HANDS ACROSS THE SEA

Peter Saunders, the President of F.O.L.A. (Friends of Leiston Airfield), in his quest to gather memorabilia and information for their future Archives, has contacted the 178th Fighter Wing of Ohio who we list under "Friends of the 357th Fighter Group".

Since the 178th picked up where the 357th Fighter Group left off, Peter was interested in their status. The 178th responded by sending him caps and badges and items for display. Peter states that it is interesting to see that the 178th Fighter Wing, 162nd Fighter Squadron shows the old Group colors and the 362nd F.S. in stars.

The 121st, the Refueling Wing shows the Armored Fist and Sword of the 357th F. G. Emblem and the 166th Air Refueling Squadron uses the 364th F.S. Emblem of the Cobra Snake and Machine Gun.

The 179th Airlift Wing, 164th Airlift Squadron uses the Skull and Dagger Emblem of the 363rd F.S. Nice to see that part of the 357th F.G. history is still in being (end of comment).

A super job by both Peter Saunders and the men of the 178th Fighter Wing. Gus Clutten would sure like this gesture of friendship. It is obvious that the men of F.O.L.A. will continue the program of "Hands Across the Sea" originated by Gus.

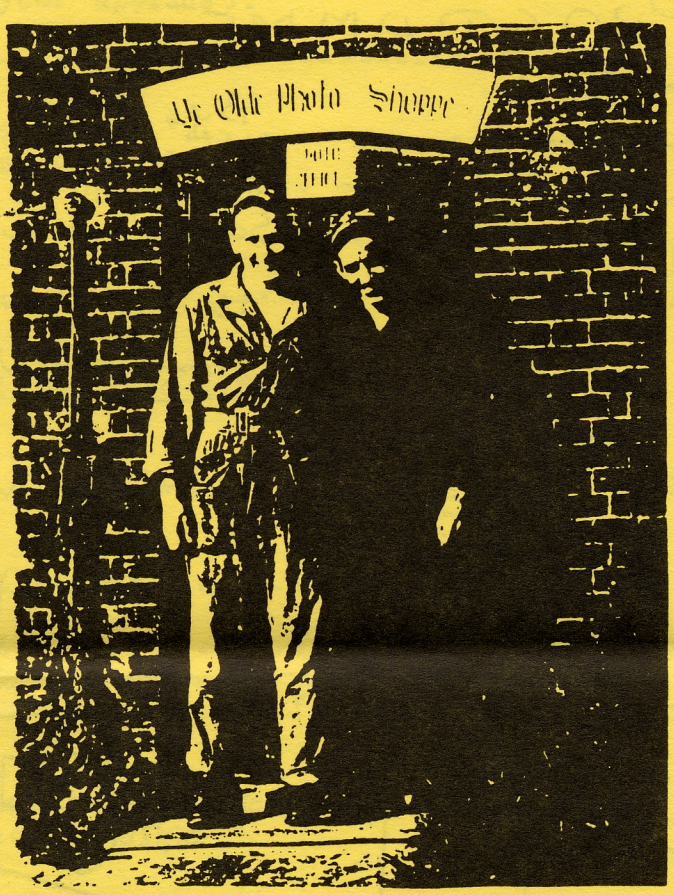


"Old Crow" and some 363rd friends. Standing left to right: James R. Sloan, John R. Stern, Keehn Landis, Robert S. Fifield. Kneeling: George J. Rice, Norbert G. Fisher. Photo from Fisher

THE 357th FIGHTER GROUP PHOTO LABORATORY AT THE LEISTON AIRFIELD

Hoyt Parmer and Joe Moores of the 362nd Armament Section in 1944

Today this building is the residence of farm manager Russell Tompkins who was a young boy at that time. Photo from the Olmsted collection and Joe Moores.



ADDRESS CHANGES

If you change your address or wish to notify the 357th Fighter Group of any other record changes, please notify Joe De Shay at 465 N. E. 34th Street, Boca Raton, FL 33431. The De Shay's will notify the Oswego Printing and Mailing Company of the changes.

1944 CHRISTMAS

The following two pages are from a one page prepared by the children of the Village of Leiston, England and presented to the men of the 357th Fighter Group stationed there at Christmas time 1944. The letter has been kept in the album of Daniel E. Browne until now.

Dan sent the letter to us to be cared for. We are returning the original letter to Leiston to be made part of the 357th Fighter Group memorabilia that is preserved by the "Friends of Leiston Airfield". Most of the members of F.O.L.A. were children when we were there. Kind gestures are often returned.

P R O G R A M M E

Although we make no apology for the efforts of the children, (WE think they are GOOD) we would like you to know that they have had only two weeks to get this programme ready. You will agree that as they have had to do their ordinary school work as well, their efforts are worth your applause.

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1. Songs.....'Passing By."..... Girls
"Rose of Tralee."
"In An Old Fashioned Town."

