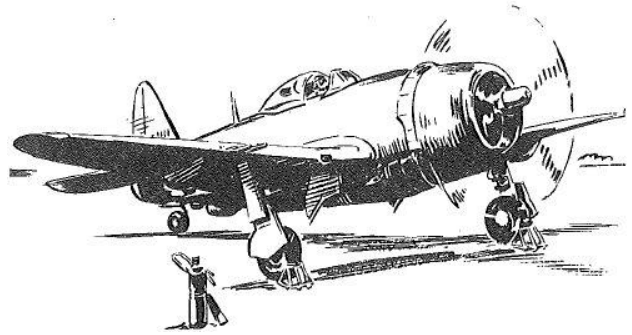




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Dear Friends, Families and 367th Fighter Group members,

The patrol missions over the invasion force in the beginning of June 1944 were uneventful but less than two weeks later the Gang met the Luftwaffe in the middle of a dive bombing mission. Although that each squadron had its own assigned targets they were all involved in the dogfight. The article starts in this issue and will be continued in the next one.

I WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

And as always : good reading !

The first dogfight of the 367th Fighter Group, part 1

In June 1944, the pilots of the 367th Fighter Group had gained a lot of experience. They had flown different kind of missions : bomber escorts, dive bombing, fighter sweep and armed reconnaissance. They also had flown top cover missions of the allied fleet during the Invasion of France. Nevertheless they had not yet encountered the enemy in a true fighter pilot way : a dogfight. We saw in a previous newsletter that Lt. Col. Morris 'Mo' Crossen had shot down two enemy A/C while flying with the 55th FG in order to gain experience before leading his own Squadron or the full group. On June 14, 1944, Lt. James Mason, 393rd FS, destroyed a Me 410 while on a bombing mission. He chased the enemy A/C at tree top level with his bombs still under his wings and joined the formation back after his victory.

On June 17, 1944, the three squadrons took off from Stoney Cross for a dive bombing mission on railways targets. The P-38 were each loaded with 2 G.P. (General Purpose) 1000 Lb bomb. The 392nd FS took off at 13H33 with Maj. Rogers leading 13 P-38s.



Cap. Cortland Carmody who led the 394th FS on June 17, 1944 (archive 367th FG)



Lt. Jim Mason, 393rd FS, and crew. He shot down a Me 410 three days before the dogfight of June 17, 1944 (Don Packham/archive 367th FG)



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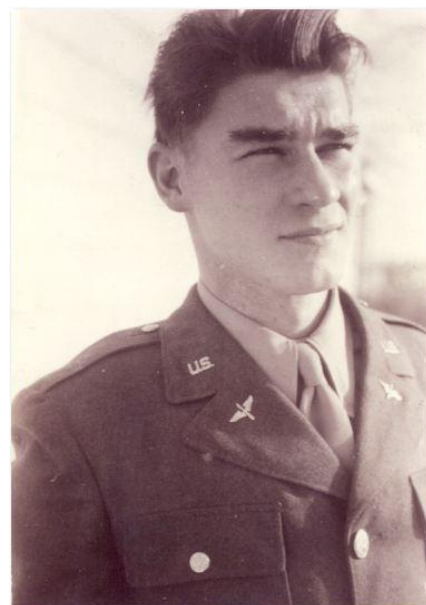


Staff Sgt Aubrey Yarbrough , Lt. Robert Moorhead and X. Lt. Moorhead led the 392nd FS after Cap. Rogers had to abort (Clyde Deavers/archive 367th FG)

Unfortunately this last aborted shortly after take-off because of a mechanical trouble and 1st Lt. Robert Moorhead took over the squadron. The 393rd FS took off at 13H25 with Cap. Joe Griffin leading 16 P-38s. The 394th FS took off at 13H33 with 1st Lt. Carmody Leading 19 P-38s. The targets of the mission were railroad tracks and railroad bridges in the Dreux-Evreux area, 50 miles west of Paris.

