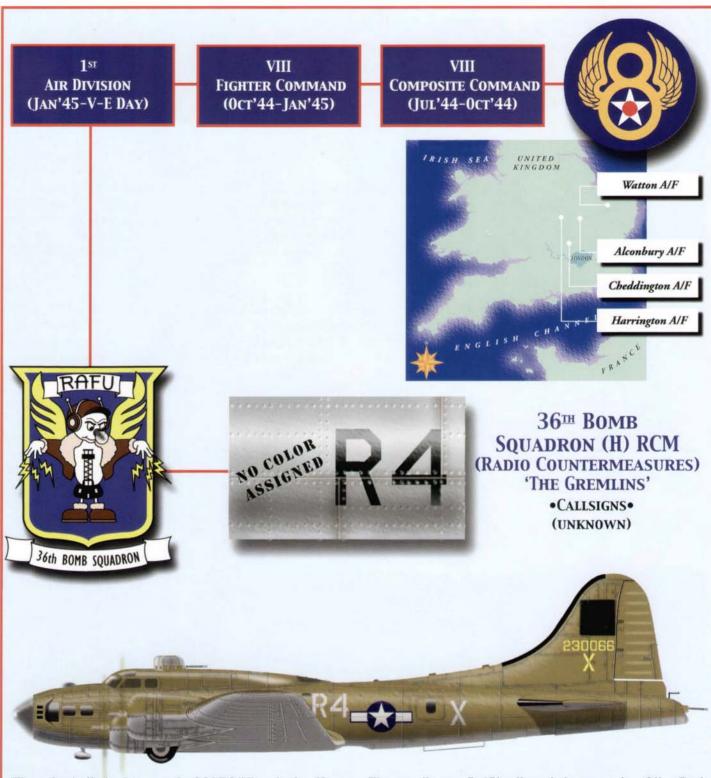
For a brief period, March through May of 1945, the 5thERS utilized numerous 'war weary' B-17G's inherited from both the 457th and 305th Bomb Groups. Those aircraft coming from the former were placed into service by the 5thERS with virtually no modifications to the existing 457thBG fuselage unit markings and bore a standard Olive Drab over Neutral Grey camouflage paint scheme. Those from the 305thBG had been employed exclusively for special night leaflet operations and displayed an ANA-622 Jet (black) under-surface in place of the standard Neutral Grey paint. As with the other B-17's these aircraft continued to display the original fuselage codes of the parent unit, however in some instances the characteristic

422ndBS 'Night Op's' black triangle



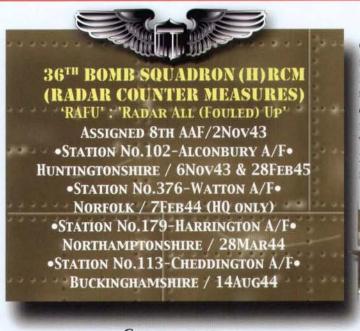
USAAF ordered numerous Navy PBY's for search and rescue operations in both the Pacific and Atlantic Theaters. The nine Catalina's that subsequently ended up assigned to the 5thERS were originally PBV-IA's built under licence by Vickers of Canada. Once turned over to the USAAF and the 5thERS these

aircraft were officially redesignated OA-10A-VI's but continued to bear the Catalina title. Those belonging to the 5thERS received an overall coat of white paint, matt white on the upper hull and gloss white on the lower. From the time this unit first received these aircraft in January 1945 until wars end, the only official markings displayed were the standard AN-I-9b USAAF National Insignia on the prescribed hull and wing areas plus a black serial number on the upper tail section.



The only similarity between the 36thBS(H) and other Heavy Bombardment units within the 8thAAF was in the type of aircraft utilized for their operations. The Boeing B-17 made up a majority of the squadrons inventory initially and these were 'war weary' aircraft handed over to the 36thBS from various combat units. The missions conducted by this unit involved innovative airborne electronic radar jamming equipment. These missions were dubbed with numerous esoteric code names i.e. Freya; Small Wurzburg; Large Wurzburg; Big Ben Jostle to name a few. In general these operations were conducted in conjunction with Allied bombing operations and were designed to disrupt the Germans radar and advanced warning systems.

These well-worn B-17's all carried a two-color, Olive Drab over Neutral Grey camouflage paint application. Tail markers indicating each aircrafts previous assignment were obliterated with a coat of either black or O.D. paint. Along with the redesignation of the squadron in August 1944 came the units R4 identification code, which were immediately applied to their Fortresses. The 36in. tall code letters were applied forward the national insignia on both sides of the fuselage in a light grey paint while individual call-letters of the same height were located aft. An additional 24in. tall call-letter was affixed to the tail section below, and usually centered on, the serial number and like the numbers applied using Identification Yellow.