2. Tap Dancing.....Joan Pound & Dilys Holmes

3. Song....."Mighty Like A Rose."..... Mary Moore.

4. Cowboy Songs..... Boys

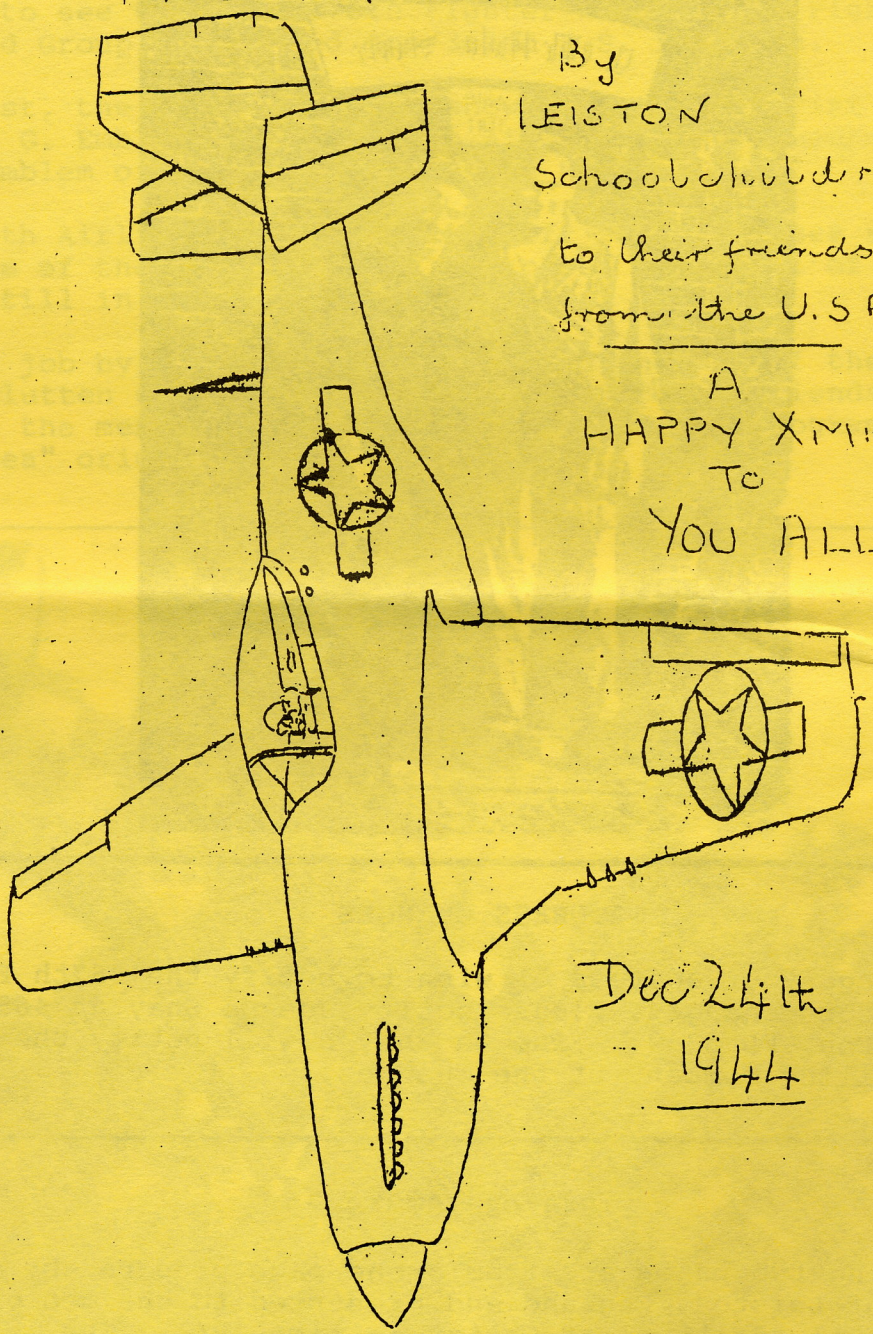
5. Gipsy Song Scena..... Girls & Boys

Boy Singers.....Fred Bardwell & David Carter
Girl Singers..... Mary Moore & Nancie Packard
Accordeons.....Joyce Spurling & Joan Marjoram

6. Carols....."Good Christian Men Rejoice".....Boys & Girls
"Peaceful Night."

7. STAR SPANGLED BANNER
GOD SAVE THE KING.

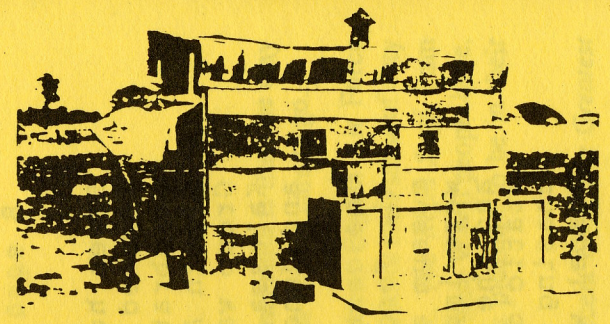
PROGRAMME



By
LEISTON
Schoolchildren
to their friends
from the U.S.A.

A
HAPPY XMAS
TO
YOU ALL

Dec 24th
1944



A phone call from Bob Prante advised us that the person adjacent to the crew chief hut and the construction supervisor was Clinton H. Maag. He was assisted in the project by Arthur Swanson, our past President and Crew Chief Donald Roepe.

