

A note about Fred Smith's WWII Story:

We are adding Fred Smith's story to this website because he is truly an American Hero from the greatest generation. It has nothing to do with the Lone Pine Cemetery except that he is a descendant of pioneers buried there and this is his story from World War II. In the press release about his retirement as President of Friends of Lone Pine Cemetery, we mentioned that he was a highly decorated Fighter Pilot of WWII; that is a great understatement. Please read his story and you be the judge.

Fred joined the U.S. Army at the age of nineteen and became a highly decorated Fighter Pilot during WWII in the European and African theatres, flying 173 missions.

(Ed Note): More US servicemen died in WWII in the Air Corps than the Marine Corps. While completing the required 30 missions, your chance of being killed was 71%.

It's a wonderful story and well worth your time!

Fred Smith's WWII Story

There were seven of us from the Wallace, Kellogg Idaho area that enlisted together. While we were in the process of becoming full-fledged army privates, I said to myself, wow what have I done to myself? If I could have backed out of the enlistment agreement I'm sure I would have. Oh well, I guess things worked out for the best in the long run.

I would like to say that I knew WWII was coming when I enlisted June 19 of 1941 but "taintso". I had been drinking "fire water" and when this Sgt. recruiter told me I could be a pilot, I signed up. He made me go home and get a note from my father, and sure enough, Dad was very happy to see his son get the discipline he thought I needed, He whipped out his pen, signed, and the next day I was on my way to Spokane, WA for induction into the "glorious realms of the Wild Blue Yonder." I was in the Army Air corps. I was 19 years old.

I went to Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, MO, for indoctrination. How many medical shots can one guy stand? I sure was sick and sore and I did not like the Army one bit. I signed up for mechanics school and spent six months at Chanute Field near Chicago, IL. I graduated from there and went to Bakersfield, California as a crew chief on a BT-13A Vultee basic trainer airplane. I passed some written tests for pilot training as the Army had originally promised. They sent me to Maxwell Field in Montgomery, AL for preflight training. Next came nine weeks at the Mississippi Institute of Aviation in Jackson, MS for primary flight training.

We flew the Stearman PT-17. Then I went on to Cochran Field in Macon, Georgia, where I flew the "Vultee Vibrator" BT-13A basic trainer. From there I went to Dothan, Alabama, for advanced training in the North American AT-6A. After 36 weeks, I was a pilot.

On October 12th I went to Drew Field in Florida for "Fighter" training, this lasted less than a month. With 13 hours and 25 minutes of training in the P-40F5CU I was ready for combat.

The last week in November I went to England on the Queen Elizabeth along with 15,000 other troops. There were 60 of us in one room that would normally hold four 1st class passengers. Our bunks were made out of two by fours, they were five high from

the floor, about two feet wide with just enough length for a man and his duffel bag to crowd in. I rarely slept in this assigned room as it took five to ten minutes to get into or out of it. There was only one way passage between the tiers of bunks. It took most of the day to eat. We got in line for breakfast and when we finished washing our mess kit we got in line again for the evening meal, two meals a day. Many of us were sea sick, so we slept sitting up in the aisles. The trip from Newport News to Scotland took only five days. In England, there were no American aircraft available to fly, so we flew very little at this time. I flew the British Miles Master and a Fighter called the Hurricane a few times.

On January 22 1943, we sailed on a P & O [Pacific and Orient] ship to Casablanca, Africa. It was an H.M.S. ship named the Strathnaver. The accommodations were great, good food and plenty of time to play cards. Every morning, a crew member would bring tea to our stateroom (we had only six men to a room this time). He would call out "show a leg" and we wondered why until he told us that it was an old custom on British ships when wives were allowed on some voyages with their crew mates. When the crew were awakened prior to going on duty the steward would shout "show a leg" and if the leg pushed out from under the covers was smooth that leg got to stay in bed, but if it was a hairy leg the steward jerked the owner out of bed and sent him on his way. for many years I would say to my wife nearly every morning "show a leg".

