

## **THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN AND THE “NEVER LOST A BOMBER” MYTH**

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For sixty years after World War II, the Tuskegee Airmen’s 332d Fighter Group was reputed to be the only American fighter escort group to have “never lost a bomber to enemy aircraft.” Where did the claim originate, and was it true? This paper explores both questions.

On March 10, 1945, the respected and widely read *Liberty* magazine published “Dark Angels of Doom,” an article by influential black journalist Roi Ottley about the 332d Fighter Group in combat. Ottley wrote “in more than 100 combat missions in which the Red Tails have given escort cover to their ‘Big Friends’ - the long-range heavy bombers-they haven’t lost a single ship to enemy fighters!”<sup>1</sup> By then the 332d Fighter Group had flown more than 130 bomber escort missions, and had lost bombers on only six of those missions.<sup>2</sup> But the group did not fly 100 missions before losing a bomber. In fact, the group had lost bombers within the first few missions. Despite that fact, readers might have falsely concluded that the 332d Fighter Group had flown more than 100 bomber escort missions and that it had never lost a bomber on any of them, when in fact it had lost bombers on at least six of more than 130 bomber escort missions by March 10, 1945.

The 332d Fighter Group flew more than bomber escort missions for the Fifteenth Air Force, such as strafing attacks on ground targets and fighter sweeps, and by March 1945, it had flown more than 200 missions for the Fifteenth Air Force. On March 24, 1945, the *Chicago Defender*, a popular black newspaper, published another article

entitled “332d Flies Its 200<sup>th</sup> Mission without Loss.”<sup>3</sup> Apparently the reporter had misinterpreted the Ottley article, which had been published two weeks before, and expanded it into a larger myth that the Tuskegee Airmen did not lose a bomber after 200 bomber escort missions. In fact, the 332d Fighter Group flew only a total of 179 bomber escort missions out of a total of 311 missions for the Fifteenth Air Force.<sup>4</sup>

The “never lost a bomber” claim already circulated before a War Department press release dated June 21, 1945, announced that Colonel Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., who had commanded the 332d Fighter Group, was taking command of the 477<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group. Undoubtedly based on the preceding newspaper article, the press release claimed that “On February 28, 1945, Colonel Davis’ group had completed 200 missions with the 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force and had served as escort to heavy bombers without losing a single bomber to enemy fighters.”<sup>5</sup> This was probably the first time an official Air Force document repeated the “never lost a bomber” claim.

Charles Francis wrote the first book about the Tuskegee Airmen in 1955.<sup>6</sup> While he discussed the excellent combat record of the 332d Fighter Group and its squadrons, he did not repeat the “never lost a bomber” claim. The statement eventually appeared in countless other places, including other books, magazines, newspaper articles, television documentaries, and museum displays about the Tuskegee Airmen. By the end of the twentieth century, many found it difficult to think of the black pilots without also thinking “never lost a bomber.”

Colonel Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., who later rose to become the first African-American general in the United States Air Force, commanded the 332d Fighter Group during most of the time it served in combat with the Fifteenth Air Force. His father had

been the first African-American general in the United States Army. As a lieutenant general, the younger Davis shared his experiences with historian Al Gropman in a 1990 oral history interview. Gropman asked Davis specifically about the “never lost a bomber” claim. Davis replied, “I do not say that, or if I do say it, it’s not an over-enthusiastic statement. I question that privately between you and me. But so many people have said it that a lot of people have come to believe it.”<sup>7</sup>

Davis himself might have come to believe it. The very next year, 1991, the Smithsonian Institution published General Davis’ autobiography entitled *Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., American*. In that book, General Davis noted : “In a letter of commendation to me, Buck Taylor remarked that ours was a fine military organization: among our accomplishments, we had achieved the distinction of never losing a single bomber to enemy fighters on an escort mission.” Davis himself, despite his questioning of the statement the year before, endorsed the claim.<sup>8</sup>

In 1995, the cable television channel HBO broadcast a movie called *The Tuskegee Airmen* that reached a national audience more effectively than almost any other medium.<sup>9</sup> The movie repeated the “never lost a bomber” statement, which reinforced the common belief that the Tuskegee Airmen’s 332d was the only fighter group never to have lost a bomber under its escort.

Apparently no one seriously or publically questioned the veracity of the “never lost a bomber” statement in the twentieth century, possibly because the claim was so old, and possibly because it had been repeated so often. In 1997, members of the Tuskegee Airmen Incorporated, which included many of the original Tuskegee Airmen veterans, chose Mr. William Holton, an African-American U.S. Navy veteran of World War II, to

be the organization's national historian. When a World War II veteran told Holton he did not believe the "never lost a bomber" statement, Holton began research to prove it was true.<sup>10</sup> What he found, instead, was evidence among the daily mission reports of the 332d Fighter Group that bombers might have been shot down by enemy aircraft after all. In 2004, Mr. Holton published a booklet to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 332d Fighter Group's first heavy bomber escort missions in World War II.<sup>11</sup> His booklet contained copies of selected mission reports of the 332d Fighter Group. Holton boldly claimed that the "never lost a bomber" statement was not true. Holton distributed copies of his booklet at the Tuskegee Airmen Incorporated national convention in Omaha, Nebraska in 2004, but his revelation encountered emotional vocal opposition. The Tuskegee Airmen Incorporated asked its Harry A. Sheppard Research Team, led by original Tuskegee Airman William Holloman, a retired USAF lieutenant colonel, to serve as a historical research committee to investigate the issue.<sup>12</sup> For about two years, the Holloman committee began to explore the documents in an attempt to prove or disprove Holton's assertion that the "never lost a bomber" statement was false.

In 2006, Dr. Daniel L. Haulman, a historian at the Air Force Historical Research Agency since the 1980s, wrote an article about the aerial victory credits of the Tuskegee Airmen originally called "109 Victories". Haulman was not aware of Holton's previous research, but he examined some of the same mission reports of the 332d Fighter Group, and he came to the same conclusion that the "never lost a bomber" statement was false. He mentioned that discovery at the spring 2006 symposium of the Society for Military History at Kansas State University.<sup>13</sup>

When Haulman returned from the meeting, Mr. Joseph Caver, an archivist who worked with him at the Air Force Historical Research Agency, informed him of William Holton's research and the fact that Holton had already discovered that the "never lost a bomber" claim was false. In fact, Caver had been at the 2004 meeting of the Tuskegee Airmen Incorporated when Holton presented his original findings.<sup>14</sup>

In December 2006, a reporter named Alvin Benn interviewed Dr. Haulman about his research that suggested the famous "never lost a bomber" statement was historically inaccurate. During the interview, Haulman told Benn about Holton's similar research, and Mr. Benn also interviewed Mr. Holton. On December 10, Al Benn then published an article in the *Montgomery Advertiser* called "Tuskegee Airmen Record Disputed."<sup>15</sup> Later in December, several reporters interviewed both Haulman and Holton about their research, and their questioning of the "never lost a bomber" claim became widely known.

