



Fall 2021

P-51B SHILLELAGH FALL UPDATE

Wings of the North Air Museum's P-51B

by Chuck Cravens



AIRCORPS AVIATION



Kenneth Dahlberg with "Shillelagh" in the earlier, pre August 1944 paint scheme, courtesy of Jack Cook collection

WINGS of the NORTH



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The restoration of Shillelagh honors Ken Dahlberg and his wartime story, as well as David O'Hara, to whom the Mustang was assigned. But a restoration like this also honors the entire squadron the Mustang served in. It is interesting to not only follow the mission history of Shillelagh, but to also note how many different pilots flew this particular Mustang in combat.

Combat Missions

P-51B-10NA 42-106602 arrived in England on March 22, 1944, and was assigned to the 9th Air Force, 354th Fighter Group on April 13, 1944. The P-51B was designated as combat veteran David B. O'Hara of the 353rd Fighter Squadron's Mustang.

The 354th Fighter Group was known as the Pioneer Mustang Group because they were the first to fly P-51B Mustangs in combat, beginning with a mission on December 1, 1943.



David B. O'Hara receives the Distinguished Flying Cross. Photo courtesy of Jack Cook collection.



That first mission on December 1st, 1943, was also historic in that it was the very first combat mission for the Merlin-powered P-51. The mission was flown over the Pas De Calais area of France, and it was led by famed 4th Fighter Group pilot, RCAF and Eagle Squadron veteran, Col. Donald Blakeslee. The RAF entered combat with the Mustang Mark III (RAF nomenclature for the P-51B Mustang) on February 15, 1944, when 19 and 65 squadrons flew a similar sweep over the enemy-occupied Channel coast.

Just four months after that historic first mission in December, David O'Hara flew his new Mustang's initial combat mission on April 15, 1944. He named his new Mustang "Shillelagh" after a traditional Irish walking stick that is often used as a club or cudgel.

There have historically been many styles of stick which have been referred to as a Shillelagh. The earliest known reference dates back over a thousand years.. These sticks were a club that was used extensively for warfare and personal protection.



When the English established plantations in Ireland during the sixteenth and seventeen centuries the native Irish inhabitants were increasingly pushed back into the mountains. During this period the traditional short shillelagh club was outlawed by English penal codes.

The Irish responded by lengthening the shillelagh into a walking stick with a heavy end that could still be used as a club.

The shillelagh has deep rooted associations with Ireland, the fighting Irish, and Irish folklore.

The newly named and painted P-51B-10NA that David O'Hara flew that day is the subject of Wings of the North Air Museum's latest restoration.



P-51B-10NA 42-106602, Shillelagh (in several different spellings), was scheduled to fly 99 missions over its remarkable wartime career, four of which were aborted, (3 because of coolant issues, and 1 instance when it didn't take off for an unspecified problem).

In total, Shillelagh flew 95 missions over enemy territory in just 5 months of 1944, according to the 353rd Fighter Squadrons' official Combat Mission Schedule.¹ Broken down on a monthly basis, this warhorse flew 10 missions in April of 1944 (one aborted on April 25), 20 in May (2 aborted on May 2 and 8), 28 in June (1 aborted due to unspecified cause), 29 in July, and 12 in August before being shot down on August 16, 1944.

Flying 95 missions, and only aborting 4 of 99 scheduled under combat conditions, is an amazing record and a tribute to the ground crews of the 353rd Fighter Squadron.



P-51B-10NA 42-106602 nose art. Shillelaugh originally had nose art that represented a club behind the name, as shown in this profile drawing with the name spelled Shillelaugh. Over the night of June 5, 1944, 1944 full D-Day invasion stripes were applied. Profile illustration by Gaetan Marie

Shillelagh (or more properly Shilellaugh) wore this scheme from April through August 7th, 1944. It always carried squadron marking letters FT-P. The FT identified it as a 353rd Fighter Squadron fighter and the letter P was the individual plane identification.

¹ 354th Fighter Group Combat Mission Schedules Running from 1 April 1944 to 4 April 1945, From the National Military Archives Copied 2-27- 2006, courtesy of the Ken Dahlberg family



In August of 1944, the Mustang received a “freshening up” of the paint, The nose art name was now spelled Shillelagh, and the Shillelagh was painted as a spiked club. Profile illustration by Gaetan Marie

The specific date that Shillelagh received new paint and a different spelling of its name hasn’t been found recorded in official USAAF records. But examining the squadron’s combat schedule gives us clues to when this change most likely occurred.