The invasion of Africa had started on November 8th, 1942. We were to be the first group of pilots to supplement the buildup of the 12th Air Force. We arrived in Africa in early February with no squadron to go to and no airplanes to fly. We were sent to an airfield not too far from Casablanca and, woe is me, there were a few beat up P-40's and about 8 Bell Aircobra P-39M's. There was very little flying and nothing else to do except play poker and black jack. I became a P-39 pilot at this time as there were no P-40 squadrons in the area. There were 67 of us pilots that had graduated from flying school about the same time and had moved together in England and then to Africa. We seemed to be "lost" in the replacement depot, so we got together and formed the 67 "Sad Sacks". A leather patch to be worn on our flight jacket was designed - a potato sack with tears coming out of its eyes and the number 67 as a back ground. I still have that patch and an article from the Stars and Stripes paper telling about our "Lost" squadron in Africa. Twenty years ago, a young fellow tracked me down; he was a collector of WWII Air medals, patches wings, etc. He offered me \$50.00 for that 4" round patch that had become rather tattered and worn. I didn't sell it. I'll bet there aren't over three or four of them left by now. One of my great great grandsons can probably get a couple hundred bucks for that little piece of leather in 2052 or so.

I forgot to mention that I graduated as a Staff Sgt. Pilot and somewhere between the U.S. and Africa I had been promoted to Flight Officer or F /0 as we were known. Someone tried to put a 3rd Lieutenant tag on us but it didn't stick. Before I was a pilot, I was a \$21 a month private (not even "First Class"). I spent seven months as a private at \$21.00 a month, four months as a Staff Sgt. at \$182.00, 16 months as a Flight Officer at

\$270.00 a month, six months as a 2nd Lieutenant at \$270.00 a month, five months as a 1st Lieutenant at \$286.00 a month, and 11 months as a Captain at \$328.00 a month. All of the above dollars included flight pay and overseas allowances. From this repl-depo in Africa, 30 of us were sent to the 350th Fighter Group. The 350th Fighter Group was made up of three fighter Squadrons. The 345th, 346th, and 347th Fighter Squadrons. I went to the 346th Fighter Squadron along with about ten guys I had started pilot training with back in Jackson, Miss. As in most army situations, names go in alphabetical order, and it so happened that men with names starting with S were kind of kept together - So it was with H. Simmonds, K.E. Smith, F.N. Smith and K.B. Smith etc. We were all part of the pilots that went to the 350th Fighter Group. I mention this because when we were at Orleansville, Africa, and members of the 346th Fighter Squadron, we three Smiths ended up in town and Ken Smith writes of the instance - "we were sitting in the town square one afternoon when a very pretty dark eyed little girl came by and spoke to us in English. After we discovered that her parents were refugees from the Spanish Civil War, we invited her to have dinner with us at the hotel dining room. Her name was Amapola Ververels. She went home and received permission from her parents to join us. We had a delightful evening entertaining her. She informed us that the French people were not too receptive to her and her family. It was obvious that her clothes were clean and well pressed but were far from new. When we took her home, we asked her parents if we might purchase a new dress for her. Her mother stated that they had ration coupons but no money. The next time we were in town we used the coupons to buy her a new dress. " I have a small picture of Amapola and also her signature on my "short snorter" bill. For what it is worth, I also have Spencer Tracy's signature on my one dollar bill. In case you don't know what a "Short Snorter" is, "I'll try to explain. Anyone who sailed over the ocean in a ship signed a one dollar bill and had those present also sign. Then if you met someone thereafter who had one of these dollar bills you exchanged signatures. It was supposed to bring you good luck. That bill "saved" me once, more on that later.

I was transferred to the 347th squadron which was about 150 miles east of Algiers at Taher Airfield, 3 miles from the town of Djidjelli, Africa. I was to stay with the 347th , squadron until I left to come home in March of 1945. I Flew out of Taher Field for several months - May 1943 to the end of the year. We were on Coastal Defense and patrolled the Mediterranean Sea to protect ship convoys from enemy aircraft as well as submarines. Every daylight hour the Sq. would have two or three P-39's parked at the end of the runway for immediate take off, if radar detected enemy aircraft approaching. The pilots occupied a small tent shelter near the parked planes. We had a table, chairs and usually a pot of coffee, also a telephone that we got the call on to "scramble" if necessary. I usually answered the phone if I wasn't sitting in one of the P-39's ready for takeoff. When the phone rang I would answer, "Fighter Shack, Fighter Smith speaking" --- to this day the whole squadron knows me as "Fighter" Smith. We have a squadron reunion somewhere in the U.S. each year and some of the people don't know what my first name is. My wife and I have only missed five or six reunions in the past 29 years and we have some very close friends all over the country.