Many of the Tuskegee Airmen and their proponents misinterpreted the challenge to the "never lost a bomber" myth as an attack on the combat performance of the Tuskegee Airmen during World War II, which was not at all the intention of either Holton or Haulman. Other Tuskegee Airmen and their supporters resented the implication that the Tuskegee Airmen had been lying for sixty years, when in fact most were not familiar with the wartime records of their organization, especially from the months before they went as individuals overseas, and were not intentionally speaking dishonestly.

In early 2007, an Air University officer named Lt. Col. Robert Tate questioned Dr. Haulman about his conclusion and suggested further research. When Haulman learned that members of the historical committee of the Tuskegee Airmen Incorporated

were planning to come to the Air Force Historical Research Agency to conduct their own research into the “never lost a bomber” question, and that he was to help them with their research, he decided to take Colonel Tate’s advice, and looked at more documents pertaining to the issue. Haulman looked at the mission reports and periodic histories of the bombardment groups the 332d Fighter Group escorted, and the missing air crew reports of bomber crews that the escorted groups lost.

Haulman first determined, for each of the mission in question, which bombardment groups the 332d Fighter Group was assigned to escort, and the times and places of the escort. Then he consulted the mission reports of the bombardment groups, found in the daily mission reports of the Fifteenth Air Force. Next he examined the index of missing air crew reports, which show which bombardment group lost aircraft on certain days. Finally, he examined each of the missing air crew reports, which show which bombers were lost, how they were lost, and where and when they were lost. By piecing together the relevant documents, Haulman was able to prove more conclusively that sometimes bombers under the escort of the Tuskegee Airmen were indeed shot down by enemy aircraft.

Early in 2007, Haulman met with three members of the Tuskegee Airmen Incorporated, who visited the Air Force Historical Research Agency to conduct research into the “never lost a bomber” question. They included retired Lt. Col. William Holloman, the head of the Harry A. Sheppard research committee; Lt Col. Alexander Jefferson, and Lt. Col. William Ellis. All three were original Tuskegee Airmen who flew with the 332d Fighter Group in Europe in combat during World War II. After several days of research, especially into the records of the July 12, 1944 mission of the 332d

Fighter Group, the team concluded that at least three and possibly four bombers under Tuskegee Airmen escort that day were shot down by enemy aircraft. The team also concluded, with Dr. Haulman, that one of the Tuskegee Airmen had shot down three enemy aircraft that day that were not counted among the aerial victory credits of the Tuskegee Airmen. Haulman amended his “109 Victories” paper and called it “112 Victories.”

**Table I: Fifteenth Air Force Organization as of October 1944**

<b>Wing</b>	<b>Assigned Components</b>
5 <sup>th</sup> Bombardment (B-17s)	2d, 97 <sup>th</sup> , 99 <sup>th</sup> , 301 <sup>st</sup> , 463d, 483d Bombardment Groups
47 <sup>th</sup> Bombardment (B-24s)	98 <sup>th</sup> , 376 <sup>th</sup> , 449 <sup>th</sup> , 450 <sup>th</sup> Bombardment Groups
49 <sup>th</sup> Bombardment (B-24s)	451 <sup>st</sup> , 461 <sup>st</sup> , 484 <sup>th</sup> Bombardment Groups
55 <sup>th</sup> Bombardment (B-24s)	460 <sup>th</sup> , 464 <sup>th</sup> , 465 <sup>th</sup> , 485 <sup>th</sup> Bombardment Groups
304 <sup>th</sup> Bombardment (B-24s)	454 <sup>th</sup> , 455 <sup>th</sup> , 456 <sup>th</sup> , 459 <sup>th</sup> Bombardment Groups
305 <sup>th</sup> Fighter (Provisional) (P-38s)	1 <sup>st</sup> , 14 <sup>th</sup> , 82d Fighter Groups
306 <sup>th</sup> Fighter (P-51s)	31 <sup>st</sup> , 52d, 325 <sup>th</sup> , 332d Fighter Groups

Between the summer of 1944 and the end of April 1945, the Fifteenth Air Force had 7 fighter groups available to escort 21 bombardment groups. In other words, for each fighter group, there were three bombardment groups. In fact, on many of the missions in the summer and fall of 1944, each fighter group was typically assigned one bombardment wing to escort on a given day, and each of those wings consisted of several bombardment groups. For example, on 12 July 1944, the 332d Fighter Group was the only group assigned to escort the 49<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing, which consisted of three bombardment groups. On certain days, the 332d Fighter Group was assigned to escort more than one bombardment wing. There were simply many more bombers on a day’s mission than there were fighters to escort them, and the fighters sometimes were hard pressed to cover all the bombers, especially when large numbers of enemy fighters rose to attack the

bombers. It is quite understandable that sometimes a fighter group, despite its best efforts, would be unable to prevent enemy aircraft from reaching and shooting down some of the bombers.<sup>16</sup>

The rest of this paper reflects Dr. Haulman's research into the "never lost a bomber" question. It focuses on seven missions, one each for the following dates: June 9, 1944, June 13, 1944, July 12, 1944, July 18, 1944, July 20, 1944, August 24, 1944, and March 24, 1945. On each of those dates, enemy aircraft shot down bombers under Tuskegee Airmen escort.

### **June 9 1944**

On June 9, 1944, the 301<sup>st</sup> and 302d Fighter Squadrons of the 332d Fighter Group escorted bombers of several bombardment wings of the Fifteenth Air Force, including the 304th Bombardment Wing, from Italy toward their target at Munich in Germany. The time of the escort was between 0830 and 0925 hours.<sup>17</sup> The Fifteenth Air Force lost 17 bombers that day.<sup>18</sup> Only two of these were shot down by enemy aircraft during the period when the 332d Fighter Group was escorting them.<sup>19</sup> Both belonged to the 304<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing's 459<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group.<sup>20</sup> For his heroism during the mission, Col. Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., the commander of the 332d Fighter Group, earned the Distinguished Flying Cross. The Fifteenth Air Force award order noted that "Colonel Davis so skillfully disposed his squadrons that in spite of the large number of enemy fighters, the bomber formation suffered only a few losses."<sup>21</sup> According to Fifteenth Air Force General Order 1473 dated 30 June 1974, members of the 332d Fighter Group earned five aerial victory credits for shooting down enemy aircraft on 9 June 1944.<sup>22</sup> They earned those victories by attacking enemy aircraft that were also attacking the

bombers they were escorting. While the Tuskegee Airmen were shooting down enemy fighters, some of those fighters were shooting down two American bombers. German fighter pilots claimed several B-24s in the Munich area of southern Germany (Bavaria) that fateful morning.<sup>23</sup>

**Table II. Bombers lost to enemy aircraft while under 332d Fighter Group escort, 304<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing, 9 June 1944, Mission to Munich, Germany**

