

Thomas L. Hayes
364th Squadron Commander
8 July,1943 to 14 August,1944

Deputy Group Commander
15 August,1944

To My 357th Fighter Group Friends:

I am enclosing a photo of my P-51 Aircraft of WW II "Maizie R" coded C5-C of the 364th Fighter Squadron. I am sitting on the wing with Assistant Crew Chief Richard Spicer and Crew Chief John Shultz on the fuselage.

I am writing about something that you might like to hear about. Perhaps someone has written about it before. I don't have the exact facts but I relate what I know to be awfully close.

The "Mazie R", "Pride of the Yanks" and the "Fighting Panther" came to the 357th F.G. via a U.S. War Bond drive that allowed the winners to name the aircraft. John Shultz and Dick Spicer of the 364th Fighter Squadron were given the "Mazie R" or C5-C and I was assigned as Pilot. I don't know who got the other two "War Bond" Aircraft. I believe one was shot down rather soon. I do know that John and Dick both received the Bronze Star Medal for the performance of our aircraft. Our aircraft Armorer was Morton Hyman.

The "Mazie R" completer over 600 flying hours without aborting a mission at least when I flew it and it never had any battle damage. This aircraft had a dash-3 class engine with a super charger that cut in at a higher point in time than the dash-7 class engines. This made it better at altitude and it was about ten miles per hour faster airspeed than the dash-7 engines. They removed the "bird cage" canopy off the cockpit and replaced it with the English type "bubble" canopy so it had better visibility than the P-51D models. The "Mazie R" was a model P-51C.

I had the good fortune of flying the P-51's from models A through H and the "Mazie R" model C was the best of the bunch.

HATS OFF to my Crew for they were wonderful and probably a good number of us Pilots owe our lives to them.

Hope to see you in Dayton in September.

Cheers,
John Salsman



photo-Salsman

Lt. Edward H. O'Hare, Navy Pilot

World War II produced many heroes. One such man was Butch O'Hare. He was a fighter pilot assigned to an aircraft carrier in the South Pacific. One day his entire squadron was sent on a mission. After he was airborne, he looked at his fuel gauge and realized that someone had forgotten to top off his fuel tank. He would not have enough fuel to complete his mission and get back to his ship. His flight leader told him to return to the carrier. Reluctantly he dropped out of formation and headed back to the fleet. As he was returning to the mother ship, he saw something that turned his blood cold. A squadron of Japanese Zeroes were speeding their way toward the American fleet. The American fighters were gone on a sortie and the fleet was all but defenseless. He couldn't reach his squadron and bring them back in time to save the fleet. Nor could he warn the fleet of the approaching danger.

There was only one thing to do. He must somehow divert them from the fleet. Laying aside all thoughts of personal safety, he dove into the formation of Japanese planes. Wing-mounted 50 calibers blazed as he charged in, attacking one surprised enemy plane and then another. Butch weaved in and out of the now broken formation and fired at as many planes as possible until finally all his ammunition was spent.

Undaunted, he continued the assault. He dove at the Zeroes, trying to at least clip off a wing or tail, in hopes of damaging as many enemy planes as possible and rendering them unfit to fly. He was desperate to do anything he could to keep them from reaching the American ships.

Finally, the exasperated Japanese squadron took off in another direction. Deeply relieved, Butch O'Hare and his tattered fighter limped back to the carrier. Upon arrival he reported in and related the events surrounding his return. The film from the camera mounted on his plane told the tale. It showed the extent of Butch's daring attempt to protect his fleet. He was recognized as a hero and given one of the nation's highest military honors. And today, O'Hare Airport in Chicago is named in tribute to the courage of this great man.

Some years earlier there was a man in Chicago called Easy Eddie. At that time, Al Capone virtually owned the city. Capone wasn't famous for anything heroic. His exploits were anything but praiseworthy. He was, however, notorious for enmeshing the city of Chicago in everything from bootlegging booze and prostitution to murder. Easy Eddie was Capone's lawyer and for a good reason. He was very good! In fact, his skill at legal maneuvering kept Big Al out of jail for a long time.

To show his appreciation, Capone paid him very well. Not only was the money big; Eddie got special dividends. For instance, he and his family occupied a fenced-in mansion with live-in help and all of the conveniences of the day. The estate was so large that it filled an entire Chicago city block. Yes, Eddie lived the high life of the Chicago mob and gave little consideration to the atrocities that went on around him.

Eddy did have one soft spot, however. He had a son that he loved dearly. Eddy saw to it that his young son had the best of everything; clothes, cars, and a good education. Nothing was withheld. Price was no object. And, despite his involvement with organized crime, Eddie even tried to teach him right from wrong. Yes, Eddie tried to teach his son to rise above his own sordid life. He wanted him to be a better man than he was. Yet, with all his wealth and influence, there were two things that Eddie couldn't give his son. Two things that Eddie sacrificed to the Capone mob that he could not pass on to his beloved son...a good name and a good example.

