A LONG KEPT SECRET

As your Editor, I have not been a basic World War II history buff, merely interested in perpetuating the history of the 357th Fighter Group. In November of 2000, we received correspondence from Fred Church our "Friends" member who served on the Leiston Airfield with us in a civilian capacity. Prior to that, he served in the British Royal Marines.

After "Friends" member Gus Clutten died, Fred carried on the duty of acquiring and traveling to the Cambridge Cemetery at Mattingley to lay the 357th F.G. floral wreath.

With Fred's recent correspndence, we received an oversized picture post card (for mailing) with photos of the beach at South Devon, England known as Slapton Sands. A fellow, Ken Small has written a book entitled "The Forgotten Dead" about an event that took place there in early 1944 repeating the story that is on the reverse side of the post card as follows:

The beaches of South Devon were used for five months in early July 1944 for the practice of D-Day after 3500 people were ordered out of their homes from 8 coastal and inland villages covering 25 square miles of South Devon coast in late 1943. Over 1000, mainly teenaged American soldiers and sailors were to die and their loss surrounded in secrecy until Ken Small walked along the beach in the winter of 1969 during a severe storm. Initial finds on the beach were antique coins and jewelry and some of the remains of the live prectice exercise. A Memorial site has been established on the beach mainly consisting of a Sherman tank recovered from the sea. The Memorial also has several plaques representing a 24 year long campaign in England and U.S.A. to ensure that these men are named, honored and not forgotten.

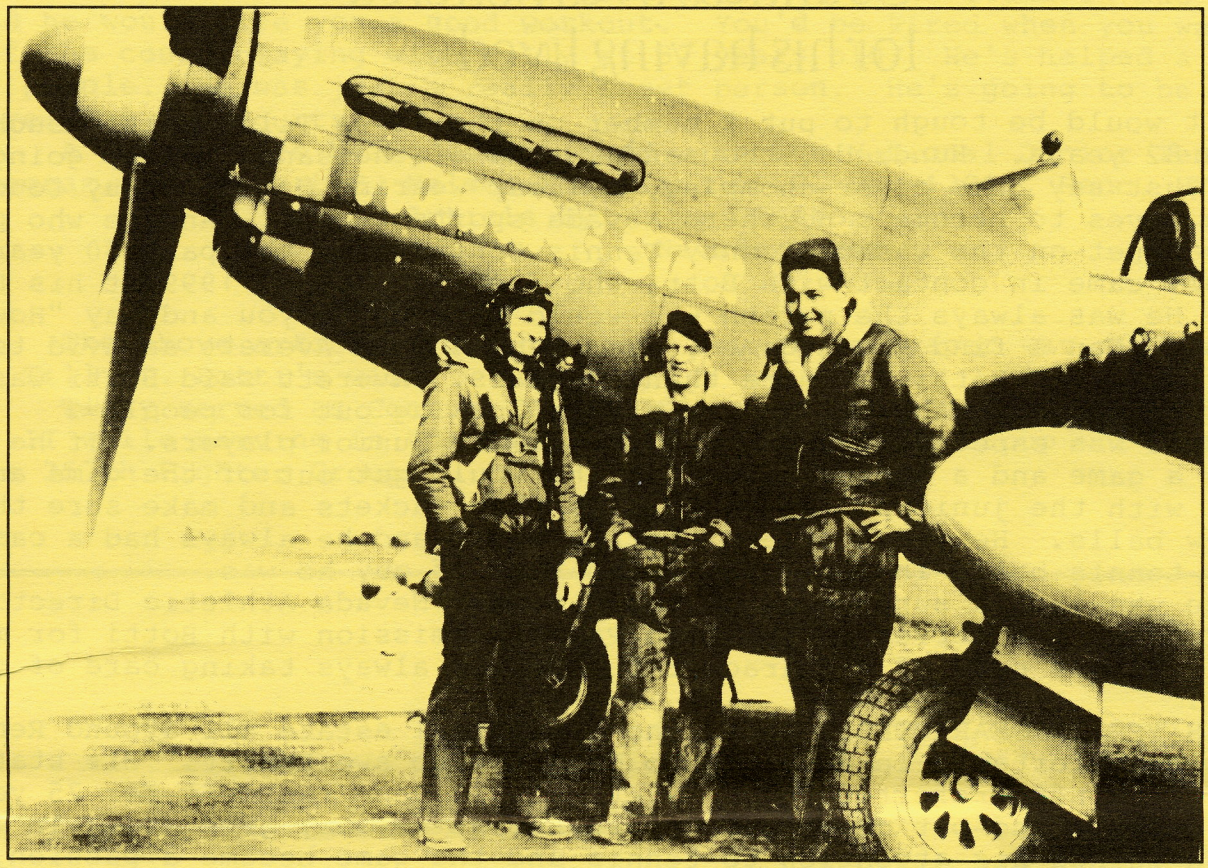
Fred Church vacationed at this area. He tells us the story as follows:

