



American Fighter Aces

and Friends

The Bulletin of the American Fighter Aces Association

July 2017 | Volume 34, No 3



Edward "Whitey" Feightner, the Grim Reaper Ace



Association President's Message

Dear Aces, Friends, Survivors, and Honorees:

The Grim Reaper is an equal opportunity villain, and with the last flight of three of our WWII Aces, he has brought us inexorably below the seemingly impenetrable floor of 50. Gone: Luther (Del) Prater, USN, 8.5 victories, Navy Cross and Silver Star; Robert Milliken, USAAF, 5 victories in the P-38; and Frank McCauley, USAAF, a 5.5 victory P-47 Ace, at the age of 100, the oldest living Ace before his death. The USAF paid him the honor of a four-ship F-15 flyby at his funeral. Aces remaining: 47.

With the approval of the Marketing Committee and the Board of Directors, the Museum of Flight has instituted a major sale of the beautiful lithographs that Roy Grinnell has produced for the Aces. The entire U.S. art market has tanked in the last few years, and we were not immune. In order to generate revenue and reduce the large stock, the sale is 50% off every litho. The sale is being advertised and is featured on both the Aces website and the Museum website, among other venues. Now is a great time to acquire a litho done by one of the preeminent aviation artists in the world.

Ed Garland has expressed concern that few members have registered to date for the reunion and reserved a hotel room at the Holiday Inn Riverwalk. Ed has made some fine arrangements for us, so sign up now. The cutoff date for hotel reservations is August 4th.

Did you know that new members can join the AFAA on-line now? Beat the bushes - we need new members.

Recently, there has been some correspondence alleging that the Aces memorabilia at the Museum had been shipped to storage space at Paine Field some 30 miles North. The rumor was not true. All Aces artifacts and papers are still stored in climate-controlled conditions on the main campus and are available on request for viewing or research. What has been moved is a collection of old Ace records, plus some old Museum records, to make room for a break room for Museum employees on their lunch hour, a reasonable administrative move. The Museum will be adding a permanent Congressional Gold Medal exhibit into the Personal Courage Wing at the beginning of the year that will include more Aces memorabilia to be publicly displayed

Respectfully,

General Charles "Chick" Cleveland, USAF (Ret)

June 2017



AMERICAN

FIGHTER ACES & FRIENDS BULLETIN

Published by the American Fighter Aces Association
in conjunction with The Museum of Flight.

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Rear Admiral Edward L. Feightner in 1970. (U.S. Navy)



Museum President's Message

Dear Aces, Friends, Survivors and Honorees:

It's summer time in Seattle and we are gearing up for the busy season! The museum had a successful opening of our new APOLLO exhibit which features a full scale unused F-1 engine as well as components from the original F-1 engines from the Apollo 12 and Apollo 16 missions that were recovered from the Atlantic ocean.

We are now accepting applications for 2017 AFAA Scholarships. This wonderful program assists to offset tuition costs for students, and, moreover, continues to increase the knowledge and understanding of the legacy of the American Fighter Aces well into the future. Please help us promote this incredible program. Applications are due August 31st, 2017!

With the 2017 AFAA Reunion in San Antonio around the corner, make sure you register soon. Ed Garland has been working tirelessly planning the affair and it's going to be a great event.

This summer, The Museum of Flight is hosting two events sponsored by the NW Chapter of Friends of the American Fighter Aces. On July 1st we will be joined by AFAA Honoree Col. Ken Cordier (USAF, ret.). Cordier was forced to eject on December 2, 1966 after his F-4C Phantom was struck by a surface to air missile. He was immediately captured and spent 2,285 days as a POW. On August 19th we will be joined by Bill Knudson, former Mariners Baseball executive. Knudson did not know about his father and WWII casualty, 2nd Lt William B. Cuthbert, until he was 18 years old. He will recount his journey to understand what happened to his father as well as talk about his work with the Honor Flight Network.

If you are in the Seattle area this August, please swing by the museum and help us celebrate the Blue Angels with our Annual Jet Bash Blast. Come see the Blues fly while enjoying outdoor family activities, live music, and fun eats and drinks.

I hope to see you all at the Reunion this September!

Sincerely,

Doug King
CEO and President
The Museum of Flight

June 2017





ACE BIRTHDAYS

AUGUST - OCTOBER

<u>Name</u>	<u>Birthdate</u>
Lynn F. Jones	8/16/1920
John A. Zink	8/18/1921
James F. Luma	8/27/1922
Richard H. Fleischer	9/6/1919
James F. Low	9/10/1925
John B. Lawler	9/15/1921
Abner M. Aust Jr.	10/7/1921
Edward L. Feightner	10/14/1919



2017 Reunion in San Antonio, TX September 7-10

The 2017 Annual Reunion is almost here! Make sure to register for this fun event by August 4th to ensure you get a room and are able to participate in all of this year's activities.

To register go to
<http://www.americanfighteraces.org/news.htm>
Print out the form and mail to:

Edward Garland
5206 Sagail Place
San Antonio, TX 78249

To reserve your hotel room, call the Holiday Inn Riverwalk at 210-224-2500 and tell them you are part of the American Fighter Aces Reunion.

If you have any questions you can contact Ed Garland at 210-823-7149 or 210-558-7149 or AFAA-Reunion@museumofflight.org.

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(Auxiliary of the American Fighter Aces Association)

BASIC MEMBERS receive:

- Membership card, certificate, lapel pin and decal (pin and decal with initial year's membership only).
- Subscription to the quarterly American Fighter Aces Bulletin, featuring articles by the Aces and others.
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I AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS OF THE AMERICAN FIGHTER ACES ASSOCIATION. Yes ___ No ___

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Ace Profile

Whitey Feightner, Grim Reaper Ace

By Jon Guttman



Lieutenant Edward L. "Whitey" Feightner in a Grumman F6F-5 of VF-8 aboard the carrier Bunker Hill, sporting nine victory flags under the cockpit. (U.S. Navy)

Ed "Whitey" Feightner was one of a rare breed within the U.S. Navy: a Grumman F4F-4 Wildcat pilot who honed his fighting skills during the pivotal Guadalcanal campaign and went on to complete his scoring in the F6F-5 Hellcat during the fleet's irresistible advance on Japan. From there, he went on to an equally noteworthy postwar naval career.

Edward Lewis Feightner was born in Lima, Ohio, on October 14, 1919. He was in the Civilian Pilot Training Program and received a private pilot's license in 1940. He graduated from Findlay College in 1941 with a BA in Chemistry.

Taking an early interest in aviation, he had learned to fly before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 officially plunged his country into the global conflict. "I had CPT—civilian pilot training—and was licensed," he said. "My number was coming up in the draft, and I had flown 30 different airplanes, so I decided to join the Army Air Corps. What changed my mind was that I was about to be inducted into the Army, but they said I had a five month wait and told me, 'We'll send you orders on where to report.' So I looked into the Navy—I went to Detroit, Michigan, 30 minutes' flight time away and I got the royal treatment. I learned about the Navy program, I saw *Hell's Angels*, and when I asked when I could start training, they said, 'We'll take you today.' It took 10 minutes to convince me to enlist with them instead of the Air Corps."

Feightner enlisted in the Navy on June 16, 1941, was designated a Naval Aviator, and commissioned an ensign on April 3, 1942. He was then assigned to a fighter squadron, VF-5.

"My orders were to go to a carrier that was damaged in the Battle of the Coral Sea—*Yorktown*," Feightner said. "We shipped on the transport USS *Henderson* (AP-1). There were no officers on the ship, so they grabbed us and someone told me, 'You're executive officer.' Among my duties was to feed all the soldiers. Everyone got two meals every 24 hours. At one point during the voyage we went to general quarters, with destroyer escorts flipping double depth charges from their Y guns. Each time there'd be a big rumble and the ship shook. At one point I saw a black submarine with a red meatball 1,000 yards off the port beam." Whether he saw it or not, the Japanese lost no submarines at that time, nor were any American transports sunk.

"Before we reached Hawaii we learned that *Yorktown* had sunk at the battle of Midway," Feightner continued. "They sent us to Maui for reassignment to VF-3 and that's where I met Butch O'Hare." The Navy's first ace in a day, having shot down five Mitsubishi G4M1 torpedo bombers on February 19, 1942, for which he received the Medal of Honor, Lt. Cmdr. Edward H. "Butch" O'Hare was keen to get back into action, but thoroughly professional in passing his experience on to a new generation of fighter pilots. At the same time, Feightner said: "I got sunburned as hell. I was blond and white as a sheet, which is how everyone came to call me 'Whitey.'"



