THE WEB-SITE MEN



FRANK ALDRIDGE
http://www.357th Fighter Group.com

JIM ANDERSON
http://www.cebudanderson.com

AN ENJOYABLE MISSION

After attending the San Antonio Reunion in May, John Cirillo with his niece and her husband traveled to Leiston in late June. John was from a 363rd ground crew and sure enjoyed getting back to the Leiston Airfield again. All three were greeted by Brian Boulton and Tony Errington and according to John, they were treated royally.

When they traveled in South England, John was wearing his white 357th F.G. cap. A couple on the street approached him and pointed to his cap and asked "Do you know Merle Olmsted"?

POW MEDAL AVAILABLE

The Pentagon has announced the offering of a new Prisoner Of War Medal featuring an eagle, ringed with barbed wire and bayonets to honor some 142,000 U.S. troops captured in four wars.

The medal will be issued at no cost to any person who was taken prisoner of war and held captive after April 5, 1917. The medal can be awarded posthumously to legal next of kin.

Eligible persons may call 1-800-873-3768 for more info.

Taken from August 2000
Bulge Bugle

"L U C K E D O U T"

One day and approximately mid-day, the weather was very clear. I and Crew Chief Frank Fahs started to walk across the Leiston Air Base perimeter track mainly because aircraft B6-A & B6-B were parked in revetments at the outward side of the airfield. B6-C, B6-D, B6-E, B6-F and B6-G were aligned up in hardstands on the inward side of the perimeter track.

There was a plywood shack made up of sides of drop tank shipping boxes located between D & E or E & F. It was there where we passed idle time awaiting for the aircraft to return from those long missions. Coffee brewed over a home made stove took the chill off those cold damp days of winter. Elsworth Stevens was Crew Chief on B6-?. Roger Bender had B6-B. Commanding Squadron Officer Bochkay flew B6-F. All known as "A" ground flight of the 363rd Fighter Squadron.

As we continued across the perimeter track, the main runway was in front of us and not too distant. We looked up and here came an aircraft in for a landing shooting flares. This aircraft landed with its wheels down but a few hundred yards behind the first one was a second one struggling and smoking. It made a wheels up landing in the dirt. Frank and I ran over to the troubled aircraft. Three officers came out through the top cockpit hatch. One of them said to us, "See if you can help my men in the back"? We ran around to the right side. The trailing edge of the right wing had a large gap torn in it with engine oil spewing all over. There was a gun door opening in the fuselage which was just above ground level and there was a 50 caliber machine gun sticking out.

In the meantime, base fire equipment and ambulance were on the way. I removed the gun, shoving it out to Frank. We crawled inside the doorway and there was one crew member laying down. Another one was laying on top of him. The one on the bottom said, "Don't worry about me, help my buddy". I was sure the one on top was already dead.

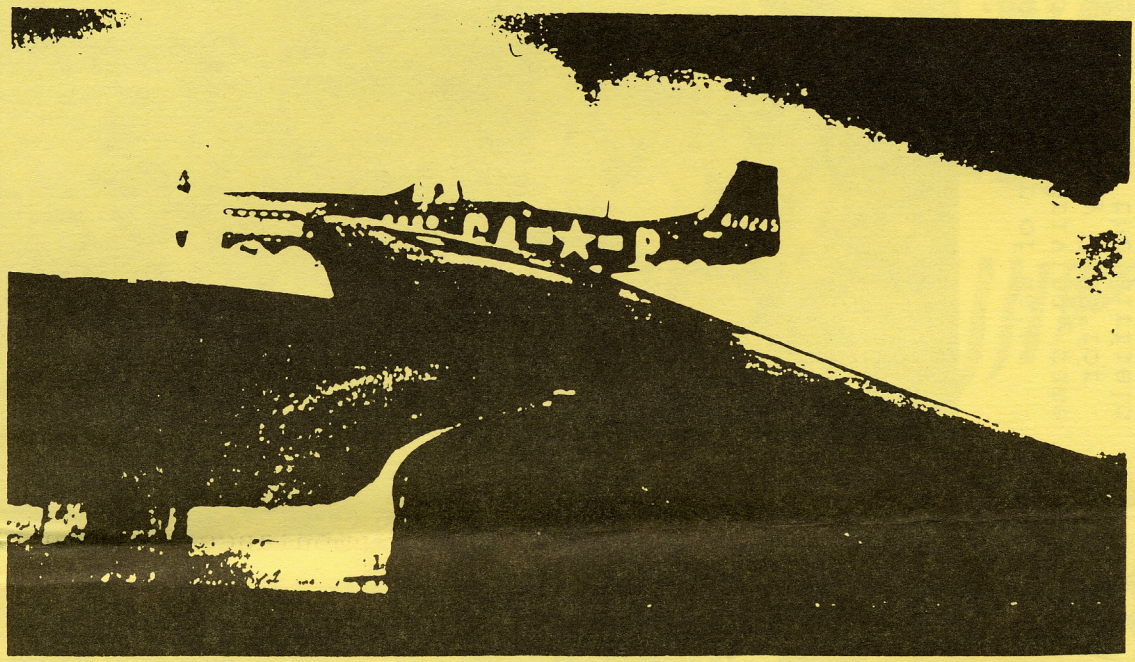
After the medics arrived, they found the top turret gunner still in his seat with his feet dangling. We proceeded to get him down and about one fourth of his right forehead was gone. It appeared as if he had been hit once and then the tail gunner had come foreward either to help or to prepare to bail out and had been hit again for the middle of the fuselage had been riddled, yet no visible damage in the tail gunners area. A few days later, I asked our medic how the injured crew member was and he told me that he had died on the way to the hospital.

