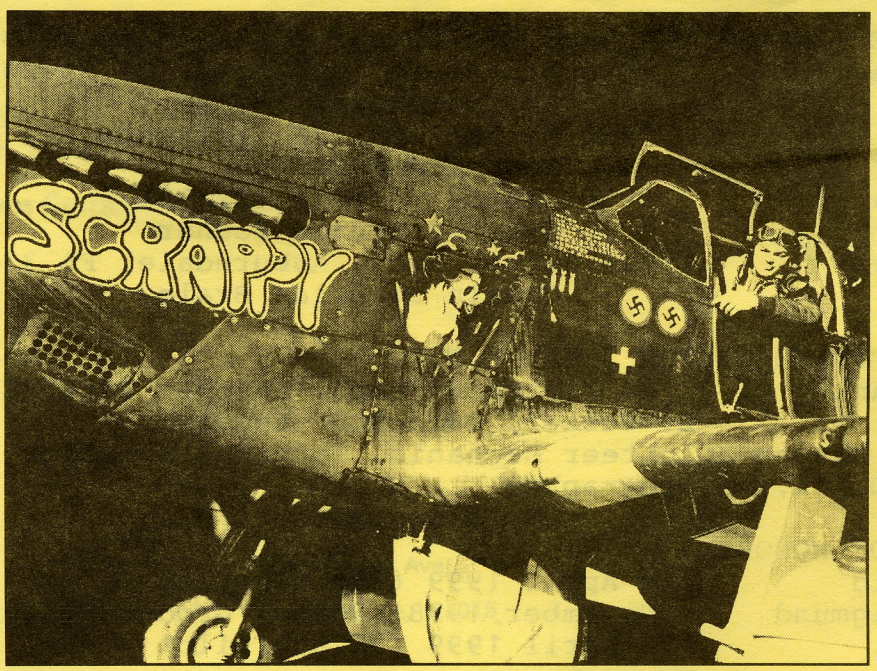
SWEET LIBERTY
By Richard Hess (Neighbor of Pete Laboranti)

From the thundering wild blue yonder
To storming Normandy
From wet, cold and hungry
To sweltering humidity
This gift that some take lightly
Of freedom every day,
Was granted by the courageous price
Our Veterans had to pay!

They risked their lives
And many died
To protect this life we love
Where a man can believe
What he wants to believe
And worship his God above
A place where our kids
Can grow up free to do so many things
A country where in this world of strife
Sweet liberty still rings,
So to these special heroes
Who the world owes such a debt
I just want to say God bless you
And that we should never forget!



Alvin F. Pyeatt III and "Scrappy"

It was the War Medals of the above 362nd F.S. Pilot Alvin F. Pyeatt that Merle Olmsted rescued from the collectors market. See article in Newsletter Issue #63, page 2 titled "A Name From the Past". As time passes, one wonders what might be the story of ones own medals? Small families do fade away with no kin folks left to care for the treasurers.

Mormon Mustang Flies Again



Taken from The Daily Herald
Written by Ann Potempa

Photo - L to R
Gene Mallette and Roland Wright

More than 50 years ago, Roland Wright flew his P-51 "Mormon Mustang" over Europe during World War II. Today, Gene Mallette flies his replica of the "Mormon Mustang" over Provo, Utah. Mallette says his airplane is one of about 120 of the original 15,500 P-51's that remain today. The "Mormon Mustang" rests in a hangar at the Provo City Airport. Mallette, the Chief Executive Officer of Alpine Air, lets his more than 50 year old plane dust off its wings now and again. He shares his Mustang with the community and even invites some lucky passengers to sit in the back seat while the strategic fighter airplane soars across Utah County skies.

Faith in flight, Wright of Salt Lake City christened the "Mormon Mustang" in 1944. Wright says he was an LDS missionary in Oregon when the bombing of Pearl Harbor took place in 1941. "I badly wanted to be a fighter pilot" he says. After his mission, Wright took flight training. At that time, the P-51 Mustang was under development. Wright says he told himself that if he became a fighter pilot, his P-51 would be called the 'Mormon Mustang". "I was proud of my heritage, and I wanted people to know I was" Wright says. Wright eventually joined the 357th Fighter Group and flew three P-51's, all called the "Mormon Mustang". Wright, now 79 was in his early 20's when he flew during World War II.

Wright says the P-51 made the difference in World War II. The airplane which has reached speeds in excess of 500 mph, was used to escort and protect the bombers during the war. "It was the jewel of WW II and was noted to be the best fighter we had in the war". When the war ended, Wright was sent to Germany for Occupational duty. At that time, many of the P-51's were scrapped. The newer jets could fly faster than the P-51 making the propeller driven planes outdated. "It broke my heart to leave that airplane" Wright says.