JOURNAL STAR, Peoria, Ill.

B6 Monday, August 23, 1999

FROM:
Joe Cannon B6-B "Little Joe"

P-51 Mustangs may soar to historic landmark status

Some of the WWII planes could be the first working planes declared landmarks

By CHRISTOPHER WILLS
of The Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD — Nearly 60 years ago, a sleek new fighter roared across European skies. The P-51 Mustang ravaged German trains, dueled with enemy planes and protected Allied bombers on their deadly missions.

The Mustang helped win World War II. But at the war's end, the plane some call the greatest "warbird" in history was just one more piece of military surplus.

Most of the planes that saw combat were simply abandoned overseas. Mustangs still in their crates, or in the United States, were generally shipped off to National Guard units and eventually sold.

Plane lovers and historians, however, have not forgotten the Mustang, and they want to make sure the public doesn't either.

A Mustang on display at a private aviation museum in Springfield has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places, and officials may elevate it to "national landmark" status. It would be the first working plane declared a landmark.



Mike George

"It really turned the tide . . . and helped win the war," said Brian Howard, curator of the National Warplane Museum near Elmira, N.Y. "I think the P-51 would be a very fitting aircraft to name as a landmark."

More than 15,000 Mustangs were produced during the war; only 150 or so are still flying.

"We're getting to the point that we need to think of them as historically significant, because they're getting to be fewer and fewer," said John Sprinkle, supervisory historian for the National Historic Landmarks Survey.

Sprinkle, working with Mustang groups, hopes to track down the best remaining Mustangs before deciding which ones deserve landmark status. His goal is to find the ones with the most historical significance — combat time, for instance — and the fewest changes in structure and appearance.

A leading candidate for landmark status is the "Worry Bird," the Mustang already listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Worry Bird was shipped to Europe late in the war, said owner Mike George of Springfield. It was brought back to the states and used by the Air Force for a couple of years before being turned over to the National Guard.

The National Guard sold it for $957 in 1958 and it went through a series of private owners before George bought it in 1989. It's now on display at the Springfield airport.

Through all its travels and owners, the plane was kept nearly intact, George said. Its skin even carries the dings and dents from carelessly handled ammunition belts.

Countless hours of work have restored the plane's exterior to the way it might have looked in action. Its silvery skin glistens. The bright red tail and checkerboard pattern near the propellor give it a sporty look. The six swastikas below the bubble canopy — denoting six kills — offer a reminder of what was really at stake when these Mustangs flew.

George sees the Worry Bird's place on the national register as a tribute to World War II pilots. Landmark status would be an even bigger tribute.

It may sound strange to use the term "landmark" for a moving object, but Sprinkle said the landmark program is meant to protect the things — mobile or not — that tell the story of America.

The Mustang and perhaps some other classes of airplane deserve that designation, he said, especially since planes will celebrate their 100th anniversary in 2003. So far, the only plane declared a landmark is the "Spruce Goose" built by Howard Hughes.

Recognition would not take the plane out of private hands or bar it from flying. Basically, it would be an honorary designation — the ultimate prize for airplane collectors.

The possibility of flying a landmark may have collectors lining up to tout the historic attributes of their beloved planes.

"I think you couldn't choose another group that would be more competitive than a group of pilots, especially P-51 owners," said Howard, of the Warplane Museum. "They would probably be very interested in having their planes designated."

Strangest Mission

"Shoo Shoo Baby's" strangest and probably most talked about mission was the trip to Gdynia, Poland, on April 9, 1944.

Everything started as planned but shortly after take off they flew into low hanging cloud cover. At 29, 600 feet, they broke through the clouds and suddenly found themselves in the middle of a Group of B-24's.