"Meanwhile we trained at the Thach weave, a tactic of mutual support developed by Lt. Cmdr. John S. 'Jimmy' Thach, based on his experience at Midway, the three-plane formation was replaced by the 'fluid four.' Two people came down from Ford Island and we got to demonstrate that to those people. We made four runs at a towed target at 15,000 feet. One of the visitors was the VF-10 squadron skipper, and he said, 'That's for us.' After landing I heard, 'Feightner, get over here.' He had noticed that my target sleeve had 75 or 80 holes in it. He said, 'Sit down—who the hell are you, anyway?'" Well, he got to know me and I became like his little brother. As it turned out, VF-10 came over on the carrier *Enterprise* and they were going over to the war. It had lost a couple of pilots, so Ensign Gordon Barnes and me were sent on VF-10 on *Enterprise*. Also there was John Leppla from my home town."

Flying a Douglas SBD-3 Dauntless with scouting squadron VS-2 aboard *Lexington*, Ensign John A. Leppla and Radioman John Liska had been credited with shooting down four Mitsubishi A6M2 Zero fighters in two days during the Battle of the Coral Sea. Consequently the aggressive Leppla had been tapped for fighter training.

Feightner completed his training under VF-10's leader, Lt. Cmdr. James H. 'Jimmy' Flatley, as well as such future notables as Dick May, Russ Reiserer and Butch Voris. "The squadron had 36 airplanes and 42 pilots," Feightner recalled. "We went back from Hawaii to San Diego. We trained there on Naval Air Station North Island in F4F-3s with four .50-caliber machine guns, and then F4F-4s, which had six guns but carried the same number of rounds, which meant we could get rid of them faster. Our planes didn't have gunsights, but we found where they were being stored, shot the lock and took the gunsights. When the time came to deploy we flew three airplanes apiece onto the carrier."

Feightner, who by then had amassed 323.9 hours of military flight time, was serving as assistant engineering officer when *Enterprise* arrived off Guadalcanal on October 24, 1942. Two days later, those past months of preparation were put to the test as VF-10 had its baptism of fire. Since August 7, when the U.S. Marines had landed and seized its airfield, which they christened Henderson Field, Guadalcanal had been the scene of several battles on land, sea and air. October 26 saw the largest clash of aircraft carriers since Midway off the Santa Cruz Islands, as the U.S. Navy's last operational flattops in the Pacific, *Enterprise* and *Hornet*, faced the Japanese fleet carriers *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku*, and light carriers *Zuiho* and *Junyo*.

"The Battle of Santa Cruz got very interesting," Feightner remarked. "We were east of Guadalcanal when *Zuikaku* and *Shokaku* showed up. The Japanese were up a couple hours ahead of us. When *Enterprise* sent an attack at them they shot down John Leppla, who was killed in action, and two others ended up prisoners for the rest of the war. When our planes came back there was one with 170 holes in it."

As the Grumman TBF-1 Avengers of torpedo bomber squadron VT-10 headed toward the Japanese fleet, escorted by Flatley and other F4Fs of VF-10, they passed Japanese planes en route to attack their task force. Lieutenant Saneyasu Hidaka, leading nine of *Zuiho's* Zeros to escort Nakajima B5N2 torpedo bombers and Aichi D3A1 dive bombers of the Japanese strike force, let



Deck crewmen fold the wings of a Grumman F4F-4 of VF-10 before stowing it below carrier *Enterprise's* flight deck during the critical Solomons campaign. (U.S. Navy)

the first wave of Americans pass, but then attacked the second. In the ensuing fight Hidaka and his pilots claimed 14 Americans. In actuality, they downed two TBFs and badly damaged a third for the loss of Petty Officer 3rd Class Shizuta Takagi, who went down in flames by the Avengers' return fire. Flatley deviated from his escort task only long enough to pick off a nearby Zero, killing Petty Officer 3rd Class Zenpei Matsumoto. Belatedly entering the fray, Leppla and his wingman, Ensign Albert E. Mead, were credited with

three Zeros and certainly got one, killing either Lieutenant jg Shuichi Utsumi or Petty Officer 1st Class Masao Kawasaki (the other fell victim to a TBF gunner). Soon thereafter, however, Hidaka and Petty Officer 1st Class Jiro Mitsumoto killed Leppla and forced Mead to land in the sea. Three other Zeros engaged Ensigns Willis B. Reding and Raleigh E. Rhodes, the latter of whom also had to ditch with a wounded leg, while Reding managed to get his riddled F4F back to *Enterprise*. The next day Al Mead was picked up by the Japanese destroyer *Kazegumo*, whose crew beat him up, while "Dusty" Rhodes, after a day and night in his life raft with occasional shark encounters, was found by the destroyer *Kagero* and also taken prisoner.

Two of *Enterprise's* SBDs reached the Japanese fleet and damaged *Zuiho*, while *Hornet's* Dauntlesses scored some damaging bomb hits on *Shokaku*, putting her out of action for months. At the same time, however, *Shokaku's*, *Zuikaku's* and *Zuiho's* attack planes reached TF-61 and in the ensuing melee, seven of *Zuikaku's* D3As dive-bombed *Hornet*, losing three planes but scoring three hits. As more dive bombers bore in on the



beleaguered flattop, among those trying to stop them was Feightner, who had taken off at 0910 hours in F4F-4 BuNo 5193, F-31. "We were at 12,000 feet," he recalled, "and our pilots took out seven airplanes in the first pass. I was at 10,000 feet when we intercepted the last of them—there were two left."

At that point, Feightner and Ensign Maurice W. Wickendoll spotted two D3As about to dive on *Hornet*. "My wingman had just got new guns in his Wildcat," Feightner recalled. The cosmoline froze and his guns jammed. I then found two Zeros in front of me. They pulled up in a tighter turn, hoping to lure me into a turning dogfight, and looped trying to get behind us. I knew better than to do that." Wickendoll led Feightner in a sharp turn away from the Zeros, then turned to engage them again, only to find both planes gone. Their opponents were apparently Lieutenant Hisoyoshi Miyajima and Seaman 1st Class Masashi Ishida, escorts from *Shokaku* who had earlier splashed a Wildcat whose wounded pilot, Lt. jg George Formanek Jr. of *Hornet's* VF-72, was rescued by the destroyer *Russell*. Now on the return leg, the Zero pilots were none too keen to linger, but upon their return, Miyajima claimed one of those last two F4Fs they had encountered.

"With *Hornet* hit, our combined two air groups fueled all on top of *Enterprise*," Feightner said. The regrouped divisions then took off again as another wave of attackers bore in, their target this time being *Enterprise*. Most of the F4Fs were still too low when D3As from *Shokaku* arrived; only Wickendoll and Feightner being in position to intercept as they began their dives. Wickendoll made four passes, but only his left outboard gun would fire and its recoil threw his aim hopelessly off. "At 10,000 feet I intercepted the last of them," said Feightner. "I fired at number eight, then I got the number nine guy flying and he exploded. He came down right in front of me—I got my first kill then and there." The heavy cruiser *Portland* reported an enemy plane splashing 4,000 yards off her bow at 1014 hours.

In spite of losses to Wildcats and anti-aircraft fire, the dive bombers scored two damaging hits on *Enterprise*. Landing behind Lieutenant Stanley W. Vejtasa, virtually out of fuel, Feightner never forgot his shock at what he saw on exiting his plane. "They hit the ship pretty badly," he said. "One bomb went short of the No.1 elevator. A bomb knocked out 'Boy's Town' where I was. When I got back, the ready room was gone. All I could do was get an airplane and get airborne."

Still the enemy came, and Feightner rejoined the combat air patrol. As he did a wave of B5N2s from *Zuikaku* tried and failed to hit *Enterprise* but Seaman 1st Class Kiyomi Takei, discovering his plane on fire and unable to drop his torpedo, deliberately crashed into the destroyer *Smith*, killing 57 crewmen and injuring 12. As the Japanese withdrew westward they ran into three low flying F4Fs flown by Vejtasa, Feightner and Ensign Donald

Gordon. Feightner attacked the nearest B5N and was joined by Vejtasa, who had already shot down four torpedo bombers in the fight but had enough ammunition left to empty his guns into that one. Although it was burning, Feightner broke off and lost track of his quarry, but Vejtasa followed it another five miles to witness its final crash into the sea—along with two D3As he'd downed earlier, it raised "Swede" Vejtasa's tally for the day to seven. Gordon was out of ammunition, but as he came head-on at one of the B5Ns, its pilot tried to evade, only to dip its left wing into the water and cartwheel in.