#### **CAMPAIGNS**

- AIR OFFENSIVE-JAPAN
   ALEUTAIN ISLANDS
  - AIR COMBAT, ASIATIC-PACIFIC THEATER
    - •AIR OFFENSIVE, EUROPE •
    - NORMANDY NORTHERN FRANCE •
    - RHINELAND CENTRAL EUROPE •

The early history of this unit is somewhat cloudy as 8thAAF records of the period state that the 36thBS was formed from the 803rd Bombardment Squadron (Provisional), which was originally formed at RAF Sculthrope A/F in January of 1944, and temporally attached to the 100th Bomb Group. So far so good, but these same records fail to mention that USAAF 36th Bombardment Squadron (H) was constituted on 22Dec39 and saw service with the 4th USAAF prior to being reassigned to the 8thAAF on 21Nov43. Contemporary USAF records tie the lineage of the 36thBS(H) and 36thBS(H)RCM together and this is reflected by the Campaign Credits listed. The 803rd(P) moved to RAF Oulton A/F on 16May44 and was consolidated with Detachment 'A'/ 858thBS and the 856thBS in August '44 to form the 36th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) Radar Countermeasures. The full European Theater of Operations deployment record of the 36thBS(H)RCM is as follows:

 1st Bomb Division, 21Nov43 (attached / 482nd Bomb Group, 4Dec43)

- VIII Composite Command, 27Feb44 (attached / 328th Service Group, 27Feb44) (attached / 801st Bomb Group (P), 27Mar44)
- VIII Fighter Command, 1Oct44
- 1st Air Division, 1Jan45 (attached / 482nd Bomb Group, 7Feb45)

Although the 36thBS(H) and 406thBS(H) were both officially transferred from Alconbury A/F to Watton A/F in February of 1945, in reality the 36thBS(H) continued to conduct ongoing operations from Alconbury A/F until it flew its final 8thAAF 'bomber assist' radar jamming mission on the 30 Apr 45.

One month following the formal consolidation of the unit, the newly reformed 36th Bomb Squadron (H) ceased all operations involving their B-17 Flying Fortresses and converted entirely to the use of the B-24 Liberator. From this point the 36thBS(H) operated in conjunction with the RAF on radar jamming flights through 25Nov44 when joint operations were curtailed. These joint missions were ultimately concluded altogether on



Original B-24's assigned were, like their B-17 predecessors, was weary hand-me-downs from assorted 8thAAF bomb groups. These were of a two-color camouflage type and same 36in. tall, light grey squadron codes were applied aft the gunner's window. The 24in. call-letter was positioned on each tail surface with no corresponding duplicate letter affixed to the fuselage as with the B-17's. With the introduction of natural metal finished aircraft, all letters were applied with black paint.

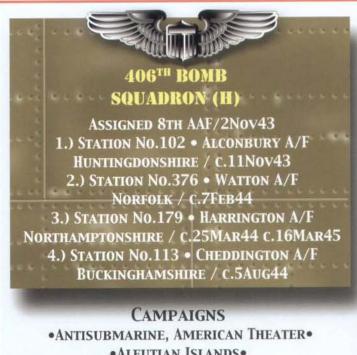
In addition to the heavy bombers serving with the squadron the 36thBS(H) also utilized the services of both the P-38J lightning and at least one P-51B Mustang. The former were deployed on photoreconnaissance missions while the latter provided fighter support and all were of a natural metal finish variety. Both fighter types were required to adhere to the D-Day Invasion Stripes directive and complied accordingly. The squadron codes on the P-51 were applied forward the national insignia on both sides of the fuselage, call letters aft, and all approximately 24in. in height.



With the exception

of the period entailing D-Day Stripes , as depicted above, the P-38's displayed an 18in. black squadron code on both radiator housings with a call-letter of similar height affixed to both outward facing tail fin surfaces. As with the squadrons' heavy bombers, the sole distinguishing marking device carried by any of the 36 thBS(H) fighters was the R4 fuselage code.





•ALEUTIAN ISLANDS• • AIR COMBAT, ASIATIC-PACIFIC THEATER • AIR OFFENSIVE-EUROPE • NORMANDY • NORTHERN FRANCE • RHINELAND
 CENTRAL EUROPE In September of 1943 the 422nd Bomb Squadron / 305th Bomb Group ceased normal daylight bombing operations and was ordered to concentrate on developing nighttime operational and navigational skills. The squadron would ultimately conduct nocturnal operations, mainly leaflet drops over enemy territory,

and crew returned to daylight operations with the 305thBG. A number of the squadron's personnel and aircraft however were reassigned and formed the nucleus of the newly organized 422nd Night Leaflet Squadron, which ultimately evolved into the 406th Bomb Squadron.

B-24's carried out the vast majority of operations conducted by the 422nd Night Leaflet Squadron. The Liberators originally transferred to the 422nd were of both a painted and unpainted variety. Those arriving with a two-color camouflage paint scheme had the Neutral Grey under surfaces repainted with black. Natural metal finished B-24's received an overall application of black. This added color was probably an ANA 604 Black, Black 44 or an RAF equivalent. All were eventually standardized with ANA 622 Jet (Gloss Black), which had been specifically developed by the AAF for night aerial operations.