REPAIRING THE MUSTANG:

Mallette owns one of the few P-1's that weren't destroyed after the war. After the war, Mallette says nobody wanted the now obsolete airplanes. Decades later, however, the attitude changed. Now Mustangs are collectors items that can cost more than $1 million each. Mallette bought his airplane last year from an estate sale. The former owner lived in Blackfoot, Idaho, Roland Wright's home town. The owner had painted the plane in military colors that commemorated Wright's "Mormon Mustang". When Mallette bought the airplane, he kept the tradition going. Mallette hired someone to restore his airplane so that it looked like Wright's fighter plane. Unlike the original "Mormon Mustang", Mallette and his new P-51 had never seen combat before. "It needed a lot of TLC" Mallette says. Restoration required duct work, seat and cockpit repair, new layers of paint and more. "It actually looks a lot nicer than it did in 1944" Mallette says. Mallette says he left the 1940's technology in place. There's nothing close to a computer chip in his airplane.

Mallette has had a pilot's license since 1975. Learning how to fly a Mustang took additional training. Mallette traveled to Florida to take P-51 flying lessons. "It takes your full attention" he says. "It's a tail-dragger and they have unusual take-off and landing characteristics".

SHARING HISTORY:

Unlike many P-51 pilots, Mallette is able to show passengers what it's like to fly in a World War II vintage airplane. Traditionally, Mustangs were built with only one seat. Behind the pilot's seat, was a radio with tubes and a spare 85 gallon gasoline tank. Mallette has removed these parts and added a back seat. He says he is not a commercial pilot so he cannot charge people for flights in his P-51. Instead he rewards people for good deeds. Mallette's company, Alpine Air is a commuter and cargo airline service. Employees of the Month at Alpine Air win a ride in the back seat of the "Mormon Mustang".

"It's a beautiful plane. It's just everybody's dream of an airplane" says Linda Anderson, chief pilot and former Emloyee of the Month. "You can really cover a great distance in that plane in half an hour" she says. Mallette says he would also be tempted to give anyone a ride who donates $1000 to the Boys and Girls Club of Utah County. Wright who hasn't flown a P-51 for many years, says he would like to fly in a Mustang again. He says that Mallette continues to retell War History when the plane takes to the sky. Wright says "This is one of the great stories of World War II". Keep the story alive!

LATEST CHANGES

ADDRESS CHANGE:

Dietz, Robert ---- 110 E. Benjamin, Apt 4, Norfolk, NE 68701-2957

LOSS OF CO-PILOT:

Helen Britton, wife of John Britton ----- 29 June 1998

NEW LIFE MEMBER:

#207 Vincent E. Buening

THE GREAT FIGHTER VICTORY RACE

By Barrett Tillman

How many times has an ace asked which was the top-scoring American fighter of WW II—and therefore of all time? Probably as many as bogies over Schweinfurt in October '43. So, with nothing much else to do, I resolved to answer the question once and for now, anyway. Retiring to the AFAA office with Frank Olynyk's series, I commenced to chase electrons around the circuits of my handy-dandy calculator and emerged with the following:

Much to nobody's surprise, it was the Mustang. And though its total of 5,942 shootdowns includes contributions by A-36s (a tip of the hat to Mike Russo) and F-6 recon birds (an attaboy to Clyde East), the margin was enough to dispel any doubt. In fact, the '51 family bagged nearly half of all USAAF fighter victories against the western Axis.

Placing second with 5,164 (including eight in the Med) was our champion ace-maker, the Hellcat. So complete was its dominance that the F6F narrowly outscored all AAF/AVG fighters against Japan (5,156-5,155), including the CBI theater where no Golden Wingers appeared.

Third place was also a squeaker: 3,685 for Lightings to 3,661 for Thunderbolts. Fifth went to the warhorse P-40, with 2,271 credits (including the AVG), while accounting for 65% of the CBI tally. Meanwhile, the late-starting F4U nearly closed the gap with 2,140. A first-to-last warrior, the F4F/FM Wildcat, ended with 1,034, including a surprising 28 in Morocco and Europe. (Ask Marv Franger, Hal Vita and Diz Laird about that.)

American-owned Spitfires bagged 379 planes while P-39s tallied 271 in the Pacific, Med and ETO. (Airacobras split the first U.S. kills in-theater with Iceland-based P-38s, believe it or not.)

But let's not forget the night-fighters. Black Widows scored 72 victories in the ETO, MTO and CBI, while American-flown Beaufighters notched 31 against Germany.

The following tabulation omits five types that each scored fewer than ten kills: P-35, -36, -43, -70 (night-fighter A-20) and Marine Corps F2A. The grand total (including these types) for credited U.S. air-air fighter victories in WW II therefore is some 24,665. Taking a ballpark estimate of 1,250 aces in American service during the war, and factoring in the median seven victories per ace, our aces got roughly 8,750, or 35% of the total.