One day, Easy Eddie reached a difficult decision. Offering his son a good name was far more important than all the riches he could lavish on him. He had to rectify all the wrong that he had done. He would go to the authorities and tell the truth about Scar-face Al Capone. He would try to clean up his tarnished name and offer his son some semblance of integrity. To do this he must testify against The Mob, and he knew that the cost would be great. But more than anything, he wanted to be an example to his son. He wanted to do his best to make restoration and hopefully have a good name to leave his son. So, he testified. Within the year, Easy Eddie's life ended in a blaze of gunfire on a lonely Chicago street. He had given his son the greatest gift he had to offer at the greatest price he would ever pay.

I know what you're thinking. What do these two stories have to do with one another? Well you see ...
Butch O'Hare was Easy Eddie's son!



TOP: OVERSTREET, ANXENY, SITZER
CENTER: CONLIN, CARDER, MAXWELL
BOTTOM:(corners) MACE, FREY
GROUP: STEPELTON, KOKO (KIA)
STORCH, RUDER (KIA) CONKLIN (POW)

Olmsted photos



TOP LEFT: 364th Crew Chiefs Bill Hood & Henry Schmidt seeking oil leak

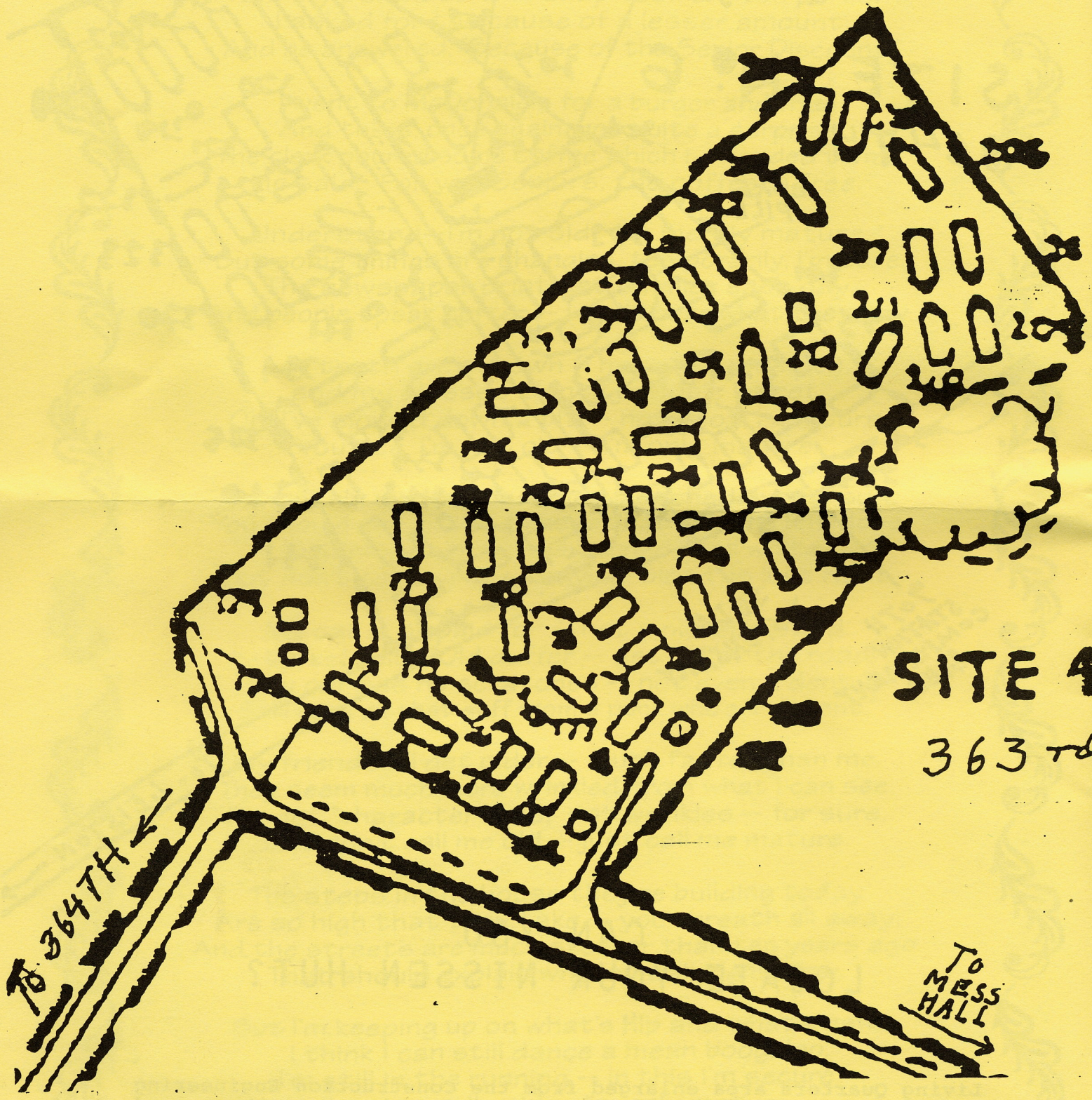
TOP RIGHT: 364th Radio Men Fred Sieb & Billy Kubisiak eliminating static