The 393rd FS had already put 4 hits on a railroad embankment, one hit on tracks and two on a railroad bridge when eight Me 109 were observed at the same level as the P-38s. The enemy A/C launched their attack from 3 o'clock when four P-38s were on their bomb run. A short burst took off the canopy of one P-38. A dogfight ensued and ranging from 6000 feet to deck after the remaining bombs had been jettisoned. Lt. Earl Peters scored hits on a Me 109 on a 300 feet dive from above. The enemy A/C burst into flames. Cap. Raymond Ray hit a Me 109 on its right side and noted smoke. Lt. Milton Grosse peppered one German aircraft from nose to tail and parts were seen to fly apart and it emitted smoke when it

entered into the overcast. Unfortunately Lt. Earl Peters was hit and his plane was seen to crash. Cap. Ray wrote the following statement in the MACR of Lt. Peters : "I, Cap. Raymond Ray, was leading Yellow flight of the 393rd Fighter Sq, on dive bombing mission on a railway embankment at Epernon, France with Lt. Earl L. Peters leading second element. We contacted enemy aircraft at approx. 1435. The flight was broken after the first pass at the enemy leaving Lt. Peters on my wing. Pulling out of a dive to the deck in pursuit of an Me 109, I glanced down to the right. Lt. Peters was just pulling out of his dive when I saw a burst of enemy fire strike what appeared to be Lt. Peters' left engine. His left wing dropped and crashed into a ravine in the vicinity of Epernon, France. The aircraft burst into flames and Lt. Peters was not seen to leave the aircraft". Lt. George White's P-38 was also hit and entered into a spin. Unfortunately he was not able to recover from this spin. Cap. Joe Griffin chased this enemy aircraft on the deck until this last hit the ground.



Lt. George White during a furlough in 1943 (Jean-Luc Gruson/archive 367th FG)



EARL L. PETERS
San Diego, California

Lt. Earl Peters, 393rd FS, was also KIA on June 17, 1944. This picture was taken for the Yearly book of Class 43 I of Luke Field (archive 367th FG).



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Cap. Joe Griffin who was leading the 393rd FS on June 17, 1944 (archive 367th FG)

P-38J15-LO 42-104079. Lt. George White, 393rd FS, was KIA at the control of this plane on June 17, 1944 (Jean-Luc Gruson/archive 367th FG)



The MACR concerning the loss of Lt. White was written by Lt. Clemens Pawlowski who had to break the formation : *"We were attacked from 3 o'clock by four Me 109. I was leading the second element in Rebel Red flight. Lt. White was on my wing. As we turned to get on the tails of the 109s I was hit and broke formation. Lt. White continued on with Captain Griffin"*.

Cap. Joe Griffin, Operations Officer of the Group at this time, wrote his memories of the fight : *"On the 17th of June I led a squadron of twelve planes on a bombing mission to a target near Evreux. Just before we got to the target we were bounced by a large group of Me-109's. We immediately jettisoned our bombs and tangled with the Germans. I got in several shots at two of the German planes without apparent effect. I saw a P-38 in a dogfight with a Me-109 about two miles North of my position, with the German getting into position to the rear of the P-38. I gave my plane full throttle going to the help of the P-38. The P-38 went into a spin and crashed into the ground, before I could get there.*

I made a vow to myself that I would get that Me-109 or dye trying. I tagged on behind him but each time I started to fire he made a quick turn, only giving me a quartering shot. Which meant that I would have to be aiming way in front of him to hit him. He was continually skidding and turning. I saw a few of my bullets hitting him but with no apparent effect. About every fifth bullet in our guns was the type that would explode on contact with a foreign object, thus we could see our bullets hitting. He pulled up into a vertical climb and disappeared into the cloud cover. I went up after him and when I broke out of the cloud cover I saw him diving back into the clouds. I split-essed and followed him down through the clouds. When I broke out below the overcast I was able to see him again. I lined him up in my gun sight and started firing. All of a sudden my 20mm cannon stopped firing. I knew that there were a few less rounds of the 20mm cannon shells, than there were for the 50 caliber machine guns, so I knew that I only had a few rounds of 50 caliber left. I had used quite a few rounds earlier in the fight. I was determined that I was going to get within 40 or 50 feet of the Me-109 before I used my last few rounds.