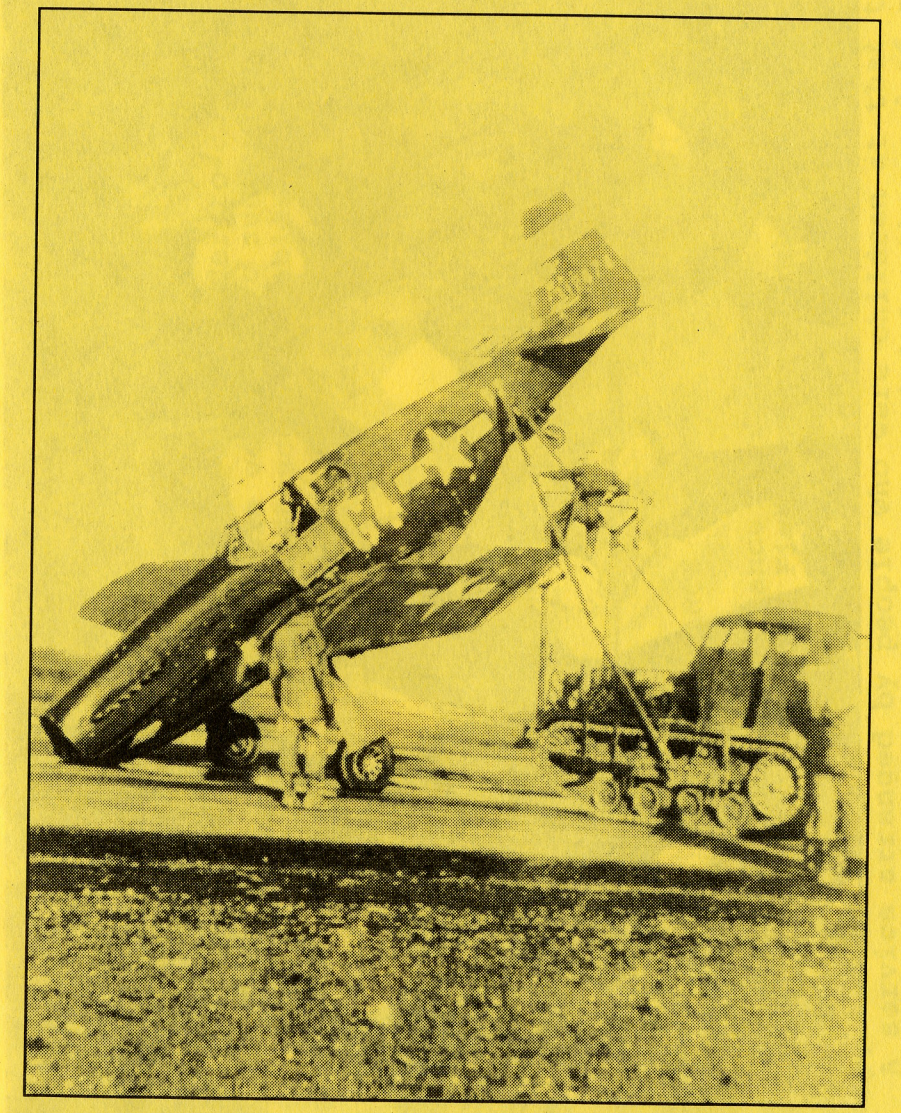
After circling for a while, the pilot spotted a B-17 formation from a different group. Even though they didn't seem to be on their way to the right target, the pilot decided to join up since they were under radio silence and couldn't get other instructions. Another B-17 from the 91st joined them.

At the target, they dropped their bombs with the rest of the formation and headed for England. Halfway across the North Sea, the 2 planes broke formation and headed home. After 12 hours and 55 minutes of flying time, all four engines quit at the same time in the dispersal area at Bassingbourne.

The pilot called the tower and asked how many of the others had come back safely. "Nobody!" was the answer, and after a pause, "because nobody else left!." The mission had been cancelled, but due to a radio malfunction, "Shoo Shoo Baby" never got the word.

They had participated in a mission to Marienburg, not far from Gdynia, and as a result of the their mission, the 91st Bomb Group would be credited for a completed mission, even though only two aircraft from the group actually participated!

Story from the Florida Chapter of the 8th A.F.H.S. Newsletter.



G4-H nosed up on runway at Leiston Airfield. 362nd cletrac machine attaching a winch to lower the aircraft. Henslee photo via Olmsted



L-4 Observation Craft used by Infantry and left to the 363rd at Neubiberg, Germany being crewed by Tim Tyler. Photo from Kalessa



363rd Pilots, left to right - Paul K. DeVries, ?? , C.E. "Bud" Anderson, Donald H. Bochkay, Thomas E. Hughes. Photo from Joe Cannon

Hard-charging Chuck Yeager to give Rochester talk on aging

■ 'With older people, if you don't use it you lose it,' says the 76-year-old icon of supersonic flight.

BY STAFF WRITER
GARY CRAIG

Charles "Chuck" Yeager was 24 when he first broke the sound barrier.

He was 74 when he last did it.

In both instances, Yeager, now a retired Air Force brigadier general, sent a message to the world.

When Yeager on Oct. 14, 1947, became the first man to surpass the speed of sound, he shattered the myth that the speed was an impenetrable and deadly wall. When he did it again 50 years later, commemorating his historic flight, he proved that age, quite literally, does not have to slow a person down.

"I don't play golf because I'm not old enough," Yeager, now 76, said in a recent telephone interview.

On Nov. 16, Yeager will be the guest speaker at Lifespan's annual "Celebration of Aging Luncheon." His speech will be entitled, "Breaking the Age Barrier."

Yeager is the perfect person to debunk any myths that men and women lead less productive lives in their latter years, said Lifespan Executive Director Fran Weisberg.

"He's not only an American hero," she said. "He's a hero to all Americans in their second half of life."

Yeager does not talk about his vibrant lifestyle — "Just last month I was hunting in Colorado and got me a nice fat elk to eat" — as if it were uncommon. Instead, he said, life is lived to be enjoyed, so why be a couch potato at any age.

"With older people, if you don't use it you lose it," he said. "It's just about that simple. I've been very active all my life because I enjoy it."

What Yeager has enjoyed most in life is flying. So, while many other younger military pilots would leave the cockpit and retire, Yeager saw no need to abandon his passion.

"I stayed on at Edwards (Air Force Base) until I'd been flying for 55 years, flying the latest equipment all along," said Yeager.

While the significance of his record-breaking flight is now embedded in our history, Yeager says that he looked at the flight in 1947 as just another mission.

"To tell you the truth I was working on about 10 different test programs at that time," he said.