Group	Type and serial number	Time	Location	Missing Air Crew Report number
459	B-24G 42-78219	0905	46 deg 40 min North 12 deg 40 min East	6317
459	B-24 H 42-52318	0907	46 deg 00 min North 12 deg 40 min East	6179

**June 13, 1944**

On June 13, 1944, the 332d Fighter Group was assigned to provide penetration escort to both the 5<sup>th</sup> and 49<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wings on a mission to the Munich area of Germany. The 332d Fighter Group fighters met the bombers at 0755 and stayed with them until 0925 hours. Enemy aircraft rose to challenge the bombers in northern Italy. The 332d Fighter Group mission report for the day noted “Total of 11 E/A (enemy aircraft) seen but not encountered. Total of 2 seen attacking bombers.”<sup>24</sup>

At 0900, a B-24 of the 49<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing’s 484<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group, which had slowed and fallen out of formation, probably because of mechanical trouble, was attacked by enemy fighters near Portogruaro, Italy. An eye-witness named Robert E. Myers, in Missing Air Crew Report 6097, noted that the B-24 pilot, Lieutenant Remington, called on the radio. “I heard him calling for Pixey 1, saying he was jumped by enemy fighters.” According to the Fifteenth Air Force Mission Report for 13 June 1944, the 332d Fighter Group call sign was “Pixie One”. The enemy aircraft shot down

the bomber. Other witness statements within the Missing Air Crew Report 6097 confirm that the B-24 was shot down by enemy aircraft. The combination of documents proves that the 332d Fighter Group was escorting the 484<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group when it lost a B-24 bomber to enemy aircraft that day.<sup>25</sup>

**Table III: Bomber Shot Down by Enemy Aircraft on 13 June 1944**

Wing	Group	Type and serial number	Time	Location	Missing Air Crew Report Number
49	484	B-24 42-94741	0900	Portogruaro, Italy	6097

### **July 12, 1944**

On July 12, 1944, more bombers were lost to enemy aircraft fire while those bombers were under 332d Fighter Group escort. The group's mission that day was to provide penetration, target cover, and withdrawal escort for the 49<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing on its mission to bomb marshalling yards at Nimes, France.<sup>26</sup> No other fighter group was assigned to escort the 49<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing that day. Of the seven fighter groups in the Fifteenth Air Force's 306<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, three stood down, and each of the other four was assigned a different bombardment wing to escort.<sup>27</sup> The 332d Fighter Group rendezvoused with the 49<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing's bombers at 1011 hours, staying with them until after they left mainland France and reached the island of Corsica. Seventeen of the Tuskegee Airmen were with the bombers throughout the escort mission.<sup>28</sup> One of the 332d Fighter Group pilots, Lt. Joseph D. Elsberry, reported that 16 FW-190s attacked the bomber formation, and that he intercepted at least three of the German fighters.<sup>29</sup>

The 49<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing that day included the 461<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group.<sup>30</sup> The 461<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group lost four bombers to enemy aircraft that day, according to

its own mission report and the bombardment wing's intelligence report for that day.<sup>31</sup>

The July 1944 history of the 461<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group (GP-461-HI Apr 1944-Feb 1945) notes the following: “In the month of July the 461<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group ran the gamut of human experiences. The most violent of the emotions created were those of grief, chagrin, surprise, frustration, and disappointment which immediately followed the losses of forty officers and men and four airplanes at Nimes, France on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July...”. It also notes, under “Mission No. 60, 12 July 1944 – Nimes M/Y, France”, “For the first time in its history the 461<sup>st</sup> Group was really hit on the bomb run by a formation-concentration of enemy fighters. Twenty-eight enemy fighters hit the last flight of six planes and knocked down four of them. Three of the planes went down over the target at Nimes, France...” “The planes lost over the target were those piloted by 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Richard S. Fawcett, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Frederick L. Dunn, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Chester A. Ray Jr.”<sup>32</sup>

Missing Air Crew Reports 6894, 6895, and 7034 confirm that three of the 461<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group B-24s lost on 12 July 1944 were lost to enemy aircraft fire. The bombers were shot down at 1050 hours, 1051 hours, and 1105 hours near the target. All three missing air crew reports also contain witness statements from the members of crews of other bombers that were in the formation. Those witness statements confirm that the bombers went down after being hit by enemy aircraft.<sup>33</sup> German records indicate that between 1048 and 1118, as many as eight B-24s were hit by Luftwaffe fighters over southern France, including the Nimes area.<sup>34</sup>

**Table IV. Bombers lost to enemy aircraft while under 332d Fighter Group escort, 49<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing, 12 July 1944, Mission to Nimes, France.**

Group	Type and serial number	Time	Location	Missing Air Crew Report number

461	B-24H 42-52723	1050	20 miles SE of Mirabeau, France	6894
461	B-24G 42-78202	1051	10 miles E of Mirabeau, France	6895
461	B-24G 42-78291	1105	43 43 N 05 23 E	7034

### **July 18, 1944**

The 332d Fighter Group Narrative Mission Report no. 28 dated 18 July 1944 states that the group's mission and target was "to furnish penetration, target cover, and withdrawal for the 5<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing to Memmingen A/D (airdrome)." It also notes that "Bomber formation was good and easy to cover. The 301<sup>st</sup> was lead Sq; the 99<sup>th</sup> was low; the 302<sup>nd</sup> middle; the 100<sup>th</sup> high," and "36 A/C (aircraft) over target at 10:35 hours." The same report notes that eight of the 332d Fighter Group pilots claimed that day to have shot down many enemy aircraft, including FW-190s and Me-109s.<sup>35</sup>

According to the 332d Fighter Group's 100<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron report for the month of July, "Escorting a flight of bombers over Memmingen, Germany, 18 July 1944, the pilots' fondest hopes were realized when enemy aircraft came up to attack our bomber formation."<sup>36</sup>

The 332d Fighter Group earned aerial victory credits for shooting down twelve enemy aircraft on 18 July 1944, presumably because the enemy aircraft were attacking the escorted bomber formations.<sup>37</sup>

The Fifth Wing Operations Order number 628 dated 17 July 1944 for the 18 July 1944 mission to Memmingen airdrome notes that the Fifth Bomb Wing included six bomb groups, including the 483d and the 301<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Groups.<sup>38</sup>

The 483d Bombardment Group narrative mission report for 18 July 1944 noted that the group arrived “alone” at the initial point before the bomb run at 1045 and was immediately attacked from the rear by approximately 100 enemy airplanes. It noted that the fighter escort arrived 8 minutes after the initial 1045 attack. It also noted that the fighter escort was “very effective from then on, despite the fact that they were heavily outnumbered.” The enemy aircraft attack lasted 20 minutes, according to the same report. In other words, for approximately twelve minutes, enemy fighters continued to attack the 483d Bombardment Group, despite the arrival of the 332d Fighter Group escort fighters. The same special narrative mission report notes that “From the above encounters, our Group lost fifteen (15) aircraft.” In the report’s conclusion are the words, “Total losses: from fighters-15.”<sup>39</sup>

