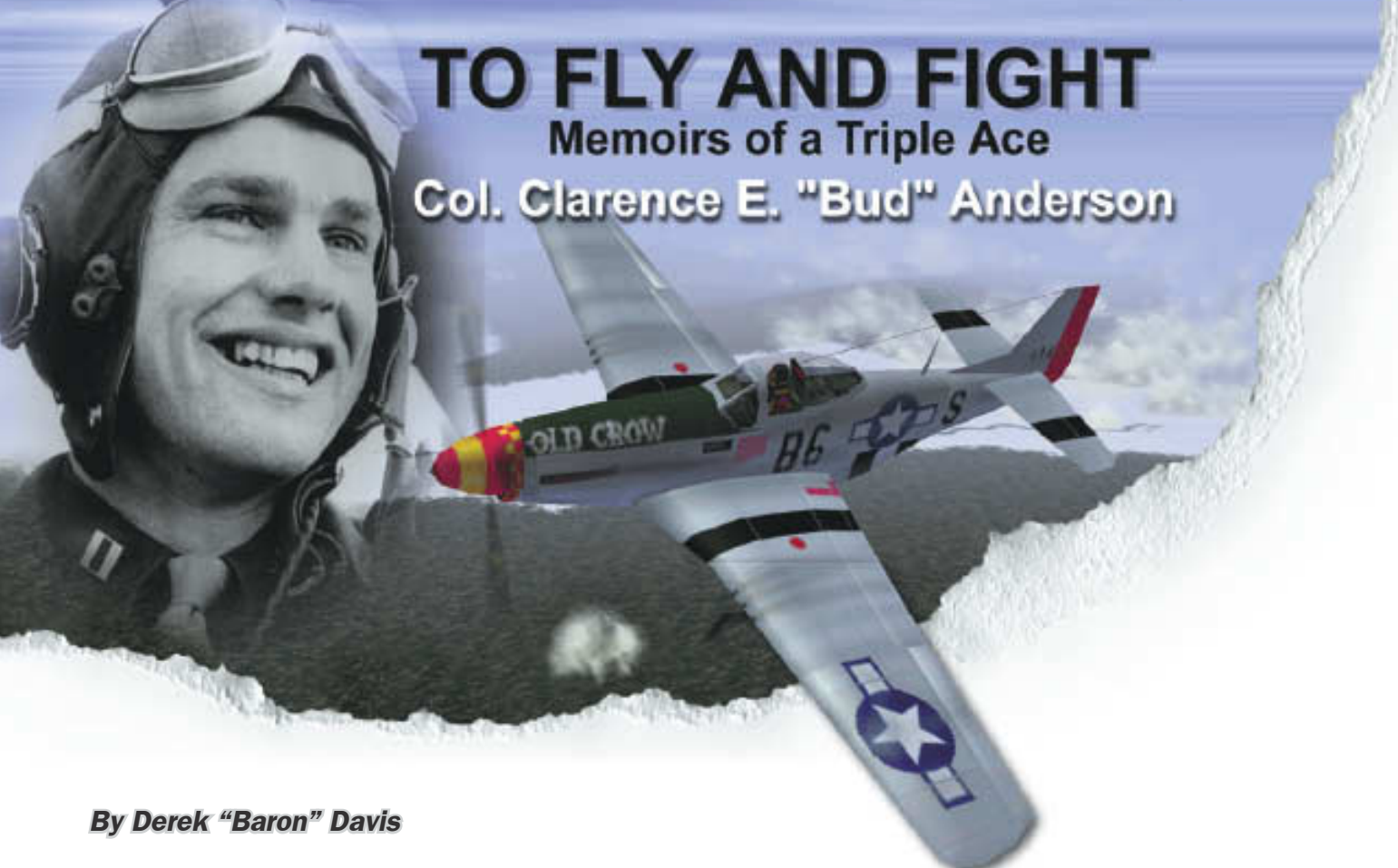


TO FLY AND FIGHT

Memoirs of a Triple Ace

Col. Clarence E. "Bud" Anderson



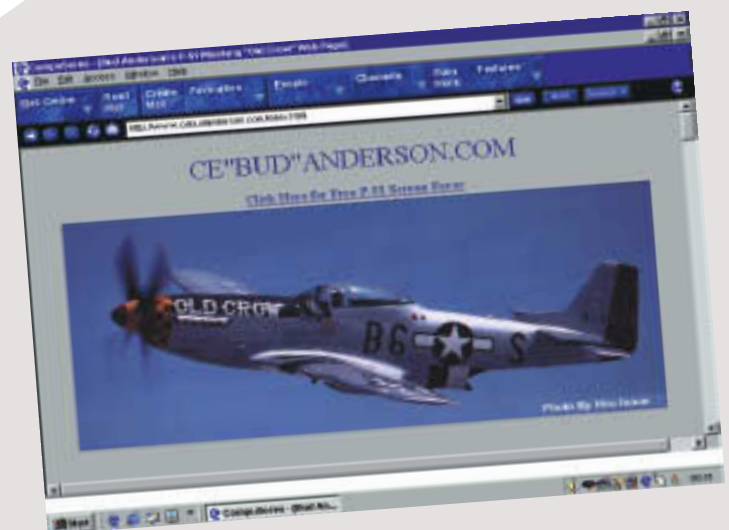
By Derek "Baron" Davis

"The sky above was a bright crystal blue, and the land below a green-on-green checkerboard divided by a silver-blue ribbon. Below was occupied France, beyond the river lay Germany, and it all looked the same, rolling and peaceful and bursting with spring. But this was an overpoweringly sinister place. From our perch six miles up, we couldn't see the enemy, some huddling over their guns taking aim, some climbing into their airplanes to fly up and get us, and some, on the far side of the river, waiting with pitchforks and hoping we'd fall somewhere close. All we could see was the green of their fields and forests. But we knew they were there, looking up, watching us come, and thinking how they could kill us.

The day was unusually, incredibly clear. In better times, it would have been a day for splashing through trout streams with fly rods, or driving so fast that some giggling girl would beg you to slow. But these weren't those kinds of times. These were the worst times God ever let happen. And so the trout streams were left to the fish, gasoline was a thing you used sparingly, and it was just one more day for flying and fighting and staying alive, if you could, six miles high over Germany.

Staying alive was no simple thing in the skies over Europe in the spring of 1944. A lot of men couldn't. It was a bad thing to dwell on if you were a fighter pilot, and so we told ourselves we were dead men and lived for the moment with no thought of the future at all. It wasn't too difficult. Lots of us had no future and everyone knew it."

An extract from "Bud" Anderson's autobiography "To Fly and Fight",



COLONEL CLARENCE E "BUD" ANDERSON USAF RETIRED

My interest in this particular pilot started a few years ago, after watching the pilot video accounts in Jane's WWII Fighters simulation. In fact Col. Anderson actually consulted on the game itself. A former member of the 357th Fighter Group, his name and face kept appearing in books and videos that I have on aviation. Then by chance I spotted a magazine that had an article on the very man himself! And to top it off, it turned out that there was a web site dedicated to Col Anderson and the men of the 357th, run by his son Jim Anderson (a former USAF pilot himself!)

For those interested, check out this truly memorable site at: <http://www.cebudanderson.com/index.html> This award-winning 'must-see' site, brilliantly put together by his son Jim, is full of words and colour and black and white photographs. It chronicles the military life of one of the USAF's great pilots as well as having additional information on the 357th Fighter Group. It even has a tribute to Chuck Yeager. One notable section on the site caters for Computer Pilots. Including some contribution from yours truly, this area