By the way, the 347th Fighter Squadron is nationally known as the "Screaming Red Ass" Squadron. Our insignia is a screaming red donkey kicking a yellow lightning

bolt, with a round blue background. This insignia was painted on each side of our aircraft as well as on a four inch leather patch that we wore on our flight jacket. I still have that original patch that was on my jacket, as well as the "Sad Sack" one. Convoy patrolling was not too exciting, so we all had to make do in trying to keep our spirits up.

We used to have a standing bet to see who could fly the lowest to the ground. We would fly over a grain field and the fellow that came back with grass stains higher on his prop won the money. One day one of our boys got too low and slid right into the middle of the grain field, what a cloud of dust he made, his prop bent back over the nose cowling. He stepped out onto the wing and waved at us and when we got back to the airfield we reported where he was. They sent a crew out to salvage the plane. He won the bet that day. Someone squealed on us and the next day the word was out from Major Thorsen, our C.O., "the next pilot that comes back with grass stains on his prop is going to fly the "Hump". The "Hump" was flying C-47's hauling cargo from Rangoon over the Burma road to China. Flying the Hump was sort of a bad boy punishment. We weren't totally stupid, we stopped that sort of diversion.

About this same time. I remember flying a cross-country trip to Tunis. I stopped off on the way at a field named EI-Alouina, a B-17 bomber base to see some of my old class mates from Dothan, Alabama. We had a couple of drinks in their tent bar, which was pretty flimsy as tents go, then we had lunch and I had to leave. One of the captains asked me to give them a buzz job so when I took off I made a 180 degree turn and aimed right at their bar where they were all congregated. Right on, I was a little low. I blew that tent down. I wrote in my log book that night "good buzz job" . I didn't find out till about a month later that I was not welcome at that base anymore. I only broke two bottles of their booze, but it took them all afternoon to repair their tent bar.

The P-39 was a peculiar plane in that it had an erratic spin. With the engine being behind the pilot, the weight distribution was different than most planes and when the plane spun it could do a flat spin or it would tumble end over end. In early 1943 there were wild rumors that the P-39 was very unsafe. There was a period of about four months when five or six pilots of the 350th group spun into the ground and killed themselves. Most of the fellows learned never to spin the plane intentionally or try to snap roll it. I was testing a plane one day and decided to have a little fun by doing some loops, spins and so forth, well sure enough I stalled out, upside down, at about 14,000 feet and that little #@!#%*" went into a tumble spin. The stick came out of my hand and was hitting my legs and the rudder pedals felt like they were beating my feet to pieces. I flopped around in the cockpit and every once in each tumble I would pull back on the throttle, then push it right up to the fire wall. After about five or six tumbles, the plane went into a normal nose down spin and I was able to recover. I was down under a thousand feet by that time and plenty scared. Soon after that our group commander put a ban on loops, immelmans, and upside down stalls, and I don't think we lost another pilot to spin crashes after that.

The P-39 could and did stall at high speeds also, but there was always a warning and it was easy to stop. When dive bombing, if you pulled up too abruptly, it would shake, rattle and roll, and all you had to do was let up on the stick a little and it would fly on. Of course, if you were too low or in a very tight turn when this happened and you let up on

the stick, you would run through trees or power lines. The oil cooler scoop was under the belly of the plane and we came back more than once with twigs and leaves in this scoop. We learned and adjusted.