The 301<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group Special Narrative Report for the 18 July 1944 mission to Memmingen A/D, Germany notes that enemy fighters attacked the group’s bombers “in the target area” and that “no flak was encountered at the target.” Under “Total Losses,” the report mentions “From Fighters: One (1). No. 3 engine hit by rocket.” The 301<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group, like the 483d Bombardment Group, belonged to the 5<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing that the 332d Fighter Group was escorting that day.<sup>40</sup>

The Narrative Mission Report no. 47 for the 52d Fighter Group dated 18 July 1944 notes that the 52d Fighter Group was “to provide escort on penetration and a fighter sweep over target for four groups of B-17s of the 5<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing attacking Memmingen (Germany) airdrome at 1030 hours.” It also mentions “the bombers were left at 1030 hours...After leaving, the fighters proceeded to the target area, making ninety degree turns in front of the bombers. They then took a position east of the target.” The same

report notes that enemy airplanes attacked the bombers and aircraft of the 52d Fighter Group engaged the enemy fighters, “but P-51s of the 332d Group were already attacking the Me-109s.” It also mentioned that the enemy fighters were “chased to the deck either by P-51s of the 2d Squadron or by planes of the 332d which engaged the enemy.” Further on, the 52d Fighter Group mission report noted enemy fighter attacks on the B-17 formations, and “The P-51s of the 332d as well as the 4<sup>th</sup> Squadron attacked these fighters.” In other words, members of the 52d Fighter Group witnessed enemy fighters attack the 5<sup>th</sup> Wing’s B-17 bombers and also 332d Fighter Group fighters engaging the enemy fighters.<sup>41</sup>

One might conclude from these documents that on 18 July 1944, the 332d Fighter Group was escorting the Fifth Bombardment Wing, including its 483d and 301<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Groups, both to and over its target of Memmingen airdrome, Germany, and that enemy fighters attacked the bombers and shot down sixteen of them, fifteen from the 483d and one from the 301<sup>st</sup>. Missing Air Crew Reports regarding the bombers of the 483d and 301<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Groups lost to enemy aircraft fire on 18 July 1944 confirm fifteen of the sixteen losses reported in the group narrative mission reports. The index of Missing Air Crew Reports (MACRs) for 18 July 1944 includes fourteen reports for B-17s lost from the 483d Bombardment Group. All the bombers were reported to have been shot down by enemy aircraft between 1045 and 1100 in the target area. An additional MACR mentions one B-17 lost from the 301<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group at 1104 at 47 degrees 54 minutes N and 10 degrees, 40 minutes E.<sup>42</sup>

German fighter pilots claimed to have shot down or at as many as thirty-eight B-17s southeast of Memmingen and Kempten between 1047 and 1055 on the morning of 18 July 1944.<sup>43</sup>

Reinforcing the conclusion that the 332d Fighter Group was escorting some of the B-17s shot down by enemy fighters that day are missing air crew reports 6973 and 7027. Those missing air crew report mention that on 18 July 1944 at 1045, enemy aircraft shot down two 301<sup>st</sup> Fighter Squadron aircraft of the 332d Fighter Group. One was flown by 2d Lt. Gene C. Browne, and the other by 2d Lt. Wellington G. Irving. According to witness reports of 2d Lt. Stanley L. Harris, who was also a member of the 301<sup>st</sup> Fighter Squadron, both airplanes were in combat with about 30 German FW-190 fighters in the Kempton area, around 47 43 N and 10 20 E, when they were shot down by enemy aircraft. This was the same time and place as the B-17 bomber losses that day.<sup>44</sup>

**Table V. Bombers lost to enemy aircraft assigned to 332d Fighter Group for escort, 5<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing, 18 July 1944, Mission to Memmingen, Germany.**

Group	Type and serial number	Time	Location	Missing Air Crew Report number
483	B-17G 42-107179	1045-1100	Vicinity of target	6856
483	B-17G 42-107008	1045-1100	Vicinity of target	6953
483	B-17G 42-102862	1045-1100	Vicinity of target	6954
483	B-17G 44-6174	1045-1100	Vicinity of target	6975
483	B-17G 42-97671	1045-1100	Vicinity of target	6976
483	B-17G 42-102382	1045-1100	Vicinity of target	6977
483	B-17G 42-107170	1045-1100	Vicinity of target	6978
483	B-17G 42-102923	1045-1100	Vicinity of target	6979
483	B-17G 42-102927	1045-1100	Vicinity of target	6980
483	B-17G 42-97584	1045-1100	Vicinity of target	6981
483	B-17G 42-46267	1045-1100	Vicinity of target	7097
483	B-17G 42-102422	1045-1100	Vicinity of target	7098
483	B-17G 44-6177	1045-1100	Vicinity of target	7099
483	B-17G 42-107172	1045-1100	Vicinity of target	7153
301	B-17G 42-102943	1104	47 54 N; 10 40 E	7310

## **July 20, 1944**

On July 20, 1944, the 332d Fighter Group was assigned the monumental task of escorting no less than three bombardment wings, each of which was composed of several bombardment groups, on penetration to their target at Friedrichshafen, Germany. The 332d Fighter Group narrative mission report number 30 for that day noted that there were “too many wings to cover adequately.”<sup>45</sup> According to the 306<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing’s operations order 140, dated 19 July 1944, the 332d Fighter Group was to escort the bombers after rendezvous with them at a point 45 degrees 10 minutes N latitude and 12 degrees 48 minutes E longitude at 0947 hours, and release the escort for fighter sweep after being relieved by three other fighter groups, the 31<sup>st</sup>, 52d, and 325<sup>th</sup>, northeast of the target. The other groups were assigned to rendezvous with the three bombardment wings at a point 47 degrees N latitude and 11 degrees 03 minutes E longitude at times ranging from 1035 to 1055 hours.<sup>46</sup> In other words, between 0947 and 1035 hours, and between 45 degrees 10 minutes N latitude and 47 degrees N latitude and between 12 degrees 48 minutes E and 11 degrees 03 minutes E longitude, the only escort for the 55<sup>th</sup>, 47<sup>th</sup>, and 304<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wings was provided by the 332d Fighter Group. According to the Fifteenth Air Force mission folder for 20 July 1944, the 485<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group belonged to the 55<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing, and so it was being escorted by the Tuskegee Airmen that day. The 485<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group mission report for 20 July 1944 noted the group lost two B-24s to enemy aircraft fire around 1000 hours at 45 degrees, 38 minutes N latitude and 12 degrees 28 minutes E longitude.<sup>47</sup> Missing Air Crew Reports 6914 and 6919 confirm these losses to enemy aircraft during the time and within the place the 332d Fighter Group was exclusively providing escort.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, German

documents show Luftwaffe fighter pilots claimed to have shot down two B-24s between 0955 and 0956 on the morning of 20 July 1944 over northeastern Italy.<sup>49</sup>