Regardless of what plane(s) you flew, that's a record anybody can wear with pride.

Air - To - Air
Major U.S. Fighter Scores, WW2

(omits types w/fewer than 10 confirmed)

	ETO	MTO	PTO	CBI	TOTAL
P-51*	4,238	1,063	296	345	5,942
F6F	—	8	5,156	—	5,164
P-38	497	1,331	1,700	157	3,685
P-47	2,685	263	697	16	3,661
P40	—	592	706	973	2,271
F4U	—	—	2,140	—	2,140
F4F/FM	2	26	1,006	—	1,034
SPITFIRE	15	364	—	—	379
P-39	3	25	243	—	271
P-61	59	—	8	5	72
Beaufighter	6	25	—	—	31

*includes A-36 & F-6

	V. Ger.	V.Japan	TOTAL
USAAF	11,132	5,151	16,283
USN/MC	36	8,302	8,338
	11,168	13,453	24,621

Please Credit: American Fighter Aces Assn Olmsted

John Lewelling (363rd F.S.) coming down from the top of a Leiston Airfield Blister Hangar after taking a photo of a mission departure in 1944.

Olmsted



THE FINAL AUDIT

CASUALTIES

	MILITARY KILLED	MILITARY WOUNDED	CIVILIAN DEATHS
UK	264,443	277,077	92,673
USA	292,131	671,801	6,000
RUSSIA	11,000,000	—	7,000,000
GERMANY	3,500,000	5,000,000	2,300,000
JAPAN	1,300,000	4,000,000	672,000

COST OF WAR (£s)

UK	12,446,571,000
USA	62,560,537,000
RUSSIA	23,253,196,000
GERMANY	53,084,000,000
JAPAN	10,317,965,000

FORCE	MEN (under arms)	AIRCRAFT (military prod.)
UK	4,683,000	131,549
USA	16,353,659	303,713
RUSSIA	20,000,000	158,218
GERMANY	10,000,000	119,871
JAPAN	7,000,000	76,320

FORCE	TANKS (built)	SHIPS (lost)
UK	23,202	2,831
USA	60,973	19,034
RUSSIA	54,500	—
GERMANY	19,926	1,069
JAPAN	2,464	686

The Daily Mail 20 March '95

Abort. The failure of an aircraft to complete its combat mission for some non-combat reason. It might be a mechanical malfunction or damage of some kind, or yes, even a psychological reason (fear).

I suppose fear could have been the reason for a few isolated cases. But, as an ex-combat fighter pilot, I prefer to believe there were very good reasons for the vast majority of aborts by our fighting men.

ABORT! A

During my combat tour of flying the Mustang over Germany, my records show that I had six aborts. I guess that's a lot compared to the very few pilots that may not have had any, but I remember the reasons for them very well.

There was a rather unusual cause for one of them. The Mustang was a truly great fighter plane. But when it was armed with six five-loaded .50-caliber Browning machine guns and carrying a full load of fuel, which included the 85-gallon tank behind the pilot and two 108-gallon drop tanks under the wings, even the most ardent fan piloting the P-51 would have to admit that it became a loud flying airplane.

The drop tanks could be salvoed at any time (usually) so they posed no particular problem during a flight. The heavy load of fuel behind the pilot was another matter entirely, however. The detrimental effect it had on the flying qualities of the Mustang made it imperative to get rid of that offensive load as soon as possible. As a result it was standard practice to switch to the fuselage tank soon after takeoff. Using the fuselage tank for takeoff was not recommended.

The two main tanks were the only ones with fuel gauges so there was no need to monitor the gauges until either of those tanks were put to use. They were always the last tanks used.

As this particular mission progressed, I emptied the fuselage tank first then the drop tanks. As I started to switch to the right main tank,



I glanced at its gauge and was shocked to find that it was empty!

This left me one tank shy of having enough fuel to complete the very long mission we were on. The exact cause of the fuel loss was not ever pin-pointed to my knowledge. I had taken a *flak* hit in that tank but they were supposed to be self sealing. My crew chief Ray Smith said it was possible a poor seal of the cap could have allowed the fuel to siphon out. No matter. Whatever the cause, the fuel was gone and the result was another abort. It was a shame to tag me with an abort, however, as I had already been over enemy territory much longer than many of our shorter missions. But, that's the way the ball bounces.

I admit to not being a world-class instrument pilot in those days. Whenever it became necessary to fly on instruments, which was agonizingly frequent, I would rivet my eyes on the old "needle, ball, airspeed" to the exclusion of all else. As a result, any scanning of the engine-related instruments was put off until breaking out on top of the almost inevitable overcast. Not a great practice as the following will show.