After the long war, this incident was kept very secret. The area around Slapton Sands was cleared of the population for this exercise to take place for it resenbled the area of "Utah and Omaha" beaches in Normandy where they were due to land on D-Day. It was to be a full scale exercise with shelling from the Navy and Artillery and with live ammunition. Nine L.S.T.'s sailed from various ports but unfortunately were spotted by German E. Boats which succeeded in sinking three L.S.T.'s and damaging a fourth. Of the some ten thousand men taking part, nearly a thousand Army and Navy men lost their lives. The search parties, the rescuers, the survivors and even nurses and doctors to which the injured were taken were told not to talk of this to anyone on pain of Court Marshal because this was so close to D-Day. The military authorities could not or would not inform the next of kin for fear the Germans could find out that a landing was in the offing.

The Sherman tank was on the sea bed for forty years until it was raised by Ken Small. Fred Church met Ken Small while there and had a long conversation with him about those times.

Thanks for the story Fred Church.

AN AMERICAN INDIAN WAS ONE OF US





Lt. Tom Martinek, Sgts George Roepke and Roger Stops, 362nd Ftr. Sqdn., 357th Fighter Group.
The Army Air Forces patch was made from beads by Roger's mother and is on deer skin.
The Stops Family were Crow Indian and patch was made on Crow Agency (reservation) in Montana. Given by Stops to John Timpo in 1943 who in turn passed it on to Merle Olmsted in 1999.
Roger Stops passed away in 1991 after having returned to his family at the Agency.

Photos and story, Merle Olmsted

2D BEHIND THE LINES

Countless lives bettered for his having lived

It would be tough to put a number on the lives Tilly Botti touched in his 82 years. Hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands. Keep going! Let's just say this cigar-chomping, ballcap-wearing Mr. Nice Guy touched enough lives to become a northern Nevada sports legend. Anyone who picked up a racquet on the Washoe County Tennis Courts over the past 60 years probably came in contact with Botti who died 18 January 1999 at his Reno home. He was always the person who would come up to you and say "How are you? Can I find you a game", said Reno's Stan Averett an avid tennis player who knew Botti for more than 30 years. Averett said Botti was the organizer down there. He was always looking out for people".

This was especially true when it came to junior players. If he was in a game and a junior came down, he would get out of the game and go hit with the juniors. He would give them rackets and make sure they had new balls. He drove an old station wagon and he always had a case of new tennis balls in it. That's the kind of guy he was.

He was just a super nice guy said former Nevada Athletic Director Dick Trachok who served on the Reno Parks Commission with Botti for many years. He was sort of a character but he was always taking care of those courts.

AH YES, A CHARACTER! Botti who owned real estate all around Reno was most comfortable in an old Reno Tennis Club sweatshirt. His station wagon was kindly referred to as "vintage". A Reno resident for 75 years, Botti was a stand-out cross country runner at Nevada, graduating in 1940. He soon turned his attention to tennis and the game became a passion.

"I work when I want to work" he said in a 1985 interview. "Tennis is the number one priority". A World War II Army Veteran, he stayed active in the Nevada Air National Guard retiring with the rank of L/Col. However he was able to maintain his unique individualism against the backdrop of military rules and regulations.

"I was in the Guard with him" recalled Monsignor Leo McFadden who eulogized Botti at the services. "The Guard was activated in January of 68' and released from active duty 18 months later. Through some scallywag deal, he had signed up for a tournament in Florida. He got himself placed on active duty for three more months just to play in the tournament".

THEN THERE WAS THE EVER-PRESENT CIGAR.