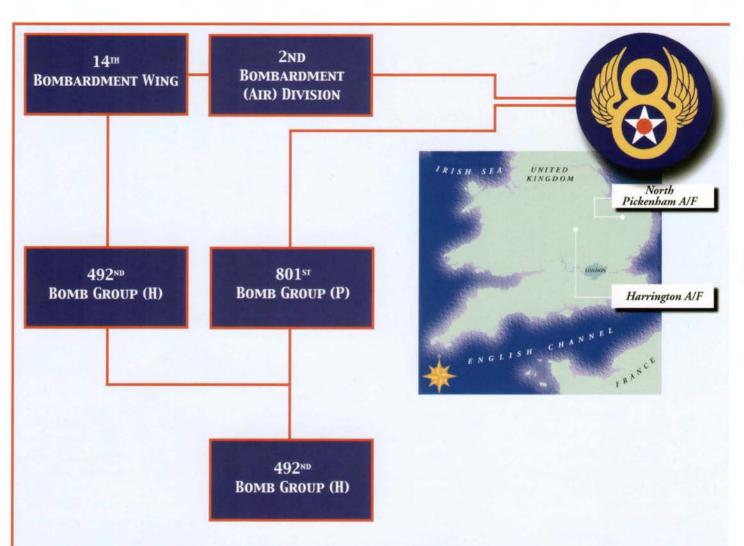
until June of the following year when most of the units aircraft

The insignia on these aircraft were very often 'grayed out' and carried no distinguishing unit markings for most of their service with this unit. An Identification Yellow call-letter (48in. height

approx.) was applied to the tail surfaces of each ship below the aircrafts serial number. In some instances the aircraft serial number was relocated to the inward facing surfaces of the fins. The squadron 'J6' code appeared very late in the war. It was eventually painted as 48in. tall Identification Yellow letters aft the waist gunner's station on both sides of the aircrafts fuselage.

to serve with the squadron received an overall application of black paint. The 'Double-J' fuselage code reflecting these aircrafts previous assignment with the 422nd Bomb Squadron were masked out prior to the painting process and remained affixed to each aircraft. The original triangular tail device of the 1st Bombardment (Air) Division was often initially repainted as a solid white image. This symbol was eventually eliminated from the B-17 tail sections altogether. These aircraft served both the 406th and 36th Bomb Squadrons.

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The story of the 801st/492nd Bomb Group(s) is really that of three distinctly seperate units, which ultimately merged into one. The original 492BG(H) was activated in the United States on 10ct43 and was deployed to Great Britain and subsequently stationed at North Pickenham A/F on 18Apr44. As one of the last heavy bombardment groups to arrive in England the 492nd was considered to be one of the best trained and best equipped bomb units within the 8thAAF structure, which makes this units battle history all the more perplexing. After only 89 days of actual operations the 492nd Bomb Group (H) was removed from combat status having sustained a combat causality rate of approximately 117%. To put this figure into some sort of perspective, the average casualty rate within the 8thAAF at this time was approximately 16 per 1000 combat personal, the ratio within the 492ndBG was 442 casualties per 1000 combat

personnel. The 492nd was not to recover from these devastating losses and in fact this unit has the dubious distinction of being the only formally established group in the annals of United States air operations to have been disbanded as a direct result of combat losses. And so it was that in August 1944 the 492nd BG(H) was dismantled, its full inventory of aircraft, equipment and

personnel reassigned to numerous other bomb groups within the 8thAAF structure. The stage was now set for the rebirth of this unit, and while the name would remain the same, the primary mission of the new 492nd was to be entirely different. In early May of 1944 the 801st Bomb Group (Provisional) was created by combining the resources of both the 36th and 406th Bomb Squadrons at Harrington Airfield. The missions of this newly formed unit was to expand upon the Carpetbagger operations begun earlier that same year. These missions were top secret in nature and even though the new unit was officially structured within the 8thAAF, actual operational control was maintained by the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) forerunner of today's Central Intelligence Agency. Still in its infancy at this stage of its history the OSS was sparsely funded and lacking many resources and thus largely dependent upon the military establishment for the much of the infrastructure necessary to conduct its operations. While the Carpetbagger missions were proving highly successful in the Allied effort against German occupied Western Europe, a problem arose

concerning the OSS's partner in the Carpetbagger effort, namely the 8thAAF itself. By forming the 801stBG(P) and several other 'Provisional' units, the Eighth had exceeded

its Congressionally authorized component strength. Not inclined to discontinue or disrupt the highly effective Carpetbagger operations, HQ/8thAAF took advantage of the recent breakup of the unfortunate 492ndBG and transferred the name along with a handful of select personnel to Harrington A/F. Although the 492nd would continue to bear the BG (H) designation, its role in the war was to become much more complex.



