

## 325 OPERATIONS GROUP



### MISSION

The 325 Operations Group is the focal point for all F-22 Raptor pilot training, intelligence training and Air Battle Manager training. The group consists of one fighter squadron, an air control squadron, a training support squadron and an operations support squadron. The group staff provides guidance and assistance in successfully executing the training mission and ensures quality performance and standardized procedures for pilots, air battle managers, intelligence officers and air traffic controllers.

The intelligence flight directs all intelligence activities for the 325 Fighter Wing and subordinate units, to include current intelligence and threat briefings, extensive aircrew and weapons controller academic training, intelligence personnel training, and exercise support. The flight directs all aspects of the F-22 and F-15C Intelligence Formal Training Units, parallel courses designed to teach intelligence personnel assigned to F-22 and F-15C units all aspects of supporting the air dominance mission. An intelligence flight detachment at Hurlburt Field, Fl, conducts a similar IFTU course for Air Force Special Operations Command personnel.

### LINEAGE

325 Fighter Group, established, 24 Jun 1942

Activated, 3 Aug 1942

Inactivated, 28 Oct 1945

Redesignated 325 Fighter Group (All-Weather), 2 May 1947

Activated, 21 May 1947

Redesignated 325 Fighter Group, All-Weather, 10 May 1948

Redesignated 325 Fighter All Weather Group, 20 Jan 1950

Redesignated 325 Fighter Interceptor Group, 1 May 1951

Inactivated, 6 Feb 1952  
Redesignated 325 Fighter Group (Air Defense), 20 Jun 1955  
Activated, 18 Aug 1955  
Discontinued, 25 Mar 1960  
Redesignated 325 Tactical Training Group, 31 Jul 1985  
Redesignated 325 Operations Group, 1 Sep 1991  
Activated, 1 Sep 1991

## **STATIONS**

Mitchel Field, NY, 3 Aug 1942  
Hillsgrove, RI, c. 31 Aug 1942  
Camp Kilmer, NJ, 23 Jan-7 Feb 1943  
Tafaraoui, Algeria, 28 Feb 1943  
Montesquieu, Algeria, 5 Apr 1943  
Souk-el-Khemis, Tunisia, 3 Jun 1943  
Mateur, Tunisia, 19 Jun 1943  
Soliman, Tunisia, 4 Nov 1943  
Foggia, Italy, 11 Dec 1943  
Lesina, Italy, 29 Mar 1944  
Rimini, Italy, c. 5 Mar 1945  
Mondolfo, Italy, Apr 1945  
Vincenzo, Italy, Jul-9 Oct 1945  
Camp Kilmer, NJ, 26-28 Oct 1945  
Mitchel Field, NY, 21 May 1947  
Hamilton Field (later, Hamilton AFB), CA, 2 Dec 1947  
Moses Lake AFB, WA, 26 Nov 1948  
McChord AFB, WA, 23 Apr 1950-6 Feb 1952  
McChord AFB, WA, 18 Aug 1955-25 Mar 1960  
Tyndall AFB, FL, 1 Sep 1991

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

I Fighter Command, 3 Aug 1942  
Boston Air Defense Wing, 11 Aug 1942  
Twelfth Air Force, 13 Feb 1943  
Northwest African Tactical Air Force, 18 Feb 1943  
Northwest African Strategic Air Force, 14 Mar 1943  
47 Bombardment Wing, 27 Mar 1943  
2686 Medium Bombardment Wing (Provisional), 7 Jun 1943  
42 Bombardment Wing, 24 Aug 1943  
5 Bombardment Wing, 22 Oct 1943  
306 Bombardment (later, 306 Fighter) Wing, 27 Mar 1944  
305 Bombardment Wing, 13 Jun 1945  
49 Bombardment Wing, Heavy, Aug 1945  
Army Service Forces, 9-28 Oct 1945