I am almost certain these two aircrafts were B-26, medium bombers. In one, there had been a crew of three men in front and three in the rear. A normal crew was six men. For an A-20 aircraft, the normal crew was three and at most four. I had flown in a B-25 outfit at Hammer Field, Fresno, CA. It was at that time that I was declared TOO BIG FOR FLIGHT as I was 6 ft. 3 inches tall, weighing 205 pounds. After witnessing this crash landing as well as others, I can thank the medical doctor for ruling me out for I made it through the war and am still around today.

(continued)

One of our 357th Fighter Group men whom I was close to was Billy Lynn Freeman from Oklahoma. As an enlisted man, he wanted to be an Aerial Gunner and get his missions over with so he signed up for gunnery school. About 1950, I stopped in at his former home town and was informed that he was Killed in Action and his remains had just been returned a few weeks before.

by Claude L. Allen
Crew Chief, B6-?



The photo above was sent to Merle Olmsted by a former B-17 pilot. It was taken in November when thay had an engine shot out of their aircraft and called for fighter support. They were greatly relieved when "FLOOGIE II" showed up.and stayed with them. The pilot still is expressing much gratitude. This was "Dittie" Jenkin's aircraft but we do not know if he was flying it on that particular day. Marle was the aircraft's assistant crew chief. Good old G4-P.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR JANUARY 2000 ROSTER

If an event appears on page 1 of a 357th Newsletter pertaining to a friend of yours,-- Mark your roster accordingly for this 2000 Jan. roster is the last 357th roster to be made available for you.

Joe DeShay



THE JACKET RETURNS

Young Matthew J. Rimmer of Wales and his mother who did the driving, came all the way to leiston in May 2000 for the Remembrance Ceremony at the airfield and to meet Joe De Shay. Matthew brought Joe's WWII Ike jacket to show it to Joe and the folks at the luncheon at the Cakes & Ale Lounge. The jacket was in excellent condition except it must have shrunk according to Joe's size today.



FUN AT #6 NISSEN HUT
LEISTON

Left: Robert A. Bignell
Right: Merle Olmsted

Merle with a fencing sword and wearing fencing gear. Merle says he was basking in the sunshine and one can see the shadows. However Bob is wearing a heavy jacket and Merle in his fancy underwear.

Photo: Olmsted



REMEMBERING: Five war veterans made the trip from the U.S. for the annual remembrance service held by the Friends of Leiston Airfield. They are, from left, Charles Puleo, Jesse Weise, Joe Deshay, Charles Goss and Tony Stirpe

Photograph: NICK DAVIES

War veterans meet again at ceremony

A LARGE crowd gathered at the site of a former East Anglian airfield to honour those who gave their lives for freedom.

by DAVE LENNARD

A special remembrance ceremony was held at the Harrow Lane Memorial in Leiston on a piece of land which was an important American air base during the Second World War.