A U.S. Marine examines the abandoned wreckage of a Mitsubishi G4M1 of the 705th Kokutai, which had crash landed on Munda airfield in December 1942. Feightner was heavily engaged against that unit's torpedo bombers the following month. (U.S. Marine Corps)

The Battle of Santa Cruz ended with *Hornet* abandoned, to be subsequently found and finished off by Japanese destroyers. That gave the Japanese the tactical victory, but they did not follow up to give it any strategic importance. American losses in planes and trained airmen were high, but those of the Japanese were higher and could not be replaced as quickly. *Shokaku* and *Zuiho* were badly damaged, as was *Enterprise*, but after repairs at Espiritu Santo the last operational American carrier in the Pacific was back in the Solomons within three weeks, to contribute to the costly but ultimately decisive American naval victories off Guadalcanal between November 12 and 15. During that time Feightner was flying from Henderson Field, operating alongside the U.S. Marine Wildcat squadrons there. By November 15, American control of the island became inevitable, but the fighting would go on for another three months.

Feightner's next air action followed a game-changing attack on U.S. Navy Task Force 18 near Rennell Island on the night of January 29, 1943. At 1919 hours, 16 Rabaul-based Mitsubishi G4M1s of the 705th *Kokutai* (naval air group) made torpedo attacks on the ships in the fading twilight, though the best they did was to near-miss heavy cruiser *Louisville* while losing one plane to anti-aircraft fire.



Darkness fell by 1940 hours when a Nakajima J1N1-C shadowing the task force lit up the night with green and red navigational beacons and a string of parachute flares, at which point 15 older Mitsubishi G3M2s of the 701st *Kokutai* attacked. Two of their torpedoes struck heavy cruiser *Chicago* on the starboard side, leaving her dead in the water. Torpedoes also hit *Louisville* and *Wichita*, but failed to explode. The 701st paid for this success when one bomber was shot down, killing the group leader, Lt. Cmdr. Joji Hagai, and a second shell-damaged G3M, unable to make Rabaul, ditched in the sea.

Louisville took *Chicago* in tow toward Noumea, to be spelled the next day by the fleet tug *Navajo*. Admiral William Halsey ordered all of Task Force 18 to clear the area off Rennell Island, save for six destroyers, and also ordered *Enterprise* into the area to augment the crippled cruiser's defense. Meanwhile, 11 G4M1s of the Japanese 751st *Kokutai* were dispatched from Kavieng to Buka, where they refueled and took off to finish what the revolutionary night attackers had started.

On the afternoon of January 30 coast watchers reported a dozen more Japanese bombers on the way and at 1545 hours radar detected the enemy approaching from the west. *Enterprise* launched two divisions of VF-10 Wildcats.

Feightner was in the first division, led by Lieutenant McGregor Kilpatrick. Its interception of the raiders coincided with their arrival over *Chicago* and her consorts northeast of Rennell Island at 1610 hours and the 751st commander, Lt. Cmdr. Kazuo Nishioka, ordered his bombers to attack. Feightner, whose F4F-4 BuNo 5238 No.14 was suffering from a balky engine, had dropped behind the others but now found himself in a good position to attack the bombers, claiming two of them in quick succession. A third G4M, set afire by fighters, flak or both, managed to launch its torpedo before crashing, and hit destroyer *La Vallette* in the engine room, killing 22 crewmen. The remaining eight Japanese regrouped for another attempt while Feightner formed up with the second division, led by Lt. Cmdr. Flatley. In the ensuing melee, the Japanese lost two more planes—including a third victory claimed by Feightner—but scored four more torpedo hits on *Chicago's* starboard side at 1624. As the bombers withdrew another two fell victim to the F4Fs and of the four survivors, three limped home on one engine; one had to force land on Munda, New Georgia, while the remaining three, including Nishioka's plane, reached Ballale in the Shortlands.

As the last of VF-10's pilots turned for home, they saw *Chicago* start to sink stern first with 62 of her crew dead; 1,049 survivors were rescued by *Navajo* and the destroyers. Having lost the cruiser, *Navajo* took the damaged *La Vallette* in tow.

Back aboard *Enterprise*, initial claims as high as 19 were winnowed down to six for the VF-10 pilots, and for the loss of Lieutenant Thomas E. Edwards Jr., who failed to return from the combat. Three of the kills were credited to Feightner. Flatley allegedly walked up to the

ensign and remarked, "You're a fighting fool, aren't you?" As a direct consequence of the battle, an Air Medal for which Feightner had been recommended was promptly upgraded to the Distinguished Flying Cross.

The Japanese rightly claimed the air-sea Battle of Rennell Island as a victory, but aside from its cost in aircraft and aircrews it was strategically moot, for they had already decided to evacuate their surviving troops from Guadalcanal, which they would achieve in three convoys by February 8, 1943. After more than six agonizing months, the United States had won its first major offensive operation in the Pacific.

After Guadalcanal, VF-10 was withdrawn for retraining and re-equipment. In May 1943, Feightner, now with the DFC, two Air Medals, and promotion to lieutenant junior grade, was assigned to VF-8, organizing at Naval Auxiliary Air Station Pungo, near Norfolk, Virginia. As the squadron engineering officer, Feightner not only became acquainted with the F4F's bigger, more potent replacement, the F6F-3 Hellcat, but got to test improvements to come, such as a new supercharger in June 1943. Air Group 8 was initially based aboard the new carrier *Intrepid* (CV-11). After a difficult passage through the Panama Canal, however, a damaged *Intrepid* underwent repairs and Air Group 8 was reassigned to the carrier *Bunker Hill* on March 6, 1944.

Led by Lt. Cmdr. William Magill Collins Jr., VF-8 returned to action as part of Task Force 58 under Vice Adm. Marc A. Mitscher. On March 30 TF-58 attacked Peleliu in the Palau Islands, spearheaded by 72 Hellcats, which were met by 22 Zeros of the 201st *Kokutai* and Fighter *Hikotai* 351 of the 501st *Kokutai*. Mixing it up with the enemy between Peleliu and Angaur islands at 0820 hours, Feightner was credited with one Zero destroyed and another probable. He also caught up with his inexperienced squadron leader before Collins, diving 3,000 feet into 12 Zeros, got too far in over his head. Whitey gestured to a formation of Zeros coming down on them and Collins, signaling back acknowledgment, let Feightner take the lead. Both Hellcats turned toward their attackers and Collins' gunfire took out the enemy leader, at which point, Feightner recalled, the Japanese scattered "like a bunch of chickens."

The Japanese claimed 16 American planes and three probables that day, for the loss of nine Zeros and at least five pilots by the 201st *Kokutai*, while *Hikotai* 351's five losses included its leader, Lieutenant Tomojiro Yamaguchi. The next day saw the Hellcats battling 66 Zeros newly arrived, as reinforcements from the 661st and 263rd *Kokutais*, which claimed another 37 Americans and three probables, while losing 35 planes. Actual American losses over the two days totaled 25 planes, while claiming 70 Japanese. For his part, Feightner, with



his fifth victory, was officially an ace.

On April 30, TF-58 made a follow-up strike on the once-formidable naval staging base at Truk atoll, already rendered a shadow of its former self by a previous raid in February. Some 300 American planes hit the base at 0837 hours and were gamely met by 54 Zeros of the 253rd *Kokutai* and *Hikotai 301* of the 202nd *Kokutai* coming up from Takeshima airfield. As VF-8 approached the atoll, Feightner, in F6F-3 40686, spotted what he called a “square-cut Zero,” the A6M3 Model 32 with clipped wingtips, trying to drop two bombs with magnesium streamers on his division. Whitey climbed to engage and the Zero came at him head to head until, at about 1,000 feet distance, it rolled to the left and leveled out with Feightner slightly below and 30 feet off its right wing. Kicking right rudder, Feightner fired and saw the Zero catch fire at 26,000 feet and spiral down, at which point the pilot bailed out.

The Japanese claimed 30 victories and two probables over Truk that day, for the loss of 28 Zeros—20 by the 253rd *Kokutai*, which also noted that American strafing left the unit with only five operational planes. TF-58 claimed 59 and another 34 destroyed on the ground, for the loss of 35 planes, more to anti-aircraft fire than to enemy fighters.

