

318TH
FIGHTER
INTERCEPTOR
SQUADRON

"DEFENDERS OF THE GREAT NORTHWEST"

HISTORY

HISTORY OF THE
318TH FIGHTER INTERCEPTOR
SQUADRON

The 318th Fighter Squadron, 325th Fighter Group, was activated on 3 August 1942 at Bedford, Massachusetts. Two months later the squadron moved to Grenier, N.H. Then on 7 February, just six months after activation, the squadron, composed of 23 pilots flying P-40 Warhawks plus their ground support, boarded the USS Lyon and the carrier Ranger for destination unknown. After two weeks at sea the squadron landed at Oran, Algeria and a short time later set up operations at Montesquieu Air Base, Algeria.

The 318th flew its first combat mission 17 April 1943, about 5 months after the invasion of North Africa began. On this mission the squadron destroyed one ME-109 giving the 318th its first victory.

The 325th Fighter Group, consisting of the 318th and 319th Fighter Squadrons participated in action in the islands of Sardinia, Sicily and Pantelleria.

On 20 June 1943 the 318th moved to Mateur. Action over Sardinia on 30 July 1943 won the 318th its first unit citation when the group did much to win air supremacy over Sardinia through the destruction of 21 enemy aircraft with probable destruction of 4 more. This citation read in part, "this mission so weakened both the enemy's number of operational aircraft and combat morale that it contributed directly and materially to the subsequent surrender of the Islands."

It is interesting to note that a member of the group flying a P-40 strafed and sank an enemy submarine during an escort mission over southern Sardinia on 5 August 1943.

In November the unit moved from Mateur to Solimon, Tunisia then on to Foggia, Italy. Barely a month after flying their first operational mission in the P-47, the unit won their second citation. It read in part "On 30 Jan 1944 six heavy bombardment groups attacked five enemy airdromes in the Villaorba, Italy area. Preceding the bombers six P-47's of the 325th Fighter Group swept over these vital targets attacking over 50 enemy fighters that had already been alerted, destroying 37 enemy fighters, 6 possibly destroyed and many others damaged in the violent air battle that was waged for over 37 minutes. So completely neutralized was the enemy's aerial defense that in an unmolested attack our bombers were able to destroy over 70 enemy aircraft on the ground. The skill with which these pilots flew for a distance of over 300 miles at an altitude of less than 50 feet above the water, together with the aggressiveness and daring with which they pressed their successful attacks has been an example of unsurpassed combat efficiency."

These two Presidential Unit Citations were presented by Major General Nathan F. Twining 19 May 1944.

In March 1944 the 318th moved from Foggia to Lesina Airdrome, Italy. In May the P-51 replaced the P-47. Outstanding events from this point on to VE Day about a year later went like this:

2 June 1944 to 11 June 1944 - Planes of the 318th participated in the first shuttle run to Russia escorting B-17's. They were the first USAAF fighter unit to go to Russia.

28 June 1944 - 7 enemy aircraft were destroyed during a fighter sweep over the Bucharest Area, Rumania.

31 July 1944 - 18 enemy fighters were destroyed during an escort mission to Bucharest, Rumania. Capt Harry A. Parker made 4 of the kills.

5 Nov 1944 - 4 ME-109's were destroyed during a single engagement by one pilot, Capt Oscar Rau.

23 Aug 1944 - 9 FW-190's were destroyed during an escort mission to Markersdorf, Austria.

19 Mar 1945 - On an escort mission to Marshalling Yards in Hungary, 15 planes from the 318th (outnumbered better than 2 to 1) destroyed 18, probably 1 more, and damaged 2 FW-190's. 1st Lt Gordon H. McDonald destroyed 5 during this encounter.

10 April 1945 - Two flights of 318th P-51's remained in the Regensburg-Linz target area one hour beyond the required time in order to destroy 6 FW-190's.