**Table VI. Bombers lost to enemy aircraft assigned to 332d Fighter Group for escort, 55<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing, 20 July 1944, Mission to Friedrichshafen, Germany.**

Group	Type and serial number	Time	Location	Missing Air Crew Report Number
485	B-24J 44-40886	1000	45 deg 38 min N 12 deg 28 min E	6914
485	B-24G 42-78361	0954	45 deg 38 min N 12 deg 28 min E	6919

### **August 24, 1944**

On August 24, 1944, the 332d Fighter Group provided penetration, target cover, and withdrawal escort for B-17s bombers of the 5<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing that raided Pardubice Airdrome in Czechoslovakia. One of the B-17s, serial number 42-31645, of the wing's 97<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group, was hit by flak in the target area at about 1246 hours, but the bomber formation was also attacked by enemy fighters, one of which hit the crippled bomber. According to Missing Air Crew Report 7971, a witness named Sgt. Doyle C. Davidson noted that he was flying in another bomber in the 97<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group when he noticed the bomber slowing down and dropping from the formation, although all four engines were still operating. He then saw an enemy aircraft attack the bomber. It is likely that the bomber was crippled by flak and then destroyed by an enemy aircraft after it dropped out of formation.<sup>50</sup>

**Table VII. Bomber Lost to Enemy Aircraft Assigned to 332d Fighter Group for Escort, 24 August 1944**

Group	Type and serial number	Time	Location	Missing Air Crew Report Number
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97	B-17G 42-31645	12:45-12:47	49 28 N – 15 25 E	7971
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### **March 24, 1945**

In some ways the March 24, 1945 mission of the Fifteenth Air Force to bomb Berlin was superlative. The Fifteenth Air Force had never reached so far before, and it had never attacked the German capital. For the mission, the Fifteenth Air Force sent the six bombardment groups of the 5<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing, which consisted of B-17s. To escort the bombers to, over, or from the target, the XV Fighter Command sent no less than five of its seven fighter groups, the 31<sup>st</sup>, 52d, 82d, 325<sup>th</sup>, and 332nd. The 332d Fighter Group rendezvoused with the bombers at 1145 hours, and remained with them to the “prudent limit of their endurance,” which was until about 1225.<sup>51</sup>

The 5<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing included the 2d, 97<sup>th</sup>, 99<sup>th</sup>, 301<sup>st</sup>, 463d, and 483d Bombardment Groups.<sup>52</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Group reported one bomber lost to enemy aircraft after attack by enemy ME-262s at 1215 hours.<sup>53</sup> The 463d Bombardment Group also reported one bomber lost to fighters after attack by enemy ME-262s.<sup>54</sup> The 483d Bombardment Group reported one bomber missing after it was attacked by two or three ME-262s at the target.<sup>55</sup> In other words, three of the six groups in the wing being escorted to Berlin on 24 March 1945 each reported losing a bomber after enemy aircraft attack that day.

The Fifteenth Air Force mission folder for 24 March 1945 contains a set of encounter reports from 332 Fighter Group members. Flight Officer Thurston L. Gaines, Jr. of the 99<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron reported: “On 24 March 1945, I was flying number four (4) position in yellow flight furnishing penetration cover for B-17s of the 5<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing. At approximately 1210 hours, we were escorting B-17s at an altitude of 27,000 feet about

thirty (30) miles southwest of the target, when three (3) ME-262s were seen diving on the bomber formation...The second jet made his attack in a glide and after firing a burst from his guns...Immediately after observing the puff of smoke from the jets, a B-17 was seen to do an abrupt high wing over to the right and started to spin in the same direction. The second ME-262 to make a pass at the bomber fired..." 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Richard S. Harder, also of the 332d Fighter Group's 99<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, reported that four ME-262s pressed their attack upon the bombers about 1215.<sup>56</sup>

Missing Air Crew Reports (MACRs) for the 2d, 463d, and 483d Bombardment Groups of the 5<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing that lost bombers on 24 March 1945 indicate which bombers were lost to enemy aircraft fire, enemy antiaircraft fire, and a combination of the two. All of them are supported by attached witness statements. MACR 13278 notes that the 463d Bombardment Group's B-17G serial number 44-6283 was shot down by enemy fighter aircraft at 1200, and MACR 13274 notes that the 463d Bombardment Group's B-17G serial number 44-6761 was also shot down by enemy fighter aircraft at 1208. MACR 13375 notes that the 483d Bombardment Group's B-17G serial number 44-8159 was shot down by enemy fighter aircraft at 1227. MACR 13374 notes that the 2d Bombardment Group's B-17 serial number 44-6718 was shot down by a combination of enemy fighter aircraft and enemy antiaircraft artillery between 1215 and 1230. MACR 13271 notes that the 463d Bombardment Group's B-17G serial number 44-6702 was shot down by a combination of enemy fighter aircraft and enemy antiaircraft artillery at 1150.<sup>57</sup>

Members of the 332d Fighter Group earned three aerial victory credits on 24 March 1945 by shooting down three Me-262 aircraft.<sup>58</sup> The opportunity arose because

the Me-262s emerged to attack the bomber formations the 332d Fighter Group was protecting. In other words, while the 332d Fighter Group was shooting down enemy German jet fighters, some of the German fighters were also shooting down American bombers.

**Table VIII. Bombers lost to enemy aircraft while under 332d Fighter Group escort, 5<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing, March 24, 1945, Mission to Berlin, Germany.**

Group	Type and serial number	Time	Location	Missing Air Crew Report number
463	B-17G 44-6283	1200	52 05 N 13 10 E	13278
463	B-17G 44-6761	1208	51 00 N 13 10 E	13274
483	B-17G 44-8159	1227	Berlin target area	13375

**Table IX. Bombers lost to a combination of enemy aircraft and enemy antiaircraft artillery while under 332d Fighter Group escort, 5<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing, March 24, 1945, Mission to Berlin, Germany.**

Group	Type and serial number	Time	Location	Missing Air Crew Report number
2	B-17G 44-6718	1215-1230	52 00-52 20 N 13 35 E	13374
463	B-17G 44-6702	1150	50 40 N 13 40 E	13271

For a summary of all the bombers shot down by enemy aircraft while those bombers were flying in groups the 332d Fighter Group was assigned to escort, please see the next page.