Appointed VF-8’s engineering officer in May, Lt. jg Feightner was active throughout the Marianas campaign, but scored no confirmed victories, not even during the “Turkey Shoot” against the Japanese carrier force on June 19. While he was photographing Tinian and Saipan in advance of the June 15 landings, however, anti-aircraft fire set his F6F-3P on fire and a subsequent explosion blew away much of his left wing and horizontal stabilizer. That last blast also extinguished the fire, though, and Feightner decided to get the plane, the F56 camera, and his hard-earned photos back to *Bunker Hill*—which he did. As he approached the carrier an F6F pilot sent up to look him over informed him, “You have no left wheel and your tail hook is down,” and advised him to ditch and be picked up by a destroyer. Instead, Feightner radioed “Permission to come aboard.”

“It’s your option,” the other Hellcat pilot said. “The skipper says if you think you can bring it aboard, fine.” Rear Admiral Alfred E. Montgomery, commanding Task Group 58.2 from *Bunker Hill*, asked Feightner if he had taken the photographs and he replied, “Yes sir, the film is all gone [used up.]” “Your decision,” said the admiral. Feightner duly landed and the deck crew counted more than 170

shrapnel holes in his Hellcat. Asked why he was so determined to get aboard, he said, “because I didn’t want to go back and do that again.”

Another example of Feightner’s exploits going beyond air to air combat occurred during a 20-plane combat air patrol in the Ryukyu Islands on October 10. When his own F6F-5 had to drop out with generator problems he took off in another Hellcat still rigged with a 500-pound bomb from an earlier strike. When his flight spotted a small Japanese steamer, he offered to bomb it and rejected the idea of being accompanied by two fighters to suppress anti-aircraft fire—he thought he might approach unnoticed if he attacked alone: “They’ll be too busy looking at these other planes up here.” He succeeded in scoring a hit that caused an explosion. The stern section fell away, and the ship soon sank. Lieutenant Feightner received the Air Medal for that feat.

Two days later Feightner, in F6F-5 58927, was part of a 15-plane strike over Taien airfield, Formosa at 0730 hours when an estimated 40 to 60 Japanese fighters descended on them, fired an inaccurate fusillade and dove on through the formation. Diving after them, Feightner shot down three in quick succession and damaged another. This brought his final credited tally to nine. VF-8’s deployment aboard *Bunker Hill* ended on November 4. His wartime decorations at that point consisted of the Distinguished Flying Cross, two combat/strike DFCs, five air medals and six combat/strike AMs for 40 combat missions.

Steaming to San Francisco, Feightner was assigned to VF-98 under Commander John Crommelin, serving as engineering officer until November 1946, followed by duty as gunnery officer in VF-21. He served at Naval Aviation Training Center Patuxent, Maryland, from November 1948 to July 1949, then as a test pilot until December 1951. During that time, he had a hand in the development of a new generation of jet carrier planes, such as the McDonnell F2H Banshee, the Grumman F9F-6 Cougar and the Vought F7U Cutlass. His work on the Cutlass came in handy when he flew with the Blue Angels from January to September 1952, for he was among the few in the famed flight team to perform aerobatics in the F7U; radical to look at and challenging to fly.

From September 1952 through December 1954, Feightner was the development officer at VX-3. He was frequently assigned to the Pentagon but in between those stints he commanded VF-11 from



Feightner takes off in a Vought F7U-1 from USS Midway on July 23, 1951. He was the only pilot to successfully land that Cutlass model on a carrier deck. (U.S. Navy)



January 1955 to February 1957, was given command of Carrier Air Group CVG-10 in March 1959, and CVG-4 from April to July 1960. He also had ship commands in the form of the oiler Chikaskia (AO-54) in November 1964 and the landing ship Okinawa (LPH-3) in February 1966. On February 1, 1971, Feightner attained the rank of rear admiral. He retired from the Navy on July 1, 1974, bringing to a close a 33 year career in which acedom had been an almost incidental, but nonetheless exciting part.

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Thanks to James McBride for his assistance in doing justice to his uncle's naval career.

Signed Copies of *Wings of Valor*

In November 2016, Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum honored the American Fighter Aces at their Annual Spreading Wings Gala. The night was an incredible tribute to the skill, fortitude, courage, and heroics of the Fighter Aces. 14 Aces were present that evening for the Gala and while there, they each signed 50 *Wings of Valor* books. The AFAA is currently selling these signed books for \$200, with proceeds going to help with the production costs of the book.



Photo Credit: Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum



*Col. Dean Caswell
(Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum)*

Signatures include:

- Col. Bud Anderson, Col. Abner Aust Jr., Lt. Henry Buttelmann,
- Col. Richard Candelaria, Col. Dean Caswell, Gen. Charles Cleveland,
- Brig. Gen. Frank Gailer Jr., Cmdr. Lester Gray,
- Cmdr. Bill Hardy, Lt. James Luma, Lt. Donald McPherson,
- LCDR Billy Watts, and Capt. David Wilhelm.

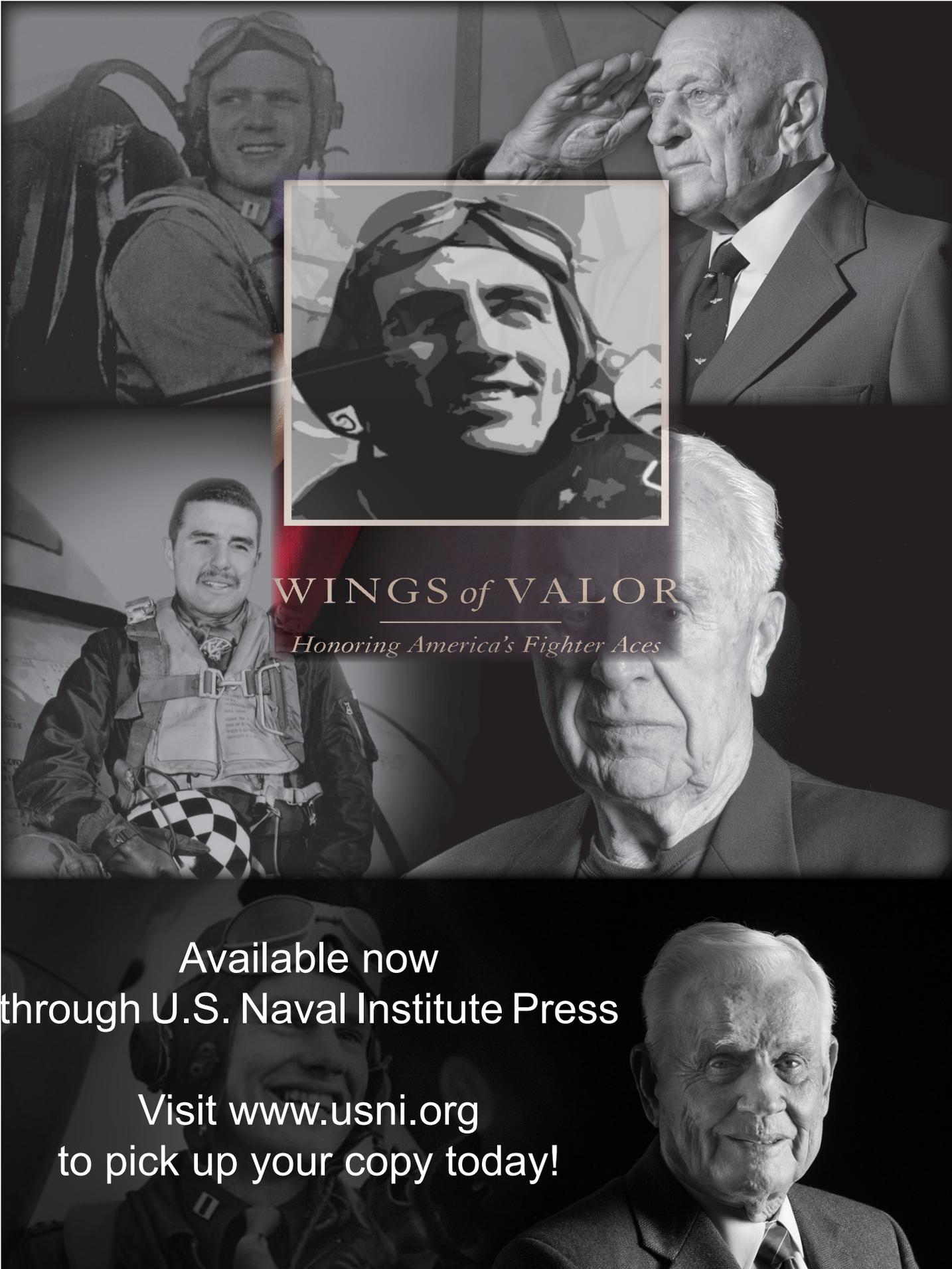


*Col. Bud Anderson and Brig. Gen. Frank Gailer
(Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum)*