First Air Force, 21 May 1947  
Fourth Air Force, 2 Dec 1947  
325 Fighter (later, 325 Fighter-All Weather, 325 Fighter-Interceptor) Wing, 9 Jun 1948-6 Feb 1952  
25 Air Division, 18 Aug 1955  
325 Fighter Wing, 18 Oct 1956-25 Mar 1960  
325 Tactical Training (later, 325 Fighter) Wing, 1 Sep 1991

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

P-40, 1942-1943  
P-47, 1943-1944  
P-51, 1944-1945  
P-61 (later, F-61), 1947-1948  
F-82, 1948-1951  
F-94, 1950-1952  
F-51, 1951-1952  
F-86, 1955-1957  
F-102, 1956-1960  
F-106, 1960  
F-15, 1991  
F-22, 2003

### **COMMANDERS**

Maj Leonard C. Lydon, 3 Aug 1942  
LTC Gordon H. Austin, 10 Dec 1942  
LTC Robert L. Baseler, 5 Jul 1943  
Col Chester L. Sluder, 1 Apr 1944  
LTC Ernest H. Beverly, 11 Sep 1944  
Col Felix L. Vidal, 2 Mar 1945  
LTC Wyatt P. Exum, 6 Jun 1945  
LTC Wilhelm C. Freudenthal, Aug 1945  
Unkn, Sep-Oct 1945. None (not manned), May-Dec 1947  
LTC Gordon D. Timmons, 2 Dec 1947  
Col Harold E. Kofahl, Jan 1948  
LTC Gordon D. Timmons, by Nov 1948  
LTC Walter C. Hearne, 16 Jan 1949  
LTC Kermit A. Tyler, 6 Mar 1950  
Col George W. Prentice, 27 Mar 1950  
LTC Leland S. McGowan, 8 Dec 1950  
Col Raymond K. Gallagher, 19 Apr 1951  
LTC Gordon L. Doolittle, 28 Dec 1951  
LTC Frederick J. Nelander, 8 Jan-6 Feb 1952  
Col James C. Stewart, 18 Aug 1955  
Col Henry L. Crouch Jr., 18 Oct 1956

Lt Col Edwin W. Fuller, 15 May 1957  
Col Henry S. Tyler Jr., Jul 1957  
LTC Charles W. Carson Jr., Oct 1957  
Col Thomas W. Schwellenbach, 2 May 1958  
LTC Homer C. Boles, 15 Dec 1959-25 Mar 1960  
Col Conley V. Bradford, 1 Sep 1991  
Col Gary R. Trexler, 7 Jul 1992  
Col Michael E. Slinkard, 6 Dec 1993  
Col James B. Smith, 15 Jul 1994  
Col Mark G. Beesley, 15 Jul 1996  
Col Thomas J. Quelly, 22 Jun 1998  
Col Charles K. Shugg, 24 Jul 2000  
Col Mark A. Barrett, 7 Jan 2002  
Col Timothy Merrell, 8 Aug 2003  
Col Matthew H. Molloy, 8 Aug 2005  
Col. Charles Corcoran  
Col Joseph P. Breen  
Col John R. Echols

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

#### **Campaign Streamers**

World War II  
Tunisia  
Sicily  
Naples-Foggia  
Rome-Arno  
Southern France  
North Apennines  
Po Valley  
Air Offensive, Europe  
Normandy  
Northern France  
Rhineland  
Central Europe  
Air Combat, EAME Theater

#### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

None

#### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citations

Sardinia, 30 Jul 1943  
Italy, 30 Jan 1944

#### Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jul 1993-30 Jun 1995  
1 Jul 1995-30 Jun 1996  
1 Jul 1996-30 Jun 1997  
1 Jul 1997-30 Jun 1999  
1 Jul 1999-30 Jun 2001  
1 Jul 2001-30 Jun 2002  
1 Jul 2002-30 Jun 2003

#### EMBLEM



325 Fighter Group emblem

#### MOTTO

#### NICKNAME

#### OPERATIONS

By General Orders Number 50, dated 30 July 1942, Headquarters Air Force, Eastern Defense Command and First Air Force brought into being and activated 325 Fighter Group. Led by Major Leonard C. Lydon, a cadre of Officers and Enlisted men from the 85th, 86th, and 87th Fighter Squadrons of the 79th Fighter Group proceeded to Theodore F. Greene Field, Providence, Rhode Island, where it became the nucleus of the new group.