"When I got back I had a feeling of accomplishment, yes. But I looked back and said, 'That one's finished so I can get on with the rest of them.' "

Yeager, a decorated combat fighter, said he didn't fear what would happen when he hit the speed of sound.

"Hell, if you get killed, you don't know anything about it anyway," he said.

While Yeager's exploits were considered a precursor to the country's conquest of space, his status as an American hero stems largely from Sam Shepard's portrayal of him in the movie *The Right Stuff*. Yeager admits that he found a kindred spirit in the actor.

"Sam Shepard drives a pick-up, hunts and fishes and shacks up with Jessica Lange," Yeager said.

"What more could you want?"



File photo

Living legend Charles "Chuck" Yeager, who will visit Rochester on Nov. 16, says he's been active all his life "because I enjoy it." He broke the sound barrier at age 24, then did it again at 74.

from
Tony Stirpe
1260th M.P. CO.

Roush lives his dream in restored P-51

BROOKLYN (AP) — Jack Roush was born during World War II and, somehow, never quite got the war out of his system.

Like many kids of his generation, Roush was fascinated by the machines of war. His father served on a battleship in the South Pacific, and Roush built model airplanes growing up in Manchester, Ohio.

The fighting eventually ended, but Roush's love of machines never did. Six years ago, Roush spent $500,000 to buy and lovingly restore a North American P-51, one of America's greatest fighters.

Don't worry, he can afford it.

Roush is CEO of Roush Industries Inc., an engineering and prototype development company serving the automotive and transportation industries.

The company, headquartered in Livonia, Mich., employs more than 1,350 people in five states, Mexico and England.

But that's just what he does for money. For fun, Roush sponsors five NASCAR racing teams. And he flies airplanes, most often his old Model D warbird.

"Back in grade school, I was a kid that was interested in World War II stuff and all the things that were involved with it," Roush said. "I would find myself in study halls and quiet periods doodling airplanes and ships and things and thinking about combat situations I'd seen in movies or heard my dad talk about."

By the time he was in high school, Roush had a keen interest in perhaps attending the U.S. Air Force Academy. But that required an appointment from either a senator or congressman, and Roush wasn't politically connected.

"So, I didn't get that done, and I was a little early for Vietnam," Roush said. "I missed that."

Instead, he headed for Kentucky where he enrolled at Berrea College and earned a degree in mathematics and physics. Ford Motor Co. offered him a job, but Roush still had a yearning for aviation.

He gave the military one more shot.

"After I graduated from college, I went through a two-day physical and written exam for the Air Force to become a flight officer," Roush said. "But they wanted me to be a navigator, in the back seat of an F-4. If I was going to be in an F-4, I wanted to be up front.

"So, I didn't take their initial assignment. I went on and took a job that Ford had offered me and then got involved with racing."

As his fame began to spread, the Air Force realized it might have been a tad hasty in dismissing Roush as pilot material.

"I remember that when I had my 28th birthday, the Air Force stopped notifying me once a year that they had a class that I could get into — and ride in the front seat, if I wanted to," Roush said. "But, they kept offering me that until I was 28."

Roush could probably start his own Air Force today. In addition to the P-51, he also flies the corporate jet, a Cessna Citation 525. He keeps both at Willow Run Airport, about 30 miles west of Detroit.

But it's the old warbird he cranks up whenever conditions permit. Some folks own classic cars. Roush wanted a WWII airplane. When he's alone in the P-51, he is somehow a kid again.

"Euphoric youthfulness," is how the 57-year-old Roush describes it. "As long as you can fly a P-51, I don't think you'd ever feel old in one. It's a wonderful thing."

He has to wear an oxygen mask in the P-51, which goes to only 25,000 feet. And it's not good for night flying. Still, there is nowhere he won't fly it when conditions are right.

He often flies it to NASCAR races, and the plane appears frequently in air shows around the country.

"I like everything about it," Roush said. "You wear it, like you'd wear a race car. It has a unique smell. It has a unique feel. It has a unique sound. And it's incredibly agile."

In restoring the plane, Roush decided to make it a replica of "Old Crow," the P-51 that Col. Jim Anderson flew while shooting down 18 German aircraft over western Europe during WWII. In the process, Roush and Anderson, now in his mid-70s, have become friends.

Roush frequently lets Anderson fly the plane in airshows, where he sometimes has Chuck Yeager on his wing. Yeager, who went on to become one of the country's most famous test pilots, was a young noncommissioned office in Anderson's outfit during the war.

As he talks, it almost sounds as if Roush regrets not going into the military himself. But he says that's not so.

"No. Not really. I'm having a great life," Roush said. "If I'd stayed in the Air Force, I don't know that I'd have been able to reach the level of financial independence that would allow me to have an airplane at this time in my life. And all I've got is what's left.

"I'm glad to have the airplane right now."

Taken from the Summer 1968 issue of the AERO ALBUMS
well recommended by Olmsted

DOGFIGHT OVER PARIS

By Henry C. Woodrum

As the pilot of a Martin B-26 Marauder bomber, I never saw a good dogfight. When enemy fighters got through our fighter cover they flashed past the formation so fast we saw only fleeting glimpses of them — and even that was too much. Our tail gunners saw a few skirmishes but no sustained engagements. When I finally did see one, it was from the ground.