We had to get most of the parts for our planes from a depot near Constantine, Africa, so we landed at Telergma Airport, which was about ten miles west of town. when we took off to go home, there was a bridge in town with a fairly long span. You are right again! We would fly under this bridge with wide open throttle and head for home. This was a no no. There was a hospital on the bank of this canyon and when we flew under that bridge a lot of patients hit the floor and hid under their beds. I found out about this a few months later when I had to go to that same hospital for an operation and a bout with the malaria bug. I had a pilonidal cyst that needed surgery. I flew My P-39 to Telergma on November 29, 1943, when I landed, I was in a lot of pain and could not sit any longer. After getting my plane secured I bummed a ride into town to the hospital, I ended up in the back of a 4 by 4 truck, I couldn't sit down, so for the ten mile ride into town I hung on to a roof truss that held the canopy over the truck. I will always remember that horrible ride to the hospital. That mosquito really did a job on me as well, even though I was taking quinine pills regularly. By the way, they finally hung cables down both sides of that bridge to keep us from flying under it. Someone always has to take the fun out of life! The day I flew back from the hospital to Taher, I found that the squadron had moved to Sardinia. There were two planes left that needed repairs. Our C.O. Major Thorsen and Jamey, another pilot, were still there. I packed most of my personal effects and a few clothes in various places in my plane and was waiting for the other two planes to be fixed so the three of us could fly to Sardinia to join our squadron. The Major's plane needed a new carburetor so I was elected to fly it to Telergma and have a new one put on. So on December 23 I stayed overnight at Telergma while they fixed the plane. On the 24th, when I came in to land at Taher, I heard the British controller say a plane crash had occurred at the radar station and I found out when I landed that Jamey, (George B. Jameson) had taken my plane for a test hop and had run through the radio tower. He killed himself. All my gear packed in the plane was scattered across the hillside. Major Thorsen and I flew to a small field at LaKroub, Africa for Jamey's funeral. The Major told me to land first because the grass field didn't look long enough to get a P-39 stopped. If I didn't make it he was going to go on to Telergma then back to Taher and then to Sardinia because he had to get back to the squadron. I just barely got that beast stopped before running over a small berm. I had forgotten to put my flaps down to slow my speed. Dumb! I told the Major to be sure and use full flaps. So he came in and we went about a mile over to the grave yard to bury Jamey. We flew back to Taher on December 28th and then on the 29th we flew to Alghero, Sardinia. That was the first time I had been back with the whole squadron in over a month. By the way it took several hours for me to convince the British that I was alive and the gear they had picked up belonged to me. Most of my clothes were ruined and to this day my log book has oil stains on it. I still have the "Authorization" from the Commander of the 332 Wing-of the British - It reads:

This is to authorize the bearer F.O. Smith to recover his property, log book, personal photo-graphs, letters, etc., which were collected by Lieutenant Copis from P-39 No. 29358 after its crash on 24.12.43

O.L. Williams F. LT.
for W/C Boyd
Commanding 332 Wing

Date: 26.12.43

All in all, that was quite a miserable 1943 Christmas season. We stayed at Alghero, Sardinia only a few days then moved to Ghisonaccia, Corsica. We were patrolling the sea between Corsica and Italy with occasional bomber escort to Northern Italy. The armies were fighting in Southern Italy, north of Naples. In February, about half of our squadron flew to Naples and landed at Capodichino Airport at the Northern edge of Naples. We were to be top cover for the Anzio beachhead landing. The day after we got there, when I was taking off in formation with eight other planes, my right landing gear fell off and I spun around in an arc to the right as my wing tip dug into the ground. My right hand wing man ran over the tip of my wing and we came very close to crashing into each other. This field was a big grassy area and we could take off all abreast in formation. Would you believe Doc Levine grounded me for two days, he thought I would be too shook up to properly lead the flight again the next morning.

About mid-March the Anzio push was over and we returned to the Island of Corsica. We started dive bombing and strafing the supply lines north of the ground fighting from Anzio north to Genoa and then west to the southern French coast line. We carried 500 pound bombs and full loads of ammo. The P-39 had great fire power with four 30 caliber machine guns, two 50 caliber and one 37MM cannon that poked out through the nose cone of the propeller. The engine was behind the pilot in the center of the airframe, it had tricycle landing gear. We were very busy cutting the supply lines of the Germans. The P-39 had small fuel tanks (60 gallons in each wing) and we had to be very careful not to stay too long over Italy, strafing, after dropping our bombs, as we had 1 00 miles or more to fly back over water to the Island of Corsica. I was Flight Leader of four planes on one mission and we stayed too long in strafing a railroad yard. When we neared Corsica I looked at my fuel gauges and they read EMPTY. Being the leader, I knew that the other three guys were worse off, because they were flying in formation with me and that always took a little more gas. When I hit the coast of Corsica I called for a straight in approach and told the three other pilots to space out in line and land ahead of me and be quick about it., I was last to land and my engine quit just as I came over the end of the runway and started my flare out. They towed me off the runway. The C.O. wasn't too rough on me as he had been very close to running out of gas himself.