The 318th flew 452 missions and accounted for 188 aircraft. The squadron's awards since activated with the Group as of June 1945:

- 2 DSC's
- 3 Legion of Merits
- 9 Silver Stars
- 74 DFC's
- 13 Soldiers Medals
- 16 Bronze Stars
- 13 Purple Hearts

From 17 April 1943 to 7 May 1945 the following record was established for the entire 325th Fighter Group:

- 17 aircraft destroyed in the air
- 60 aircraft probably destroyed
- 89 aircraft damaged
- 250 aircraft damaged on the ground
- 264 locomotives destroyed
- 137 locomotives probably destroyed
- 159 motor transports destroyed
- 101 motor transports probably damaged
- 148 freight cars, oil cars destroyed
- 995 freight cars, oil cars damaged

The 318th was inactivated at Camp Kilmer, N.J. on 28 Oct 1945. It was re-activated on 21 May 1947 at Mitchel Field, New York. At this time it was re-designated from 318th Fighter Squadron, Single Engine to 318th Fighter Squadron (All Weather).

On 19 Nov 1947 it was reassigned to Hamilton Field, California again under the 325th Fighter Group. P-61's were being used at this time.

In April 1950 the 325th Group with the 317th and 318th Fighter Squadrons was sent to McChord. F-82's then F-94's were then being used.

The 318th left McChord in June 1953 to spend a tour at Thule, Greenland. Meanwhile the 465th having been activated at McChord in Feb 54, just prior to the 318th being sent to Thule, was checking out in the F-86D. The 318th shows up again at McChord when on 18 Aug 1955 the 465th was redesignated the 318th FIS in accordance with "Project Arrow". This was a measure designed to re-activate outstanding WWII organizations so that their battle honors and prestige could be continued. The 567th Air Defense Group was deactivated and the 325th Fighter Group (Air Defense) continued in it's place. Since Aug 1955, two outstanding organizations, the 325th Group and 318th Squadron have once more worked as a team.

The first three F-102's arrived on 2 Mar 1957. Initial transition into this new aircraft was made at Vincent AFB, at Yuma, Arizona. The entire transition program was completed without so much as a blown tire.

The present system of consolidated maintenance began 9 Sep 1957.

The squadron moved into the present building (#308) in Jan of 1956. Prior to this their home was hanger #301.

Some of the outstanding honorary members of the 318th are:

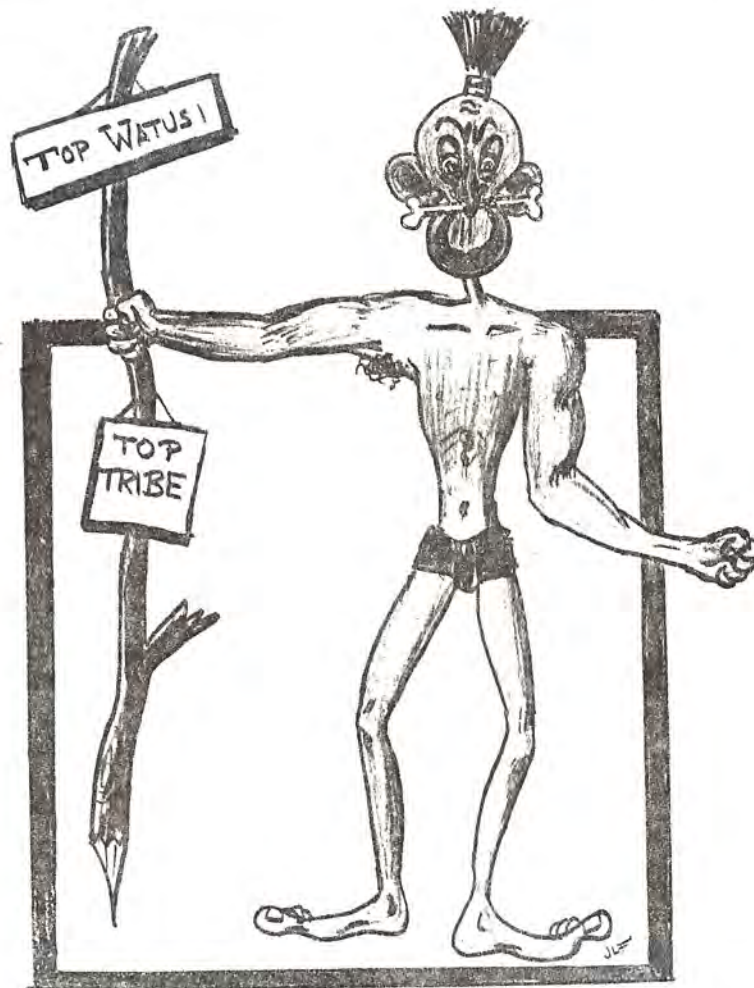
Jerry Lewis, actor
David Wayne, actor
George Marshal, producer

The above were made honorary members in May 1957 after the 318th was asked to perform in a fly-by which opens the Paramount picture "Sad Sack". This picture was being filmed while the squadron was in transition at Yuma.