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That way I knew that I would destroy him. At that time we were flying just above the treetops. As I got very close to him he did a violent 270-degree left turn around the steeple of a church. I stayed with him all the way. He straightened out and just before I had him lined up in my gun sight he made a violent left turn and hit his left wing tip into the ground. He recovered showering dirt all over the place and then bellied into a plowed field. His plane did not break up and he didn't get out. I made two passes taking pictures of the Me-109 on each passes.

There weren't any other airplanes around so I flew a course that would take me back to base. I stayed on the deck because it is much safer for a single airplane to fly at a very low altitude over enemy territory. About ten minutes after I started for home I saw four Me-109's cross my path at a ninety-degree angle to my flight. They were about ½ of a mile in front of me. I watched them out of sight and thought they had not seen me. I decided to climb and turn the way they had gone and maybe get a shot at them. When I had gotten high enough to see them they had disappeared. Like a good fighter pilot I cleared the area behind me and they were diving on my tail. I dove back to the deck and gave both engines full throttle. At the same time I tried to scrunch down as small as I could to take advantage of the armor plate that was behind my seat. I never saw them again. This was proof to me that the P-38, on the deck, was a faster airplane than the Me-109.

We destroyed three Me-109's and lost three of our pilots on that mission. We don't like that type of odds".



P-38-J15-LO 42-104079 "Lucky" was the mount of Lt. Earl Ody. Lt. George White was killed in this aircraft during the June 17 1944 mission. Note the invasion stripes on the wing and boom (Jean-Luc Gruson/archive 367th FG)



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Lt. Earl Ody, a very close friend of Lt. White, wrote the following letter concerning George White : *“Many of us who graduated from flying school at Luke Field on 1 October, 1943, were assigned to a newly formed fighter group, the 367th at Santa Rosa, CA. Included in our Group was George White, Art Peterson, Burnus Hayden and Earl Peters.../...although many of us pilots forming the group were inexperienced, our leaders who were to train us were very experienced fighter pilots. As a matter of fact, our Commanding Officer in our 393rd fighter squadron was Major Joe Griffin who had flown with the ‘Flying Tigers’ in China. Our Group records show that he shot down the German pilot who shot down George White. This was confirmed by Clem Pawlowski who was badly shot up in the fight but managed to return to base. A month or two before we were due to go overseas, the ‘higher ups’ decided to join our fighter group with another fighter group training in California. That meant that one-half of our pilots and one-half of the pilots in the other group would be transferred out to a replacement depot and, after additional training, be assigned to groups in Europe or the Pacific as individual replacement pilots. Peters, Peterson, Hayden and I stayed with the 367th FG while George White was sent to a replacement depot. After we were overseas for a couple of months, who should come back to our group as replacement pilot but George White. We were very happy to see him since we were very unhappy to have seen many of our friends transferred out. Possession of an airplane was based strictly on a seniority basis. Since I went to England with the group I was assigned my own airplane. Since George came as a replacement he would have to wait his turn to get his own airplane. Since the airplane goes on more missions than the pilot-owner can fly, one of the non-owners would fly the craft. Since my crew and I knew George White so well, liked him, and respected his flying skills, we wanted him to fly my bird on missions for which I was not scheduled. That is how he happened to be in my airplane when he was shot down. If he had survived eventually he would have had his own P-38. My crew named my first P-38 ‘Lucky’ since I had two incidents in California in which I was lucky to survive.../...When I received my new P-38 after George’s death, we quickly agreed that my new bird would not be called ‘Lucky’.*

...To be continued.