"In the old days, he used to smoke those Clint Eastwood cigars, the real small ones" Averett said. "He'd start playing and throw one down on a hard point. Days later you'd be playing with him again and he'd spot that cigar and pick it up and start chewing on it again". Sometimes he wouldn't put out the stogie at all whether he was playing or not. "I played two sets yesterday and my cigar didn't go out once" he said in a 1975 interview. "I'll bet some doctors would like to look at my lungs".

Quirks aside, Botti's heart was always in the right place. He was a kind and gentle man. The Washoe County Tennis Courts, tucked between the 11th and 14th holes at Washoe Golf Course were Botti's second home. He even had a garden and would often share the fruits of his labor, expecially his home-grown garlic, with local players.

The courts were dedicated to him a few years back. Tennis was his second love (his wife, Jo was first) and he played it all his life, even into his 80's. He couldn't run around but he would stand in one spot and he would give you a good workout. You'd be tired when you walked off the court playing with Tilly at 82 years old. He's helped a lot of people. He was just a really sweet person. He's going to be missed sorely at the courts.

A memorial is being established with the National Junior Tennis Program, c/o Robert E. Nelson-Kourtland, P.O. Box 12816, Reno, NV 89510.

Article By: Guy Clifton
Nevada Notes

The above article from the Reno, Nevada newspaper was sent to us by Tilly P. Botti's wife.

Tilly served as Control Tower Officer at the Leiston Airfield during WW II while serving in the 50th - 439th Air Service Group who supported the 357th Fighter Group.

NORTHWEST USA GET-TOGETHER



Kenneth Arveson Margreth Olmsted John C. Howell
Merle Olmsted Beth Arveson Mike Howell

LOSS OF A "FRIENDS" MEMBER

Barker, Peter of Leiston on 18 August 2000. A committee man for the "Friends of Leiston Airfield". Former leader of the Air Training Corp. at Leiston. Played a big part in bringing about the original smaller airfield memorial in Gus Clutten's time. A very artistic person who could write script at ease and created pencil sketches of many 357th Fighter Group Aircraft. He was a collector of World War II air war artifacts and 357th memorabelia. A man who was proud to be associated with the people of the 357th Fighter Group. He will be missed by many.

LOSS OF CO-PILOTS

Anita Gilman, 21 July 2000, wife of Ernest Gilman (364th F.S. Roll of Honor), Crew Chief of the AT-6 Texan Aircraft. "Ernie" had the name Anita Theresa painted in writing on his aircraft in a most legible manner. When the war came to an end, Ernie married Anita Theresa. This couple attended the first gathering of 357th F.G. veterans at Hartford, Conn. in 1967.