After climbing up through 8000 feet of overcast on one mission, I quickly scanned the engine instruments as usual. Everything was fine except the oil temperature needle had apparently broken and was crossing swords, so to speak, with the fuel pressure needle!

But, was it broken? Close scrutiny revealed a slow but steady movement of the needle, an indication that I possessed some very hot oil, and not a broken gauge. A quick split-ess followed by a dive through the overcast back to base placed an "abort" after that mission entry. An inspection by Ray Smith found that a burned-out oil cooler shutter motor had left the shutter completely closed.

A similar gremlin caused one other abort. As I climbed to altitude on that day, I noticed a very subtle roughness creeping into the normally smooth running engine. A check of the engine instruments showed a lower than usual coolant temperature even though the shutter switch was in the automatic position. Since the problem was not life threatening, I stuck with it until we reached cruising altitude where the engine roughness became intolerable. No adjustment, manual or otherwise, would cure the problem so I headed for home. This time the coolant shutter motor had burned out when the coolant shutters were in the wide open position. This caused the engine to run very rough in the bitter cold of altitude.

A fourth abort came very early on another mission. Just when I was getting ready to take off, a somewhat

BORT!

AN ALMOST SINFUL WORD FROM WORLD WAR TWO

BY HARVEY MACE



Parked on the hardstand, the author's P-51D-5-NA Mustang was named *Sweet Helen II* after his wife. Note the Olive Drab and Neutral Gray camouflage (applied in England), D-Day invasion stripes, and extra-long range "paper" drop tanks.

inattentive pilot behind me chewed most of my rudder away. That seemed like a fairly good reason not to proceed with the mission. Chalk up one more abort.

Early in the combat life of the Mustang, poor spark plugs caused an almost epidemic of rough-running engines. Almost everybody had to abort at one time or another. There had been as many as 15 fighters aborting on one mission. This problem caused my other two aborts. OK, call me a sissy for those two, but I don't think anyone should be expected to start on a combat mission with less than a great running engine.

However, I always did my best to carry on with the job at hand. On one mission I switched to the drop tanks only to have the engine quit. I tried again and again but the tanks would not feed and the engine quit every time. It was certainly good reason to turn back but I persisted until finally, on the 13th try, the fuel got through and I was able to complete the mission.

On rare occasions an abort by other people would put me in an uncomfortable situation. Late in my tour I was booted up — to Operations Officer which required me to lead the squadron whenever the CO stood down. As a result I found myself leading the squadron on a very complex mission one day. That was OK, all I had to do was follow the Group Leader. But soon after takeoff the Group Leader had to abort. Not long after his departure, the second in command had to abort. Like I say, just about everybody had to abort at one time or another. After a quick consultation with the other two squadron leaders over the RT, I became the victim of a two-to-one vote to take over as the group leader.

It was an experimental mission deep in Germany. The plan called for us to reach the target ahead of the bombers and sweep the area around the target of any enemy fighters before the bombers got there.

With this plan the luxury of being able to merely follow the bombers for most of the mission was not going to be available. Also, sweeping the area around the target was going to require flying many short courses radiating out and back from the target — all of this over a solid undercast with no land marks to be seen anywhere! Great, here I was a 23-year-old punk, not that long out of J-2 Cubs, and I had to lead the whole 357th Fighter Group on a complicated mission with nothing more to lean on but dead reckoning over a seemingly endless number of course changes. My last course was supposed to have me reach the target at exactly the same time as the bombers — it promised to be a long day.

"CLOSE SCRUTINY REVEALED A SLOW BUT STEADY MOVEMENT OF THE NEEDLE, AN INDICATION THAT I POSSESSED SOME VERY HOT OIL, AND NOT A BROKEN GAUGE"

Fortunately for me the mission went off just as planned, and I breathed a huge sigh of relief as I saw the bombers approaching the target just as we did. The abundance of *flak* aimed at our fighters and bombers left no doubt our striking force had reached the target area. As we headed for home I breathed an even bigger sigh of relief as our home base appeared through the mist at the end of the mission.

The above photo on the opposite page was given to Historian Merle Olmsted in March of 1999 by Jim Foy, the son of Bob Foy. On this occasion, Jim became a 357th Fighter Group Associate Member.

Photo was taken in 1948 as Bob Foy was a member of the 195th California Air National Guard. Men left to right:
Larry Powell, Lyle Advance, Bob Foy in the cockpit.