In the weeks and months that followed activation, the group gradually grew in size, drawing its personnel from established fighter organizations, A.A.F. training schools, replacement centers, and officer candidate schools. The chain of command to First Air Force, under which the group operated at this time was through Boston Air Defense Wing, and First Fighter Command.

Training of both pilots and ground personnel began immediately. Formation flying, aerobatics, celestial and intercept missions, instrument flying, navigation, gunnery, and "scramble" were on the training program for pilots. Ground officers were sent to various specialized schools in Intelligence, Camouflage, Chemical Warfare, etc. Enlisted men's training consisted of lectures, drills, training films, departmental instruction, and practical "on-the-job" training.

In addition to the necessary technical and administrative training for officers and enlisted men in the group, athletic and recreational programs of varied types were planned for the benefit of all personnel.

On 10 December 1942, Lt. Colonel Gordon H. Austin became the Commanding Officer of 325 Fighter Group. By this time, the group had reached full quota allotted by Tables of Organization, and was developing to the fullest the cooperation so necessary to combat teams.

The alert for overseas movement came on 2 January 1943 and all pilots departed for Langley Field, Virginia, preparatory to leaving on the aircraft carrier Ranger on 8 January 1943. Captain L.E. Oldham was placed in charge of the ground echelon. The air echelon of ground personnel departed Theodore F. Greene field on 6-7 January and proceeded to Morrison Field, Florida. From here they proceeded, via Porto Rico, Trinidad, Belam (Brazil), Natal (Brazil), Liberia, Accra (British Gold Coast), to Tafaraoui Air Base in Algeria North Africa.

On 23 January the balance of the personnel departed Theodore F. Greene Field for Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. Two weeks later, on 7 February, they moved to the port of embarkation and boarded the U.S.S. Lyon, sailing the following day. After 13 uneventful days on the ocean, they disembarked at Mers-el-Kabir, Algeria on 21 February from whence they proceeded to Oran where they entrained for Ste. Barbe de Tlelat. Here they marched to Bivouac Area Number 1, more commonly known as "Mud Hill", where they remained a week before joining the ground flight echelons at Tafaraoui.

At Tafaraoui, pilots and ground personnel spent the month of March preparing their P-40 Warhawks for combat and attending lectures by battle-seasoned pilots. On 5-6 April, 325 Fighter Group moved to its first combat operational base, Montesquiou, Algeria.

Flying its first combat mission on 17 April 1943, 325 Fighter Group's P-40s escorted B-25s attacking Mateur A/D, gained its first aerial victory, and entered upon its run of 59 bomber escort missions, wherein not one of the 1000 escorted bombers was lost due to enemy aircraft action.

For instance, aircraft of 325 Fighter Group were the first P-40 planes in the Mediterranean Theater to carry 1000 lb. bombs. Outstanding missions had included: the destruction of twelve seaplanes

and the severe damaging of six more at the Stagnono Anchorage, Sicily; the destruction of seventeen out of twenty-five enemy aircraft over Southern Sardinia; and, again over Sardinia, the destruction of twenty-one enemy planes by twenty Warhawks.

During the above mentioned Pantellerian campaign, 325 Fighter Group flew thirty-three missions totaling 652 sorties. As that attack mounted in fury, sixteen missions were flown in one five day period. As many as six mission were flown in one day, and as high as 130 sorties were flown in six missions. All types of missions were flown against Pantelleria including bombing , strafing, and escort for medium bombers.

