

HISTORICIMAGES



He was later awarded the Silver Star, as was 1st Lieutenant Allen S. Webb, who destroyed two aircraft on January 15.

On January 18, a flight of P-40s, escorting B-17s to the Shortland Islands, shot down two Zeros. During the fighting, a B-17 gunner accidentally hit Captain Stanley Palmer's P-40 and forced it down at sea within sight of an enemy base. A life raft and a canteen of water were dropped to him, and the next day a Navy PBY, with a P-38 and P-40 escort, was dispatched to rescue Palmer. During the pickup, the escort P-40 of 1st Lieutenant Joseph A. Lynch, Jr., experienced mechanical difficulties and was forced down. He was rescued with Palmer.

In another engagement, which occurred on January 20, 1943 during a mission to the Shortland Islands, three enemy planes were destroyed and two others were possibly destroyed. 1st Lieutenant Frederick F. Ploetz shot down one of these aircraft and was hit by an enemy shell, which left shrapnel in his shoulder. Despite the wound, he brought his plane safely back to Guadalcanal and later received the Distinguished Service Cross.

The first pilot to be killed in combat was 1st Lieutenant Ronald W. Hilken, who went down during an attack by enemy fighters north of Vella Lavella Island. Captain Robert B.

Hubbell and 1st Lieutenant Ralph H. Moseley were shot down on January 17, 1943 while intercepting enemy fighters during a Japanese bombing attack against Guadalcanal, and Lieutenant Jackson B. Lewis was shot down over the Shortland Islands on February 27.

The 68th continued operations from Guadalcanal until early in April 1943, when it was relieved by the 70th Fighter Squadron. Contingents of the 68th boarded three naval transports on April 6 and sailed to Lautoka Harbor, Viti Levu, Fiji Islands. Between April 1943 and January 1944, the 68th functioned as a training squadron for the 347th and 18th Fighter Groups of the 13th Air Force, but during that time, some pilots of the 68th served on detached service in the Solomons with other squadrons of the 13th Air Force.

The last 13th Air Force mission of World War II was flown by 68th pilots against Singapore on August 13, 1945. The squadron received the Navy Presidential Unit Citation, Distinguished Unit Citation, Netherlands East Indies, and Philippines Presidential Unit Citation, along with Honor Guard from the 110th Tactical Fighter Wing, Battle Creek Air National Guard, other ribbons, battle stars, and many individual citations and awards.

Submitted by Chester V. Novak



Honor Roll 1st Fighter Group 1941- APR 45

Revised 24 Aug 2008

Page compiled from:

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[1st Fighter Group WW2 - P-38 Missions In Action Research](#) Special Thanks to Tom Graham for all his Research

Special Thanks to Terence (nick Terry) Geary, aka Terry T. [AmvAarForces Forums](#)

MACR#	Date	Serial#	A/C Type	Pilot	Service #	Sqds	Group	AF	Status	Location/ Comments
	4 Apr 41	11-41	Douglas BT-2B, Trainer version of O-38	Endres, John G		179F	19F			From Bellevue, VA. Plane destroyed landing Seltbridge Field, MD
	11 Apr 41	18-111	Curtis P-36A	Porter, James L		849F	19F			Car 3 damage landing Seltbridge Field, MD
	10 May 41	18-111	Curtis P-36A	Taylor, James B		849F	19F			Forced landing fuel exhausted, Seltbridge Field, MD. Car 3 damage
	4 Jun 41	18-714	Republic VP-40 Lancer	Pratt, Bradley F		849F	19F			Car 2 damage landing Seltbridge Field, MD. Plane scrapped Mar 27, 1942
	14 Jun 41	18-711	Republic VP-40 Lancer	Vaughn, Harley C		849F	19F			Landing gear would not extend fully; pilot bailed out near Collins Airport, Alpena, MI
	19 Jun 41	18-420	Seversky P-31	Malmgren, Ronald M	0-418312	179F	19F			Home town: Suffolk County, NY. Forced landing engine failure. Pilot flew a P-38 on Bellevue England later DOW with 34578, 11910, 2 Dec 1941
	23 Jun 41	18-699	Lockheed VP-31 Lightning	Peterson, Guy L, Jr	0-408010	179F	19F		DOW	Crashed, Adams, MD, USA, Home town: Alameda, CA
	27 Jun 41	18-418	Seversky P-31	Vivian, Eugene M		179F	19F			Ground looped Car 3 damage, Seltbridge Field, MD
	1 Jul 41	18-714	Lockheed VP-31 Lightning	Caldwell, Robert M		179F	19F			Side off/accident, engine failure, Seltbridge Field, MD, USA
	14 Jul 41	18-398	Seversky P-31	Cooklin, John S	0-418274	179F	19F			Crashed on take off due to engine fire, 179F, 19F, Seltbridge Field, MD
	21 Jul 41	18-117	Lockheed C-40 USAAF version of Model 12 commercial version. Redesignated VC-41 as 1 1940	Caldwell, Robert M		179F	19F			Car 3 damage landing Seltbridge Field, MD