While flying my 35th mission, with the 344th Bomb Group to attack bridges across the Seine River near Paris on 28 May 1944, I was shot down by German flak. The following day I contacted members of the Resistance. They took good care of me and for five days I was hidden in a small tavern where I ate well and was treated royally as the guest of a fine couple, Carlos and Maria. They spoke excellent English, having spent many years in New York City where Carlos had led a rhumba band at the Waldorf-Astoria, and were glad to aid an American.

On Thursday, 2 June, I was moved to an apartment on the top floor of a building on the rue de Chantier in Versailles. There I was the guest of Charles and Delise. From their windows I could see the Eiffel Tower in the distance to the northeast. Less than four miles to the east I could see German aircraft taking off from Villacoublay aerodrome. At first there was only moderate activity, but on D-Day things really picked up, reaching a peak which was sustained for several days.

Flights began arriving at dawn to refuel and fly shuttle runs to the invasion beachhead throughout the day. Often they returned individually, badly battered and damaged. Just before dark, they would refuel and fly to the more remote fields of eastern France to escape the night-bombing RAF. Dawn would see them return. I was always amazed to witness their mass departures because they were so unorthodox compared to American techniques.

Their takeoff procedure seemed to consist solely of a left climbing turn at maximum climb after gear-up. There was no regular interval between takeoffs. Each plane departed when it was ready, started the left climbing turn and merged with the swirl of snarling aircraft.

The first big mission departure I saw was on D-Day, before I learned of the Normandy landing a hundred miles or so to the west. It was about seven o'clock in the morning, and when I heard the sound of so many engines I pulled a chair over to the window and waited for something to happen. The revving of the engines continued, then suddenly a red nosed Me 109 with red wing tips leaped up in a very steep angle, starting a left climbing turn. Others followed immediately, and with each new launch the stack grew higher and higher, forming one great, ever enlarging corkscrew-shaped spiral. When the last plane was airborne there must have been at least 50 fighters involved, and the whole shebang just seemed to collapse as the leader nosed his plane down, accelerating as the others tagged along in a sort of indiscriminate mass, behind, alongside, underneath and above him. Without an apparent pattern, they looked like a swarm of bees — either there was no precision or the utmost precision possible. I couldn't tell which was the case, but they never flew it any other way. I watched them many times and never saw them have any trouble, but I couldn't figure out how they could keep everyone in sight.

That morning they headed westward, and I wondered why such a large flight was in the area. It was far and away the largest I had seen, for most of the previous flights had been only small patrols.

About two hours later, I heard several aircraft coming in from the west and looked out the living room window. The red nosed Messerschmitt slanted hurriedly in, knifing down for a landing. There was a sense of urgency about it because he made no attempt to set up a preliminary pattern but maintained airspeed all the way through a long, straight-in approach. Before he touched down, out of sight behind the trees ringing the field, others flew in from the same direction. Several trailed smoke, one badly. Then another group came in, milling about over the field as they set up a landing priority. Some were Focke Wulf FW 190s. There must have been nearly a hundred fighters altogether. I remember counting more than sixty, and I missed several flights.

Throughout the next half hour they continued to straggle in, revving their engines, jazzing them like kids in hot rods. The jazzing bit made me cringe. In B-26s we wanted power all the way in.

A neighbor on a nearby balcony excitedly called Delise over and told her about the invasion. Delise came running inside, calling me by the name on my forged identity card which said I was a 42 year old merchant from Deurdan.

"Albert, Albert. Le debarkemont. Le debarkemont est ici."

She was so excited I couldn't get much information from her. We turned on the radio, but the German-controlled French station had nothing so I switched to the Yankee

Doodle network. They were playing music — Glenn Miller. After a pause and the phrase of the song which identified the station, the announcer gave the latest report on the invasion, with a detailed analysis of the whole story. Then I knew where the Jerries had been and why their numbers had increased after takeoff. The Luftwaffe was probably being diverted from all over Europe to Normandy. It was tremendous news, and to me it was a real boost. I kept listening to the radio all day and telling Delise what was happening. The French radio stations told us nothing, but all morning cryptic messages were transmitted over both AFRS and the BBC. The BBC's were delightful.

"Pierre, there is a red, red rose in the icebox for you."

"Marcel, your interest will be due on the 12th."

I often tuned in the BBC after that just to catch those messages and to get the news at dictation speed, which gave me a chance to take notes.

Later, one of our own teams went into action. Charles learned that the marshalling yard was full of German tanks which were supposed to depart for Normandy that night. I wrote a note to an English agent who had contacted me, and he got the message off by portable radio units at about eight o'clock in the evening. Just before midnight it got results, for the RAF started a raid which lasted until one A.M. The marshalling yard was closer to our apartment than I had thought, and for the entire raid there were flashes from exploding bombs, crumbling buildings, the thudding WHAM of antiaircraft batteries and the almost constant rocking of our building on its foundation. We finally went to bed about three A.M.