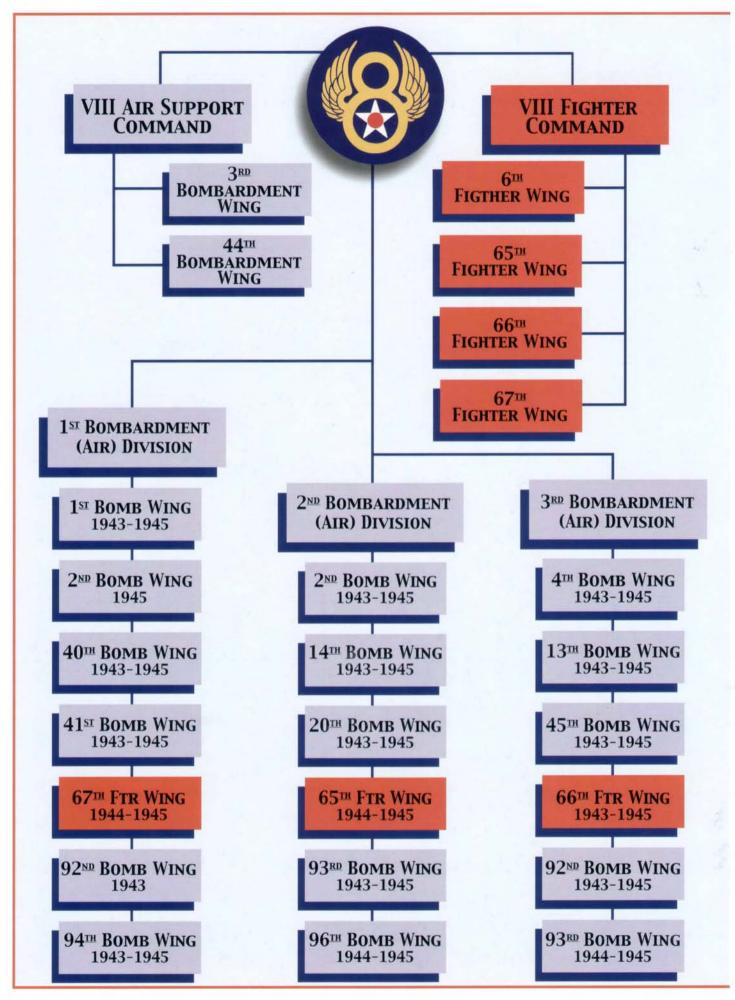
#### **USAAF/ EIGHTH AIR FORCE** FIGHTER GROUPS & SQUADRON ASSIGNMENTS 94TH FIGHTER SQUADRON 71ST FIGHTER SQUADRON **27TH FIGHTER SQUADRON 1ST FIGHTER GROUP** 336TH FIGHTER SQUADRON 334TH FIGHTER SOUADRON 335TH FIGHTER SQUADRON **4TH FIGHTER GROUP 50TH FIGHTER SQUADRON 49TH FIGHTER SQUADRON 48TH FIGHTER SOUADRON** 14TH FIGHTER GROUP 79TH FIGHTER SOUADRON 77TH FIGHTER SQUADRON **55TH FIGHTER SQUADRON 20TH FIGHTER GROUP 309TH FIGHTER SQUADRON 307TH FIGHTER SQUADRON** 308TH FIGHTER SQUADRON 31st Fighter Group 4TH FIGHTER SQUADRON **5TH FIGHTER SQUADRON** 2ND FIGHTER SQUADRON **52ND FIGHTER GROUP** 343RD FIGHTER SQUADRON 338TH FIGHTER SQUADRON **38TH FIGHTER SQUADRON** 55TH FIGHTER GROUP **62ND FIGHTER SQUADRON 63RD FIGHTER SQUADRON 61ST FIGHTER SQUADRON 56TH FIGHTER GROUP** 84TH FIGHTER SQUADRON 83RD FIGHTER SQUADRON 82ND FIGHTER SQUADRON **78TH FIGHTER GROUP 505TH FIGHTER SQUADRON 504TH FIGHTER SQUADRON 503RD FIGHTER SQUADRON 339TH FIGHTER GROUP** 487TH FIGHTER SQUADRON **486TH FIGHTER SQUADRON** 328TH FIGHTER SQUADRON 352ND FIGHTER GROUP 352ND FIGHTER SQUADRON 351st Fighter Squadron 350TH FIGHTER SQUADRON 353RD FIGHTER GROUP 358TH FIGHTER SQUADRON 357TH FIGHTER SQUADRON 354TH FIGHTER SQUADRON **355TH FIGHTER GROUP 361ST FIGHTER SQUADRON** 360TH FIGHTER SQUADRON **359TH FIGHTER SQUADRON 356TH FIGHTER GROUP 364TH FIGHTER SQUADRON 363RD FIGHTER SQUADRON 362ND FIGHTER SQUADRON** 357TH FIGHTER GROUP **367TH FIGHTER SQUADRON 366TH FIGHTER SQUADRON** 358TH FIGHTER GROUP **365TH FIGHTER SQUADRON 370TH FIGHTER SQUADRON 369TH FIGHTER SQUADRON** 368TH FIGHTER SQUADRON **359TH FIGHTER GROUP** 376TH FIGHTER SQUADRON **375TH FIGHTER SQUADRON 374TH FIGHTER SQUADRON** 361st Fighter Group **385TH FIGHTER SQUADRON 383RD FIGHTER SQUADRON** 384TH FIGHTER SQUADRON **364TH FIGHTER GROUP** 436TH FIGHTER SQUADRON 435TH FIGHTER SQUADRON **334TH FIGHTER SQUADRON** 479TH FIGHTER GROUP DETACHMENT/385THFS DETACHMENT/384THFS DETACHMENT/383RDFS 1ST SCOUTING FORCE DETACHMENT/388THFS DETACHMENT/357THFS DETACHMENT/354THFS 2ND SCOUTING FORCE DETACHMENT/343RDFS DETACHMENT/338THFS DETACHMENT/38THFS **3RD SCOUTING FORCE**