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 Seattle, WA 98108

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News of the Aces

Lou Luma Visits Newly Restored Mosquito

By: Christopher Wilkinson

On May 31, The Flying Heritage Collection & Combat Armor Museum of Everett, Washington opened up their newly restored-to-flying de Havilland Mosquito T.III TV959 to local area resident James Forrest "Lou" Luma, a decorated American Mosquito ace. Lou was graciously invited for a visit by Museum Director Adrian Hunt and Curator Cory Graff, who greeted Lou and discussed the restoration and future plans to fly the Mosquito. Lou regaled them with his humor and Mosquito stories, which are legion. Lou was unable to climb inside, but he had a close up view of the interior through the crew door and the exterior and pronounced it a beauty. Lou became an ace flying as an USAAF 1st Lieutenant in the RCAF's 418 Squadron in England, flying Night Intruder and Day Ranger missions over Europe with his navigator F/O Colin Finlayson. According to Lou, it had been a while since he had last seen a Mosquito, but he thought the museum's



Lou Luma and the de Havilland Mosquito T.III TV959

example painted in a Night Intruder scheme really was just superb and he was very pleased he could see the airworthy example so close to his home. The museum's Mosquito took its first U.S. based flight on June 23.

The museum's Mosquito is a T.III, a dual control training version. According to sources, the original TV959 was bought by the FHC in 1992 from the Imperial War Museum in England. The restoration to flying was finished in 2016 by AvSpecs in New Zealand. It was accomplished using a new build fuselage created on molds built by New Zealander Glyn Powell after the original fuselage was deemed not airworthy. Powell's 18 year work to revive Mosquito construction techniques and technology made the current crop of two new-build Mosquitos possible. The T.III uses original components on a new build fuselage and wings.

The museum states that it has been painted to represent the Mosquito FB.VI of ace F/O Alan Wagner, who flew Night Intruder missions with 605 Squadron RAF and became an ace flying the Mosquito. Wagner died in combat flying a Tempest, and the museum's Mosquito is a tribute to his sacrifice. Lou had flown a T.III during his training days and



Lou Luma (left) and his navigator Colin Finlayson (right) in April 1944

has distinct memories of flying it, one of which was hair raising. On his first solo flight in the T.III, he said he rolled the Mosquito which he believes dislodged a piece of debris in the cockpit and jammed the chain linkage for the stick. He eventually got the stick moving and he made it home safely but he never forgot it. Soon after, he transitioned to the single control Mosquito and the 418 Squadron's FB.VI named "Moonbeam McSwine" that he flew in combat with his navigator. Lou finished his tour in May 1944, with 31 missions, and 5 aerial victories; two destroyed on the ground and two damaged on the ground. Lou was separated from his navigator Colin Finlayson when he was transferred to the USAAF 802nd Reconnaissance Group in Watton, England in June 1944 flying weather recon in their Mosquitos and later the 419th Night Fighter Squadron in 1945. Finlayson signed up for a second tour but was lost on a combat mission. Lou describes him as an excellent navigator and was ready to take the fight to the Hun. Today, James Forrest Luma is America's last living Mosquito ace.

There are currently three flying Mosquitos in the world: Military Aircraft Museum's FB.26 KA 114 in Virginia Beach, VA; Bob Jens' B.35 VR 796 in Vancouver, British Columbia; and The Flying Heritage's T.III TV 959. There is a fourth Mosquito (FB.VI PZ 474) being prepared to flying by AvSpecs for Texas owner Rod Lewis and could be flying by early next year.

A big thank you to Jema Hayes of the American Fighter Aces Association for her assistance, and to Adrian Hunt and Cory Graff of the FHC&CAM, for making Lou's visit possible and a very memorable one.



Lou with FHC&CAM Museum Director, Adrian Hunt



News of the Aces

Aces and Friends Luncheon, January 13, 2017

By: Honoree, Col. Lee Forbes

Photos: Jerry Escobedo

On Friday, January 13, our newly chartered South Texas Chapter of the American Fighter Aces Association (AFAA) held its first meeting of 2017 at the Petroleum Club in San Antonio, TX. The meeting was attended by 31 people including one Ace, one Ace Ette, three Honorees, 13 Friends of the Aces and 13 guests. Four of the guests were Air Force pilots who are stationed at JBSA-Randolph, TX. We are especially pleased with our growing interface with all of the flying training operations at JBSA-Randolph. No doubt you'll be seeing more young pilots and their unit commanders as guests at our luncheons, and hopefully some of them will become members of our South Texas Chapter.

Following lunch and my introductory remarks, I led the group in our Pledge of Allegiance, followed by our Chaplain, Colonel Bill Jacobs, USAF (Ret) who delivered an Invocation. Next I introduced everyone in attendance starting with our Ace, Ace Ette, Honorees, Friends of the Aces, and guests. Our senior Ace was Brig General Frank Gailer, USAF (Ret), who had announced at our last meeting of 2016 that he would be leaving the San Antonio area and moving to Colorado. Well, that hasn't happened yet and we're glad he was able to join us to kick off the first meeting of this year. General Gailer was a WWII P-51 Mustang Ace in the 363 FS, 357 FG, 8 AF (ETO) with 5.5 confirmed victories and was a POW of the Germans in Stalag 1 from November 1944 until the end of the War. He flew combat again in F-100s during the Vietnam War as Commander of the 35 TFW, 7 AF (PACAF) at Phan Rang AB, South Vietnam. His decorations



Everyone is enjoying the food.

Left side of table foreground.

L-R Lt Colonel Jonathon "Salty" Elza, USAF & one of his junior officer's & Friend, Dave Herron.

Right side of table foreground.

L-R Friends, Bryan Miller & Gray Baber & Guest, Eddie Pickrel



That's what I call a serious handshake.

L-R Tuskegee Airman, Dr. Granville Coggs, M.D. & Ace, Frank Gailer

include 3 Legions of Merit, 2 Distinguished Flying Crosses, The Purple Heart, and 21 Air Medals. He is also a member of the AFAA Board of Directors. We had one Ace Ette in attendance, Mrs. Madeline Welch, widow of the late WWII P-38 Lightning Ace, Colonel Darrell Welch, USAF (Ret). He was assigned to the 27 FS, 1 FG, 12 AF (MTO) and had 5 confirmed victories. His decorations include the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, and 12 Air medals.

We had three Honorees in attendance: Colonel Ward Boyce, USAF (Ret), former Executive Director of the AFAA and current member of the

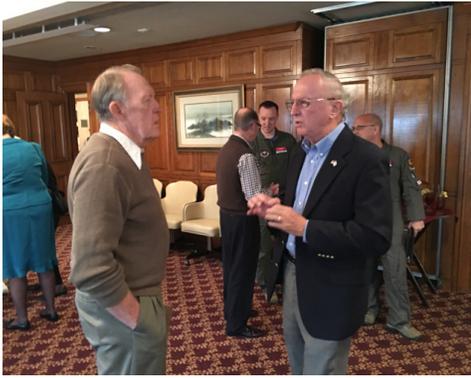
AFAA Board of Directors; Myself, and Lt Colonel Dick Cole, USAF (Ret), the sole surviving Doolittle Raider.

Friends of the Fighter Aces in attendance were: Colonel Gary Baber, USAF (Ret); Colonel Ed Garland, USAFR (Ret); Colonel (CH) Bill Jacobs, USAF (Ret); Colonel Bill Stewart, USAF (Ret); Colonel J. B. Stone, USAF (Ret); Lt Colonel (MC) Granville Coggs, USAFR (Ret); Lt Colonel Bill Duvall, USAF (Ret); Lt Colonel Joe Smith, USAF (Ret); Major Dave Herron, ANG (Ret); Mr. Jerry Escobedo, Mr. Wayne Fagan; Mr. Chris Mann; and Mr. Bryan Miller.

Our guests included: Colonel Eddie "Pick" Pickrel, USAF, (Ret), LF Cinc, Ralph Parr Pack of the River Rats; Lt Colonel Chris "Duff" Duffet, USAF, Commander, 99 FTS, 12FTW, JBSA-Randolph; Lt Colonel Jonathon "Salty" Elza, USAF, Commander, 460 FTS, 12 FTW, JBSA-Randolph and one of his Junior Officers; Lt Colonel John "Batt" Platt, USAF, Assistant Director of Operations, 435 FTS, 12FTW, JBSA-Randolph; Lt Colonel Rick Sinkfield, USAF (Ret), President, San Antonio Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen and his wife, Carolyn; Mrs. Kelly Dixon, widow of the



Are we having fun, or not? L-R Honoree, Dick Cole; Friend, Jerry Escobedo & Ace, Frank Gailer.