On 5 August 1943, while returning from a bomber escort mission over Sardinia, Lt. Wm. R. Elliott of 319th Fighter Squadron sighted a submarine surfaced on the Mediterranean. Observing a large German cross on the submarine's conning tower, Lt. Elliott strafed it and caused an explosion. The stern of the submarine was seen to lift in the air and the craft disappeared underwater leaving a large oil slick.

A welcome interlude in the ceaseless round of combat missions was the visit 10 August by Bob Hope and his company, including Frances Langford, Jack Pepper, and Tony Romano. A delegation from the 325 Fighter Group met the actors at El Alouina Airport in Tunis and flew them back to Mateur in a B-25 bomber. After lunch in the Group Headquarters mess hall, the Hope company presented a performance on a temporary stage behind the big Nissen hut chapel. The visit of these entertainers was one of the biggest morale builders the group had had since leaving the States.

The above events had taken place during the first year of the 325 Fighter Group's existence. And from a point of view of geography, they represented an odyssey that carried the group from one end of North Africa to the other on the heels of the retreating enemy. From the base at Tafaraoui where the three echelons, Air Flight, and Ground, had regrouped after the overseas trip, the group moved to Montesquieu on 7 April 1943. Here it remained until 6 June at which time it moved to Souk el Khemis, where it remained but 10 days. On 17 June it moved to Mateur, Tunisia and operated from the base that had been the target for its first mission.

On 5 July, command of the 325 Fighter Group changed when Lt. Colonel Gordon H. Austin was transferred to Command of the 319th Bomb Group. He was replaced by Major Robert L. Baseler, former Operations Officer and Commanding Officer, of the 319th Squadron.

By the end of the Sicilian Campaign on 17 August 1943, 325 Fighter Group had, in 4 months of combat established a record that was outstanding for so young a unit. Operating first under 2nd Air Defense Wing, of the 12th Air Force, and then under Northwest African Strategic Air Force, it had flown 110 missions, 3233 sorties, shot down 128 enemy planes, to its own loss of 26 P-40s, and escorted 1100 bombers without losing one to enemy aircraft action.

The final month of its operation with the P-40 discovered 325 Fighter Group engaging in the softening-up of the island of Sardinia. Engaging in bomber escort, strafing, fighter sweeps, and

bombing missions, the P-40s were almost solely responsible for the capitulation of the Italian garrison on that island.

The period from 22 September through 31 October 1943 was one of transition both for the pilots and enlisted personnel who service the planes. New P-47 type aircraft arrived and were assembled at Casablanca, Algiers, and Bizerte; and then they were flown to the base at Mateur. Civilian technicians and test pilots were attached to the group to instruct flyers and to test planes. Lectures, distribution of printed matter, and actual operation of the new planes were the principal methods of instruction. With the arrival of high-flying P-47s came a change of assignment for the group from the 42nd Medium Bomb Wing to the 5th Heavy Bomb Wing.

During this period a series of forums for all personnel was instituted. Topics chosen concerned current events and progress of the war. These were very beneficial in that they acted as a mental stimulant at a time when there was no combat operations.

The onslaught of North Africa's rainy season rendered field and runway at Mateur #2 unsuitable for operations or training. On 4 November 1943, 325 Fighter Group moved to Soliman, Tunisia, where the transitional phase from P-40 to P-47 continued, and preparations started for a major move to Italy.

Between 1 and 3 December, the ground echelon moved from Soliman to the staging area at Bizerte where it bivouacked until 25 December at which time it embarked on LST's for Italy. While in Bizerte re-equipment was carried out, and vehicles were repaired.

Meanwhile, on 9 November Lt. Colonel Baseler led the pilots and the air echelon in a move via transports to the new base at Foggia Main. Weather interrupted the schedule so that it was not until the afternoon of 11 December that this phase of the move was successfully completed.

It was soon discovered that Italy is no more immune to winter rains than North Africa and the field at Foggia Main was a semi-quagmire. But this condition was of no aid in digging foxholes for, a few inches beneath the mud was a layer of rock that defied penetration. To add to the disconcertion the field was overcrowded with all types of allied aircraft.