From August 7 through August 10, there were 5 days when FT-P did not fly in combat, this period is the most probable time for Shillelagh to be sent to a repair depot for maintenance, and to have the upper invasion stripes removed from the wing and fuselage.

The original D-Day invasion stripes were clearly visible from the air and ground, and were intended to prevent friendly fire during the D-Day invasion. Two months after the invasion, the greatest remaining threat came from nervous Allied ground gunners, and from enemy fighters. The upper stripes also compromised camouflage when on the ground. Therefore, removal of the stripes on the upper surfaces was allowed by the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF). The upper stripes stood out when viewed from above, so they were removed to reduce the risk of enemy fighters spotting Allied planes and diving to attack from a position of altitude advantage. The lower stripes were retained so Allied ground gunners could easily recognize friendly planes. By August of 1944, most were gone.

By early August of 1944, 42-106602’s had completed 90 combat missions and needed a bit of refurbishment. Besides the maintenance and removal of the invasion stripes; the paint and nose art were refreshed with a change in the nose art from a club to a mace, along with change in the spelling of Shillelaugh to Shillelagh.



Pilots Who Flew Shillelagh into Combat:



Ken Dahlberg, 14 victories

The Shillelagh restoration is a tribute to Ken Dahlberg, who was shot down in this Mustang, and to David O'Hara, who was assigned 42-106602 as his personal P-51.

But it will also pay tribute to the 18 other pilots of the 353rd Fighter Squadron and the 354th Pioneer Mustang Group who flew Shillelagh into danger over Europe in 1944.

In all, the list includes twenty different pilots who climbed into Shillelagh and flew off on combat missions. Seven of those twenty pilots had attained ace status before the war ended, and four of them had double digit victory tallies.



353rd Fighter Squadron pilot board. This image can be more easily examined and selectively enlarged on the 354th Fighter Group website: http://www.354thpmfg.com/history_pt1_353rdfs.html, accessed 11-9-2021



Lt. Bruce Carr, 15 victories, USAF photo



Kenneth Dahlberg, 14 victories, photo American Air Museum in Britain, <https://www.americanairmuseum.com/person/239101>, accessed 12-11-2021



Carl M. Frantz 11 victories, photo The Hall of Valor Project website, <https://valor.militarytimes.com/hero/47037>



Loyd J. Overfield, 11 victories, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/59896625/loyd-james-overfield>



Capt. Felix M. Rogers, 7 victories, Squadron Leader, Aug 9, 1944 to Oct 6, 1944, photo 354th Fighter Group website: http://www.354thpmfg.com/history_pt2_353rdfs.html, accessed 11-9-2021



Charles W. Koenig, Flight leader 353rd FS, Dec. 1943 - Sept. 1944 6.5 air kills (3.5 ME-109 + 3 FW-190) photo American Air Museum in Britain, Jack Cook Collection, <http://www.americanairmuseum.com/person/240844>, accessed 11-9-2021



1st Lt. John Bakalar, photo American Air Museum in Britain, <http://www.americanairmuseum.com/person/240844>, accessed 11-9-2021



1st Lt Jim Keane 353rd FS, Courtesy Jack Cook Collection



Of course, the most frequent pilot was David O'Hara, since Shillelagh was assigned to him.

In descending order of the number of combat missions flown in Shillelagh, the pilots were as follows:

David B. O'Hara	49 missions
Bruce W. Carr	6 missions
Hayden H. Holton	6 missions
Phillip D. Cohen	4 missions
Richard H. Brown	4 missions
John E. Bakalar	4 missions
James P. Keane	3 missions
William B. Debow	2 missions
William T. Elrod	2 missions
Carl M. Frantz	2 missions
Theodore W. Sedvert	2 missions
Russel S. Brown	2 missions
Frederick B. Deeds	2 missions
Kenneth H. Dahlberg	2 missions
Felix M. Rogers	1 mission
Glenn H. Pipes	1 mission
(Unknown first name) Melton	1 mission
Ira J. Bunting	1 mission
Charles W. Koenig	1 mission
Loyd J. Overfield	1 mission