CENTER LEFT: 362nd R.D.F. men Bill Lanier, Bob Shearer & Roy Johnson talking down an aircraft needing help

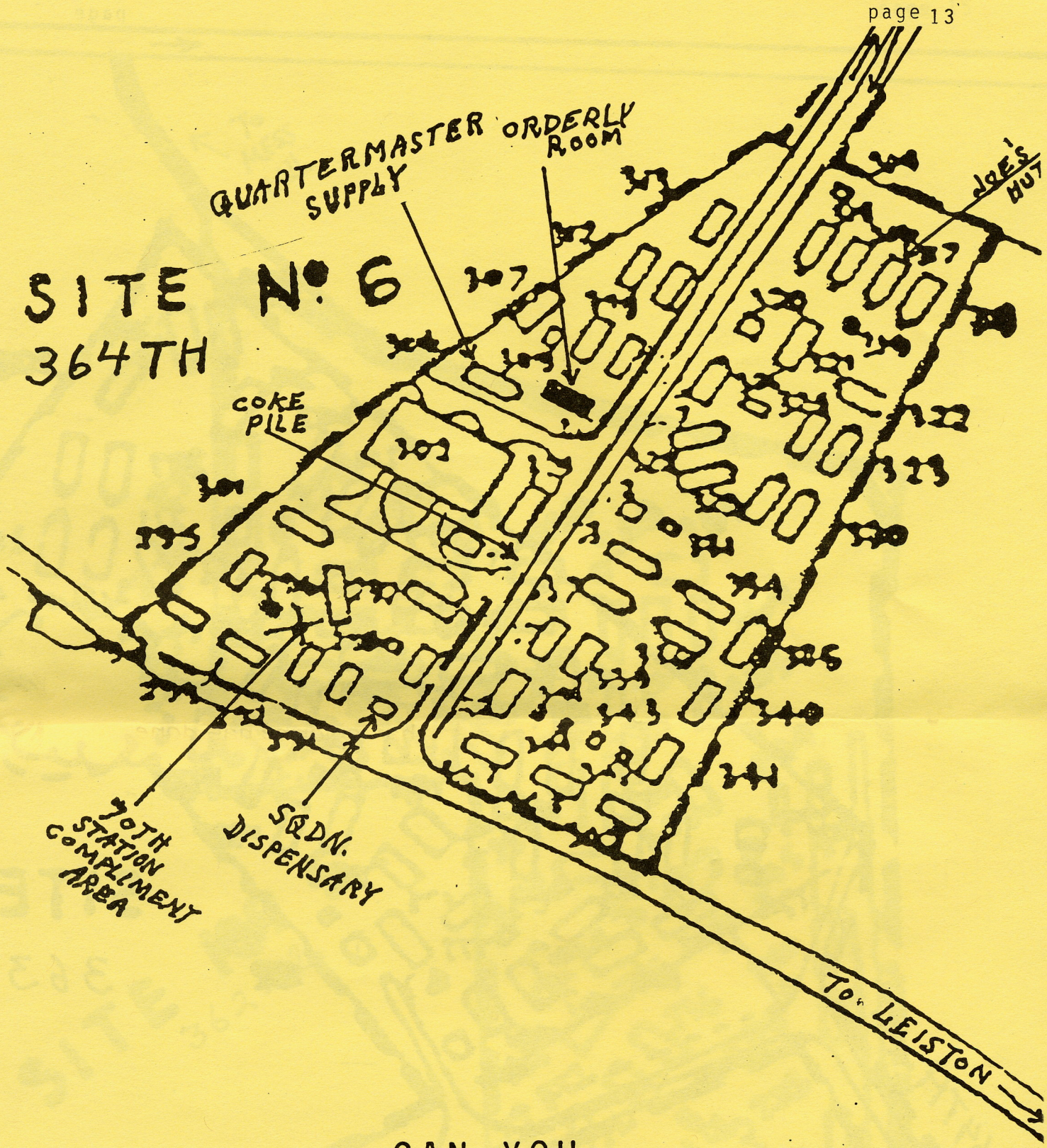
CENTER: 363rd Line Chief M/Sgt. Sam Miller's watchful eye

LOWER LEFT: 363rd Crew Chief Ray McCain & Lt. Marion Burnett (KIA)

LOWER RIGHT: 363rd Gun Site Specialist Idolo Augugliaro doing his bit.


SITE 4
363 rd
TO 364TH
TO MESS HALL


To MESS HALL
SITE No. 5.
362nd.



CAN YOU LOCATE YOUR NISSEN HUT?

Living Quarters area enlarged from the Construction Engineering map of the Leiston Airfield. The obliterated numbers are those used by the Engineers to number their buildings and are not the numbers that the military used to number their Nissen Huts.