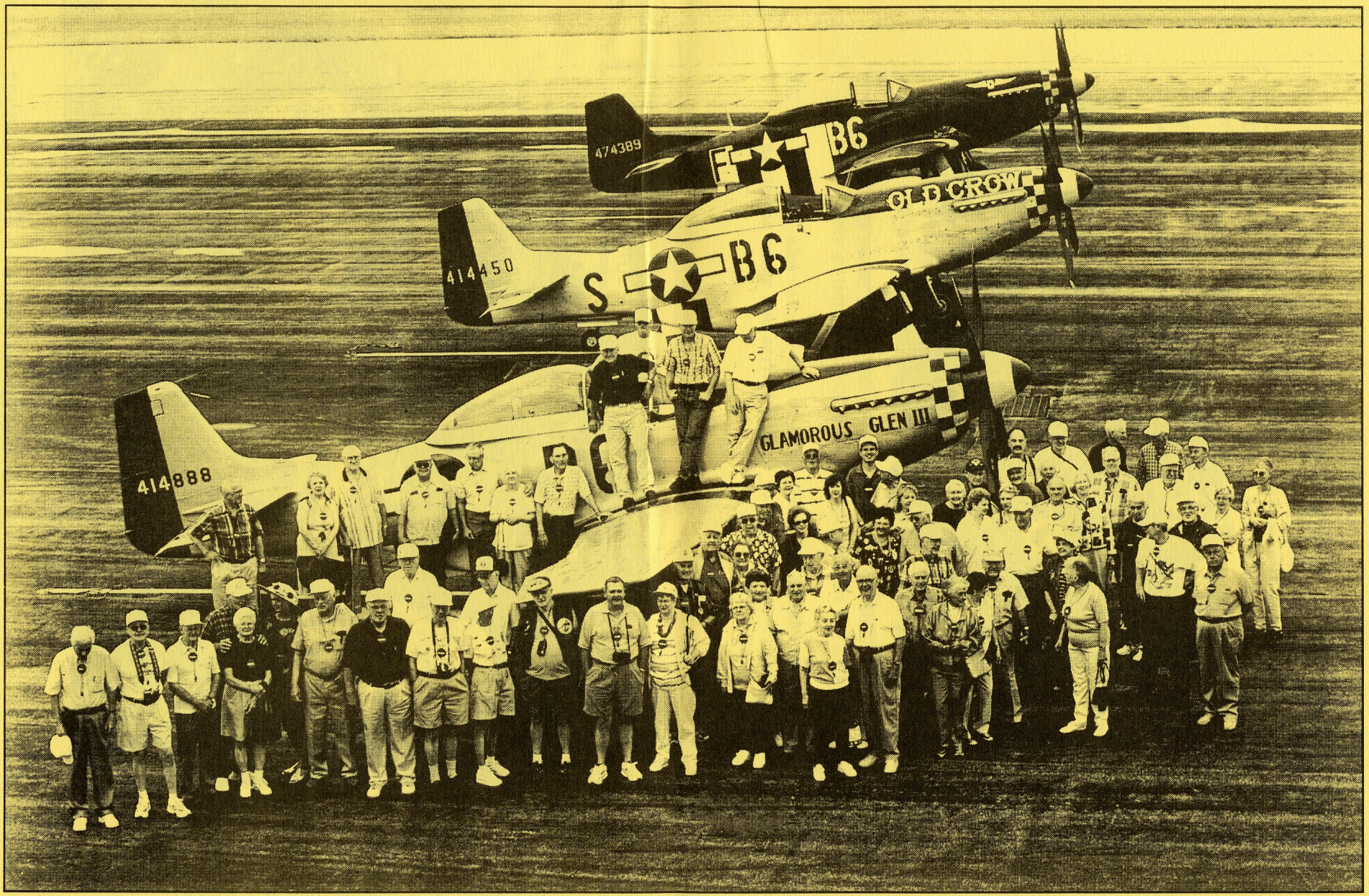
Martha Spicer, 16 October 2000, wife of Dick Spicer a 364th F.S.Crew Chief.

INFORMATION REQUESTED

Can any of our members help nephew Ed Jenest learn about his Uncle John G. Jenest a pilot of the 362nd F.S. If so contact Merle Olmsted or Joe De Shay?

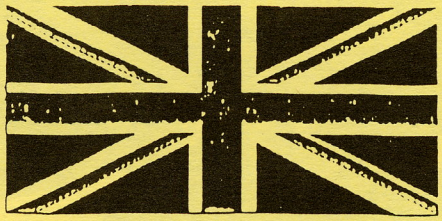


Communal site at the Leiston Airfield,England



MAY 2000 SAN ANTONIO REUNION OF THE 357TH FIGHTER GROUP ASOCIATION

The following article was published in the 486th Bomb Group Newsletter. It is a fine tribute to the 8th Air Force. There was no date included as to when the speech was given.



A TRIBUTE

We need to pay our tribute of respect and admiration to the officers and men who fought and died in the fearful battle of the air, the like of which had never before been known, or even with any precision, imagined. The moral test to which the crew of a bomber were subjected reached the limits of human valour and sacrifice. Here chance was carried to its most extreme and violent degree above all else. There was a rule that no one should go on more than 30 raids without a break. But many who entered on their last dozen wild adventures felt that the odds against them were increasing. How can one be lucky thirty times running in a world of averages and machinery? Detective-Constable McSweeney, one of the Scotland yard officers who looked after me during the early days of the war, was determined to fight in a bomber. I saw him several times during his training and his fighting. One day, gay and jaunty as ever but with a thoughtful look, he said, "My next will be my twenty-ninth." It was his last.

Not only our hearts and admiration, but our minds in strong comprehension of those ordeals must go out to these heroic men whose duty to their country and cause sustained them in superhuman trials.