The next morning I was still sleepy and stayed in bed, dozing until something awakened me. It was an unfamiliar sound, a sort of popping. Then came sounds I recognized — racing aircraft engines. I jumped out of bed and ran over to the window, dragging the sheet with me. Coming straight toward me at not more than fifty feet above the roof was an American P-51 Mustang, going flat out. Close behind it were five FW 190s, sort of bunched together, flying like the bees again, and all of them were taking pot shots with their 20 mm cannon at the poor old Yankee boy.

I saw all this simultaneously, before the planes flashed by just over the roof top. They were coming from the airfield toward the apartment, headed northwest. I could even see the pilot, tensely hunched over the controls. He was wearing helmet and goggles and his chute straps showed plainly against the darker color of his leather A-2 jacket; a patch of white scarf was visible at his throat. The checkered yellow, or maybe checkered yellow and white, nose of his plane was clear and distinct. The aircraft was unpainted, bright aluminum, and its marking — black letters and the national insignia — stood out. It had a bubble canopy, the first one I'd ever seen.

As they passed overhead, I whirled and ran through the apartment, across the living room to the window at the balcony on the other side of the building. The fighters actually dipped lower going away, for our building stood on the side of a slope, and the terrain fell away toward the center of Versailles. They were soon out of sight, and I was sure the '51 jockey was a goner. I turned away from the window and for the first time realized Delise was standing by my side and that I was wearing only a pair of shorts.

She looked at me and said, "Albert, le Americaine? Petet fini?"

"I think so, Delise, yes."

"Ahh . . . pasbon." She turned away sadly.

I went back into the bedroom and put on my pants and slippers. Then, suddenly, Delise opened the door, shouting. "Albert, ici, ici!"

I followed her quickly into the living room and onto the tiny balcony. A couple of minutes had passed, and the battle unexpectedly continued, but the tide had changed. Coming toward us from the southwest, still at rooftop level, were the six fighters, but leading the pack was a lonesome FW 190, frantically trying to escape the P-51 pilot who was relentlessly hosing him with 50 caliber slugs in short, accurate bursts. Behind were the other four Jerries, holding their fire for fear of hitting the first FW 190. Not more than three hundred yards separated the first plane from the last.

I began to really sweat out the American, though, because the Jerry was playing it cozy by heading straight for an antiaircraft battery in a patch of woods. Sure enough, it opened fire. The FW waggled his wing and the ground fire stopped, but the P-51 did the same thing and they didn't shoot at him either. Its pilot continued firing, and the law of averages caught up with the German plane. It exploded in a great, angry, red and black and orange burst.

The Mustang pilot flew through the debris, but he was again the hunted and being shot at, so he banked toward Villacoublay a mile or so away. As he started a low pass over the field, all the ack-ack in the base opened up, even on their own planes. The three on the left, nearest Paris, turned left to avoid the flak, but the other one was too far to the right and had to turn to the right o say clear. The Mustang turned also, heading for the lone FW which apparently lost sight of him momentarily. Within thirty seconds the Yank was sitting on his tail, taking pot shots at the Luftwaffe again. The two planes were now heading toward me, almost on the same track they had flown on their first pass over the house earlier. The other three were completing a wider turn and were grouped some distance behind, and even though no physical change had occurred, they didn't seem to have the pouncing snarl or the look of the hunter so apparent in their first low level pass. They straggled, trying to catch up, but they were too far back to save their buddy.

Again I raced through the apartment to the other window. As the two planes came over, the thunder of their engines was punctuated by the short, ammo-saving bursts of the .50 calibers. Scraping over the rooftops, twisting and yawing, they crossed the city, and finally the FW 190 began to trail smoke. It nosed down into the horizon to merge with the red flame and black smoke-cloud of impact just west of town. (We learned later that the pilot got out alive but was badly injured.)

The Yank racked the '51 around in a steep chandelle, right off the deck, almost reversing course. Two of the other 190s flashed past and pulled up also, but the third was a little farther back and turned north, away from the tiger who continued his turn, diving a little now. With a height advantage for the first time, the Yank began firing on a dead pigeon. Smoke immediately trailed from the FW, but the '51 pilot had to turn away as the other two planes closed in on him. The distressed FW 190 limped away, trying to get back to Villacoublay, but crashed north of town several miles from the base. Now only two Germans were left, and the American had put a little distance between their planes and his.

By this time I was absolutely going nuts. It was all I could do to keep from shouting in English. Everybody else was excited, too. People had come out on the roof tops of nearby apartments, and the balconies were full of men and women silently cheering for the crazy, lone American. I knew he would have a rough time from here on out. The last two wouldn't give him any breaks. On the other hand, they were wary, which might be in his favor. They flew out of sight on the deck southwest of the city. It was quiet for a minute

or two and the roof top audience became restless, frustrated.

Then they returned, still on the deck, and the Yank was miraculously in the middle. They made a long pass across town while the Mustang closed to a range from which he couldn't miss — I figured he was very low on ammunition. The 190 was trying to outrun him this time, but when he saw his nemesis so close behind the pilot pulled up frantically. The fifties cut loose in a brief shattering blast. The 190 nosed straight up and its engine died. As the prop windmilled almost to a stop, the plane began to stall about a thousand to fifteen hundred feet off the deck, and the pilot bailed out, opening his chute immediately. At first its slow billowing trail made me think it would never open, but it blossomed full and white only a few feet above the trees between me and the Eiffel Tower, standing very tiny in the distance.