## Summary of Bombers Lost

**Table X. Bombers shot down by enemy aircraft while flying in groups the 332d  
Fighter Group was assigned to escort**

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	TYPE	SERIAL NUMBER	WG	GP	MISSING AIR CREW REPORT
9 June 1944	0905	46 40 N, 12 40 E	B-24	42-78219	304	459	6317
9 June 1944	0907	46 00 N, 12 40 E	B-24	42-52318	304	459	6179
13 June 1944	0900	Poroguardo, Italy	B-24	42-94741	49	484	6097
12 July 1944	1050	20 miles SE of Mirabeau, France	B-24	42-52723	49	461	6894
12 July 1944	1051	10 miles E of Mirabeau, France	B-24	42-78202	49	461	6895
12 July 1944	1105	43 43 N, 05 23 E	B-24	42-78291	49	461	7034
18 July 1944	1045-1100	near Memmingen	B-17	42-107179	5	483	6856
18 July 1944	1045-1100	near Memmingen	B-17	42-107008	5	483	6953
18 July 1944	1045-1100	near Memmingen	B-17	42-102862	5	483	6954
18 July 1944	1045-1100	near Memmingen	B-17	44-6174	5	483	6975
18 July 1944	1045-1100	near Memmingen	B-17	42-97671	5	483	6976
18 July 1944	1045-1100	near Memmingen	B-17	42-102382	5	483	6977
18 July 1944	1045-1100	near Memmingen	B-17	42-107170	5	483	6978
18 July 1944	1045-1100	near Memmingen	B-17	42-102923	5	483	6979
18 July 1944	1045-1100	near Memmingen	B-17	42-102927	5	483	6980
18 July 1944	1045-1100	near Memmingen	B-17	42-97584	5	483	6981
18 July 1944	1045-1100	near Memmingen	B-17	42-46267	5	483	7097
18 July 1944	1045-1100	near Memmingen	B-17	42-102422	5	483	7098
18 July 1944	1045-1100	near Memmingen	B-17	44-6177	5	483	7099
18 July 1944	1045-1100	near Memmingen	B-17	42-107172	5	483	7153
18 July 1944	1104	47 54 N, 10 40 E	B-17	42-102943	5	301	7310
20 Jul 1944	1000	45 38 N, 12 28 E	B-24	44-40886	55	485	6914
20 Jul 1944	0954	45 38 N, 12 28 E	B-24	42-78361	55	485	6919
24 Aug 1944	1245-1247	49 28 N, 15 25 E	B-17	42-31645	5	97	7971
24 Mar 1945	1200	52 05 N, 13 10 E	B-17	44-6283	5	463	13278
24 Mar 1945	1208	51 00 N, 13 10 E	B-17	44-6761	5	463	13274
24 Mar 1945	1227	Berlin target area	B-17	44-8159	5	483	13375

## **Conclusion.**

The 332d Fighter Group flew its 200<sup>th</sup> mission for the Fifteenth Air Force on February 28, 1945. The dates Tuskegee Airmen-escorted bombers were shot down by enemy aircraft were June 9 1944, June 13, 1944, July 12, 1944, July 18, 1944, July 20, 1944, August 24, 1944, and March 24, 1945. There might have been no losses of bombers under Tuskegee Airmen escort in the seven months between August 24, 1944 and March 24, 1945. It is possible that persons not familiar with the losses during the summer of 1944 might have been led to believe there had been no losses when the 332d Fighter Group flew its 200<sup>th</sup> mission on February 28, 1945, since there might have been no bombers lost while under 332d Fighter Group escort for more than six months in a row.

When the “never lost a bomber” statement about the Tuskegee Airmen first appeared in a newspaper article in the *Chicago Defender* on March 24, 1945, it noted that the 332d Fighter Group had flown 200 escort missions without having lost a bomber, but that statement was not true. Not only had the 332d Fighter Group escorted bombers that had been shot down by enemy aircraft, in the summer of 1944, but by March 24, 1945, less than 140 of the 200 missions the group flew for the Fifteenth Air Force had escorted bombers.<sup>59</sup>

The 332d Fighter Group flew a total of 311 missions for the Fifteenth Air Force. Only 179 of these were bomber escort missions. The other missions were fighter sweeps or strafing missions or missions in which the fighters escorted single reconnaissance or small numbers of cargo aircraft. Of the 179 bomber escort missions the 332d Fighter Group flew for the Fifteenth Air Force, 146 did not encounter any

enemy aircraft. Of the 33 bomber escort missions the 332d Fighter Group flew for the Fifteenth Air Force that encountered enemy aircraft, possibly seven were missions in which 332d Fighter Group-escorted bombers were shot down by enemy aircraft. The 332d Fighter Group flew at least 170 bomber escort missions for the Fifteenth Air Force without losing a bomber, but 146 of these missions encountered no enemy aircraft. The fact that so many missions did not encounter enemy aircraft is understandable in light of the fact that by June 1944, the month of the Normandy invasion, the Luftwaffe was only a shadow of its former self. The German Air Force was short on fuel and pilots, and was concentrating its dwindling resources against Allied armies advancing from the east and west and not the south, from which the Fifteenth Air Force was launching its fighter-escorted bombing raids.<sup>60</sup>

Might one say that the 332d Fighter Group flew 200 missions during World War II without losing a bomber to enemy aircraft because the 332d Fighter Group flew 311 missions for the Fifteenth Air Force during World War II, and possibly only 7 of those missions involved bombers lost to enemy aircraft? The 332d Fighter Group would have flown more than 300 missions for the Fifteenth Air Force without having lost a bomber. The statement “never lost a bomber in 200 missions” would still be misleading, because less than 200 of the missions the 332d Fighter Group flew for the Fifteenth Air Force escorted bombers. Moreover, all seven fighter groups of the Fifteenth Air Force could claim that they never lost a bomber on 200 missions, because they all flew more than 300 missions for the Fifteenth Air Force, and none of them flew 100 missions in which they lost bombers. A great many of the missions of each group did not even escort bombers, and most of the bomber escort missions did not encounter enemy aircraft. In truth, all

seven of the fighter groups of the Fifteenth Air Force flew more than 200 missions during World War II in which bombers were not shot down by enemy aircraft, but none of those fighter groups flew 200 or more *bomber escort* missions during World War II without losing a bomber to enemy aircraft.<sup>61</sup>

**Table XII: Mission Numbers of Fifteenth Air Force Fighter Groups, 26 April 1945<sup>62</sup>**

<b>Fifteenth Air Force Fighter Group</b>	<b>Type of Aircraft Flown</b>	<b>When assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force</b>	<b>Mission Number on Narrative Mission Report, 26 April 1945</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>P-38</b>	<b>November 1943</b>	<b>1402</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>P-38</b>	<b>November 1943</b>	<b>169 (since 1 Jan 1945; 251 in 1944, or 420 in 1944-1945)</b>
<b>31</b>	<b>P-51</b>	<b>April 1944</b>	<b>927</b>
<b>52</b>	<b>P-51</b>	<b>May 1944</b>	<b>348</b>
<b>82</b>	<b>P-38</b>	<b>November 1943</b>	<b>1131</b>
<b>325</b>	<b>P-51</b>	<b>December 1943</b>	<b>335</b>
<b>332</b>	<b>P-51</b>	<b>May 1944</b>	<b>310</b>

The World War II documents of Fifteenth Air Force organizations, coupled by the missing air crew reports, provide overwhelming evidence that sometimes bombers under the escort of the Tuskegee Airmen (332d Fighter Group) were shot down by enemy aircraft. What is not so clear is exactly how many bombers were lost.