St Ann's Home

The children from this home were "adopted" by the squadron in Nov 1958. They are the squadron's "Junior Interceptors". The squadron tries to provide some companionship for the youngsters as well as see that they are remembered on special occasions such as birthdays, Thanksgiving, etc.

The Tacoma Civil Air Patrol was made Honorary Auxiliary of the 318th in May 1957.



Names of the top radar pilot and top radar flight for each month are hung on this plaque.

"Watusi Song"

We are the Watusi, We're 11 feet tall.
We fight the Nairobies, They're not good a'tall.
The cannibals may eat us, But they'll never beat us,
For we're the Watusi, we're 11 feet tall.

Chant

Oom-Gah-Wah, Oom-Gah-Wah, Oom-Gah-Wah

The Watusi Song has never been officially accepted as the squadron fight song. However, it is generally accepted as such and can be heard at almost any squadron gathering.

SUPERSEDED EMBLEM



SQUADRON EMBLEM:

On a light blue disc, a Chinese green dragon, fangs and claws black, armored gold, mouth and tongue red, grasping a gray machine gun, emitting smoke from the barrel proper.

The insignia will face toward the front of the aircraft.

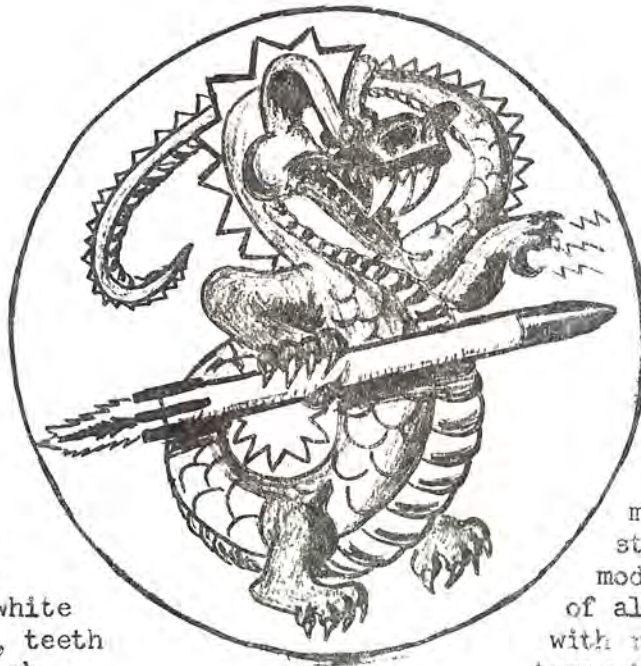
APPROVED 11 JUNE 1943.

SUPERSEDED 27 OCTOBER 1955

SIGNIFICANCE:

According to medieval history, the only possible way to slay the formidable green dragon was to equip the bravest available man with a lance and stout armour plate. In modern times, this deadliest of all killers is equipped with a machine gun which again returns the "Green Dragon" to the position of the most dangerous opponent of man.

PRESENT EMBLEM



SQUADRON EMBLEM:

In a light blue disc, a green dragon, with fierce expression, body scales shadowed dark green, the under part of the body in rolled scales Air Force yellow and vermilion orange, his back barbed white, his eyeballs white with bloodshot lines, claws, teeth and fangs white outlined black, mouth pink, with crimson barbed tongue, his left claw emitting electronic rays, his right claw grasping a red tipped, white rocket with black fins, fire exhaust proper.

APPROVED 27 OCT 55

SIGNIFICANCE:

According to medieval history, the only possible way to slay the formidable Green Dragon was to equip the bravest available man with a lance and stout armor plate. In modern times this deadliest of all killers is equipped with rockets which again returns the "Green Dragon" to the position of the most dangerous opponent of man. The dragon of the unit's inherited emblem was equipped with modern weapons to portray his present mission.