

RESTRICTED

HISTORY

OF THE

SANTA ROSA ARMY AIR FIELD

Santa Rosa, California

1 April 1944 to 31 December 1944

Prepared during the period 1 January 1945 to 15 April 1945 in compliance with AR 345-105, AAF Regulation 20-8, and Directives of the Fourth Air Force.

FORMER DESIGNATIONS

Santa Rosa Army Airdrome

PRESENT ASSIGNMENT

To Fourth Air Force

UNITS ASSIGNED OR ATTACHED

434th Army Air Forces Base Unit (CCTS-Ftr) (Assigned)  
Detachment, 68th Army Air Forces Base Unit (Weather Personnel)  
Detachment, 101st Army Airways Communications System Squadron  
738th Army Air Forces Band (Attached, 23 May 1944 to 30 November 1944)

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test card the instructor can transfix airspeed, manifold pressure gauge and tachometer.<sup>1</sup>

Each operations section has installed control mock-up boards which consist of propeller control, throttle, mixture and fuel selectors. This has been a great help to the flying instructors during their operating instruction lectures.<sup>2</sup>

For aerial gunnery missions flown from the field, six ranges, all located near the mouth of Russian River at Bodega Head, are available for use.<sup>3</sup> One of these ranges, designated as X-5, is utilized for overcast firing. Dive and skip bombing missions are accomplished at either the Tubbs Island or Drakes Bay range.<sup>4</sup> Ground gunnery and dive-bombing missions are accomplished at the Tubbs Island range. A ground strafing range is located at Bodega Head.<sup>5</sup>

#### Base Operations

Capt. Wilbur S. Hattendorf has performed the duties of Base Operations' Officer during the entire period covered by this installment of the history. Assisting Captain Hattendorf in the supervision of the section were 1st Lt. Carl T. Huneycutt from 1 April to 20 October 1944, and 2nd Lt. Robert P. Roberson from 20 October to 31 December 1944.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Interview with Capt. Judson Hallock, Supv. of Flying Tng., by Hist. C., SRAAF on 17 Jan. 1945.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Ibid.
  4. Ibid.
  5. Ibid.
  6. Historical Report from Base Operations Officer for period 1 Apr. 1944 - 30 Nov. 1944.

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at Navy Fighter was found just southeast of Ukiah.

In the crash near Pillsbury on 23 March, which resulted in the deaths of Captain Armstrong and Lieutenant James Woodridge, Civilian Air Patrol Officers, the Base Rescue Personnel received excellent cooperation and assistance from the Sheriff at Lakspport, the Forestry Service, the Fish and Game Department, and several other civilians. The assistance and cooperation rendered by the civilians in reaching and recovering the personnel involved in the crash was greatly appreciated.

GUNNERY

Gunnery Section is responsible for the coordination, standardization, and improvement of gunnery training for all trainee pilots in training at Santa Rosa Army Air Field. To accomplish its purpose the section has instituted several new ideas during the first three months of 1945:

- (1) Flight instructors have been sent to Air Force Gunnery Schools as often as possible;
- (2) Coordination between gunnery officers of each Section has been accomplished by weekly meetings for discussion and solution of pressing problems, expression of new ideas, and consideration and adoption of recommendations.
- (3) Two dive bomb targets were constructed at Tubbs Island Gunnery Range to facilitate accurate scoring of dive bombing.
- (4) A Sight-Burst Panel was erected at Bodega Head to aid in Assessment of Gun Camera film.
- (5) Visits to other installations for observation of methods and practice.
- (6) Provision of a copy of "434 Gunnery And Bombing Guide" for each trainee in training to be studied in conjunction with Ground School Classes.
- (7) A new system of marking targets to eliminate the confusion in determining the ownership of aerial targets after they were dropped.
- (8) An Standard Operating Procedure for Gunnery Training Aids.
- (9) Operational control over Gunnery Training Aids vested in the Staff Gunnery Officer.
- (10) A Chart recording the hits in per cent in the Gun-Air Instructor.
- (11) A new column on the film Assessment Chart showing the date film

Report of Base Operations to Hist.O., SRAAF, Mar 45.

2. Ibid.

3. Report of Dir. of Operations for Gunnery to Hist.O. Jan, Feb, Mar, 1945.

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was exposed.

- (12) A Standard Operating Procedure for handling the Film Magazines to eliminate keeping of magazines in the personnel lockers.

