

First Full American Squadron Sets Down on French Airstrip

By Bud Hutton

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AN AIRFIELD IN FRANCE, June 14 (delayed)—The first full squadron of American fighter planes set down on this newly-built airstrip at 8.15 last night, after a combat mission, refueled and flew back to home base in England. Use of the strip, which had been carved out of the Norman fields by air-force engineers under fire, made possible the tactical doubling of the fighters' range—which almost automatically shoves the line of Allied aerial mastery even deeper into the Continent.

First man down in his P47 Thunderbolt was Capt. Richard E. Leary, of Annapolis, Md., operations officer for the group commanded by Col. Gilbert Meyers, and as his wheels kicked up the dust of the strip it marked the first planned use of airstrips onto which Allied war-planes have been landing for emergency refueling and rearming the last four days.

From now on it will be a question of moving fighter units onto newly built strips as fast as the engineers can skin turf and trees from the French fields, level them and put down the long rolls of wire mesh netting.