S/SGT.
PROJ. NO.
GUARD

EXPENDABLE AIRCRAFT

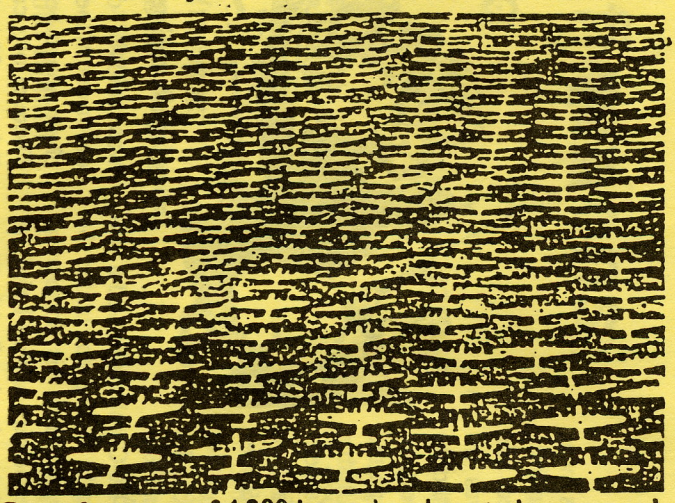
Today the sophistication of aircraft is what counts and their numbers are relatively few, with our inventory of only 100 B-1 and only 20 B-2 bombers. By contrast, we built more than 35,000 4-engined heavy bombers to fight WW II. All sides built some 789,673 aircraft for WW II! The U.S. built 303,713, most of them between 1940 and 1945. U.S. production peaked at 96,318 planes in 1944. That's 264 planes per day! The partial list below accounts for almost a quarter of a million of those. Russia built 158,220, Britain 131,549, Germany 119,871, and Japan 76,320.

WW II was a time of close combat where you saw who you were shooting at and much skill was required to do it. Now we use missiles that kill at such a distance the target is not even in sight and is acquired by automated electronic systems. We use "smart bombs" in "surgical strikes" which were dreamed of but never achieved in WW II because the gravity bombs and Norden bomb sight didn't have the accuracy. We put as many as 1,500 heavy bombers in the air at one time for a single raid, and often suffered losses of more than 10% of the aircraft we sent out. It was jokingly said that our planes created an "aluminum overcast" from having so many in the air at once. The U.S. lost 59,296 aircraft in WW II combat, Britain 33,090, Germany 95,000, and Japan 49,485.

We won WW II because we could build aircraft faster than we lost them, while the enemy was depleting their inventory. We produced and expended aircraft at a rate never done before or since. Missiles and nuclear weapons have made large formations obsolete. We trained young men to be pilots by the tens of thousands and sent them into combat with scarcely 200 hours of flight time. Master the AT-6 advanced trainer, take a few check rides in a P-40, P-47, or P-51, and you were a fighter pilot!

Fighters	Name	No. Built	Manufacturer
P-38	Lightning	9,923	Lockheed
P-39	Airacobra	9,584	Bell
P-40	Kittyhawk	13,753	Curtiss
P-47	Thunderbolt	15,683	Republic
P-51	Mustang	12,869	North American
P-61	Black Widow	706	Northrop
P-63	Kingcobra	3,300	Bell
		65,818	
Heavy Bombers			
B-17	Flying Fortress	12,761	Boeing
B-24	Liberator	18,475	Consolidated
B-29	Super Fortress	3,970	Boeing
		35,206	
Medium Bombers			
B-25	Mitchell	9,816	North American
B-26	Marauder	5,266	Martin
		15,082	
Attack Bombers			
A-20	Havoc	7,385	Douglas
A-26	Invader	2,502	Douglas
		9,887	
Transports			
C-45/JRB	(Beech D-18)	2,637	Beech
C-46	Commando	3,144	Curtiss
C-47/R4D	Skytrain (DC-3)	9,660	Douglas
C-54/R5D	Skymaster (DC-4)	1,200	Douglas
C-69	Constellation	22	Lockheed
C-110/R3D	(DC-5)	16	Douglas
		16,657	

We also scrapped aircraft at a prodigious rate when the war ended. In November 1945 there were more than 4,200 B-17 and B-24 heavy bombers waiting for the scrap man at the Reconstruction Finance Corp. yard at Walnut Ridge, Arkansas alone, just months after the end of the war.



Part of a group of 4,200 heavy bombers to be scrapped



P-40 "Kittyhawks" neatly stacked for the scrap man

Navy Aircraft	Name	No. Built	Manufacturer
F4F	Wildcat	5,927	Grumman
F6F	Hellcat	12,275	Grumman
F4U	Corsair	10,218	Chance Vought
TBF/TBM	Avenger	9,839	Grumman
SB2C	Helldiver	7,200	Douglas
SBD	Dauntless	5,936	Douglas
OS2U	Kingfisher	1,519	Chance Vought
		52,914	
Navy Patrol Aircraft			
PBY	Catalina	3,290	Consolidated
PB2Y	Coronado	216	Consolidated
PB4Y	Privateer	739	Consolidated
PBM	Mariner	1,289	Martin
JRM	Mars	6	Martin
		5,540	
Training Aircraft			
PT-16/PT-20	Recruit	46	Ryan
PT-19	Cornell	620	Fairchild
PT-21	Recruit	100	Ryan
PT-22	Recruit	1,023	Ryan
AT-6/SNJ	Texan	15,495	North American
AT-7	Navigator	718	Beech
AT-9		791	Curtiss
AT-11	Kansan	1,582	Beech
AT-17	Bobcat	1,850	Cessna
PT-13/18/27	Kaydet	1,600	Stearman/Boeing
BT-13	Valiant	1,200	Vultee
		25,900	
	Total Aircraft	244,704	

