



Down for Double: Anecdotes of a Fighter Pilot

Gordon M. Graham

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Lieutenant General Gordon M. Graham was commander of the Sixth Allied Tactical Air Force with headquarters at Izmir, Turkey. As commander he was responsible for NATO air forces from the United States, Greece and Turkey and carries out a threefold mission of support for the Allied counterair campaign, provision of air defense for the Southeastern NATO Region, and conduct of tactical air operations in support of ground forces in the SIXATAF area of responsibility. General Graham was born in Ouray, Colorado, in 1918. He attended Taft High School in Taft, Calif. and graduated from the University of California in 1940 with a bachelor of science degree in petroleum engineering. He began his military career in December 1940 as an aviation cadet and was commissioned as Second Lieutenant and received his pilot wings upon completion of flying school in August 1941. After a series of assignments as gunnery instructor and instructor pilot at various bases, General Graham joined the 355th Fighter Group in the Eighth Air Force in Europe in August 1944. He commanded the 354th Fighter Squadron from October 1944 until June 1945 when he was transferred to the 361st Fighter Group to command the 374th Fighter Squadron. He assumed command of the 361st Fighter Group in August 1945. By the end of World War II in Europe, General Graham had flown 73 combat missions in P-51 Mustang fighter aircraft and had become a triple ace with 16 1/2 enemy airplanes to his credit. In addition, he had one probable and 10 damaged. He was assistant chief of staff for operations, VIII Fighter Command, from October 1945 until February 1946. He was a legend in his own time.



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