## **ORGANIZATION & DEPLOYMENT**

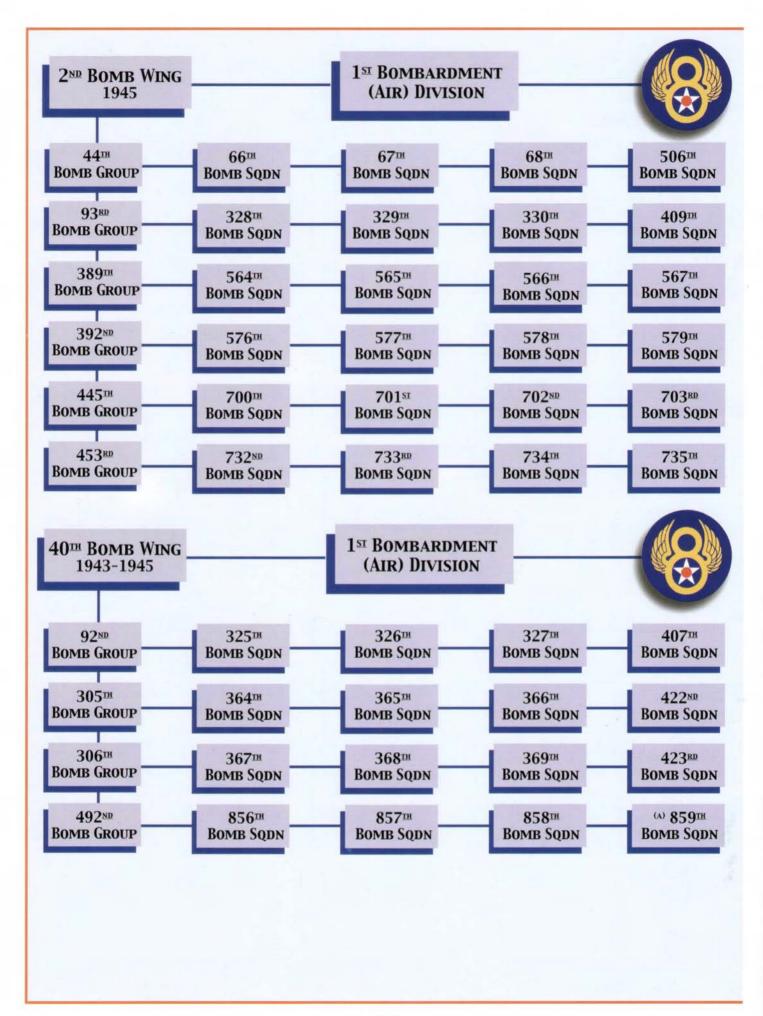
UNITED STATES EIGHTH ARMY AIR FORCE

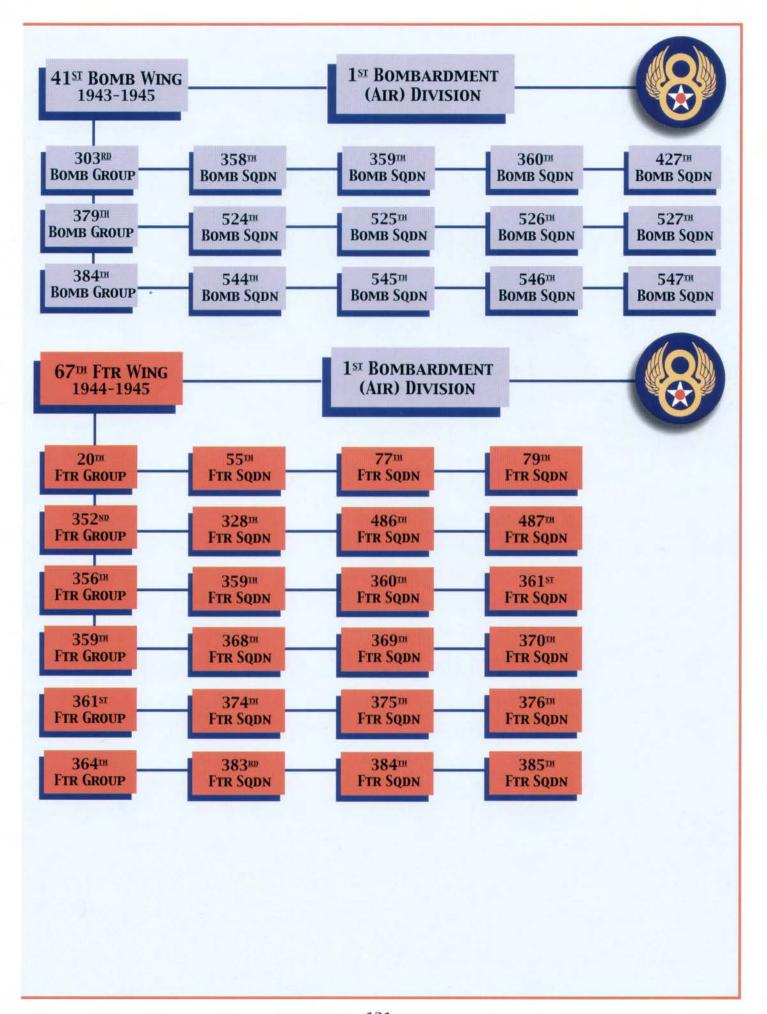


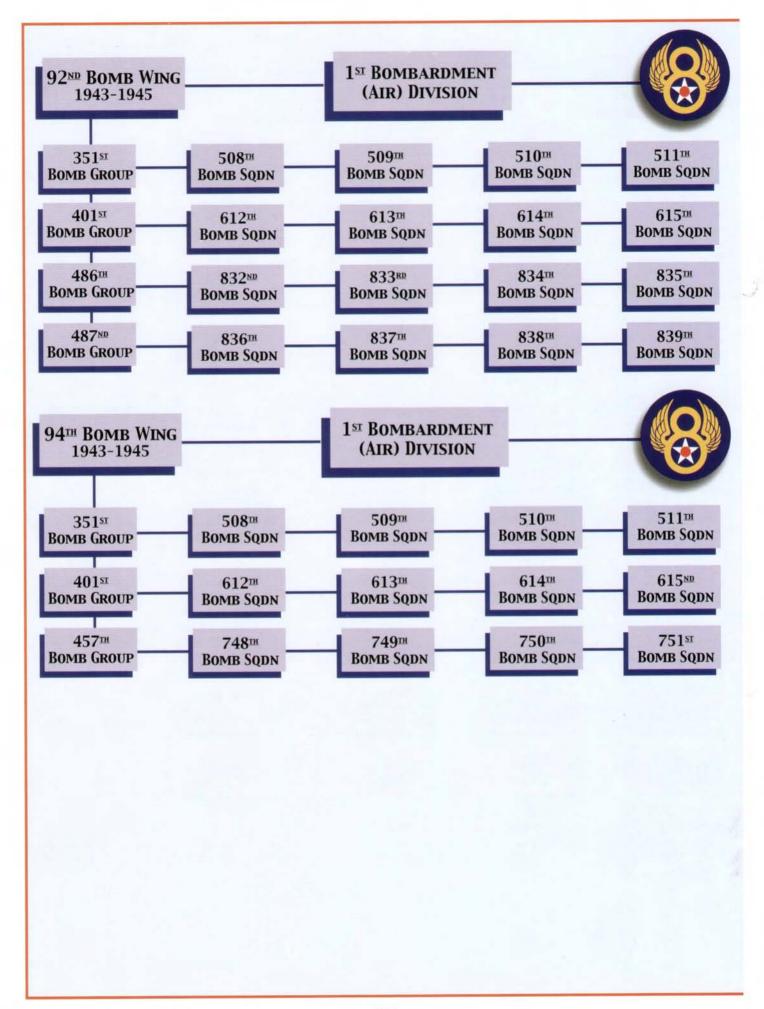




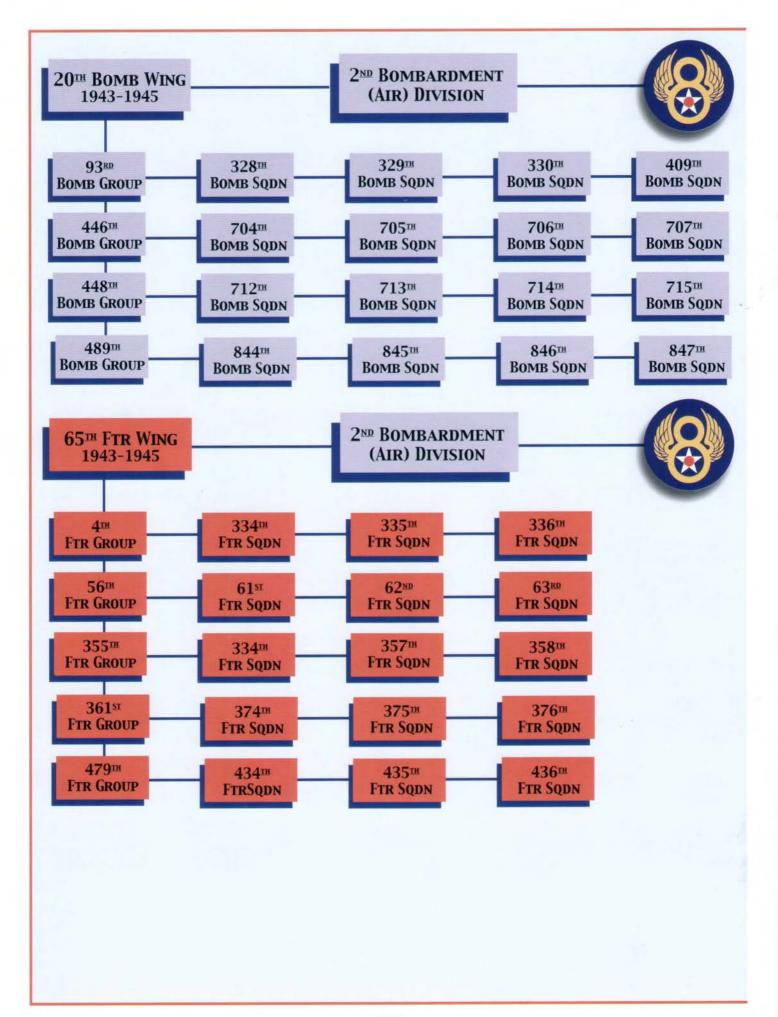


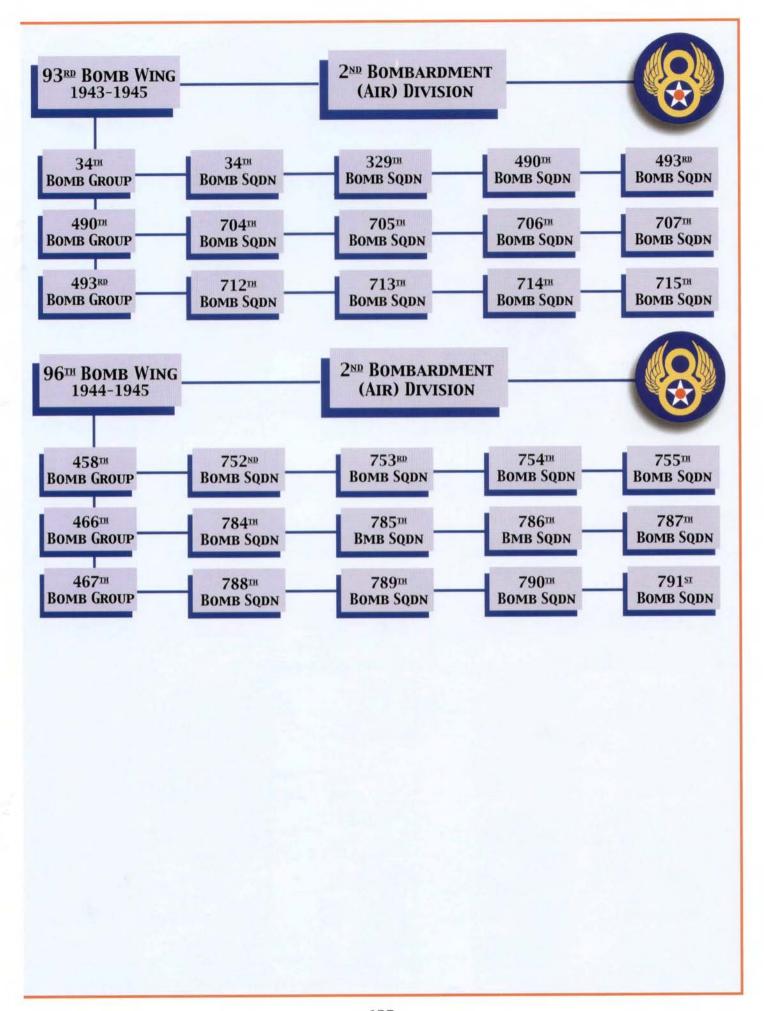




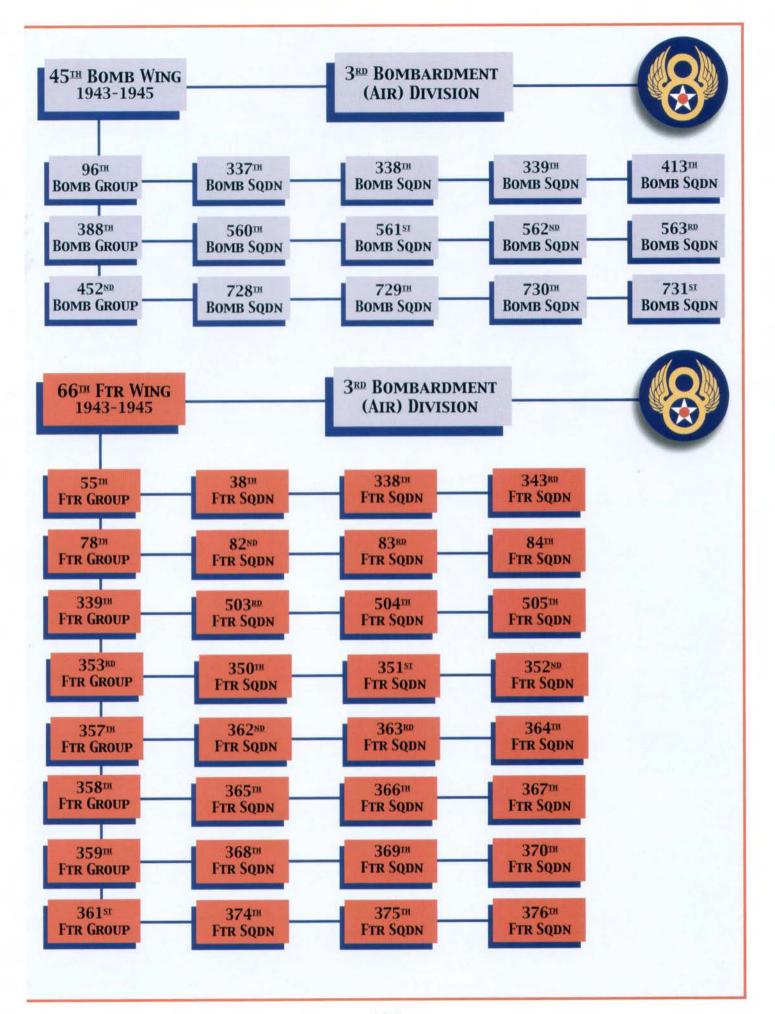


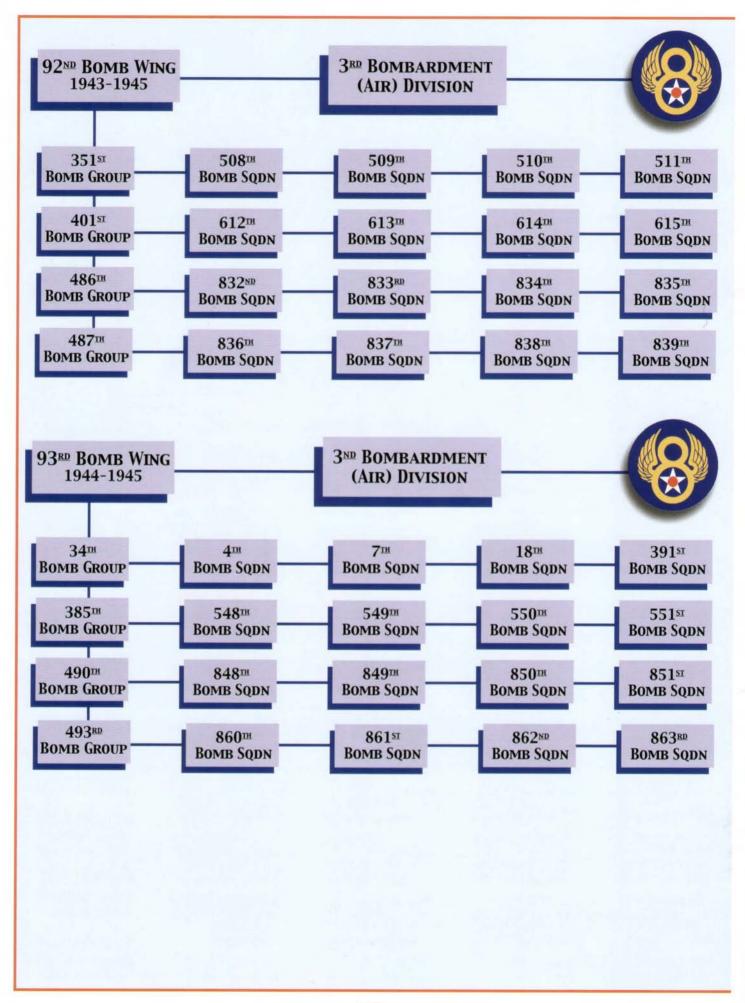














AAAAnti-Aircraft Artillery	GP / GrpGroup
AAFArmy Air Force	HQHeadquarters
ABAir Base	IncptInterceptor
AABArmy Air Base	LN Liaison
A/CAircraft	MTOMediterranean Theater of Operations
ADAir Division	MpngMapping
Air.DivAir Division	NLSNight Leaflet Squadron
A/DAir Depot	PSPhotographic Squadron