STOLEN FROM: WATTS NEW, SEPT/98, G. Santikian / Editor

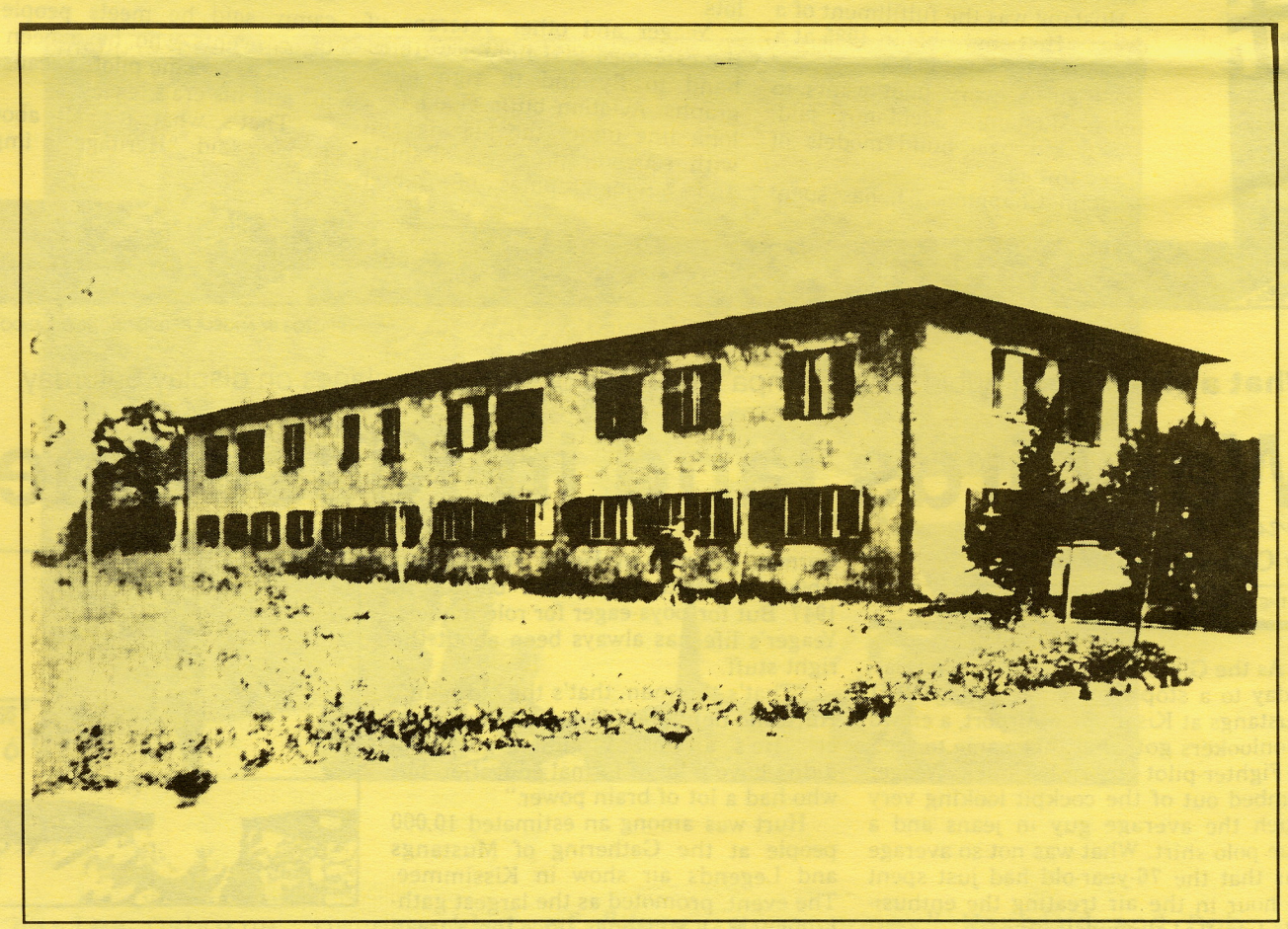
REUNION 2000 - 357th FIGHTER GROUP ASSOCIATION

Saturday May 27 ----------Registration
Sunday May 28 & Monday May 29 ----------Program
Tuesday May 30th ----------Farewell Breakfast

San Antonio, Texas
Marriott Hotel on the Riverwalk
Room Cost - $99.00 plus 15% tax
All forms with program will be mailed to membership in the future.
Mangers, Ted Conlin
Frank Gailer

In order to meet the planned delivery schedule of this issue of our newsletter to our members, we will not be able to report on the May 23, 1999 celebration at Leiston. This affair is intended to be an annual one following the 1998 Memorial Dedication at the Airfield. Plans indicated that our members Joe and Marianne Black (362nd pilot) and Tony Stirpe (1060 M.P.) and his 15 year old granddaughter were to be our delegates at this years celebration.