A number of veterans who served at Station 373 during the war were present to take part in the service on Sunday and lay wreaths to fallen comrades.

The service was conducted by the Rev Christine Brooks with music provided by the Leiston Royal British Legion Band.

Cadets of 1379 (Leiston) Squadron provided the guard of honour.

The event was organised by the Friends of Leiston Airfield and, despite the heavy rain, was extremely well attended.

The only disappointment was that the bad weather prevented a short flying display by a P51 Mustang.

RAF Leiston, or Station 373 as it was more correctly known, had a short but distinguished operational history. It began in 1943 when it was home, first to the 358th Fighter Group flying their P47 Thunderbolts, and then to the 357th Fighter Group with the P51 Mustangs.

The young American pilots flew their P51 Mustangs in support of the daylight bombing offensives over Occupied Europe and were so effective that they were singled out by German propaganda.

Among the guests were:

- Joe Deshay and his wife, Ellen. Mr Deshay is a former hangar chief who served with the 364th Fighter Squadron. The couple jointly manage the 357th Fighter Group Association in the U.S. from their home in Florida.
- Charles Goss and his wife, Jo Ann. Mr Goss was a pilot in the 362nd Squadron. He and his wife live in Tulsa.
- Tony Stirpe, who lives in Lyons, New York, and served with the 1260 Military Police Company. He and his granddaughter Natalie attended last year's event also.
- Charles Puleo, who is from Long Island, New York. He served with the 362nd Squadron.
- Jesse Weise and his wife, Glenna, who is from Texas, and served with the 362nd Squadron.
- Eileen Carrier, who lives in London and is the daughter of Daniel O'Connor of Massachusetts who served in the 364th Squadron.

VETERANS

*(Borrowed from **Base Air Depot News Letter**)*

As November 11th comes up we think of the Veteran! What is a Veteran?

He's the cop on the beat who spent six months in Saudi Arabia sweating two gallons a day, while he made sure the armored personnel carriers didn't run out of gas.

He's the Legionnaire, riding in the parade, who pins on his ribbons and medals...with a prosthetic hand.

He is the old guy at the supermarket check-out, palsied and slow, who helped liberate a Nazi death camp and now wishes all day long that his wife was still alive, to hold him when the nightmares come.

He is an ordinary, yet an extraordinary person who offered some of his most vital years to the service of his Country and who sacrificed his ambitions so others wouldn't have to sacrifice theirs.

He's the man who sells copying machines, who remembers the long hours riding in the nose of a cold B-17 Bomber (temperature: 50 degrees below zero), and the time over targets peering through a bomb sight, ignoring the plane ahead of him that is on fire and the sounds of shrapnel from anti-aircraft shells making holes in his bomber.

He's the old man, who as an 18-year old boy, shouldered his barracks bag and walked up the loading ramp of a troop ship, wondering where he was going and what would happen when he got there. He walks slower these days, avoids stairs that make problems for his arthritic joints. He'd never been more than 150 miles from home before, but learned world geography by "visiting" strange places with exotic names like Alamein, or DaNang, or St,Lo. Who knows about places like Coventry, Dunkirk, or Midway and what happened many years ago at such places.

But because of him and others like him, we still use the English language, in England and America. We're allowed to select the men and women who will make our laws. We have freedom to go and come as we wish, whenever and wherever we want to go. We have watched small children grow up never knowing what it meant to dash to an air raid shelter when airplanes were flying overhead.

So maybe when you see someone who has served our Country, who helped preserve the many things you take for granted, you just might lean over and say:

"THANK YOU"!

****





NOVEMBER 11, 1941 IN PARIS

by Monique Pitts

Paris had been occupied for over a year. The previous year, on November 11, 1940, students had assembled to celebrate Armistice Day,(always observed since the end of WWI with minutes of silence at 11:00 AM. parades, laying wreaths at monuments etc.) During WWII, the Germans had forbidden groups of more than three people. In the beginning they tried to convey a nice image of a tolerant occupation army and I guess it created a problem when they needed to contain crowds of rebellious students.

So, about a week before the 11, the Germans simply arrested a number of known professors, from the University or the Lycées (High Schools). My sister was at that time a senior in our local girl school, and her Math teacher, André Sainte-Laguë, who taught as well in a prestigious Paris Lycée and was president of the Intellectual Workers Federation (CTI), was arrested, along with a few others, as a warning that something would happen to him if students assembled again.