Combat mission reports of the 353rd Fighter Squadron, 354th Fighter Group provide us with listings of all missions that P-51B-10NA 42-106602 flew. Shillelagh was assigned to the 9th Air Force on April 13, 1944, and then to the 354th Fighter Group, 353rd Fighter Squadron. The P-51B was assigned to David O'Hara and, as noted earlier, he flew the first listed combat mission with the 353rd on April 15, 1944. The Squadron code assigned was FT-P. O'Hara's previous Mustang, also coded F-TP, and named Shillelaugh, had gone missing in action on April 11 while being flown by Lt. Ralph A. Brown. Brown survived, was captured, and spent 13 months in Stalag Luft 1, Barth.²

² American Air Museum in Britain. <http://www.americanairmuseum.com/person/174859>, Website accessed 9-21-2021



353rd Squadron missions formations were typically made up of between 4 and 16 fighters. The formations were divided into flights. Each flight (normally four fighters) of a squadron formation was assigned a color code.

These color codes indicate the position that the pilot was to fly within formation.

The 353rd's combat schedules frequently listed the flight color codes. In all that listed them, the colors were listed in the order red, white, blue, and green. It is an order that would be easy to remember for any USAAF pilot. So it is a reasonable assumption that the lists that did not write out the color code of each flight probably followed the same convention.

Making a list in the order that the American flag colors are normally named, and then adding green to make up the standard squadron maximum complement of 4 flights makes sense.

APRIL 1944

Mission Date/Base	Pilot	Position	Mission Type	Destination
4/15 - Boxted, England	O'Hara, David B.	White 3	Strafing	Northwestern Germany
Base Change				
4/19 - Lashenden, Eng.	O'Hara, David B.	Green 3	Dive Bombing	Namur (Belgium)
4/23 - Lashenden, Eng.	Dehon, William B.	Green 3	Dive Bombing	Namur
4/23 - Lashenden, Eng.	Cohen (Probably Phillip D.)	Blue 2	Fighter Sweep	Western Germany
4/24 - Lashenden, Eng.	O'Hara, David B.	Blue 3	Penetration Target Area & Withdrawal Support	Munich (returned escorting Cohen)
4/25 - Lashenden, Eng.	O'Hara, David B.	Red 3	Fighter Sweep	Central Germany, (abort B. tanks and coolant)
4/26 - Lashenden, Eng.	Elrod, William T.	Green 2	Penetration Target Area & Withdrawal Support	Brunswick (Braunschweig, Germany)
4/27 - Lashenden, Eng.	O'Hara, David B.	Blue 2	Dive Bombing	Charleroi (Belgium)
4/27 - Lashenden, Eng.	O'Hara, David B.	Blue 3	Dive Bombing	Amiens
4/30 - Lashenden, Eng.	O'Hara, David B.	Green 3	Penetration Target Area & Withdrawal Support	Lyons (flak damage)



MAY 1944

Mission Date/Base	Pilot	Position	Mission Type	Destination
5/1 - Lashenden, Eng.	O'Hara, David B.	Blue 2	Dive Bombing	Namur
5/2 - Lashenden, Eng.	Elrod, William T.	Red 2	Dive Bombing - 500 Lbs.	Gilze-Run (Gilze en Rijen, Netherlands)
5/2 - Lashenden, Eng.	Rogers, Felix M.	White Lead	Dive Bombing - Top Cover	Monceau-Sur Samore (Monceau Sur Sambre, Belgium)
5/4 - Lashenden, Eng.	Dehon, William B.	Green 4	Penetration Target Area & Withdrawal Support	Berlin
5/7 - Lashenden, Eng.	Cohen (Probably Phillip D.)	Blue 2	Escort & Target Support	Berlin
5/8 - Lashenden, Eng.	O'Hara, David B.	White 3	Escort	Berlin
5/10 - Lashenden, Eng.	Cohen (Probably Phillip D.)	Radio Relay	Dive Bombing	Mohon (France) abort- radio relay))
5/11 - Lashenden, Eng.	Pipes, Glenn H.	Spare	Escort Penetration & Withdrawal Support	Saarbrucken
5/19 - Lashenden, Eng.	O'Hara, David B.	Green 2	Withdrawal	Berlin
5/21 - Lashenden, Eng.	Elrod, William T.	Blue 2	Escort	Abbeville (France)
5/22 - Lashenden, Eng.	<u>Possible top cover, mission to Tours - illegible plane number Urquhart</u>			
5/23 - Lashenden, Eng.	O'Hara, David B.	Green 3	Escort, Target Support & Withdrawal	Bourges (France)
5/24 - Lashenden, Eng.	O'Hara, David B.	Blue 3	Long Range Escort	Mulhouse (Far Eastern France)
5/24 - Lashenden, Eng.	O'Hara, David B.	Blue 2	Penetration, Target & Withdrawal	Berlin
			Support	
5/25 - Lashenden, Eng.	O'Hara, David B.	Blue 3	Long Range Escort	Mulhouse (Far Eastern France)
5/26 - Lashenden, Eng.	Keane, James P.	Blue 2	Escort Medium Bombers	Chartres
5/27 - Lashenden, Eng.	O'Hara, David B.	Blue 3	Penetration, Target & Withdrawal Support	Konz Karthaur (Rhineland)
5/28 - Lashenden, Eng.	Carr, Bruce W.	Blue 2	Penetration, Target & Withdrawal Support	Magdeburg