I have mentioned facts like, "the Americans had 60 of their large Fortress aircraft destroyed out of 291, " and on another occasion, " out of 795 aircraft dispatched by British Bomber Command against Nuremberg, 94 did not return."

The American Fortresses carried a crew of ten men, and the British night bombers seven. Here have each time six or seven hundred of these skilled, highly trained warriors lost in an hour. This was indeed ordeal by fire.

In the British and American bombing of Germany and Italy during the war, the casualties were over a hundred and forty thousand, and in the period with which this chapter deals there were more British and American aircrews casualties than there were killed and wounded in the great operation of crossing the Channel. These heroes never flinched or failed. It is to their devotion that in no small measure we owe our victory.

Let us give them our salute.

Winston Churchill

Carbide Retiree Corp, Inc.
TEXAS CITY AREA CHAPTER
NEWSLETTER
1-4-2000

HAPPY NEW YEAR Y'ALL

A HERO IN OUR MIDST

by Les Schroeder

You have heard of the swash-buckling fighter pilots and their antics during each of the wars. They were self-assured, high ego types that didn't always go by the rules, caused a lot of trouble for their superiors and they always came out on the good end of the story. James Cagney portrayed the stereo-type in "Captain of the Clouds." I would imagine there are still a few of this type around today, but in our midst, there is a different kind of man. He's a quiet man, a good man, but a strong man. You would never know, just by talking to him that he was a fighter pilot of a North American P-51 Mustang fighter in World War II. He is ***Hollis (Bud) Nowlin*** and he was a member of the 357th Fighter Group of the 8th Air Force. That group had more aces (pilots who shot down five or more enemy planes) than in any other group in the Air Force.

War is an ugly thing and it was a custom to shoot the pilot of a downed aircraft so he couldn't return and fight again, but this wasn't the fate of a German fighter pilot back in August of 1944. He had an encounter with a good man who respected the German pilot as a human being fighting for his country just as Bud was doing. Bud knocked the German Ace (Gunther Schack) out of the air, but he didn't kill him. He flew along side him and give him a wave of acknowledgment. After the war, Gunther decided he wanted to meet the man that spared his life on that day in August. He had a friend do some research to find Bud, and a relationship began. Bud later said he was glad he didn't finish the job of killing Gunther, because a good and lasting friendship developed that lasted until Mr. Schack died. They corresponded by letter and Bud and his wife, Myrtle, visited Gunther in Germany after the war. Mr. Schack came to the United States and visited at a reunion of the 357th in August of 1991.

In case you didn't know it, Bud was commended by President Boris Yeltsin and awarded the Commemorative Medal at "the 50th Anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War" (World War II) for his part in the protection of Russia. We know it brought back memories of the good and the bad of that terrible time, but we are proud of this quiet good man. **BUD**! Thanks for helping preserve our country and freedom.

363rd FIGHTER SQUADRON - 357th FIGHTER GROUP

Dear Mr. De Shay and 357th F.G. Members;

My name is Beverly Collet Schabram and I am the daughter of Marvin "Dude" Collet who was a member of the subject line above. If you are interested, here is a link to my web page honoring my family: http:www.bjslifetime.homestead,com/index.html

When it was time for the 50th Anniversary of World War II, there was a reporter in the town my father lives in (West Union, Iowa) who found out he was a veteran of that war. This young man, Jack Swanson was a history buff of that time. He called my father and wanted to interview him. My father with tongue in cheek, told him ok. I thought you might like to read the article that was written. Unfortunately, I have had the article preserved in a frame so I am unable to print you a copy. I would guess that the Union Paper in West Union, Iowa would be able to get one from their archives. I have typed the article in it's entirety. I do not have Mr. Yeager's e-mail so am hoping this can somehow reach him. My father was so very fond of "ALL HIS BOYS" and just recently started reliving some of his memories. In the past, he never talked about those days nor were we girls very interested in them until this article appeared. I hope you enjoy it. The headline reads:

COLLET KEPT CHUCK YEAGER, CHECKERBOARD BOYS FLYING

Bringing the War to Life by Jack Swanson

As those of you who are my regular column readers know, (I know there are darn few of you so I'll say it again) I have a real affection for World War II flying machines. Recently I had the privilege of talking to a person who has lived the kind of stuff I have only imagined. His name is Marvin "everybody calls me Dude" Collet and from just talking with him for a short while, you could tell that he is the kind of guy that you see often in movies and read about in war diaries and historical accounts. No, he is not the guy out there fighting off the enemy single-handedly or one of the great strategists planning the next stage of attack. He's the good ole SARGE. Maybe it's because he was a 1st Sergeant in the Air Force that qualifies him for this type casting, or maybe the type casting actually did come from people like him.