My souvenirs are not clear but I think it worked from the German point of view. What I remember clearly is what M. Sainte-Laguë told his students afterward. He did not know for sure what would happen to him. Though fairly well treated but nevertheless in a prison cell, he expected to have to appear in front of a tribunal. In order to keep in good mental condition, he taught his classes several hours a day to the walls, as if facing his students. He also tried to measure his cell, forcing himself to do all sorts of mental calculations. Eventually, after two weeks he was freed and returned to his cheering students.

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from Bill Overstreet

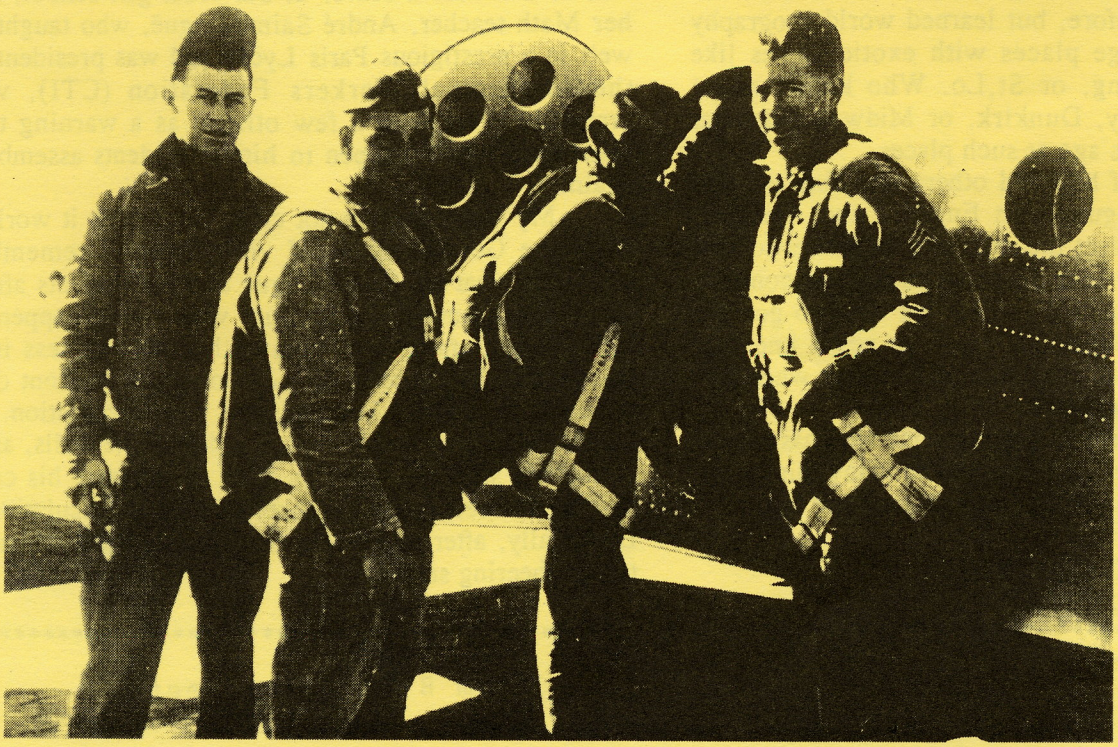


The AT-6 crew chief Corporal "Chuck" Yeager in the cockpit on the flight line at the Victorville Airfield, Calif.

In the early 1940's ????

These two photos were found at a flea market. The buyer gave them to "Bud" Anderson.

Loaned to us via Olmsted.



Crew Chief Corporal "Chuck" Yeager on left with Aircraft crew

SMALL WORLD

B/Gen. Chuck Yeager got a nice surprise when he attended the Air Command & Staff College Graduation and Gathering of Eagles event at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama on June 9, 2000. Student officer escorts are assigned to each attending Eagle to assist during their visit. Army Major Phillip T. Miller readily volunteered for the job since he knew about the 357th Fighter Group and General Yeager from his now deceased Grandfather, M/Sgt. Sam Miller, the former Line Chief for the 363rd Fighter Squadron. Major Miller had several photos including this one of his Grandfather.