Despite their best efforts, the Tuskegee Airmen could not always prevent enemy aircraft from shooting down the bombers they were protecting. Sometimes the number of bombers they had to cover and the number of enemy fighters that attacked the bombers were significantly greater than the number of escort fighters. The “never lost a bomber” statement is not accurate for any of the fighter groups, but the courage and valor of the Tuskegee Airmen is unquestionable, and their record remains exemplary. More important than the “never lost a bomber” claim is the fact that the Tuskegee Airmen

successfully fought two enemies, Nazi Germany and racism in the United States armed forces and in the United States. Members of the 332d Fighter Group proved by their combat performance that they were equal to, if not superior to, the members of the other fighter groups with which they bravely served during World War II. Their successful combat record contributed immeasurably to the ending of racial discrimination in the American armed forces, and, ultimately, American society at large.

On July 31, 2010, at the national convention of the Tuskegee Airmen Incorporated in San Antonio, Texas, the membership of the organization, which included many original Tuskegee Airmen, voted decisively to approve a statement that recognized that sometimes bombers under the escort of the 332d Fighter Group were shot down by enemy aircraft. In other words, the Tuskegee Airmen Incorporated expressed its opinion that the “never lost a bomber” claim is false. The vote was based on the research results of Mr. William Holton (who served as the Tuskegee Airmen Incorporated national historian from 1997-2007), the Harry A. Sheppard Historical Research Committee of the Tuskegee Airmen Incorporated (which was led by Lt. Col. William Holloman, an original Tuskegee Airmen, until he died in June 2010), and Dr. Daniel Haulman’s research at the Air Force Historical Research Agency.

Although the Tuskegee Airmen “never lost a bomber” myth might have been fatally wounded, it might take a very long time to die. It continues to appear in publications, videotapes, films, and museums. Whether the exhibits, publications, videotapes, and films containing the myth are ever corrected remains to be seen. But the truth is available for those who look.

Dr. Daniel L. Haulman  
3 December 2010

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- <sup>1</sup> Roi Ottley, "Dark Angels of Doom," *Liberty* (March 10, 1945), p. 13.
- <sup>2</sup> Daily narrative mission reports of the 332d Fighter Group, mission reports of the bombardment groups the 332d Fighter Group escorted, and missing air crew reports.
- <sup>3</sup> "332d Flies Its 200<sup>th</sup> Mission Without Loss," *Chicago Defender* (March 24, 1945), p. 2.
- <sup>4</sup> Daily narrative mission reports of the 332d Fighter Group, June 1944-April 1945, filed with the monthly histories of the 332d Fighter Group at the Air Force Historical Research Agency.
- <sup>5</sup> A copy of the press release is among the papers of General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., at the Garber facility of the National Air and Space Museum, a component of the Smithsonian Institution.
- <sup>6</sup> Charles E. Francis, *The Tuskegee Airmen: The Story of the Negro in the U.S. Air Force* (Boston: Bruce Humphries, Inc, 1955).
- <sup>7</sup> Interview of Lt. Gen. Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. by Dr. Alan Gropman, 3 February 1990, at Air Force Historical Research Agency, call number K239.0512-1922, p. 141.
- <sup>8</sup> Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., *Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., American* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp. 136-137.
- <sup>9</sup> IMDbPro website on the internet, subject, "The Tuskegee Airmen movie"  
(<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0114745/>).
- <sup>10</sup> Conversation of Daniel Haulman with William Holton at the 2007 national convention of the Tuskegee Airmen Incorporated in Grapevine, Texas.
- <sup>11</sup> William F. Holton, "332d Fighter Group in World War II: 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration," published by the author for the Tuskegee Airmen Incorporated, for which he served then as National Historian.
- <sup>12</sup> Conversations of Daniel Haulman with Mr. William Holloman, Mr. Joseph Caver, and Mr. Ronald Brewington, all of whom attended the 2004 national convention of the Tuskegee Airmen Incorporated in Omaha.
- <sup>13</sup> "109 Victories: The Aerial Victory Credits of the Tuskegee Airmen," by Daniel L. Haulman, presented at the 2006 meeting of the Society for Military History at Kansas State University.
- <sup>14</sup> Joseph Caver conversation with Daniel Haulman at Air Force Historical Research Agency, spring of 2006.
- <sup>15</sup> Alvin Benn, "Tuskegee Airmen's Record Disputed," *Montgomery Advertiser*, December 10, 2006, p. 1.
- <sup>16</sup> Fifteenth Air Force daily mission folders, summer and fall of 1944, AFHRA call number 670.332.
- <sup>17</sup> 332d Fighter Group narrative mission report number 3 dated 9 June 1944, AFHRA call number GP-332-HI, June 1944; Fifteenth Air Force mission folder for 9 June 1944, AFHRA call number 670.332, 9 June 1944.
- <sup>18</sup> Missing Air Crew Reports Index at AFHRA.
- <sup>19</sup> Missing Air Crew Reports numbered 6317 and 6179.
- <sup>20</sup> Fifteenth Air Force mission folder for 9 June 1944, AFHRA call number 670.332, 9 June 1944.
- <sup>21</sup> Fifteenth Air Force general order number 2972 dated 31 August 1944, AFHRA call number 670.193.
- <sup>22</sup> Fifteenth Air Force general order number 1473 dated 30 June 1974, AFHRA call number 670.193.
- <sup>23</sup> Oberkommando der Luftwaffe (O.K.L.) Fighter Claims, Chef fur Ausz. Und Diziplin, Luftwaffen-Personalamt L.P. [A] V Films & Supplementary Claims from Lists, Reich, West, & Sudfront, May-July 1944, Issue no. 1, from Tony Wood's Combat Claims and Casualty Lists:  
<http://www.lesbutler.ip3.co.uk/tony/tonywood.htm> accessed on 14 Mar 2007.
- <sup>24</sup> 332d Fighter Group narrative mission report number 5 dated 13 June 1944, AFHRA call number GP-332-HI, June 1944; Fifteenth Air Force mission folder for 13 June 1944, AFHRA call number 670.332, 13 June 1944.
- <sup>25</sup> Missing Air Crew Report number 6097; Fifteenth Air Force mission folder for 13 June 1944, AFHRA call number 670.332, 13 June 1944.
- <sup>26</sup> 332d Fighter Group narrative mission report number 23 dated 12 July 1944, AFHRA call number GP-332-HI, July 1944, and Fifteenth Air Force mission folder for 12 July 1944, AFHRA call number 670.332, 12 July 1944.