Lt. Earl Ody and ground crew . The P-38J-15 43-28338 “Bar Fly” was the replacement aircraft after the loss of P-38J-15 42-104079 “Lucky “ with Lt. George White. The man in the middle of the picture is the armorer, sgt Ray Flynn (Jean-Luc Gruson/archive 367th FG)



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367th Fighter Group missions list – July 1944

1 July 44

No mission.

2 July 44

No mission.

3 July 44

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Rogers leading. 392nd FS : 12 P-38s. Lt. Delbert Schmid shot down. He was killed with a French young girl of the French family which helped him to escape the German soldiers on July 8. This family and Delbert Schmid were evacuating the area with other inhabitants when they were hit by friendly fire.

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Reed leading. 393rd FS : 12 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Lt. Carmody leading. 394th FS : 12 P-38s.

4 July 44

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Reed leading. 393rd FS : 12 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Col. Young leading. 394th FS : 14 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Griffin leading. 392nd FS : 12 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Simmerman leading. 393rd FS : 11 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Maj. Gardner leading. 394th FS : 12 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Griffin leading. 392nd FS : 12 P-38s.

5 July 44

No mission.

6 July 44

Dive bombing mission, Lt. Col. Crossen leading. 393rd FS : 12 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Matheson leading. 394th FS : 12 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Maj. Rogers leading. 392nd FS : 12 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Maj. Rogers leading. 392nd FS : 10 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Simmerman leading. 393rd FS : 10 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Maj. Joy leading. 394th FS : 10 P-38s.

7 July 44

Bomber escort mission, Maj. Rogers leading. 392nd FS : 11 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Lt. Col. Crossen leading. 393rd FS : 12 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Simmerman leading. 394th FS : 13 P-38s.

8 July 44

Dive bombing mission, Col. Young leading. 394th FS : 12 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Griffin leading. 392nd FS : 11 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Simmerman leading. 393rd FS : 12 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Griffin leading. 392nd FS : 8 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Lt. Col. Crossen leading. 393rd FS : 12 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Maj. Gardner leading. 394th FS : 12 P-38s.



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Bomber escort mission, Maj. Joy leading. 393rd FS : 11 P-38s.
Bomber escort mission, Cap. Reed leading. 392nd FS : 9 P-38s.
Bomber escort mission, Maj. Gardner leading. 394th FS : 11 P-38s.

9 July 44

No mission.

10 July 44

No mission.

11 July 44

Bomber escort mission, Cap. Reed leading. 393rd FS : 12 P-38s.
Bomber escort mission, Cap. Matheson leading. 394th FS : 12 P-38s.
Bomber escort mission, Cap. Rogers leading. 392nd FS : 10 P-38s.

12 July 44

No mission.

13 July 44

Dive bombing mission, Maj. Gardner leading. 394th FS : 12 P-38s.
Dive bombing mission, Cap. Griffin leading. 392nd FS : 13 P-38s. Lt. Rufus Dye MIA. Returned to squadron.
Dive bombing mission, Col. Young leading. 393rd FS : 12 P-38s.

14 July 44

Bomber escort mission, Cap. Matheson leading. 394th FS : 4 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Griffin leading. 392nd FS : 13 P-38s.
Dive bombing mission, Lt. Col. Crossen leading. 394th FS : 12 P-38s;
Dive bombing mission, Cap. Reed leading. 393rd FS : 10 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Lt. Mason leading. 393rd FS : 8 P-38s.
Dive bombing mission, Lt. Col. Crossen leading. 392nd FS : 11 P-38s.
Dive bombing mission, Maj. Gardner leading. 394th FS : 13 P-38s.

15 July 44

No mission.

16 July 44

Bomber escort mission, Cap. Rogers leading. 392nd FS : 13 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Moody leading. 393rd FS : 16 P-38s.
Dive bombing mission, Maj. Gardner leading. 394th FS : 16 P-38s.

17 July 44

Dive bombing mission, Col. Young leading. 393rd FS : 16 P-38s.