About the middle of May, we started to get P-47D airplanes in our squadron. We flew both the P-39 and the P-47 for about four months, when the P-39's were transferred to another group.

I recall one day I flew a P-39 to a field near Ajaccio, Corsica, and flew a P-47 back to our base at Aghione, Corsica. A pilot named Brasch had made an emergency landing in a pasture. He didn't think he had enough room to fly it out after it had been repaired. I was elected to fly it out. That was a scary take off, but I made it. Morry Brasch flew the P-39 out with no trouble. The P47 was the heaviest fighter plane the U.S. had at that time.

O/A (which means "on or about" in Army order talk) July 10th of 1944, I flew to Naples on a B-25 bomber and started a 30 day rest/recreation in the U.S. My notes show that I went by boat to West Virginia; to Fort Lewis, Washington, by train, and started my furlough August 13th. My orders were that I would return to my same squadron and continue as Flight Commander until I felt I needed to go home for good. On the boat trip home we were on a rusty kind of tub that seemed to take forever to get across the ocean. What a fine time I had on leave. Back I went, though it took longer to get back than to travel home. I was "stuck" in Atlantic City for over a month billeted in a nice hotel with nothing to do but eat, drink, play cards and rest. I flew back to Naples in an old four engine transport with bucket seats down each side and cargo strapped in the center aisle. We landed and stayed overnight in the Azores before going on to Naples, Italy My squadron had moved from Aghione, Corsica, to Targuinia, Italy, and I finally hitched a ride on a "goony bird" (C-47) and got back to my new base. All of the P-39's were gone and we had old P-47D's that were commonly called a razor back. After making two test hops around our field I started to lead dive bomb and strafing missions again. From Targuinia we were flying north over the Apennine mountains which separated central Italy from the Po Valley. Each mission lasted from two to three hours depending on what we could find to shoot up after we dropped our bombs. The A/A, or flack, was very bad. The Germans were using 20 MM, 40 MM and 88 MM guns, so they had us in their sights from ground level to about 12,000 feet. It was rare when we didn't have holes in our planes. On a mission to Cremona, Dec. 13th, I was leading eight planes and one of our new pilots by the name of Redmond ran through his bomb blast. I did not find out until our squadron reunion in 1990, that he did bail out and got back to the states. He was the last man to go into the bomb run and not one of us saw his plane crash.. We found the wreckage after he didn't re-form with us over the target. I think this was his 13th mission. We had moved from Targuinia to Pisa on the 4th of December. This was the first mission out of Pisa for my flight.

We were glad to be a little closer to our target area, as it gave us another thirty minutes of strafing time in the Po Valley. The front Lines were about twenty miles from our base in Pisa and we could often see flashes and hear cannon fire at night. 1945 came in with a bang. We were flying every day that the weather would allow. We did close line support for the troops fighting in the foothills of the Apennine Mountains. We called these "Rover Joe" missions. An L-5 cub plane with a spotter in the back seat would fly on our side of the front lines and would relay target information to us to bomb and strafe. When we weren't sure which house or German gun emplacement to take out, we would ask for a colored smoke shell to be fired as close as possible to the target, then we could fire bomb, with napalm, the right target. Usually one of our squadron or group pilots was the spotter and via radio we could talk to him. We wanted to make sure we were not hitting our own troops, as many times they were only 200 or so yards from the target area.