Discussing the 2017 Reunion. L-R Honoree, Ward Boyce & Chapter President, Ed Garland. Honoree, Lee Forbes, with back to camera.

San Antonio River Walk direct: (210) 224-2500. Among his next major responsibilities is to identify a guest speaker for the September 10 Formal Banquet. He closed by encouraging everyone to plan on attending the Reunion since it's right here in San Antonio. Our local original Tuskegee Airman, Lt Colonel (MC) Dr. Granville Coggs asked if he could speak and recited the poem *Invictus* [inset] for us. He's now 91 years young and still going strong. I can't



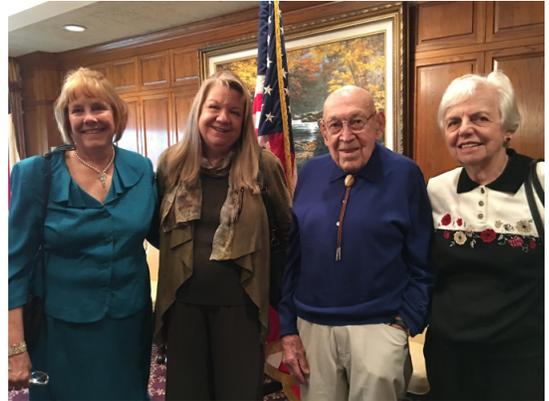
Everyone's enjoying the conversation. L-R Guest, Lt Colonel Chris "Duff" Duffet, USAF; Tuskegee Airman, Dr. Granville Coggs, M.D. & Friend, Wayne Fagan

do more with less." It seems that some things about the Air Force hasn't changed since we "veterans" were on active duty.

At this time, our meeting was winding down and I asked Chaplain, Colonel (CH) Bill Jacobs to lead us in a benediction. I announced that our next luncheon would be Friday, April 21. If General Gailer doesn't sell his home in the meantime we hope to see him again at our April gathering.

Four Star General, Robert J. Dixon, USAF (Ret); Ms. Liz Montalvo, San Antonio Honor Flight Coordinator; Mr. Bob Erfurth, WWII B-24 Crewmember; and Mr. Larry Snelson.

After the introductions were concluded, General Gailer made some opening remarks about his future plans. He intends to relocate to Colorado as soon as he sells his home which could take some time because it's located in an exclusive San Antonio sub-division. Following General Gailer's remarks, Colonel Ed Garland, the first President of the South Texas Chapter of the AFAA, spoke about the goals and objectives of our Chapter and his expectations. He also provided an update on the activities planned for the 2017 AFAA Reunion to be held September 7 thru 10 at the Holiday Inn San Antonio River Walk. He indicated that all planned activities will be priced at \$180.00 per person or attendees can chose to pay for just those activities that they wish to attend. Room rates are \$121.00 a night plus taxes. Reservations can be made by calling the Holiday Inn



What a happy group. L-R Guest, Liz Montalvo; Ginny Dameron, daughter of Ace, Darrell Welch; Honoree, Dick Cole & Ace Ette, Madeline Welch, widow of Ace, Darrell Welch.

Invictus

William Ernest Henry

*Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.*

*In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.*

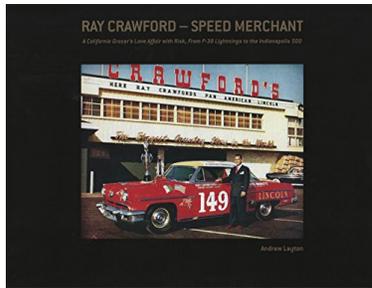
*Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.*

*It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.*



Book Review

Layton, Andrew. *Ray Crawford - Speed Merchant: A California Grocer's Love Affair with Risk, From P-38 Lightnings to the Indianapolis 500*. Revolution Press, LLC, 2015. 194pp. Ill. Appendices. \$39.99.



Rarely is a book covering so many aspects of a passion for speed and a myriad of adventure; as the title suggests it was a true life-long occupation. Ray Crawford's biography completed by Andrew Layton surely fills a void on several levels. Initially covering his exploits as a fighter ace over North Africa (which still appears to be a neglected theater covered in the history books) and not to mention a biography of a very fascinating individual.

Ray Crawford was born in New Mexico on October 26th, 1915 and moved to Bell, CA in 1924. Shortly thereafter he called Alhambra, CA, home. During high school his love of speed grew while hot rodding with local schoolmates such as friend Sam Hanks. However, Ray had loftier goals and would watch planes taking off at the local Alhambra Airport. Since it was almost impossible for a 16-year-old to have \$98.00 for flight lessons at the time - he scraped \$2.50 together and promised to pay the rest to the instructor. He managed four hours of flight time until one day he came by for another lesson, when the substitute instructor saw his records and told him he could simply take a plane and go up – alone. His primary instructor checked the box that indicated Ray was more seasoned than he actually was and rated that he already soloed. Ray later wondered if his solo flight with only four hours of seat time was some kind of record! After graduating Alhambra High School and USC, he worked as vice president for his father, W.H. Crawford's, food business.

Ray was inducted into service on November 11th, 1941 and by January 1942 accepted to the Aviation Cadet Program. He initially began his flight training at Thunderbird Field in Glendale, AZ and then was selected for the fighter training program at Luke Field. Ray was chosen to be a fighter pilot in none other than the Lockheed P-38 Lightning – even at the age of 26 – which was the cut off age for a fighter pilot, but the need was too great to not have pilots serve.

Ray served as a fighter pilot in Tunisia, North Africa, and assigned to the 97th Fighter Squadron

of the 82nd Fighter Group. Here he was blooded in combat and again, showing a more human side of his story – was rather a reluctant hero and ace. He disliked the idea of killing but he did his duty; scoring a total of six aerial victories and a probable. Crawford's tally included three Me-109s, two Ju-52 transports and a lone Macchi 202. Victories recorded were a double Me-109 score on March 1, 1943, a probable Me-109 on March 22 and then he scored a third victory, another Me-109 on April 5, 1943. During a melee over Cap Rosa and Cap Bizerte, Tunisia where 30 Ju-52s with fighter escort were attacked by his squadron, he scored his fourth and fifth victories, thus earning the title of ace. He was the fourth ace in the squadron and was tied as a top ranking ace of the 97th Fighter Squadron.

A solid narrative covers ops in North Africa, missions over the Mediterranean and Italy as well as the impact felt regarding the loss of squadron mates.

Suffering from fatigue and stress, he was eventually rotated home with ace status, 50 missions, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Air Medal with 14 oak leaf clusters

Layton then covers post-war flight assignments including Ray being one of the test pilots for the Lockheed P-80 Shooting Star program in Burbank, CA. Prior to this, he was on leave with War Bond tours, and being close to Los Angeles, met with many Hollywood elites thanks to wife Marion being tied to 20th Century Fox Studios. Those familiar with the program are reintroduced to such names as Clarence "Kelly" Johnson; pilot Milo Burcham, who would perish during a test flight; and pre-war air racer and test pilot Tony LeVier and his narrow escape and bailout when the tail sheared off of his P-80.

The most poignant interaction, though, was the tie in with another pilot with the program - America's top scoring ace – Major Dick Bong. Ray and Dick were both quite active with the P-80, despite various losses and setbacks with the program. The author is quite candid of some of the tension between Crawford & Bong whilst in public; the majority being name recognition and "6 kills...oh, that's all?" against Bong's top score of 40 and receiving the Medal of Honor. In fact, on the fateful day of Dick's loss while on a routine test flight on August 6, 1945, Ray was actually slated to fly the P-80 that Bong took up but Bong itched for more seat time. Events proved deadly to America's top ace after a flame out and failed parachute jump shortly after take-off.

After an initial grounding of the P-80, Ray became disillusioned and was flying C-47 Skytrain transports in Alabama for a short time. Afterwards, he decided to retire from active duty in December 1945 as staff positions did not appeal to him. He returned to civilian life and then worked again with the family grocery business. This did not last long, however, as "Business was good and life was dull". This completely changed when he ran into an old high school chum – Sam Hanks – who eventually went on to win the 1957



Indianapolis 500. It is here where his relationship with speed was re-born. Ray began to race midget cars in the URA and USAC; AAA Championship cars including runs at the Indy 500 1950-1959; running in the Carrera Pan Americana road race (winning his class in a Lincoln); the Race of Two Worlds at Monza, Italy; sports car racing; and even stints at piloting unlimited hydroplanes! Famed land speed record holder Mickey Thompson was influenced by Crawford as Ray gave Thompson additional exposure to racing while as a member of his pit team at the Indy 500.