Escort mission of a C-47 to ALG 15 (Advanced Landing Ground 15 in Normandy), Cap. Griffin leading. 392nd FS : 12 P-38s.



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Dive bombing mission, Maj. Joy leading. 393rd FS : 12 P-38. Lt. Blumer hit and bailed out. Picked up by allied troops and returned to squadron.

Escort mission of a C-53 to ALG 15 (Advanced Landing Ground 15 in Normandy), Lt. Moutoux leading. 392nd FS : 14 P-38s

Dive bombing mission, Maj. Gardner leading. 394th FS : 15 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Lt. Col. Crossen leading. 394th FS : 14 P-38s.

18 July 44

Patrol mission, Lt. Col. Crossen leading. 392nd FS : 15 P-38s.

Patrol mission, Cap. Matheson leading. 394th FS : 16 P-38s.

Patrol mission, Maj. Joy leading. 393rd FS : 17 P-38.

Bomber escort mission, Maj. Gardner leading. 394th FS : 15 P-38s.

Bomber escort mission, Cap. Reed leading. 393rd FS : 16 P-38s.

Bomber escort mission, Col. Young leading. 392nd FS : 16 P-38s.

19 July 44

No mission.

20 July 44

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Rogers leading. 392nd FS : 12 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Moody leading. 393rd FS : 16 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Matheson leading. 394th FS : 12 P-38s. Lt. Mushrush MIA lost into the Channel enroute to target.

Dive bombing mission, Maj. Joy leading. 393rd FS : 12 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Maj. Gardner leading. 394th FS : 12 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Griffin leading. 392nd FS : 12 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Maj. Joy leading. 393rd FS : 12 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Simmerman leading. 394th FS : 12 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Griffin leading. 392nd FS : 12 P-38s.

21 July 44

No mission.

22 July 44

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Ray leading. 393rd FS : 12 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Maj. Gardner leading. 394th FS : 18 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Griffin leading. 392nd FS : 16 P-38s.

Escort mission of a C-47 to SLS #1 (I was not able to determine what is SLS#1), Cap. Moutoux leading. 392nd FS : 2 P-38s.

23 July 44

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Rogers leading. 392nd FS : 17 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Moody leading. 393rd FS : 16 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Matheson leading. 394th FS : 13 P-38s.



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24 July 44

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Griffin leading. 392nd FS : 16 P-38s.
Dive bombing mission, Cap. Gardner leading. 394th FS : 15 P-38s.
Dive bombing mission, Col. Young leading. 393rd FS : 16 P-38s.

25 July 44

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Griffin leading. 392nd FS : 19 P-38s.
Dive bombing mission, Col. Young leading. 394th FS : 16 P-38s.
Dive bombing mission, Maj. Joy leading. 393rd FS : 16 P-38s.

26 July 44

Armed reconnaissance mission, Lt. Col. Crossen leading 49 P-38s. 3 pilots collided in mid-air while flying through the overcast. Lt. Cooksey KIA, Lt. Brandt WIA (wounded in action) and Lt. Greene managed to land his damaged P-38.

27 July 44

No mission. Move to France.

28 July 44

Dive bombing mission, Lt. Col. Crossen leading. 393rd FS : 12 P-38s
Dive bombing mission, Cap. Rogers leading. 392nd FS : 16 P-38s.
394th FS : no mission.

29 July 44

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Matheson leading. 394th FS : 11 P-38s.

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Rogers leading. 392nd FS : 8 P-38s.
Dive bombing mission, Maj. Joy leading. 393rd FS : 12 P-38s
Dive bombing mission, Cap. Matheson leading. 394th FS : 11 P-38s.

30 July 44

Bomber escort mission, Cap. Gardner leading. 394th FS : 15 P-38s.
Bomber escort mission, Lt. Col. Crossen leading. 393rd FS : 12 P-38s
Bomber cover mission, Cap. Rogers leading. 392nd FS : 12 P-38s.