In the early days of flying in the squadron we did not really have our own plane to fly all the time. We did fly one plane most of the time but shared it with other pilots. In the last few months of my service with our squadron I had what was considered "my" plane, I flew only that plane and had my name painted on it. The name I picked for the plane was painted on it as well. I had been flying this same plane for a number of missions and it

had not had one bullet hole in it, so I had the squadron painter put the name "the Virgin" on it. Right on! The next mission, bullet holes in the wing! Well, it couldn't last forever. That was the first for that plane but not the last.

We strafed anything that moved in the Po Valley towards the end of the war. We had received word through the partisans that the Germans were using horses and wagons to carry fuel and supplies to the front lines. We had permission to shoot any wagon with two or more horses pulling it. I blew one sky high one day as my tracers set off a load of gasoline.

General Nielsen, our Group CO, speaking at our 350th Fighter Group memorial dedication in 1988, was referring to our success in cutting off supplies getting to the front lines. When he said " There was a German General serving with me at SHAPE many years after the war. I learned he had been Chief of staff of the German army in Italy during the battle of the Apennines. I reminded him of the incident when the German reconnaissance force had achieved an unexpected break through in the Serchio Valley north east of Pisa. It appeared that they had a chance to change the course of the war in Italy. The 350th Group was alerted to evacuate. Unaccountably, the enemy forces failed to exploit the break through and the Fifth Army was able to plug the gap. I asked the German General, 'Didn't you know what you might have done that night?' He replied, 'Yes, of course we saw the possibilities clearly. But what you apparently didn't know was that we were out of gas. We couldn't fuel our trucks let alone our tanks".

The 350th Fighter Group played a major role in cutting off supplies to the German troops. I'll also mention an incident I'm not too proud of, four of us had been strafing targets and were about to head for home when I spotted a farmer with one horse plowing his field. I told the three other fellows to stay up about 6,000 feet and I went down to "scare" the farmer. I aimed about 20 yards in front of the horse and let fly, as I pulled up and looked back, I could see the horse running across the field and the farmer had dived into the ditch at the edge of the field.

During the period of the Africa and Italy campaigns, over 440 fighter pilots came into our Group. We lost 120 of them. Some crashed or bailed out and survived to come home, ninety five did not.

On my last mission out of Pisa, Italy, in February of 1945 I flew a Rover Joe mission on a group of houses near Brucciano, Italy. This was only about fifty-five miles north east of our airfield. I knew that this was going to be my last mission because the Flight-Surgeon had told me I was getting a little testy and irritable and had had enough. He had sent a recommendation to group headquarters that I be rotated to the U.S. On the last few missions I had noticed that the rifling in my guns had become pretty well worn as the tracers were not running true. I told my crew chief about this just before I took off on this last mission he said, "Go ahead and burn 'em up; I'll get new barrels to put in when you get back". Usually we saved a few rounds of ammo for our trip to home base in case we were jumped by enemy aircraft, but on this last mission after I dropped my fire bomb, I

continued to fire long bursts of machine gun fire on pass after pass on the target area. The other three planes had pulled up to about 6,000 feet to watch me. I burned out every barrel in that plane. We had four 50 cal. guns in each wing. I had flown 173 missions. Seventy three over what was considered the norm for most pilots. I was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with 6 oak leaf clusters, the Presidential Unit Citation, the EAME Theater Ribbon with 7 bronze stars, the Good Conduct Medal, and the American Defense Medal and Ribbon.

Earlier I mentioned "Army order talk". I will explain a little more about this. On special, personnel, confidential, or secret orders, the Army had abbreviations that saved a lot of paper and could be confusing to those not aware of what they meant. For instance an order might read: "IAW VO CG the following O and EM are placed on TO WP WID to ST A designated and will RUCTDY TON TOT." What this means is:

"In accordance with verbal orders of the Commanding General, the following officers and Enlisted men are placed on Temporary Duty and will proceed without delay to stations designated, and will return upon completion of temporary duty. Travel directed is necessary in the Military Service. Transportation Officer will furnish transportation. "

Some other abbreviations on orders were:

MEMT - Most expeditious means of travel

PAC - Pursuant to authority contained in

RCO - Replacement control depot

WPMA - Will proceed via military aircraft

RUCDS- Return upon completion of detached service

TRFD - Transferred

ASGD - Assigned

RELD FR - Relieved from

O/A- On or about

There were many other abbreviations, but I won't bore you with them.