From: Bud Anderson and Merle Olmsted



ESCORT DUTY

During the week of 15-22 August 2000, Frank Gailer will be leading a group of ten Aces to Moscow. They have been invited to spend the week with the Russian Veterans and Aces as they celebrate the 55th Anniversary of the ending of World War II.

From Frank Gailer

San Antonio Express-News Monday, May 29, 2000

Yeager flies again in WWII aircraft

By Sig Christenson
EXPRESS-NEWS STAFF WRITER

Randolph AFB had the hot planes and all the hot air that came with them Sunday, but a modest airport a half-hour southwest had the history.

In the cockpits of two P-51 Mustangs sat retired Brig. Gen. Chuck Yeager and retired Col. Clarence E. "Bud" Anderson, 29 ¾ kills, distinguished Air Force careers and a world war between them.

"General, you remember to take your heart medicine?" the P-51's owner, Gary Honbarrier, asked as a grinning Yeager sat in the cockpit.

The joke was aimed at the reporter in the Mustang's back seat, but in a moment of levity was a sobering truth: Time is the ultimate ace.

Yeager, the first man to break the sound barrier, is 77. Anderson, an old friend who has been at his side for decades, is a year older.

"They obviously can't be flying these planes a whole lot longer," observed George Paul, a freelance photographer from San Francisco.

But they did this sunny day.

And they did it with dozens of fellow members of the 357th Fighter Group, their wives and children watching and waving outside the Stinson Municipal Airport terminal.

The flight involved tight formation flying over largely rural areas south of the Alamo City, with a pass above the airport and a "three-ship echelon," a maneuver in which Yeager took his P-51 under the other planes.

"Think of the odds of all this happening," Anderson said. "Two guys, World War II, same squadron, we finished a combat tour together. And then 50 years later well, we're still alive, No. 1, and we can still fly, and not only fly but fly Mustangs. And not just Mustangs — Mustangs painted just like we flew in World War II."

In town for what will be the last time for some, Yeager and the 357th made history fighting over the skies of Europe during World War II, shooting down dozens of German planes in a day. It was in the 357th that Yeager shot down 12½ planes (sharing credit for one of them with another pilot) over 70 missions — including the group's first ME-262 jet — and Anderson got 17¼ kills in 116 missions.

The 357th arrived in England at the end of 1943 with the first P-51s flown by the 8th Air Force, and began escorting a massive bombing campaign designed to crush the German aircraft industry. It quickly racked up a stream of victories as swarms of Luftwaffe planes tried in vain to fend off the swift, deadly Mustangs.

Perhaps its most memorable day was Jan. 14, 1945, when pilots from the group shot down 55½ German fighters over Berlin, setting a record that stands today. The 357th also destroyed 50 enemy aircraft in two days during an airborne landing at Arnhem. By the end of the war, the group had 43 aces, highest in the 8th Air Force, and had racked up 695 aerial victories, second only to another Britain-based fighter group.

Yeager leads P-51 flight at reunion of old outfit

Anderson and four others became triple aces, those with at least 15 victories. Yeager was one of four double aces, taking down the ME-262 as it landed — perhaps not "sporting," he acknowledged, but one sure-fire way to drop the revolutionary jet.

If deadly in the air, Yeager had a kinder, gentler side on the ground.

"He was just like any of us, a regular guy," said retired airline pilot Gilman Weber Sr., 80, of Milner, Ga.

Yeager "is just like he is now, a lot of fun, " said the 357th's communications chief, Art Schalick, 80, of Milline, N.J. "He was a very popular pilot with the ground crew."

A mechanic before becoming a pilot, Yeager was known for having a strong curiosity about the engineering that made airplanes fly.

Still, he was "mischievous," Howard Hinman, 79, of Grand Island, Neb., said, remembering a training school incident that cannot be repeated.