On 14 December, 325 Fighter Group flew its first Italian mission which was also its first operational mission with P-47s. The mission – an uneventful one – was escort for four groups of B-17s returning from a raid on the Kalamaki Airdrome, Athens, Greece. Operations continued whenever weather permitted.

On 1 December, the advance section of the ground echelon under Major L.E. Oldham arrived at Foggia after having disembarked at Taranto and completing the move by rail. It was not until 25 December that the rear section of the ground echelon boarded LSTs at Bizerte and proceeded to Naples where it landed 27 December. On 28 December, the whole group was once more intact.



The year 1943 closed with the group moving to the Celone airfield, otherwise known as Foggia #1 where the dry, grassy plain offered the best bivouac area the personnel had enjoyed since coming overseas.

With the beginning of the new year, 325 Fighter Group began in earnest its function as a component of a strategic air force. Now that North Africa, Sicily, Sardinia, and part of Italy had fallen into allied hands, 15th Air Force, activated in October 1943, would specialize in strategic missions. The expansion was marked by the increase from 4 B-17 and 3 B-24 groups at inception to 6 B-17 and 15 B-24 groups in 1944. With the fighter groups furnishing protective cover, the bombers were able to blast communications centers, ammunition factories, and oil refineries deep in enemy held territory. Marshalling yards in Northern Italy were pounded again and again to isolate the battle in Italy from that in Europe. The counterair offensive was prosecuted with many fighter sweeps in order that the enemy interception of bomber missions be reduced to a minimum.

The 30th of January 1944 is a day that will stand out in the history of the group. On that day 60 of the group's planes were engaged in a fighter sweep in the Villaorba-Udine section of Italy when they encountered an equal number of enemy aircraft. In the ensuing combat, wherein the enemy showed unusual aggressiveness, 325 Fighter Group shot down 37 opponents and probably destroyed 7 more, at a cost of 2 P-47s. Outstanding victors that day were Captain H.H. Green with 6, and Lt. Novotny, F/O Dean, and F/O Paulk with 3 each. Major General N. F. Twining, Commanding General of the 15th Air Force visited the field for the interrogation following the mission, and awarded Lt. Colonel R. L. Baseler with the Silver Star medal.

The enemy continued to be sensitive to all counter-airforce efforts whether they were bombing, strafing, or fighter sweep in nature. On 3 March the enemy seeking to intercept a B-24 attack on airdromes in the Rome area, not only failed in their intent, but had 6 of his fast diminishing supply of fighters destroyed and 8 more probably destroyed or badly damaged.

Again, on 18 March, over the Villaorba-Udine area, 325 Fighter Group's P-47s destroyed 9 enemy planes seeking to break up a B-17 formation.

During the six month period it used the P-47, 325 Fighter Group destroyed 101 enemy planes while engaged in counter-airforce activities alone.

On 28 March, there occurred an incident that was as amazing as it was sudden. While escorting B-24s attacking Vienna Marshalling yard, Italy, 319th Fighter Squadron encountered 40 enemy aircraft. In the ensuing encounter, Lt. John R. Booth set 2 Me109s afire and was in the act of turning into more when his wing tip collided with the right wing of an Me-109. The enemy plane's wing was torn off and it twisted away only to crash into another Me-109 and both were destroyed. Lt. Booth had to crash-land his P-47 when he returned to the base due to the mid-air collision, but he emerged safely. When his combat film was developed, it was discovered that the 2 Me-109s he had fired on before the collision were also destroyed to make Lt. Booth's record for 5 seconds combat 4 Me-10s destroyed.

Life at the base was anything but monotonous in the early part of 1944. The new base was less than a week old when, on 5 January, a combination rain and hail storm, in conjunction with a 60 mile-an-hour wind, tore down more than half the tents including the mess halls.