Now the odds were even-up, and what had seemed an eternity to me had really happened in just a few minutes. I began to worry about other German fighters getting airborne to aid their shot-up air patrol, but they were either engaged elsewhere or were unable to fuel up, fearing attack from other aircraft.

In the distance I could see the last two planes in another long, low arc. The American had started a gradual swing to the west, but he was not about to leave the deck. The Jerry was still behind him, but his guns were silent now, indicating he might also be low on ammunition. When they disappeared over the rim of the rolling hills west of the city the Mustang was taking evasive action, and I was sure the dogfight was almost over. The Jerry had the advantage and was sure to hold it. A moment later, a black, blotchy mushroom of smoke billowed upward.

I knew then that one hell of a good pilot had bought the farm. He had given it everything he had and reduced the odds from five to one to even before the end, and I wondered what he had thought when only that one FW remained. Just a few pilots had ever shot down five German aircraft in one day.

I noted the time and tried to fix the approximate location of the action and also made a mental note of the aircraft markings, determined to confirm the four victories if I ever got back to England. I just couldn't forget the way the man had flown, dreaming up tactics as he went along, playing it by ear, only to have his luck run out a little bit too soon.

The spectators on the rooftops felt as I did. They stood up slowly, srtetched, gestured with their hand and went back inside. They seemed to feel a personal loss, almost as if they had been with the pilot themselves, pushing him on to victory with their will alone. They had prayed for his survival, now they prayed for his soul.

Delise said nothing but went into the kitchen and returned with two glasses and a bottle of armognac. She filled the glasses, raised hers and said, "Le Americaine pilote." Her voice was soft and her eyes brimmed.

I nodded and we drank.

I had a couple more — alone.

I sat there thinking about the pilot and the action-packed few minutes just passed. Suddenly, after three weeks of almost no war at all, it was back with me again and then suddenly gone. All I could do was sit there and think.

Twenty minutes later Charles, Delise's husband, came home. He was very excited and laughed as he asked if we'd seen the fight.

"Did you see the American kill those Germans?"

"Yes," I said, "we saw. He got four of them. Four out of five."

He looked at me and grinned, taking another sip of brandy, and suddenly I wanted to hit him, he looked so smug.

"Non. No, no! He got five. He got them all. I see . . . everything. Especially the last. It was magnificent."

He said this in a mixture of French and English, the way we always conversed. I wasn't sure I understood. He launched into a stream of French I couldn't understand, but it didn't make any difference because I could tell that he was certain the Yank had gotten all five. We had several more brandies before Charles calmed down enough to explain what had happened.

"Charles, how do you know he got them all?"

"Because I saw. Especially the second, third and fifth, you know? The last was near me. I was at the garden. I have to rake — to hoe, you see? The last one he did not even shoot — much. They came near, so fast. There is this little hill, with woods. The planes almost skim the ground. The American goes zip, like so, around the hill once, and the German follows, but in a greater circle. It is like the cat and mouse. Then the second time the American plane slows — abruptly — its wheels drop out, you know? The German goes in, towards the American, now so much slower, and they are almost sideways, but he loses control of his machine. Only a kilometer or so from where I was standing he crashes in the woods. I jump up and down and wave my hoe and everybody does the same, but then the Germans come and we hide our smiles and I come home, fast."

We told him about the other two, then. He had seen the fourth, even from the western edge of the city.

I thought about what must have happened. The American pilot was out of ammunition and had dropped his flaps and gear — everything — chopped his throttle, to slow down, forcing the German to turn in, risking a stall to make the German stall. The German didn't have much choice. If he didn't make one last try he would have wound up in front of the Mustang anyway — so he had made the try.

Everybody I saw for the next few days talked about the dogfight. Coming so soon after D-Day, it gave all of us, me especially, a tremendous boost in morale.

The plans to get me out of France by a night pick-up from a wheatfield didn't materialize, and it was early September before I reached London. I reported the dogfight during my debriefing, but by that time I had forgotten a key factor — the aircraft marking, including the squadron code.

Years later, I spent several days in the Air Force Historical section at Maxwell Field, Alabama, trying to learn the name of the pilot by reading all operational reports submitted by Mustang pilots for the period. (Now, I do not even remember the exact date.) I narrowed it down to 21 pilots. Several were killed on the missions involved and others had been killed later in Germany. One noted "confused fighting at house top level in the Paris area" but claimed no victories.

As of now, the identity of the American pilot has never been verified, and it's too bad. But there's one thing I know. Even if I never find out who he was — it was the best damned dogfight I'll ever see!

NOTE: It is with real pride that the editors have presented this story of the Dogfight Over Paris, for it is one of the great stories to come out of World War II and has long deserved a full telling. This, Mr. Woodrum has done splendidly, and it can be hoped, as more readers of Aero Album encounter the story, that one day further evidence may come forth which will lead to the complete identification of a great and brave pilot of the U.S. Army Air Forces.

During the last two years, your editor, Kenn C. Rust, and Bill Hess have sought to get some lead as to the identity of the Mustang pilot. Their efforts were unsuccessful, but somewhere there is someone who can identify this man. Could you be the one?