O/A the first of March, 1945, I and a good buddy, Captain Harold Babb, got orders to return to the USA. We were waiting with about seventy other officers for a ship to take us back to the states. We were in Naples, and I honestly think the temperature was near zero. I can remember we were sleeping on cots in a big warehouse that had no heat. To keep warm at night, we scrounged newspapers, magazines, and cardboard, to put under our sleeping bags on the cot to keep the cold from coming up through our bag. Years before, I had known families [OURS] that had done the same thing when they had a thin mattress on top of bed springs. It sure works, believe me. I have used and recommended this action to campers and RV owners who complained of cold coming up through their mattresses. We sailed from Naples on another P&O ship named the "Graves". The name of that ship sure gave us second thoughts about going home on it. The food and accommodations were great however. After we arrived in the states, we got a two week leave at home. After reporting to a repl-depo in Anaheim, CA, both Harold Babb and I ended up in Aloe, Texas, as instructors on the BT-13A trainer. Well we sure didn't like that' Finally we convinced the powers to be that we should be Fighter pilot instructors so in May they sent us to Waycross, Georgia, as P-51 instructors. The last couple of years

we had been learning to play Bridge, so when Harold and I ended up in Waycross we teamed up and became the champion bridge players in the officers' club. I had finally realized bridge was a lot cheaper to play than poker and blackjack. With the war over, and after four months of this, we asked to be separated from the Air Force, I ended up in Spokane, Washington September 16, 1945, with accrued leave and pay until November 18th when my actual discharge was effective. I had flown fifteen different air planes and had over 960 hours of time in the air. Some good - some bad. It was an experience I would not care to go through again, but thank God, I did survive.

Military Record

- June 19 1941 Enlisted in the Army Air Corps from Wallace, 10 and went to Spokane, WA for physical examination and final enlistment enrollment.
- June 20 1941 Went to Jefferson Barracks, St., Louis, MO for indoctrination, Shots and basic army training and regulations
- July 18 1941 Went to Chanute Field, Rantoul, 11I for Airplane Mechanics School. Graduated Dec 19, 1941.
- Dec 27 1941 Went to Bakersfield, CA Air corps Basic Flying School, as a crew chief of a Vultee BT 13 Airplane.
- Feb. 4 1942 Went to the Old Mill in Montgomery, AL for preflight indoctrination to become a pilot.
- Mar 16 1942 Went to Jackson, MS for ground school and primary pilot training in the Stearman PT 17 airplane. First solo flight on April 12, 1942.
- May 29 1942 Went to Cochran Field, Macon, GA for basic pilot training in the Vultee BT 13 airplane.
- Aug. 3 1942 Went to Napier field, Dothan AL for advanced pilot training in the North American AT 6 airplane.
- Oct. 9 1942 Graduated as a Staff Sergeant pilot
- Oct. 12 1942 Went to Drew Field, Tampa, FL to the 304th Fighter Sq. Checked out in a Curtiss P36 and P40 Fighter. Had only 13 hours training in these airplanes.
- Nov. 21 1942 Went to Ft. Hamilton, NY for overseas shipment to England on Queen Elizabeth along with 15,000 other troops, landed in Scotland, then went to Shrewsbury, England
- Nov. 24 1942 Went to Stone, England, Atcham Air Field for Flight instruction.
- Dec 21 1942 Promoted to Flight Officer
- Dec 21 1942 Went to Casablanca, Africa on an English ship named the P & O Strathnaver.
- Jan 21 1943 Went to 6th Fighter Wing, 12th Air Force at La Senia, Africa.
- Feb. 8 1943 Went to Cazes, Africa Mediouna Air field for instruction in P-40 and P-39 Aircraft.
- Apr 22 1943 Went to Orleansville, Africa Warnier Air Field, to join the 346th Fighter Sq., 350th Fighter Group. Flying the Bell Air Cobra P-39 airplane.