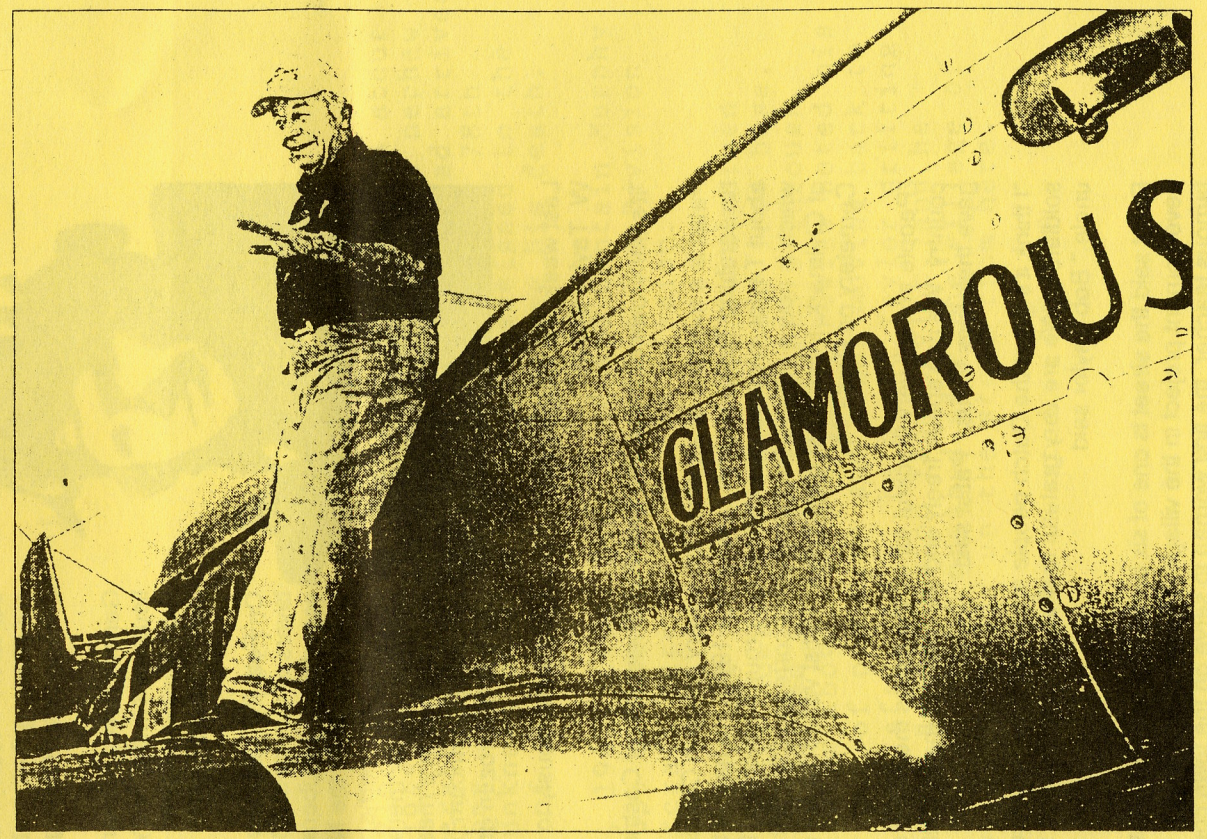
"But I don't want to give the impression that he was anything other than the meticulous and professional pilot that he was," he said.

Or is.

On this day, Yeager never took his eyes off the other two planes as they flew in tight formation. Flying is still fun, but "you're not hyped on the speed or flying itself — you're not addicted to it — you're just happy when you've done a good job," he said. A bad job, he explained, is "when you have to repair the airplane."

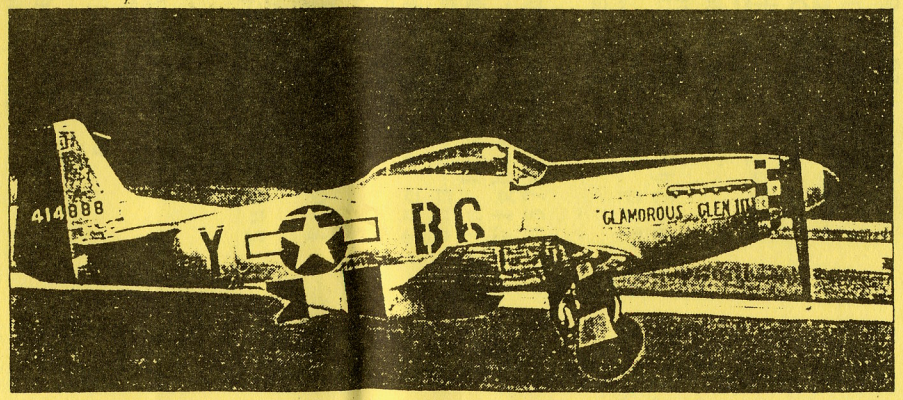
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sigc@express-news.net



PHTOS BY JOHN DAVENPORT/STAFF

Aviation legend Chuck Yeager chats Sunday with admirers from the wing of 'Glamorous Glennis III,' a P-51 Mustang, at Stinson Field.