AEFAmerican Expeditionary Force	OBSObservation
AFAir Force	OPSOperations
A/FAirfield	QIMQuick Identification Markings (Allied)
ANAArmy-Navy Aeronautical	OSSOffice Of Strategic Services (US)
AS / Antisub	(P) / ProvProvisional
A/SAirstrip	PGPhotographic Group
ATO	Photo
Avn	POMPreparation for Overseas Movement
BDBombardment (later Air) Division	POWPrisoner Of War
BGBombardment (Bomb) Group	PRPhotographic Reconnaissance
BG(H)Bomb Group (Heavy)	PRGPhotographic Reconnaissance Group
BG(M)Bomb Group (Medium)	PSPhotographic Squadron
BG(L)Bomb Group (Light)	PTOPacific Theater of Operations
BmrBomber	PurPursuit
BombBombardment	RAFRoyal Air Force (British)
BSBombardment (Bomb) Squadron	RCMRadio Counter Measures
BWBombardment (Bomb) Wing	RcnReconnaissance
ccirca (approximate time period)	RGReconnaissance Group
Carr	RSReconnaissance Squadron
CBIChina-Burma-India (Theater of Operations)	SFScouting Force
CmbtCombat	SHAEFSupreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force
CmdCommand	SOESpecial Operations Executive (British)
CmdoCommando	SptSupport
COCommanding Officer	Sq. / SqdnSquadron
CmpstComposite	Srch Search
CrgoCargo	StnStation
CWCombat Wing	TacTactical
DBDive Bomber	TrngTraining
Det Detachment	TrTroop
EAMEEuropean-African-Middle Eastern	TrnspTransport
(Theater of Operations)	T/OTheater Of Operations
ERSEmergency Rescue Squadron	TRGTacitcal Reconnaissance Group
ETOEuropean Theater of Operations	TRSTactical Reconnaissance Squadron
F/BFighter-Bomber	Triple-AAnti-Aircraft Artillery
FG / FtrGrpFighter Group	USA
FLAKAnti-Aircraft Fire	UK
FldField	USN
Flt,	US
FtrFighter	USAAF
FS / FtrSqdnFighter Squadron	USSAFEUnited States Strategic Air Forces, Europe
FW / FtrWngFighter Wing	WR
GBGreat Britain	Wthr
GHQGeneral Headquarters	WngWing



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Born of the sun they traveled a short while towards the sun, And left the vivid air signed with their honor. -Steven Bender-

# BATTLE COLORS