5/29 - Lashenden, Eng.	Carr, Bruce W.	Red 2	Withdrawal Support	Leipzig
5/30 - Lashenden, Eng.	Carr, Bruce W.	Blue 4	Penetration, Target & Withdrawal Support	Rotenburg (abort - lost oxygen clip)
5/31 - Lashenden, Eng.	O'Hara, David B.	Spare	Penetration, Target & Withdrawal Support	Luxeuil (France)

June 1944

Mission Date/Base	Pilot	Position	Mission Type	Destination
6/3 - Lashenden, Eng.	O'Hara, David B.	Blue 3	Dive Bombing	Soissons-Laon (France)
6/4 - Lashenden, Eng.	Melton (First name unknown)	White 2	Beach Patrol	Bayeaux-Caan (France)
6/4 - Lashenden, Eng.	O'Hara, David B.	White 3	Fighter Sweep	East and North Beach (Normandy)
6/6 - Lashenden, Eng. (D-Day)	O'Hara, David B.	Red 3	Escort Troop Carriers	Normandy (France)
6/7 - Lashenden, Eng.	O'Hara, David B.	White 4	Escort	Normandy (France)
6/7 - Lashenden, Eng.	Carr, Bruce W.	Green 4	Dive Bombing	Ceranton (Probably Carentan)
6/12 - Lashenden, Eng.	Holton, Hayden H.	Blue 2	Dive Bombing	Rennes - Lavari
6/12 - Lashenden, Eng.	O'Hara, David B.	Green Lead	Dive Bombing	Lemans
6/13 - Lashenden, Eng.	O'Hara, David B.	Green 3	Dive Bombing	St. Lo - Avarancates
6/14 - Lashenden, Eng.	Frantz, Carl M.	Blue Lead	Dive Bombing	Laval
6/14 - Lashenden, Eng.	Keane, James P.	Red 3	Escort	St. Hilaire
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Command Change: 354th Fighter Group comes under control of XIX Tactical Air Command, a command and control organization intended to provide air support to Army ground forces, particularly Patton's 3rd Army. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Base Change - Air Echelon Moves to Cricqueville, Advanced Landing Ground A-2, 15-June-1944 				
6/16 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	Green Lead	Dive Bombing	St. Lo
6/17 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	Blue Lead	Dive Bombing	Cherbourg
6/17 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Brown, Richard H.	White 2	Dive Bombing	Bayeux



6/18 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Holten, Hayden H.	Red 4	Dive Bombing	Samur (Probably Saumur, France)
6/18 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Cohen (Probably Philip D.)	Blue 3	Dive Bombing	Arras
6/18 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Bakalar, John E.	Blue 2	Escort B-26s	Lens
6/20 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Sedvert, Theodore W.	Blue 2	Long Range Escort	Magdeburg
6/21 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	Blue 3	Escort	Berlin
6/22 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	White 3	Dive Bombing	Chartres
6/23 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	White Lead	Escort Dive Bombers	Lahloge (Probably La Loge, France)
6/24 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Carr, Bruce W.	Red 2	Fighter Sweep	St. Lo
6/25 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Bunting, Ira J.	White 4	Fighter Sweep	St. Lo
6/25 - Note: O'Hara flew a Dive Bomber escort of Tourlaville in FT-J				
6/25 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	Red Lead	Air Sea Rescue	English Channel near Le Havre
6/28 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Frantz, Carl M.	White Lead	Area Patrol	Bayeux - Le Havre - St. Lo
6/28 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Bakalar, John E.	Red 2	Area Patrol	Bayeux - Caen - Pointe de Barfleur
6/29 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Brown, Russel S.	White 2	Fighter Sweep	Granville - St. Hilaire - Domfront
6/29 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	White Lead	Beech Patrol	Picauville (on Cotentin Peninsula)

