

New Print presented to FONFA Museum by Lt. Bob Huddleston

On Thursday 23rd February 2017, former FONFA Trustee John Levesley presented a new print to the Museum, on behalf of Bob Huddleston. The print depicts the young Pilot Officer Carroll W, McColpin's fourth victory, flying with the RAF's Eagle Squadron, to which American volunteer pilots were assigned. The print was gratefully accepted on behalf of FONFA by Chairman of Trustees Dr Henry Goodall, and immediately installed in the Museum gallery, among several other Spitfire prints.



The description of the action depicted reads as follows: On 2nd October 1941, RAF Squadron Leader Stanley Meares led a flight of Spitfires over the English Channel with newly assigned Pilot Officer Carroll W. "Red" McColpin as his wingman. At approximately 1340, McColpin spotted 18 2C Me-109Fs a few hundred feet below and called out the bogies to Meares. As they dived to the attack, Meares fired on the nearest 109. McColpin followed, firing a half-second burst from under 50 yards. The German fighter burst into flames. Then, as McColpin related it, "I broke away to port and found myself in position to attack another 109, so I gave him a burst. He pulled up and dived with smoke pouring out. I thought I saw the pilot bail out. The plane was seen to hit the ground. I saw another Me-109 below, dived on him, and followed him down to 3,000 feet, where I gave him a one-second burst. He never pulled out and hit the deck as I pulled up."



In 1944, Colonel McColpin (photo below courtesy of Andrew F Wilson) commanded the USAF 404th Fighter Bomber Group, flying the P-47 Thunderbolt, based at Winkton ALG, a few hundred yards from the FONFA Museum. He was later promoted to Major General.



Lt, Robert Huddleston flew 36 combat missions, earning the Air Medal and 2 Oak Leaf Clusters. Bob served with the 506th Fighter Squadron, 404th Fighter Group, in 1944/45. He joined the 506th as a replacement pilot in the autumn of 1944. Bob doesn't smoke a pipe anymore but the A2 flight jacket still fits.



Bob and his wife Pepita live in a retirement community in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. He has donated two signed limited edition prints to FONFA, 'Thunderbolt Strike' and 'Eagle's Prey'. He was one of four 404th Group Veterans who visited the New Forest Airfields Memorial to present the 404th Fighter Group Memorial Plaque several years ago.



Left to right: Bob Huddleston, Bob Bealle, Floyd Blair, Fred Varn and for FONFA, Les White.