May 28 1943 Transferred to the 347th Fighter Sq. at Taher Air Field, Djijelli, Africa.
 Dec 29 1943 Went to Aighero Air Field, Sardinia to rejoin the 347th Sq. after a one month Hospital stay in Constantine, Africa for Malaria recuperation.
 Jan 8 1944 Went to Ghisonaccia Air Field, Corsica, new base for the 347th Sq.
 Feb. 8 1944 Went to Capodichino Air Field, Naples Italy, to fly top cover for the Anzio invasion. Detached service with 18 Airplanes.
 Mar 13 1944 Went back to Ghisonaccia, Corsica to rejoin the Sq.
 Mar 28 1944 Checked out in P 47 fighter plane. The squadron Flew the P 47 Thunderbolt until the end of the war.
 Apr. 4 1944 Promoted to 2nd Lieutenant
 May 18 1944 Squadron moved to Aghione Airfield in Corsica.
 June 10 1944 Went by B 25 to Naples, Italy, then by boat to West Virginia, Train to Ft. Lewis, WA then to Spokane, WA for 30 day furlough.
 Sep. 22 1944 Went from Ft. Lewis, WA to Atlantic City, NJ for return to the 347th Fighter Sq.
 Sep 29 1944 Promoted to 1st Lieutenant
 Oct. 22 1944 Went to La Guardia Field, NY for Flight back to Naples on a MATS cargo plane. New York to Newfoundland to Azores to Naples Italy.
 Nov. 6 1944 Went from Naples to Tarquinia, Italy on a C 47 troop carrier plane to rejoin the Sq.
 Dec 4 1944 Squadron moved to Pisa Italy. Based on the city airport. All three Squadrons of the 350th Group were Finally on the same air field. 345th, 346th, and 347th. Squadrons
 Jan 9 1945 Promoted to Captain
 Feb. 13 1945 Went to Naples, Italy to return to the USA for rotation and a new assignment. Left Italy on the Boat "The Graves". Had 173 missions and 841 hours and 40 minutes flying time to this date.
 Mar 14 1945 Arrived at Ft. Lewis, WA for 23 days leave in Spokane, WA.
 Apr 13 1945 Went to Santa Ana Redistribution Center for reassignment.
 Apr 24 1945 Went to Aloe Field, Victoria, TX as an instructor on a BT 13 Basic Trainer.
 May 6 1945 Went to Waycross, GA as an instructor on P 51 Mustang airplane
 June 5 1945 Went to Pinellas Army air Base on temporary duty.
 June 26 1945 Went to Dale Mabry Field, Tallahassee, FL for possible new assignment. Did not accept.
 July 2 1945 Returned to Waycross, Ga.
 Aug. 24 1945 Left Waycross, GA. Drove personal car to Ft. Lewis, WA for Discharge.
 Sep. 10 1945 Reported to Ft. Lewis WA for separation from the service.
 Sep. 16 1945 Arrived in Spokane, WA for terminal accrued leave of 2 months and 2 days.
 Nov. 18 1945 Actual separation date of enlistment. Length of service was 4 years 6 months 29 days.

Serial Numbers assigned

As an Enlisted man 19006384
 As a Flight Officer 190436

As an Officer 170295

length of rank

Private 14 Months 19 Days
Staff Sergeant 2 Months 13 Days
Flight Officer 15 Months 13 Days
Second Lieutenant 6 Months 25 Days
First Lieutenant 4 Months 10 Days
Captain 11 Months 9 Days

Medals

Distinguished Flying Cross Air Medal with 6 Oak Leaf Clusters
Presidential Unit Citation American Defense Medal with Ribbon
Four Overseas service Bars EAME Theater Ribbon with 7 Bronze stars
Good Conduct Medal

Different Airplanes Flown

PT 17 Boeing Stearman
BT 13 Vultee Valiant
AT 6 North American Texan
P 35 Republic Guardsman
P 40 Curtiss Tomahawk
P 39 Bell Airacobra
P 47 Republic Thunderbolt
P 51 North American Mustang
B 25 North American Mitchell
UC 78 Cessna Twin Engine Trainer
C 47 Douglas Troop Carrier
Tiger Austere English
Miles Master English
Hurricane English
PT19 Fairchild
L4 Piper Cub
L5 Aeronca
8B Luscombe
Cessna 150