In January 1945, Sergeant Walsh of the Base Flight Armament Section designed and installed an ammunition booster, .50 cal. set-up, for the P-38 type aircraft. Tested under many conditions and found to give excellent service for the two top guns, this ammunition booster attracted the attention of Fourth Air Force.

During February, the class of trainees progressed rapidly in gunnery. Early in the month they reached an average of thirty to thirty-five flying hours in the P-38. This gave the Gunnery Section its signal to load the guns and determine the ability of the trainees with actual firing. They were eager to begin firing and there were good reports on their initial work. Six per cent of the trainees were found not yet ready for firing and these were given additional camera work until they reached the standards set by the section. At the end of February, the trainees had flown more than one thousand gun camera missions. They had fired 163,675 rounds of aerial gunnery and 34,494 rounds of ground gunnery; and they had dropped 1,397 dive bombs and 1,757 skip bombs.

In February, repairs were completed at Tubbs Island Ground Gunnery and Bombing Range, including sixteen hundred tons of sand placed around the gunnery targets to prevent ricocheting bullets. One skip bomb target and two dive bomb targets were constructed and the range houses renovated.

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1. Report of Director of Operations for Gunnery to Hist. O., Jan 1945.
  2. Ibid - February 1945.
  3. Ibid - February 1945.

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By the end of March the trainees had completed approximately three-<sup>1</sup> fourths of their gunnery and bombing training. The record follows:

Rounds Expended Aerial Gunnery	251031.
Per Cent Hits Aerial Gunnery	8.7 %
Rounds Expended Ground Gunnery	78762.
Per Cent Hits Ground Gunnery	14.91 %
Bombs Expended Dive Bombing	1960.
Per Cent Hits Dive Bombing	47.3 %
Bombs Expended Skip Bombing	2485.
Per Cent Hits Skip Bombing	54.0 %

CHEMICAL WARFARE

The ever present possibility of the use of chemicals in the war has kept the Chemical Warfare Section functioning at Santa Rosa Army Air Field. In January, the section conducted the first two weeks of the Ground Training Program in the Post Theatre, accomplishing 4780 man-hours of training in Chemical Agents, First Aid for Gas Casualties, Gas Mask Drill Demonstration with the light weight gas mask, Incendiary and Smoke Demonstration, and Review. At the completion of the training examination was given to 950 en-<sup>2</sup> listed men.

On 23 January 1945, Second Lieutenant Charles J. Pabis was assigned to the Base Chemical Section as Assistant Base Chemical Officer, being trans-<sup>3</sup>ferred from Army Air Base, Paine Field, Washington.

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1. Report of Director of Operations for Gunnery to Historical Officer, March 1945.
  2. Report of Base Chemical Officer to Historical Officer, 31 Jan 45.
  3. S. O. No. 18, Par. 6, Hq SRAAF, dtd 23 Jan 45.

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Eight enlisted men of the section took on-the-job training in Chemical Airplane Smoke Tank filling operations preparatory for work in spray missions to be flown by trainee pilots with airplane smoke tanks, M-10 filled with FS or CNB.

Sergeant Richard M. Wolfram, chemical warfare technician, joined the section from Army Air Base, Tonapah, Nevada, on 30 January 1945.<sup>1</sup>

During February, the section trained nine enlisted men - three from each squadron - as gas non-commissioned officers, each man completing the forty-four hour course and each being detailed as Gas Non-Commissioned Officers of their respective squadrons in accordance with Army Air Force Regulation 50-25.<sup>2</sup>

Major Thomas F. Pierce, Chemical Warfare Service, Assistant Chemical Officer from Headquarters Fourth Air Force, inspected the section in February and reported everything in satisfactory condition.<sup>3</sup>

In March the Base Chemical Office was moved from the General Supply Office into a separate office in Building T-722.

Sway Braces, in preparation for Chemical Spray Operations, were attached to the P-38 aircraft in Blue Section and Chemical Spray missions started on 13 March 1945. During March, trainee pilots completed their four hour Ground Training in Offensive Chemical Warfare.<sup>4</sup>

The gas chamber exercise required by Fourth Air Force Memorandum 50-2 was given to 1276 personnel in March.<sup>5</sup>

1. Report of Base Chemical Officer to Historical Officer, 31 Jan 45.
2. Ibid - February 1945.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid - March 1945.
5. Ibid.

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