Chuck Yeager takes off from Stinson Field on Sunday (with reporter Sig Christenson in back) in a P-51 Mustang. Yeager was in town for a reunion of his World War II unit, the 357th Fighter Group.

FINGER LAKES TIMES

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Europeans honoring Geneva native

Jul 5 2000 12:00AM By

By BRIAN P. HEFFRON

Times Staff Writer



GENEVA - Residents of a European village are showing their gratitude to a local man who died there during World War II.

Geneva native Richard Wallace Taylor was a lieutenant in the Army Air Forces, flying a P-51 Mustang fighter for the 357th Fighter Group, 363rd Fighter Squadron.

On Feb. 23, 1945, he was flying between layers of clouds at 18,000 feet on a mission escorting B-24 Liberator heavy bombers to Germany. Over the Netherlands, his plane fell from the sky - perhaps because of a heart condition family members suspect he had - and crashed in a meadow near the small village of Castricum, burying itself 18 to 27 feet into the frozen ground. Taylor was 22.

Last week, the village government voted unanimously to name a street "Richard W. Taylor Straat."

"It's the crown of my work," said Paul Patist, 46, of Castricum.

Patist is a member of an aircraft recovery group in Castricum and has been researching Taylor and his crash since 1993. He has written newspaper articles about Taylor, created an exhibit at his group's museum, found the crash site - which is now a friend's backyard - and corresponded with Taylor's nephew, Bob, of Chilmark, Mass. Last September, Patist visited Taylor's grave in Glenwood Cemetery on Route 14.

"People are still very thankful for all the things the Allied soldiers did for our country. We can speak freely and we owe it to the soldiers who fought for us and gave their lives for us," Patist said.

"I think it's great the Dutch people appreciate the sacrifices made by American soldiers ... We are very grateful to (Patist) for bringing to light the memory of my uncle," Bob Taylor said.

Patist said the street is one of six being built over the next year as part of a development project in the village. The other five streets are being named for a famous teacher, the first woman to serve on the town council, a girl shot by Russians during the Battle of Castricum in 1799, and two local nurses.

Although the street will not be near Taylor's crash site, Patist said its location is very fitting. It is near Bonhoeffer College, which is named for a man killed in 1945 in a concentration camp for speaking against Nazi ideas, and other streets named for members of the resistance.

Patist hopes the street also will honor Taylor's brother, Lt. Robert H. Taylor, who also died during the war. He was flying his B-17 Flying Fortress heavy bomber over the Adriatic Sea on March 11, 1944, when the plane was shot down. Of the 10 crew members and a photographer accompanying them, only three people managed to bail out of the plane, two of whom survived.

Soldiers' families "suffered hard, especially the mother of those two boys, losing both her sons in one year," Patist said.

"We're really excited about it and think it's quite an honor for the whole Taylor family - especially my uncle and my father - as well as the American people. I'm just glad it's not forgotten," Bob Taylor said.

He only wishes his grandmother, Ruth Taylor, had lived to know how much her sons were appreciated by those for whom they gave their lives.

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Subject: Richard Taylor Story.

From : Olmsted

Lt. Richard Taylor was assigned to the 357th Group about the end of January 1945. According to Bob Taylor, his nephew who has done considerable research on his uncle, He had arrived In England in December, 1944 and been assigned to the 78th Figher Group. For unknown reasons he was re-assigned to the 357th about the 1st of February, 3 weeks before his death.

On 23 February, 1945, LtCol Broadhead and Captain Murphy led "A" and "B" groups of the 357th, escorting 2nd Division B-24s. No enemy aircraft were seen on the mission.

Captain Paul Bowles was leading Cement (363rd) Green flight with Taylor as his number 2. On climbout from base, the squadron had been forced to go on instruments through some overcast. Emerging above the overcast, Bowles noted his flight was slightly out of position and began moving back to his proper place. Soon after this, he noted Taylor drifting away. No one heard any transmission from Taylor, and he continued into the overcast and crashed near the village of Castricum. The news story takes up the story from here.

Merle Olmsted. July 00