But recently evacuated by the enemy, the area around the base was heavily mined. When, on 7 January, an Italian laborer was severely injured by an exploding mine, Ordnance and Demolition units moved in and cleared the area of mines, bombs, and bomb fuses.

Special Services was not idle during this period. Lt. Albert Aschaffenburg wrote the story and music for a musical comedy. Giving it the title "Hit the Silk", Lt. Aschaffenburg held the first tryouts on 11 January and went into rehearsal. Lt. Wallace Kotter wrote the orchestrations and led the orchestra. One month after the first tryouts the show was presented to a large audience of British and American troops at the Flagella Theatre, Foggia.

Due to the arrival in Foggia of the heavy bombardment groups, movement orders were received on 13 February assigning 325 Fighter Group to a new base at Lesina. The following day, T/Sgt. F. Bowman took a detachment to the new site to erect Nissen Huts and plan the layout of the area. On the 15th, Lt. Colonel Baseler recalled the advance party and called off the move because the new field was all flooded by continuous rains. Reports from the advance echelon emphasized the difficulties due to the mud. Portions of the new runways were disappearing in the ooze and tent stakes were ineffective against the strong winds.

The move to Lesina was not accomplished until 26-29 March when conditions finally improved to the point where operations were permitted. Advance echelons left on 26 March while the remainder of the personnel moved during the next three days. Since the entire move was a distance of only 46 miles, all personnel and equipment were moved by motor vehicles. This airfield was the most advanced in location of all Allied (15th AAF) airfields in Italy.

On 1 April 1944, 325 Fighter Group's fourth Commanding Officer, Lt. Colonel Chester L. Sluder, replaced Lt. Colonel R. L. Baseler, who went to 306th Fighter Wing to become Assistant Chief of Staff, A-3, to Brigadier General Dean Strother.

The presence of an unidentified reconnaissance plane over the field on the previous night caused orders to be issued on 1 April that foxholes be dug in the immediate vicinity of each tent. It was never found necessary that the foxholes be used.

On 13 April, mindful of the perils of malaria in Southern Italy, Major Morris Grayson, Group Flight Surgeon, inaugurated an extensive program of control. In a speech given that evening, he outlined such preventive measures to be taken as: drainage of all swampland, nightly use of insect spray in each tent, conscientious use of mosquito nets, and the use of Atabrine.

The outstanding event in May 1944 was the citation ceremony held on the 19th of the month. At the ceremony held during the afternoon of that day, Major General Nathan F. Twining,

Commanding General of the 15th Air Force attached two Distinguished Unit Citation streamers to the guidons of each squadron.

First citation was for the mission on 30 July 1943 whereby 325 Fighter Group did much to win air supremacy over Sardinia through the destruction of 21 enemy aircraft and probable destruction of 4 more. The 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 Island."

The second citation was in recognition for the mission of 30 January 1944 when the group's planes destroyed 37 enemy aircraft, and probably destroyed 7 more. The citation for that mission read, in part, "So completely neutralized was the enemy's aerial defense of this region (Villaorba-Udine, Italy) that, in an unmolested attack, our bombers were able to destroy over seventy enemy aircraft on the ground... The skill with which these pilots flew for a distance of over three-hundred miles at an altitude of less than fifty feet above the water....has been an example of unsurpassed combat efficiency.

After the presentation ceremony, a formal review was held for General Twining. Leading the Review was a platoon of pilots, followed by the Headquarters platoon, and a platoon from each of the three fighter squadrons.

The month of May brought radical changes in 325 Fighter Group's operations. After having flown the radial-engined P-47 since late fall of 1943 the group was now to change back to the in-line engine type aircraft with which it started operations. But the powerful, long-ranged P-51 Mustang was a far cry from the P-40 Warhawk which preceded the P-47. With the far-reaching Mustang, the group was able to fly missions farther and farther into enemy territory, and to escort bombers from a pre-target rendezvous point, over the target, and well along the course back to base. This meant that one group flying P-51s would be able to supply the cover that had previously required 2 or 3 groups flying P-47s.