Aside from his very active racing career – he founded the chain of Crawford’s Supermarkets in southern California.

The Prologue ends with a simple question: Who was Ray Crawford? This book answers the question admirably for any interested reader, military or aviation historian, and any aficionado of speed. Fighter ace, test pilot, multi-faceted race car driver / hydroplane racer, car owner, successful business man, and family man – what more could I guy ask for?

Profusely illustrated from the Crawford family archives, and a plethora of photos from the Dick Wallen racing collection as well as other sources.

Highly recommended.

-Alex Boras

Have a book you want to review? Email it to JHayes@museumofflight.org. Book reviews should range between 500-1000 words. Please make sure the books would be of interest to AFAA members; about the Aces or about the aircraft they flew or encountered.

Viewing Aces' Memorabilia at the Museum of Flight

This past April the Museum of Flight vacated a storage room that housed items from from multiple Museum departments, including some materials belonging to the AFAA. The vast majority of materials remain stored on site at the main campus, safely housed with the Museums archives and collections departments. Spare copies of old Bulletins and boxes of extra copies of membership materials were moved into a new research room at the Museum’s Restoration Center and Reserve Collection Facility in at Paine Field. There are multiple copies of all items on site at the main Museum and none of the Ace’s memorabilia, artifacts, or lithographs were relocated.

As part of this process, staff realized it would be beneficial to outline how a member of the AFAA or museum visitors can access memorabilia that is not on display when they visit the Museum.

You will want to contact the Museum’s Registrar or Museum Collections Specialist (contact information below) with as much advance notice as possible and let them know what specific object or materials that you would like to see. Jema Hayes has an inventory of memorabilia if assistance is needed in identifying materials.



Dalberg Research Room at the Museum of Flight (museumofflight.org)

The Registrar or Museum Collections Specialist will set up an appointment for you to see the materials at the Dahlberg Reading Room during business hours: Monday – Friday, 10am – 5pm.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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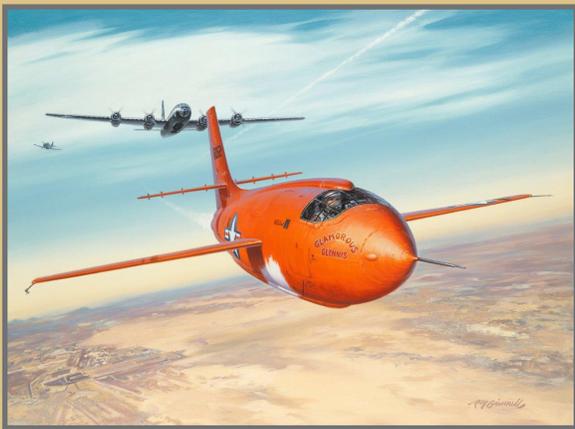
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Meeting with Colonel Clarence “Bud” Anderson

By: Ellen Jetland

I have a huge passion for World War II and aviation history. While working at the Museum of Flight, I often spend my breaks in the Personal Courage Wing where I discovered the American Fighter Aces exhibit. I was fascinated by the stories of amazing aviators and their skills, honor, and dedication to their country. I dreamed one day of meeting an American Fighter Ace because it would be such an honor to meet a master of the skies, as there are very few left alive.

As luck would have it, my dear friend Chuck Kluecker from University of North Dakota, reached out to me about an ace he knew; a triple ace in fact, Colonel Clarence “Bud” Anderson as they had crossed paths in California and Oshkosh. Before Col. Anderson agreed to the meeting, he wanted me to forward him some essays I wrote about aviation military history and other relevant material that described who I am and the work I do. So I forward my previous essay applications for the AFAA scholarship, resume, and some photos from when I met Bob Hoover, worked with the Blue Angels, and did World War II reenacting. Luckily, after Bud read the materials, it was a go! We scheduled the meeting when I would be home for spring break in March.

In preparation for the meeting, I did more research about him. With the help of Chuck, I watched a documentary, read “To Fly and Fight”, and went to The Museum of Flight archives to gather information. The stories and biographies about Col. Anderson continued to amaze me. For example, it blows my mind that he was not shot once by enemy aircraft during aerial combat and yet was able to shoot down 16 ¼ aircraft during World War Two!

The day I met Col. Anderson, I flew from Seattle to Sacramento early in the morning. Chuck picked me up from the airport and we drove to Auburn Airport where he gave me a tour around. It was such a beautiful airport. I can see how pilots like Col. Anderson liked coming here. Right before we were meeting with Col. Anderson, we stopped by Sunshine Flyers. Inside, Chuck introduced me to Tammy Meredith of The Placer Golden 99s. She presented me with an envelope of funds donated by her organization, Chuck, Mike Duncan (owner of Sunshine Flyers), Wayne Mooneyham, and Don Wolfe to cover my trip and lunch with Col. Anderson! My jaw dropped to the ground; I was so surprised. They were so excited that a young lady like me was going to meet with a special ace and wanted to contribute. Their generosity made this trip even more special, which I cannot thank them enough for.

Chuck and I went back to the Auburn Airport to have lunch at Col. Anderson’s favorite restaurant, Wing Grill and Espresso Bar. When Col. Anderson arrived, I walked up to his car to greet him and his daughter. He chose me to escort him to the restaurant, and I thought, “Oh my gosh, I am holding onto a fighter ace!” After we sat down at our table outside in the beautiful sun, Col. Anderson asked me to tell him about myself. It was really humbling to hear that he was so interested to learn about me rather than talking about himself. Through our conversation, we also talked about aviation, our flight training experience, getting over motion sickness while flying, about my University, the future, and life in general. Not only did we have lunch, but then we went to a hangar that was dedicated to Col. Anderson. Lastly, we went to tour the Douglas Van Howd studio where the life size bronze statue of Col. Anderson was made, which is displayed at the Auburn Airport. As our time together ended, he signed and gave me one of his challenge coins and a copy of his book “To Fly and Fight” which I will forever cherish.

Meeting with Col. Anderson was truly a once in a lifetime experience. I can’t tell you how much of honor it was to meet such a humble, grateful aviator. Getting the chance to meet him in person allowed me to see Col. Anderson not only as a fighter ace but also as a human being who puts others before himself. He dedicated his life to the service for our country from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and beyond, which should not be forgotten.

Ever since meeting with Col. Anderson, I often think of ways to preserve his honor so others can learn about him and he will not be forgotten. With that being said, it has inspired me to start a fundraising project to raise money to put Colonel Anderson in the Hall of Honor in the Personal Courage Wing at The Museum of Flight, in recognition for his service to our freedom and country so he can be forever remembered.



Ellen and Ace Col. Bud Anderson at the Auburn Airport



AFAA Scholarship Program

The purpose of the American Fighter Aces Association Scholarship Program is to provide yearly funds as available for qualified students to offset their college tuition and fees. It is a gift from the Aces and Friends of the Aces in order to help continue the knowledge and understanding of the legacy of the Fighter Aces well into the future. Any undergraduate or high school senior enrolled in an accredited university, college or junior college may apply on a yearly basis.

To review all details and/or print out a copy, please visit www.americanfighteraces.org and click on the "Scholarship Program" link

GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING AN APPLICATION

- 1. Applicant must be a U.S. citizen.**
- 2. A minimum GPA of 3.0 is required**, Applications with lesser GPA shall be considered by the Scholarship Committee.
- 3. Scholarships are limited** to support during undergraduate education in an accredited college or university.
- 4. The number of scholarships is normally six**, and their respective size is dependent on available funds and may vary each year. Normally, each scholarship shall be for \$2,500 per year or \$1,250 per semester towards tuition at a student's university of choice. The scholarship is for one year and the recipient must maintain a 3.0 GPA or higher. As additional funds become available from any source, the Scholarship Committee may award additional scholarships each year. These additional scholarships shall be at a minimum of \$1500.
5. Applications, transcripts, essay and letters of reference may be received starting **June 1, 2017 and no later than August 31, 2017**; recipients will be notified by October 1, 2017.

Completed applications and letters of reference signed by the writer should be mailed (post or email) and sent to:

**AFAA Scholarship
c/o Jema Hayes
Museum of Flight
9404 E Marginal Way South
Seattle, Washington 98108**

Jema Hayes may be contacted with questions at JHayes@museumofflight.org or 206-768-7166.