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- <sup>27</sup> 306<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing Operations Order 131, dated 11 July 1944, for 12 July 1944 mission, in Fifteenth Air Force mission folder for 12 July 1944, AFHRA call number 670.332, 12 July 1944.
- <sup>28</sup> 332d Fighter Group narrative mission report number 23 dated 12 July 1944, AFHRA call number GP-332-HI, July 1944, and Fifteenth Air Force mission folder for 12 July 1944, AFHRA call number 670.332, 12 July 1944.
- <sup>29</sup> Supplement to narrative mission report number 23 dated 12 July 1944, AFHRA call number GP-332-HI, July 1944.
- <sup>30</sup> 49<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing Intelligence Report for 12 July 1944, contained in the Fifteenth Air Force mission folder for 12 July 1944, AFHRA call number 670.332, 12 July 1944.
- <sup>31</sup> 461<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group mission report for 12 July 1944 and 49<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing Intelligence Report for 12 July 1944, both contained in the Fifteenth Air Force mission folder for 12 July 1944, AFHRA call number 670.332, 12 July 1944.
- <sup>32</sup> 461<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group history, July 1944, AFHRA call number GP-461-HI, July 1944.
- <sup>33</sup> Missing Air Crew Reports 6894, 6895, and 7034 and witness statements attached to them, on microfiche at the AFHRA.
- <sup>34</sup> O.K.L. Fighter Claims, Reich, West & Sudfront, May-July 1944, Issue no. 1
- <sup>35</sup> 332d Fighter Group Narrative Mission Report no. 28 dated 18 July 1944, contained in the 332d Fighter Group history for July 1944 (AFHRA call number GP-322-HI, July 1944), and in the Fifteenth Air Force Mission Folder for 18 July 1944 (AFHRA call number 670.332, 18 July 1944).
- <sup>36</sup> 332d Fighter Group history for July 1944, AFHRA call number GP-332-HI, July 1944.
- <sup>37</sup> Fifteenth Air Force general orders 2202, 2350, and 2484 for 1944, AFHRA call number 670.193.
- <sup>38</sup> Fifth Wing Operations Order number 628 dated 17 July 1944, for the 18 July 1944 mission, contained in the Fifteenth Air Force Mission Folder for 18 July 1944 (AFHRA call number 670.332, 18 July 1944).
- <sup>39</sup> 483d Bombardment Group Narrative Mission Report: Mission 18 July 1944, contained in Fifteenth Air Force Mission Folder for 18 July 1944 (AFHRA call number 670.332, 18 July 1944). A copy of the same report is contained in the July 1944 history of the 483d Bombardment Group (AFHRA call number GP-483-HI, July 1944).
- <sup>40</sup> 301<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group Special Narrative Report, 18 July 1944, contained in Fifteenth Air Force Mission Folder for 18 July 1944 (AFHRA call number 670.332, 18 July 1944).
- <sup>41</sup> 52d Fighter Group Narrative Mission Report no. 47 dated 18 July 1944, contained in Fifteenth Air Force Mission Folder for 18 July 1944 (AFHRA call number 670.332, 18 July 1944), and 52d Fighter Group History, July 1944 (AFHRA call number GP-52-HI, July 1944).
- <sup>42</sup> Index to Missing Air Crew Reports and Reports numbered 6977, 7098, 6954, 6979, 6980, 6981, 6976, 7097, 6978, 7153, 6856, 6953, 6975, 7099, and 7310, on microfiche at AFHRA.
- <sup>43</sup> O.K.L. Fighter Claims, Reich, West & Sudfront, May-July 1944, Issue no. 1.
- <sup>44</sup> Missing Air Crew Reports 6973 and 7027, each of which contains a witness statement from 2d Lt. Stanley L. Harris confirming 332 Fighter Group pilots lost in aerial combat that day.
- <sup>45</sup> 332d Fighter Group narrative mission report number 30 dated 20 July 1944, AFHRA call number GP-332-HI, July 1945.
- <sup>46</sup> 306 Fighter Wing operations order number 140 dated 19 July 1944, for mission of 20 July 1944, in Fifteenth Air Force mission folder for 20 July 1944, AFHRA call number 670.332, 20 July 1944.
- <sup>47</sup> Fifteenth Air Force mission folder for 20 July 1944, AFHRA call number 670.332, 20 July 1944.
- <sup>48</sup> Missing Air Crew reports 6914 and 6919 on microfiche at AFHRA.
- <sup>49</sup> O.K.L. Fighter Claims, Reich, West & Sudfront, May-July 1944, Issue no. 1.
- <sup>50</sup> 332d Fighter Group Narrative Mission Report number 61 dated 24 August 1944, contained in the August 1944 history of the 332d Fighter Group, Air Force Historical Research Agency, call number GP-332-HI, August 1944; Missing Air Crew Report Number 7971.
- <sup>51</sup> Fifteenth Air Force Missions Folder for 24 March 1945, AFHRA call number 670.332, 24 Mar 1945; 332d Fighter Group narrative mission report number 246, AFHRA call number GP-332-HI (FTR) Mar 1945.
- <sup>52</sup> Fifth Wing A-2 Section Daily Intelligence Report, 24 March 1945, contained in Fifteenth Air Force mission folder for 24 March 1945, AFHRA call number 670.332, 24 March 1945.
- <sup>53</sup> 2d Bombardment Group Mission Report for 24 March 1945, contained in Fifteenth Air Force mission folder for 24 March 1945, AFHRA call number 670.332, 24 March 1945.

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<sup>54</sup> 463d Bombardment Group Mission Report for 24 March 1945, contained in Fifteenth Air Force mission folder for 24 March 1945, AFHRA call number 670.332, 24 March 1945.

<sup>55</sup> 483d Bombardment Group Mission Report for 24 March 1945, contained in Fifteenth Air Force mission folder for 24 March 1945, AFHRA call number 670.332, 24 March 1945.

<sup>56</sup> 332d Fighter Group encounter reports for 24 March 1945, contained in Fifteenth Air Force mission folder for 24 March 1945, AFHRA call number 670.332, 24 March 1945.

<sup>57</sup> Missing Air Crew Reports numbered 13278, 13274, 13375, 13374, and 13271, on microfiche at AFHRA.

<sup>58</sup> Fifteenth Air Force general order number 2293 dated 12 April 1945, AFHRA call number 670.193).

<sup>59</sup> Daily narrative mission reports of the 332d Fighter Group, in the monthly histories of the group, between June 1944 and April 1945 inclusive, at the Air Force Historical Research Agency under the call number GP-332-HI.

<sup>60</sup> Daily narrative mission reports of the 332d Fighter Group, in the monthly histories of the group, between June 1944 and April 1945 inclusive, at the Air Force Historical Research Agency under the call number GP-332-HI.

<sup>61</sup> Fifteenth Air Force Mission Folders for 12 September 1944, 25 March 1945, and 26 April 1945, Air Force Historical Research Agency call number 670.332 for each of those dates. All of the mission numbers of the seven fighter groups on 26 April were well over 300 for all seven groups except the 14<sup>th</sup>, which was numbered 169. However, the 14<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group began counting from the number 1 again in early January 1945, and that group had already flown 251 missions by the end of 1944. By 26 April 1945, the 14<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group had flown 420 missions.

<sup>62</sup> Maurer Maurer, *Air Force Combat Units of World War II* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1983); Fifteenth Air Force Mission Folders, AFHRA Call Number 670.332, by date; 14<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group history, January 1945.