We intend to have a better report as well as photos by including information on this event in our next Newsletter for October 1999.
Joe De Shay



A rare photo of a Neubiberg, Germany barracks assigned to a 357th Fighter Group Communications section in 1945. (Olmsted)

P-39 Airacobra

44-2485

The Bell P-39 design dates back to 1936, when the Bell Aircraft Corporation of Buffalo, New York initiated design of a fighter aircraft with a nose mounted canon and central engine location. The Prototype XP-39 first flew on April 6, 1938.

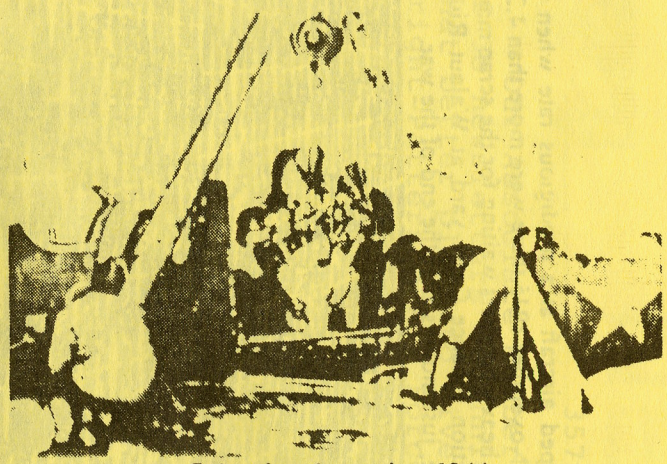
Actual production deliveries were not made until January, 1941, with contracts eventually to be signed with the United State Army Air Corps, Royal Air Force, Royal Australian Air Force, Portugal and the Soviet Union. Of a total of 9588 Airacobras constructed, nearly half of them would be sent to the Soviet Union under the lend-lease program.

2,618 of these P-39's were delivered by air, through Canada, to Soviet Pilots in Alaska, at either Ladd Field or Big Delta. The stations used on this ferrying route included: Great Falls, Lethbridge, Kamloops, Prince George, Calgary, Edmonton, Fort. St. John, Fort Nelson, Grand Prarie, Watson Lake, Whitehorse, Fairbanks, Northway, Tenacross, McGrath, Galena, Nome, Anchorage. Between September 1942 and September, 1945, a total of 7,926 aircraft were deliveredthrough the North West Staging Route under the lend-lease arrangements with the Soviet Union. These aircraft included P-39, P-63, P-40, P-47, A-20, B-25, C-47, C-46 and AT-6 (Harvard) aircraft.

The Accident

During a ferry flight to Russia the aircraft at the museumwas written off. The following is excerpted from the official accident report: On the morning of December 6, 1943, 2nd Lt. Hal Combs, flight leader, and 2nd Lt Delos R. Carpenter, wingman, took off from Fort Nelson, BC at 11:05am to fly to Whitehorse. After takeoff, the aircraft climbed on course toward Whitehorse. They were on top of overcast for about an hour when the flight leader let down through a hole in the clouds. As they were letting down, the two aircraft became separated. Lt. Carpenter flew down a canyon under the overcast which was down on top of the peaks of the mountains. He became low on gas while trying to find the Lt. Combs or a suitable place to land and was forced into mading a landing, gear up, on a frozen lake. The impact bent the propellor, buckled the right wing, tearing one gun off. Lt. Carpenter pulled all of the emergency equipment out of the plane, shovel, axe, smoke flares and rope; then made a fire to warm up.

About 2:30pm he made contact with Lake Army Airways who initiated search and Rescue operations. About 6:00pm he was spotted by a skiplane, which landed on the lake. The lake proved to be a very short landing strip, which resulted in having to drain off fuel from the rescue aircraft in order to take off.

