

BAGGING NAZI PLANES LIKE HITTING BASKET, SAYS EX-CAGE PLAYER

Of the 135 sorties over Axis targets in which he participated, Capt. John H. White, Kennett fighter ace and holder of two Distinguished Flying Crosses and the Air Medal with 18 clusters, commented, "I guess I was pretty lucky."

Captain White, with Mrs. White, is visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. Paul White of Kennett before reporting to Lowry Field, Col. for reassignment.

During the 16 months he was in Europe, his fighter group the first to enter every new theater of operations from Dieppe to Sicily, Captain White shot down five enemy aircraft, scored three probables and damaged four others.

The young captain, who used to play basket ball in school, described the sensation of shooting down an enemy plane as "just like shooting a goal from center when your team is one point behind and you've got just a minute to play."

Winning His First D. F. C.

His citation for action which won him his first D. F. C. reads: "For extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight in the European and North African theaters of operation as pilot of a Spitfire type aircraft. While patrolling over the Bay of Tunis on the morning of 21 April, 1943, Lieutenant White's flight of four Spitfires was attacked by 16 enemy aircraft. Displaying outstanding combat efficiency, Lieutenant White shot down one ME, damaged several FWs, and played a major part in dispersing the remainder of the enemy formation. His resourcefulness and gallantry on this and a great number of other combat missions have reflected great credit on himself and on the armed forces."

On the same afternoon, Lieutenant White observed 10 enemy aircraft at 10,000 feet preparing to attack a smaller number of friendly aircraft. He dived on the enemy fighters, shot down one FW 190, dispersed the entire enemy formation, and saved our planes from attack. He was awarded the second D. F. C., worn as the Oak Leaf Cluster to the first.

One day over Pantelleria, Captain White shot down two enemy planes within as many minutes. As he dived at one, seeing it break apart from his gun-fire, another dived at him. Wheeling, he fired at close range, downing the second.

Meets Many Notables.

Captain White was decorated, with 13 others from his group, by Lt. Gen. Carl Spaatz, commander of the Northwest Tactical Force, at his villa outside Tunis. Following the Dieppe raid, during which he spent 4 1-2 hours in the air and shot down his first Focke-Wolfe 190, he appeared on the March of Time radio broadcast with Maj. Gen. Ira C. Eaker, commander of the Eighth Air Force, in England, and other notables. Early in the North African cam-



CAPT. JOHN H. WHITE.

than well-established Italian aerodromes with permanent runways.

After further brief stations at Palermo and Termini, during which the unit covered the final battle in Sicily, Captain White left the squadron to return home, having participated in 85 more missions than most returning pilots.

Mrs. White, the former Miss Maude Shaver of Hardy, who was employed at the Arkansas Ordnance Plant here during Captain White's absence, will accompany him to his new station. She is the author of "She Saw A Battle," in the Gazette magazine last Sunday.

In Little Rock last week end, they visited two of Captain White's sisters, Mrs. Fred C. Raines and Miss Polly White, both of whom live at 218 West "H" street, Park Hill.

pilots who were "extremely helpful."

His squadron then moved to Gibraltar, where he served as one of a half-dozen test pilots for Spitfires the Allies were assembling in preparation for the North African invasion.

At 10 o'clock on the morning after Americans had landed in Africa, Captain White's squadron swept into an aerodrome at Oran which was still under enemy fire. After the first day, he said, there was practically no aerial combat, and his group carried on reconnaissance patrols most of the time.

Until the war in Africa was won, Captain White's unit was stationed at Algiers, where they lived in foxholes around an aerodrome which was continually bombed and strafed.

During the terrific aerial demolition of the island of Pantelleria, they escorted bombing missions and furnished target cover. "That means scouting around for something to shoot at," Captain White explained. "It was pretty fast and furious business for a while."

After a rest, the squadron moved to the island of Gozo, near Malta, where they lived in a comfortable apartment house.

Before aerodromes on Sicily could be secured, the squadron covered the invasion from Gozo, where landing boats gathered for several days preceding the jump-off. Ten days later, they were the first fighter group to move in, encountering little opposition. Their first aerodrome at Point Olivia was bombed every night, they were based on a field constructed by army Engineers, the best kind, Captain White said, because it furnished more camouflage for the plane