When the group flew P-51s on a high altitude escort of heavy bombers attacking the St. Charles and La Blanchard marshalling yards in France on 27 May, it marked a successful transition accomplished without a halt in combat operations. For, while still flying combat missions with the P-47, the pilots flew daily training flights and the ground crews studied the mechanical structure and maintenance of the Mustang.

Toward the end of May, there was much speculation concerning a certain Mission X. Passport size photographs of all pilots and certain ground personnel in civilian clothes were made, 5 day leaves were canceled, and a 24 hour guard was placed around the Commanding Officer's tent.

On 2 June the mystery surrounding said mission was partially lifted when ground officers, crew chiefs, and clerks went to a heavy bomber base. 64 P-51s took off from Lesina and escorted B-17s attacking Debreczen marshalling yards, Hungary. After the attack, both fighters and bombers continued on to Russian bases to complete the first Italy-to Russia shuttle mission of the war.

Ground officers, crew chiefs, and clerks went to the Russian bases in B-17s, and there performed the maintenance, operation, and intelligence functions necessary to all missions.

325 Fighter Group flew bomber escort missions against Rumanian airfields on 6 and 11 June from the Russian bases. On the latter date, the group's planes returned to the Lesina base after the mission. Total aerial victories for those two missions amounted to 9 enemy aircraft destroyed.

After returning to its Italian base, 325 Fighter Group proceeded to maintain its outstanding combat performance evidenced by its operations with the P-40 and P-47 type aircraft. In the summer of 1944, top priority target for strategic air forces was oil. Time and again the group's P-51s were called upon to escort heavy bombers attacking either crude oil processing plants in Rumania or synthetic plants throughout Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria, or Hungary. Second only to oil in priority were the railroad marshalling yards through which oil must pass to reach industry and aircraft. And these marshalling yards received their share of attention from the bombers and strafing fighters. To keep enemy air resistance at a minimum it was necessary to fly an occasional fighter sweep or bomber mission against enemy airfields.

An especially damaging blow against enemy air power was struck on 28 June 1944 when 40 Mustangs on a fighter sweep over Bucharest, Rumania, encountered 47 enemy aircraft of various types and destroyed 17 of them. Leading victors that day were F/O Robert H. Brown with 3 kills, and Lt. L.J. Stacey, and Lt. A.C.Fiedler with 2 each.

While escorting B-24s attacking Zwolfaxing airdrome, Austria, on 26 July, the group's planes broke up an enemy attack on the bombers, destroying 13 enemy planes while doing so.

As an example of courage and skill, the encounter of 31 July 1944 is a standout. While escorting B-24s attacking Bucharest, 16 of the group's 45 Mustangs on that mission turned aside to attack 45 Me-109s and FW-190s. The enemy went into a Lufberry, in which they gradually lost altitude. The P-51s kept diving through this circle and pulling back up until ammunition ran low. Total 325 victories for the encounter were 18 destroyed, 1 probably destroyed, and 12 damaged. Lt. Harry A. Parker destroyed 4 Me-10s and damaged 6 more. Lt. Phillip Sangermano and Lt. Benjamin H. Emmert each destroyed 3 Me-109s and the latter pilot damaged 5 more. Lt. John Reynolds, Lt. William Pomerantz, and Lt. Vernier A. Goodman each destroyed 2 enemy aircraft.

On 15 August 1944, the group's planes took off from Tarquina Airdrome, Italy, to take part in the invasion of Southern France. They flew escort for Troop Carrier and Glider planes and gave escort and target cover for planes dropping paratroopers during the initial airborne invasion. Later on the same day they again gave target cover and escort for another wave of airborne troops. Previous to D-Day in Southern France the group's planes flew bomber escort and strafing missions to Southern France, radar and communications targets being their objective.