Bomber cover mission, Cap. griffin leading. 392nd FS : 12 P-38s.
Bomber escort mission, Maj. Joy leading. 393rd FS : 12 P-38s
Bomber escort mission, Cap. Gardner leading. 394th FS : 16 P-38s.

31 July 44

Dive bombing mission, Lt. unreadable leading. 394th FS : 10 P-38s.
Dive bombing mission, Lt. Col. Crossen leading. 393rd FS : 12 P-38s
Dive bombing mission, Cap. Rogers leading. 392nd FS : 16 P-38s. Lts. Fleming and Erickson KIA and Lt. Deavers WIA and taken prisoner. He was left in the hospital of Tours (Loire Valley, France) when the German left the city. He was taken to an American hospital in Carentan, very close to the Advanced landing Ground A10, before being sent back to the USA in a rehabilitation center.

Dive bombing mission, Cap. Matheson leading. 394th FS : 11 P-38s.
Dive bombing mission, Cap. Moody leading. 393rd FS : 12 P-38s
Dive bombing mission, Cap. Rogers leading. 392nd FS : 12 P-38s



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Old 367th FG pilots !

A bunch of old 367th Fighter Group pilots gathered in front of a monument. Any help to find the place and date would be welcome.



These pilots are from left to right : Lowell Phillbrook, 393rd FS, Herman Busse, 393rd FS , Jack Curtis, 394th FS, Jack Reed, 394th FS, Warren Shaw , 392nd FS and Robert Allison, 392nd FS (Eddie Rosier/archives 367th FG).



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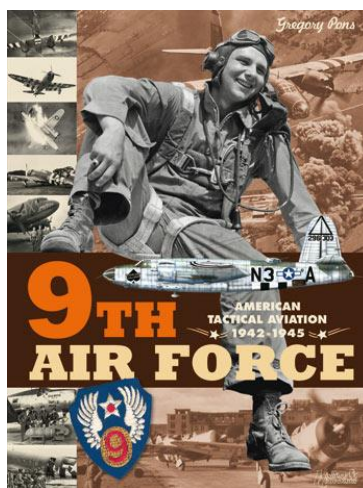
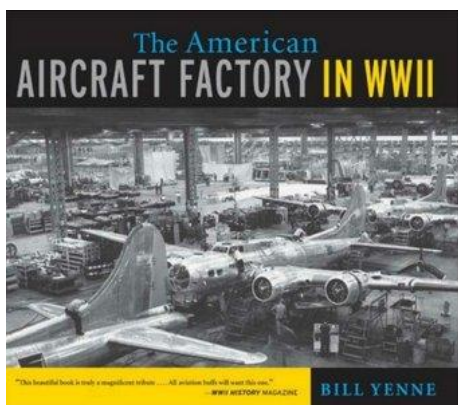
Books and Links

The American AIRCRAFT FACTORY IN WWII by Bill Yenne

This book is really interesting for many reason. The author explains how the American aircraft factories changed from a low production rate to a production of thousand of aircrafts a year. The figures are really amazing. The pictures also help to understand how the workers helped to win the war in this home front.

9th Air Force: American Tactical Aviation in the ETO, by Gregory Pons

A lot of great pictures illustrate this book dedicated to the 9th Air Force. The main remark I can say is that there is no chapter dealing with the P-38 Lightning groups.



<http://www.axpow.org/betatbarth.htm>

You will discover on this web site the really amazing bet made by Lt. Stanley Johnson, 393rd FS, when he was in Stalag Luft 2, a prisoner camp for airmen in Germany.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3nndCJbcdl&feature=em-share_video_user

Thanks to Mark Haskamp, the son of Lt. Ed Haskamp, 392nd FS, you will discover the full flight test made by the late Jeff Ethell of a restored P-38. The olive drab scheme will show you the color of some early P-38's of the 367th FG. This video is really great. Thank you very much Mark.

Coming in the next Newsletter



- the first dogfight of the 367th FG, part 2
- missions list, August 1944