Dude ran ground operations for a Fighter Squadron in England in WWII. He hobnobbed with Aces and Commanders but to Dude, they were all just people. To Dude, he and them were just doing a job that anybody else could or would do if they had to do. One of the pilots in Dude's squad was Chuck Yeager, but to Dude, he was just another one of his pilots and another one of his friends. Just because he might have shot down more planes than another pilot, gave him no special ranking with Dude. His duties to Yeager were no different than to the new pilot coming in with fuzz still covering his cheeks. They were all his boys and he was proud of them. Dude has a natural way of taking people in, that's probably why he made a great 1st Sergeant and he took me in too, opening up his memories and archives to me but not making me feel like I was prying or unwelcome. Dude's photo albums and memories are a virtual library, sprinkled with his own personal wit and insight. In simple words, he makes history come alive. I wouldn't say that Dude loved war but I would say he loves a time when young men took the controls of a big powerful bird and rode off to glory. I think he loved being there for them and

witnessing their triumphs and I think he loved knowing that somehow, some way, he had helped to make it happen. I have talked to several other area residents about World War II this year because it is the 50th Anniversary of that war and all of them have been interesting to say the least. I think Dude stands out in my mind because of the enthusiasm he creates with his memories.

He wasn't an Ace, he wasn't even a Pilot and he'll be the first to tell you he wasn't a hero. So you may be asking yourself right now, why do we care about this guy ? Well he was in the Air Force, he was in World War II and he was, to some people, a hero. This being the 50th Anniversary of World War II, it is a time that many Americans are looking back and recognizing those who contributed to that effort fifty years ago. It's easy to recognize people like Chuck Yeager for their contributions, but what about the people that kept people like Yeager in the air. What about the people that made sure there was fuel in his plane, food in his stomach and clothes on his back --- him and hundreds of others like him. Marvin "Dude" Collet was one of these men behind the scenes. His actions will never be dramatized in a movie and no one will be knocking on his door to write his life story but he has the respect of people like Chuck Yeager and many other Fighter Pilots and that's enough for him. Collet, now of West Union was a clothing store manager from Salisbury, MO when he enlisted in the Air Force in June of 1941. In 1943, he was sent to Leiston, England and was the First Sergeant of the 363rd Fighter Squadron of the 357th Fighter Group of the Eighth Air Force. Collet was in charge of all the enlisted personnel in the 363rd Squadron. It was up to him to make sure all the duties needed to keep the planes and pilots flying were done and he delegated those duties throughout the squadron.

"I'm no hero", Collet emphasizes as he tries to describe what life was like on that base almost 50 years ago. Although he hesitates to tell about his own duties and actions during the war, he is more than willing to talk about men like Chuck Yeager and his wingman C.E. (Andy) Anderson and other pilots in his squadron who became aces and are considered by many to be heroes. But to Dude Collet, the 250 men in his squad, enlisted men and pilots alike, were no different in his book. They all had a job to do and they did it. Although Yeager's story is quite well known now because of the book and movie, "The Right Stuff", Collet said other pilots were just as important as Yeager was during the war effort. "He was just another pilot", Collet said about Yeager. The whole Group was given Presidential Citations on three occasions. They downed over 530 German planes and flew over 50 missions. The pilots got so good that the Germans had a special name for them, "The Checkerboard Boys" for the checkerboard pattern they painted on the front of their P-51 Mustangs. Despite their reputation, there were still losses. Collet said the Group lost three of their four Commanding Officers in the two years he was there besides many pilots. "It got to be such a fast turnover that you didn't even get to know the pilots", Collet related. But Collet tried to know them. He had the personnel from the photo lab take pictures of all the pilots and men in the squad. These pictures are still in his photo album. It seems like Collet's interest in the individuals in his squadron had a profound effect. Many years after the war, Collet visited a Confederate Air Force Airshow in Texas in 1986 and it just so happened that Gen. Chuck Yeager was going to make an appearance at the show. Well

one thing led to another and soon the old war buddies found themselves standing face to face.