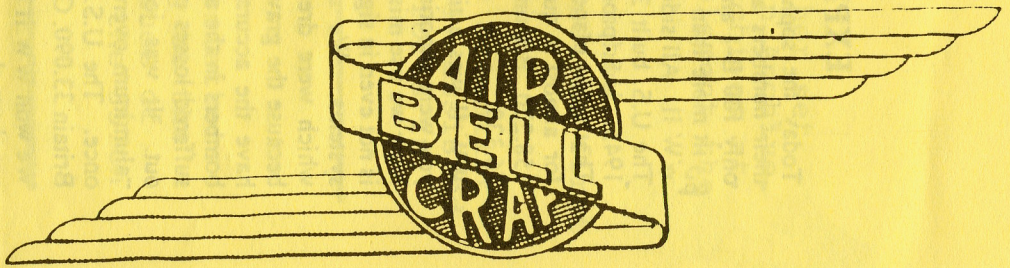


Salvaging the engine, 1944

Lt. Combs was more fortunate. He realized his compass was inoperative shortly before letting down through the overcast. Unable to signal Carpenter, he made a couple of 360 degree turns under the clouds, but the pilots did not see each other. Lt. Combs followed a valley, eventually flying out under the clouds and identified his position as being in the vicinity of Fort Laird, he had been flying in the Smith River Range. He flew about an hour before making radio contact with Fort Nelson, where he landed about 3:15pm.

Over the next two months, US Army Air Corps personnel were ferried in and out of the crash site in ski equipped Norseman aircraft in an effort to salvage the airacobra. It is thought that they were attempting to disassemble the aircraft for transport and eventual repair. After stripping the cockpit and airframe of small fittings, the engine was removed, diassembled and flown out on one of the Norseman aircraft, the photo above being taken at this time. These efforts came to a tragic end of February 27th, 1944 when a Norseman with pilot Lt. Hall and crew chief Aspesai aboard, crashed at the wreck site, killing both crewmen. They had been trying to retrieve the salvage crew who had been isolated for several days due to poor weather. After this tragedy, all salvage attempts were abandoned.

The aircraft would sink under about 50' of water during the spring thaw, resting undisturbed until July 1990 when it was salvaged from what was now Carpenter Lake, North West Terriotries.



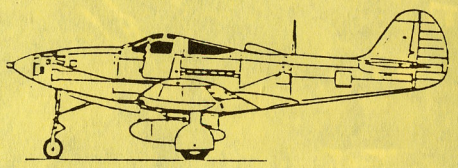
Specifications

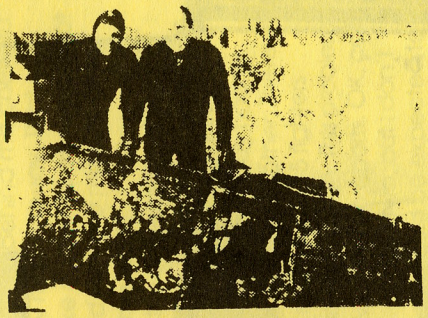
Bell P-39Q

Engine	one Allison V-1710-85	1200hp
Wing span		34' 0"
Length overall		30' 2"
Height overall		12' 5"
Wing area		213.0 sq. ft.
Weight empty		5,645lbs
Weight loaded (max)		8,300lbs
Maximum Wing Loading		38.97lbs/sq.ft
Maximum level speed		385 mph
Service Ceiling		35,000ft
Range (with 500lb Bomb)		650 miles

Armament:

Four ~~two~~ .50 calibre machine guns
one 37mm Cannon
one 500lb Bomb



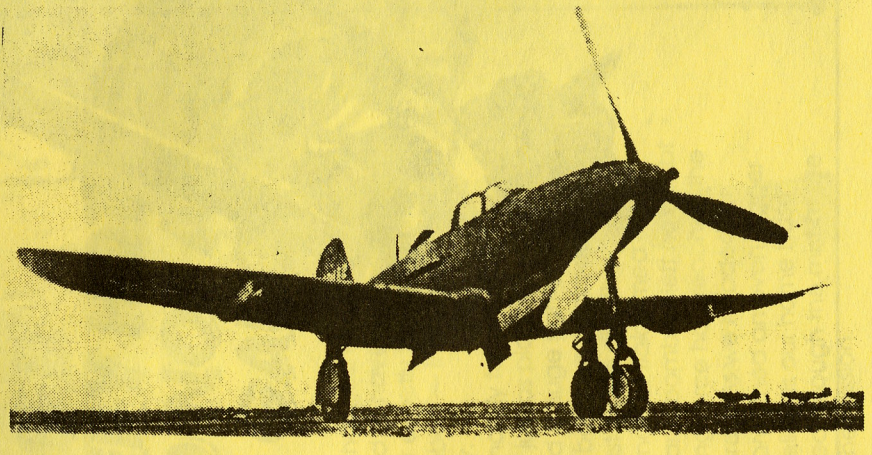


The salvaged aircraft, 1990

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Bell P-39Q

"Airacobra"



British Columbia Aviation Museum