July 1944

Mission Date/Base	Pilot	Position	Mission Type	Destination
7/5 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Carr, Bruce W.	White 3	Beach Patrol	American Beach
7/7 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	Red 3	Escort C-47s	Local Area (Cricqueville A-2)
7/7 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Brown, Richard H.	Red 4	Fighter Sweep	Le Mans - Chartres - Pardreauxville



7/8 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Holton, Hayden H.	White 2	Beach Patrol	Normandy Beach
7/8 - Note: O'Hara flew FT-L this day 7/9 - Note: O'Hara flew FT-U this day				
7/10 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	White Lead	Beach Patrol	American Beach
7/11 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Sedvert, Theodore W.	White 4	Beach Patrol	American Beach
7/13 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	White Lead	Dive Bombing & Strafing	Tierce-Corne-Varades
7/14 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Holten, Hayden H.	White 2	Patrol	Area Patrol
7/15 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	Red 3	Area Patrol	Base of Cherbourg Peninsula
7/16 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Koenig, Charles W.	Red Lead	Escort for Medium Bombers	Drieux
7/17 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	White Lead	Beach Patrol	American Beach
7/17 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Keane, James P.	Red 3	Scramble	Chartres, Paris, & Rouen
7/18 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Brown, Richard H.	Red 3	Fighter Sweep	Drieux - Beauvois - Creil
7/18 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	Red 3	Fighter Sweep	Drieux
7/23 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	White Lead	Escort B-26s	Argentan
7/24 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	White Lead	Fighter Sweep	Alencon - Chartres
7/25 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	White Lead	Patrol	Front Lines
7/25 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	White Lead	Patrol	Granville - Falaise - Bernay - Beuzeville
7/25 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Bakalar, John E.	Blue 4	Patrol	Granville - Falaise
7/26 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	Blue Lead	Patrol	Granville - St. Lo
7/26 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	Green Lead	Patrol	Unnamed, probably also Granville- St. Lo
7/27 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	Red Lead	Patrol	American Beach
7/27 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	Red Lead	Patrol & Cover C-47s	American Beach
7/27 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	Blue Lead	Patrol	American Beach
7/29 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Brown, Richard H.	Red 4	Fighter Sweep - Area Cover	Salt Area
7/30 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Brown, Richard H.	White 2	Escort B-26s	Caumont



7/30 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Bakalar, John E.	White 2	Fighter Sweep	St. Lo Area & illegible
7/31 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	Green Lead	Patrol	Assault Area
7/31 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	Red Lead	Patrol	Assault Area

August 1944

Mission Date/Base	Pilot	Position	Mission Type	Destination
8/1 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Overfield, Loyd J.	Blue 2	Escort	Nogent - Sours - Lo - Loire
8/2 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Holton, Hayden H.	White 2	Escort P-47s	Targets of Opportunity, France Area
8/2 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Holton, Hayden H.	White 2	Escort B-26s	Caudebec
8/3 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	Red Lead	Patrol	Vire - St. Lo
8/3 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	Blue 3	Escort B-26s	Chartres
8/4 - Cricqueville, Fr.	Holton, Hayden H.	White 2	Fighter Sweep	NE of Paris
8/6 - Cricqueville, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	White Lead	Patrol	St. Lo - Vire
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8/6 through 8/13 - Note: 354th Fighter Group moves to a new base, Gael Advanced Landing Ground A-31 near Rennes. 8/9 - Note: Beerbower lost 8/7 through 8/10 - Note: 5 days when FT-P did not fly in combat. This is the most probable time for Shillelagh to be sent to a repair depot, and to have received its new paint scheme and removal of upper invasion stripes. 				
8/11 - Gael, Fr.	Deeds, Frederick B.	Red 3	Patrol	Brest
8/11 - Gael, Fr.	Deeds, Frederick B.	White 4	Patrol	Brest
8/14 - Gael, Fr.	O'Hara, David B.	White Lead	Fighter Sweep	Dreux - Chateaudun - Le Mans - Alencon
8/15 - Gael, Fr.	Dahlberg, Kenneth H.	White 4	Assault Area Cover	Argentan - Le Mans - Chateaudun - Laigle
8/16 - Gael, Fr.	Dahlberg, Kenneth H.	White 2	Patrol	Mantes - Etampes - Chateau Dun (MIA, mission #207)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8-16 - Note: O'Hara was flying FT-T on this date, mission 205 (also to Mantes - Etampes - Chateau Dun) Dahlberg escaped with help from the French landowners of the Chateau he landed on, and returned to combat on 8/25/1944, mission #215 O'Hara had a new Mustang with the FT-P squadron numbers by 9/8/1944 that he named "The Shillelagh". It was a new D model with a bubble canopy: P-51D-5-NA 44-13550. 				