"Hello General Yeager", Collet said. "Don't call me General. You and I are Sergeant and Chuck" Yeager admonished him and the old friendship was back on. "He said let's have our picture taken. So we did. He told me how they used to call me the Old Man", Collet related. Collet said he was 28 at the time and Yeager was 21. Collet's wife, Verna made the trip with him and said Yeager was a "down to earth good guy, as common as an old shoe". Talking about Yeager again stirred up old memories. "He lived and breathed flying. If he got after a plane, you just couldn't stop him", Collet related.

Collet's eyes lit up as he remembered the pilots coming back from their missions. "We'd stand out in the yard and they'd make a circle. They could tell us before they landed what they did. A full roll meant a kill. A half-roll meant they had assisted in shooting down a plane. We knew how many they had shot down that way", Collet explained. "We would clap and yell but the pilots wouldn't brag about it later", he said. Losses, Collet said was something one merely had to accept. "We finally got used to it. There was no use to wonder. If he does make it back, okay, if he doesn't, okay and we have to go on", he said. Collet watched with pride as the pilots became more experienced and became better flyers. "They got so they enjoyed going after them", he related. Collet also remembers the dreaded German buzz bombs and V-2 rockets. We heard them come right over camp. We could see them too. We'd just watch them and say "go on, go on" he said. He said the pilots got good at flying next to the rockets and using their plane wings to flip the rockets over sending them into the channel. One bomb did hit their field and blew a hole eight feet deep and 16 feet in diameter into the end of their runway.

In July of 1945, Dude Collet was on his way home. He had a 15 month old daughter waiting for him that he had never seen. He was not a hero, he had not fired a gun but he had seen boys become men and find glory in a roaring soaring machine of gleaming metal and he had been a part of it. That was enough for him!!

Mr. De Shay there were three photos that accompanied the article. One was of my father in his uniform with this caption under it. First Sergeant "Marvin Dude Collet" seen here in a photo from 1943. He was a First sergeant in the 363rd Fighter Squadron. The second photo's caption read: Collection of memories. These photos are part of Dude Collet's war-time memories. The top two photos were given to him by Gen. Chuck Yeager. The left photo of Yeager (center) and his P-51 named "Glamorous Glennis" is inscribed "To the Good Ole Days", the right photo of Yeager in later years says "You guys were great during WW II, Thanks!" The photos of the pilots in Collet's squadron were taken during the war. Yeager is in the bottom row without a helmet. (7 pilots shown) And the last picture is one of my father holding his photo album and the caption reads, Young Warriors, Marvin Collet still keeps the pictures of the pilots in his squadron during World War II. Chuck Yeager was one of the more famous pilots to fly in that squadron. His picture is right above Collet's left hand. The photo near Collet's right hand was given to him by Yeager in 1986. It shows Yeager (center) and his p-51 Mustang "Glamorous Glennis". (6 more pilots displayed)

Mr. De Shay I hope I haven't bored you. If there are any other people

you think might be interested in this article, please feel free to pass it on. If anyone would like to talk with my father, they can e-mail him at my e-mail address or use his address on your mailing list. Marvin Collet, 122 Linden, West Union, Iowa 50471. His phone number (when in Iowa, he now travels between his three daughters visiting and spending winters away from Iowa) is 319-422-5296. I can always be reached at this e-mail and I can make sure to forward any messages from anyone to him to either of my sisters who also have computers. My father tears up a lot now when he recalls "His Boys".
Sincerely,
Beverly Collet Schabram
bschabrm@iland.net

SEPTEMBER NEW ORLEANS MIMI REUNION

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9



10 11 12 13

1. Basil A. Rockels (Herschel Pascoe's brother-in-law)
2. Lloyd Luukkonen
3. Eddie Gregory
4. Walter Baker (487th Bmb.Grp.)
5. Lloyd Zachariae
6. Carroll Ofsthun
7. Johnny Bright
8. Robert Shearer
9. John Bacon
10. Gray Berg
11. Joe Cannon
12. Ray Lepore
13. John Swan