

Lt. William Norris, 393rd Fighter Squadron, 367th Fighter Group USAAF

Lt. William Norris, 393rd Fighter Squadron, 367th Fighter Group USAF flew 71 missions between May and October 1944, in his P-38J Lightning, from bases in England and France. His decorations included the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with 2 silver and 2 bronze Oak Leaf Clusters and the Euro-African-Middle East Campaign Medal.



His daughter, Linda Bloom, has kindly allowed us to display some of his memorabilia, from that time, including his name badge, his initial flight training record and even his pencilled notes from 1944, on a P-38 training and familiarisation document. We are immensely grateful for her generosity in lending us these personal documents, which are literally unique and irreplaceable. They bring home his professional pride in his achievements and the very personal experience of him being so far from home, fighting a war that had to be won, against Nazi tyranny and occupation.



He was one of the original pilots who arrived at RAF Stoney Cross, USAF Station 452, in the New Forest, on April 4th 1944. Only three out of the ninety pilots had ever flown a twin engine aircraft, when they arrived in England, but they flew their first combat patrol mission over France on May 9th, just five weeks later. Initially tasked with strafing and bombing missions in France, often twice a day, the Group's missions later ranged as far as Cologne and Aachen.

Her own recollections are repeated below: "William Norris was a gentleman. I'm not sure if my dad's war experience made him that way or not, but he lived his life after the war as an honorable, kind man. He was truly part of "The Greatest Generation." I think he was very grateful to have survived the war when many of his friends did not. "William, Willie, or Bill" Norris joined the air force after his parents (Don and Dorothy

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Norris), and two sons (Bill and Dick) had a family meeting to decide which son would enlist and which one would stay to run their lumber mill.

“Bill eventually joined the 393rd Fighter Squadron of the 367th Fighter Group in the European Theater. He was first stationed in England and then in France, and he was a part of the D Day invasion.

Bill (my dad) didn’t talk very much about his time as a fighter pilot, but later in his life, he did share some memories. These are a few that stand out:

“On June 12th, Bill flew his P-38 (The Janet, named for his then girlfriend Janet Harrison) on a mission to escort two destroyers from Cherbourg to England He could tell they were escorting “Important Wheels” and later found out that Winston Churchill and President Franklin D. Roosevelt were on one of the Destroyers, and the other Destroyer was there for water escort (*this was on HMS Belfast, via the Mulberry ‘B’ artificial Harbour at the Normandy beachhead, as Cherbourg was not captured until 26th June. See photo below – ed.*).



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“On August 22nd, Bill led the Top Cover flight for a dive-bombing mission on an airfield northeast of Paris (*in the Laon area – ed.*). They encountered heavy flak and were outnumbered by enemy aircraft. My dad’s diary goes into great detail about how they managed to survive the day, but he ends by saying, “It was Overton’s second mission, and he did a beautiful job. If he had not stayed with me, I think we both would have been shot down. It was a rough mission for our flight but could have been a lot worse. When I took off my oxygen mask after the flight, water just ran out. I guess I must have been sweating.”

“But, I have to say that the one story Bill always enjoyed telling was when he and some buddies met Marlene Dietrich in a bar and in his (bad) French he asked her to join them in sharing a bottle of red wine. She accepted and stayed and talked with them for a long time. My dad was sure a big fan of hers.

I hope to figure out how to upload my dad’s diary (covering March 8th, 1944 to November 20th, 1944) to this website for anyone to read!

Ironically, William George Norris passed away on D Day (June 6th) 2009 at the age of 89.”



Linda Bloom has been able to make his WWII diary of missions available and we are proud and humbled to be able to load this unique day by day account onto the website below, for posterity.