On the last mission listed above on 8/16, O'Hara was flying FT-T mission 205, also to Mantes - Etampes - Chateau Dun. After crashing on the 16th, Dahlberg escaped with help from the French landowners of the Chateau he landed on. No official Escape & Evasion Report, German J Report, or Missing Air Crew Report was ever filed for Dahlberg, meaning that the pilot did report back within 48 hours of being shot down, and most likely being within territory that the Germans would not have undertaken salvage operations. Dahlberg returned to combat on 8/25/1944, mission #215.

After Dahlberg's crash, O'Hara had a new Mustang with the FT-P squadron numbers by 9/8/1944 that he named "The Shillelagh". It was a new D model with a bubble canopy: P-51D-5-NA 44-13550.

Shillelaugh Highlights

- The assigned pilot was 1st Lt David B O'Hara, O-744743. O'Hara flew a total of 84 combat missions from 20-December-1943 to 8-September-1944. 49 of these missions were flown in 42-106602, FT-P. During O'Hara's combat time he had a confirmed air to air victory on April 8, 1944.²
- 42-106602 flew its first combat mission on 15-April-1944.
- 42-106602 flew a total of 99 combat missions. During this time period, O'Hara flew a total of 56 combat missions of which 48 were in 42-106602, FT-P
- Recorded as missing in action 8-17-1944
- Removed from AAF inventory 9-15-1944³

Other notable events for Shillelaugh in 1944 include (in chronological order):

- 25-April: Encounter Report and Early Return with coolant problems
- 30-April: Battle Damage due to flak
- 2-May: Encounter Report (with another pilot) and Early Return due to rough engine
- 8-May: Early Return due to coolant problems
- 11-May: Encounter Report (with another pilot)
- 30-May: Encounter Report (with another pilot) and Early Return due to Oxygen troubles
- 6-June: Forced Landing at Stony Cross (Sta 254)
- 14-June: Encounter Report (with another pilot)
- 17-June: Encounter Report (with another pilot)
- 21-June: DNTD (Did Not Take Off, due to unknown mechanical problems)
- 25-July: Encounter Report with O'Hara for ground claims
- 1-August: Encounter Report (with another pilot)
- 16-August: Encounter Report (with another pilot) BOEVD Kenneth H Dahlberg/FRA
- 16 August: Lost (with Kenneth H Dahlberg)
- 17-August: Listed as MIA on the Individual Aircraft Record card

² USAF Historical Study No. 85, USAF Credits for the Destruction of Enemy Aircraft, Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center, Air University, 1978. Page 249

³ 42-106602 FT-P Compiled by Ted Damick



Shillelagh Restoration

The restoration of 42-106602 Shillelagh is in the early stages of visible assembly progress, but a great deal has been done in the area of original North American parts procurement, and fabrication of other parts before actual assembly can begin.

Tail Cone

One of the first major components to be assembled is the tail cone. The tail cone is one of the three main sections of a P-51 fuselage.



Theo organizes parts for the tail cone assembly.



The first fuselage formers are in place in the fixture.



The tail cone assembly begins to take shape in the fixture.



Horizontal Stabilizer

Another component that is one of the earlier assemblies in this restoration is the horizontal stabilizer.



Richard works on stabilizer skin.





After the painting was completed, the horizontal stabilizer had its skins riveted on.



Theo and Neil seem happy with the completed horizontal.



“Rosie the Riveter” Signatures

One of the fascinating parts of restoring a fighter built in the 1940s is that sometimes the factory workers signed parts they worked on. The horizontal stabilizer used in Shillelagh’s restoration is a good example of this. Upon disassembly, Richard found the grease pencil signatures of two women who worked at North American Aviation building the Mustangs that would play such a big part in winning WWII.

Their names were Tina Page and Rosemary O’Toole. Their signatures were found on one of the spars inside the horizontal stabilizer.



Upon inspection, these spars were not found to be airworthy, but the signatures will be faithfully duplicated on the replacements.