On 21 August, the group's planes were escorting B-24s attacking an airdrome at Boszarmeny, Hungary. Leader that day was Major H.H. Green, who when he saw that 80 to 100 enemy aircraft

were unscathed by the bombing, led the group down to strafe them. The strafing results claimed for that day were 37 enemy aircraft destroyed, 13 probably destroyed, and 17 damaged.

For strafing results, few missions exceed those of the 1st and 8th of September 1944. Attacking airdromes at Debreczen, Hungary and Ecka, Yugoslavia on the above respective dates, 325 Fighter Group destroyed 101 of 108 enemy aircraft parked on the fields, in addition to which they damaged many installations.

On 11 September Lt. Colonel Ernest H. Beverly replaced Colonel Chester L. Sluder as Commanding Officer of 325 Fighter Group. Colonel Beverly lost no time in instituting a winterization program to assure that the rains of winter would not render the base at Lesina as unoperational as it had been the previous winter. It is to his credit that the winter of 1944-45 was the driest, warmest, and best suited for operations the group had enjoyed since coming overseas.

On 23 September, Lt. Colonel H.H. Green left the group to become Assistant A-1 at 306th Fighter Wing. In the two years he was with the group, Colonel Green flew 100 combat missions, totaling 402 combat hours, destroyed 18 enemy aircraft in the air and 10 on the ground to become for many months the theater's leading ace. He was awarded the DSC, Silver Star, DFC (with cluster), Air Medal (with 25 clusters) and the Purple Heart.

Through the rest of 1944 and during the early part of 1945, 325 Fighter Group continued to operate from the base at Lesina. On the first of March, however, the group was again on the move to a forward base. Plans called for the move to be made to a base at Mondolfo, but this was not quite ready. So, during the month of March, the group operated from Rimini airdrome at Miramare, Italy, and on 6 April the move was made to Mondolfo. The move to Miramare was made by air over a distance of more than 200 miles. As was now standard procedure in all moves, an advanced echelon was sent ahead to prepare living quarters and offices. When the day came for the move, the planes took off from the old base, flew a mission, and returned to the new base.

The final encounter between planes of the 325 Fighter Group and a stray force of enemy planes occurred on 14 March 1945. While escorting B-24s on the withdrawal route from Nevo Zamsky, Hungary, the 325 destroyed 20 Me-109s and FW-190s. Lt. G.H. McDaniel led the way with 5 victories over FW-190s.

Command of the group changed on 1 March 1945 when Colonel F.L. Vidal replaced Colonel E.H. Beverly. Colonel Vidal, former Deputy Commander of the 306th Fighter Wing, became 325 Fighter Group's sixth commander.

Looking back at the results of a little over two years of operations, 17 April 1943 to 7 May 1945, 325 Fighter Group achieved the following record: in aerial combat 537 enemy aircraft were destroyed, 60 probably destroyed, and 89 were damaged. On the ground 350 enemy aircraft were destroyed and many more probably destroyed or damaged. Other ground claims include: 264 locomotives destroyed, 137 probably destroyed, 159 motor transport destroyed, 101 probably destroyed, and 148 freight cars, oil cars, etc. destroyed, 995 damaged.

The group has a total of 27 Aces, whose combined victories total 202 enemy aircraft destroyed in aerial combat.

Beginning in Spring 1949, conducted the All Weather Combat Crew Training School, while participating in air defense operations exercises and training.

From Aug 1955, served as the "host" group at McChord AFB until Oct 1956, while at the same time conducting air defense operations.

Became subordinate to the 325 Fighter Wing in Oct 1956 and was non-operational as all group headquarters personnel were used to man the wing headquarters until about Jun 1957.

Regained control over its tactical squadrons in Jun 1957 and continued air defense operations of the wing, with annual squadron deployments to Tyndall AFB, FL, for firing practice.

Discontinued in Mar 1960, losing its tactical squadrons to direct wing control.

From Sep 1991, again controlled the wing's tactical units.

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USAF Unit Histories  
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Sources  
Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.  
The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.