6. Only your completed application, transcripts, essay and three letters of reference will be evaluated. No other information is required or desired; please confine your responses to the space provided.

7. The Scholarship Committee shall consist of:

- The current President of the AFAA
- The current Friends Vice President of the AFAA
- The current Secretary of the AFAA
- Any Ace or Friend personally sponsoring a scholarship

8. Consideration will be given to applicants who are:

- Lineal descendants of past and / or current members of the AFAA
- Lineal descendants of Honorees
- Dependents of Friends of the AFAA currently active in the AFAA at the time of applicant's Submission
- Dependents of AFAA Top Gun recipients
- Members of the General Public

9. Recipients will be asked to write a letter of appreciation and include a photo that may be included in a future issue of The American Fighter Aces Bulletin.



LAST FLIGHTS

Robert Carl Milliken (June 6, 1922 - December 26, 2016)



Robert Carl Milliken, 95, died peacefully in his sleep Dec. 26 in Laramie, Wyoming. Bob was born June 6, 1922, in Hanna, Wyoming to Robert and Anna Milliken where he enjoyed fishing, hunting, horseback riding, football and working the family ranch.

When Bob was 6 years old, Charles Lindberg flew over Hanna on his historic cross country flight. While watching the plane fly low over his home town, Bob promised himself that he would fly someday. He made that dream a reality while a sophomore at the University of Wyoming. That year, Pearl Harbor was bombed and Bob responded by immediately enrolling in Civilian Pilot Training. By March 1942, he had his pilot's license and soon after enlisted in the Army Air Corp.

After graduation with the Class 43-J at Williams Field, Arizona, he was assigned to fly P-38s for the 429th Fighter Squadron, 474th Fighter Group out of Warmwell, England in late April 1944. Millikin, flying a *Lightning* coded 7X-D and emblazoned with a Wyoming bucking horse and nicknamed "Swat" on the nose, was credited with his first enemy victory on July 6, when he shot down a FW-190 between

Chateaudin and LeMans.

As the Normandy breakout progressed the Group moved to the continent. On September 12, near Aachen, the group was attacked by a large forces of FW-190s. Assuming leadership of a flight, Milliken quickly shot one down. Spotting three Focke-Wulfs chasing a lone P-38 on the deck, he dove and set the rearmost fighter on fire.

During a sweep on October 13, between Kiln and Bonn, two 474th squadrons were attacked by a superior Luftwaffe formation. In the ensuing battle, Milliken shot a FW-190 off a P-38's tail, causing it to crash for his fourth victory. On December 18, in a noontime dogfight, Milliken shot down an Me-109 near Koln to become an ace.

He came home having achieved the distinction of Fighter Ace and was awarded several Air Medals, the Silver Star and the Distinguished Flying Cross. The war had a profound impact on Bob and his wartime comrades became lifelong friends.

Robert returned to Laramie and UW in fall 1945. In January 1946, Bob met Zella Bell at a dance and after a whirlwind romance including flights in Bob's Aeronica airplane, the couple were married Aug. 25, 1946.

Bob enjoyed several careers after the war including owning a small airport, being a land man for the oil and gas industry, hospital administrator and owning several small businesses. Bob was also a member of the Episcopal Church and was active in several civic groups including the Freemasons and Rotary. (Exerpts from Laramie Boomerang)

Luther Delano Prater (October 9, 1921 - April 1, 2017)



At the May 2015 Congressional Gold Medal Ceremony for America's Fighter Aces, one writer declared "While it is difficult to pinpoint the exact qualities that separate a good fighter pilot from a great fighter pilot, it has been said that it takes a fighting inner spirit and a motivation and determination to survive and succeed at any cost, with a measure of opportunity and luck added to the mix." By this definition, Del Prater was certainly one of our nation's great fighter pilots. And, equally important to him, these qualities also made him a great father, husband, investment advisor, and community leader as well, and enabled him to live, full of life, to age 95. He died on April 1, 2017.

Del was born on October 9, 1921 in the small rural farming community of Bonanza, Kentucky. Educated in a one-room schoolhouse throughout his childhood, he was recruited by Alice Lloyd to attend her eponymous junior college, received a full scholarship from her to earn his BA in Political Science at the University of Kentucky,

and completed all course requirements for a master's degree before being called up for active duty by the Navy in June 1942. He left his master's thesis on his farmhouse desk when he shipped out, planning to return to it and a life in academics at the end of World War II. He returned to neither.

Del took his first flying lesson on a lark from a local flight instructor who used an unplowed field for his takeoffs and landings. From this humble (and precarious) beginning, he went on to earn the gold wings of a naval aviator and flew the F6F "Hellcat" fighter plane as part of VF-19, known as "Satan's Kittens," aboard the



aircraft carrier *Lexington* in the Pacific theater during World War II. By the end of the war, he had earned the Silver Star, Navy Cross, Distinguished Flying Cross, and three Air Medals. He also became one of the rare pilots in American history to achieve "Fighter Ace" status, credited with downing 8.5 enemy aircraft. After the war, he joined the Navy Reserve, became commander of the Los Alamitos Naval Reserve Base, and retired 20 years later with the rank of Captain. Like many others in "the Greatest Generation" who fought in World War II, Del downplayed his role in the war, and often deflected questions about his time in the Navy. It was particularly gratifying to his friends and family, then, that he decided to make the trip to Washington D.C. in May 2015 to receive the Congressional Gold Medal along with the few (76) other surviving American Fighter Aces.

Following the war, Del settled in Los Angeles and became an investment advisor with Blyth and Company. Sixty years and three attempted retirements later, he finally retired for good as a Senior Vice President of Wealth Management with UBS Financial Services. During the intervening years, he married his true love, Hope Edwards, who died tragically in 1967, had two sons, Don and Jeff Prater, found love again in an enduring relationship with Eloise Givens who also predeceased him, enjoyed the tender attention of two devoted daughters-in-law, Hally and Yon, and reveled in the antics of four loving granddaughters, Kim, Hayden, Angela, and Rebekah. Del's family, his friends, and his country, are in a far better place because he lived. (Pasadena Star-News)

Frank Edward McCauley (November 9, 1916 - June 1, 2017)



Frank Edward McCauley, 100, of Hamilton, Montana passed away June 1, 2017 at the Marcus Daly Hospice Center.

He was born November 9, 1916 in Hicksville, Ohio the son of Ray and Edna McCauley. Frank was raised on a large farm which included a dairy; providing milk to the Hicksville Community and schools. Frank attended Michigan State University graduating in 1939 with a degree in Agricultural Engineering.

After college Frank enlisted in the Army, then quickly transferred to the Air Corps. He trained to fly fighter planes in Texas before being stationed in England. He flew his P-47 Fighter "Rat Racer" on 46 missions, supporting and protecting our B-17 bombers. As part of the 61st Fighter Squadron and the 56th Fighter Group based out of Bridgeport, Connecticut, he successfully shot down 5 *f* enemy aircraft, achieving "Ace" fighter pilot status. Frank returned home in 1945 having earned the Silver Star, two Distinguished Flying Crosses, and four Air Medals. In 2015, Frank and Bobbie were flown to Washington D.C., where Frank was presented the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively presented to

all 1447 American Aces.

Frank married in 1945 and had three sons, Craig, Kirk, and Kevin. He pursued a successful career in construction in Northern California for the next 29 years. He retired in 1974, married his wonderful wife, Bobbie, and settled in the Bitterroot Valley of Montana. Frank and Bobbie enjoyed adventures traveling in their motor home, including a very memorable trip to Alaska. Frank also enjoyed hiking and fishing here in Hamilton and volunteering for local organizations including Marcus Daly Hospital and the Bitterroot Humane Association. Bobbie and Frank entertained often; it was not uncommon to have two or three dinner parties weekly with friends.

Frank had an infectious smile and most positive outlook on life that will be eternally missed by family and friends.

Frank proved to be a wonderful husband, father, and grandfather with a fantastic network of neighbors and friends. The family wishes to thank those friends and neighbors who offered support for Frank and Bobbie as needs arose.

Frank is survived by his wife, Bobbie McCauley; sons, Craig, Kirk, and Kevin; step-daughter, Nancy Cook; grandchildren, Morgan, Kristy, Alina; five great grandchildren and three great-great grandchildren. A graveside service with military honors was held on Friday, June 16, at the Western Montana State Veterans Cemetery, with full honors presented by the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force. (Provided by McCauley Family)

Published by the **AMERICAN FIGHTER ACES ASSOCIATION**
in conjunction with



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