provides help, assistance and examples for those who want to fly "Old Crow", Col. Anderson's P-51D mount, in their favorite sim. As of writing featured sims include Jane's WWII Fighters, Flight Simulator 2000 and Combat Flight Simulator. Other sections include help for model makers who want to model "Old Crow", as well as other aircraft of the 357th. For those wondering why the Colonel named his aircraft "Old Crow", here's his explanation: 'I tell my Baptist friends that it is named after the smartest bird that flies in the sky, the Crow, but my drinking buddies all know that it was named after that good old Kentucky straight bourbon whiskey of the same name. Now, my wife Ellie, of 54 plus years likes to kid around at times and will say "Most guys name their plane after their wife or sweet heart, what must people think is going on here?"'

In 1990 Col Anderson wrote an autobiography with another author which has been described by The Historian Of The Air Force as "the finest pilot memories of WW II". In this book titled "TO FLY AND FIGHT" General Chuck Yeager describes Anderson as "a mongoose, .. the best fighter pilot I've ever seen". In fact I was lucky enough to receive a signed copy of "TO FLY AND FIGHT" from the man himself! To obtain a signed copy of this 'can't-put-down' book yourself, vector to Col. Anderson's web site.

So who is Col. Clarence E. "Bud" Anderson? Well, here's a brief synopsis of the man as he described on his web site:

Col. Anderson is a WW II Triple Ace fighter pilot and a veteran military experimental test pilot. During WW II he served two combat tours escorting heavy bomber over Europe in the P-51 Mustang, November 1943 through January 1945. He flew 116 combat mission (480 hrs) and destroyed 16 and 1/4 enemy aircraft in aerial combat and another one on the ground.

He has an extensive flight testing background spanning a 25 year period. At Wright-Patterson AFB OH he was a fighter test pilot and later

became Chief of Fighter Operations. He flew many models of the early jet fighters and was involved in two very unusual flight test programs. He made the first flights on a bizarre experimental program to couple jet fighters to the wingtips of a large bomber aircraft for range extension. Later he also conducted the initial development flights on the F-84 Parasite fighter modified to be launched and retrieved from the very large B-36 bomber. At The Air Force Flight Test Center, Edwards AFB CA Col Anderson was assigned as the Chief Of Flight Test Operations and later Deputy Director of Flight Test. While there he flew the Century series fighters and all the other types of aircraft in the Air Force inventory. He has flown over 130 different types of aircraft and has logged over 7500 flying hours. Other assignment in his 30 years of continuous military service include duty as: Commander of an F86 Squadron in post war Korea, Commander of an F-105 Wing on Okinawa, and two assignments to the Pentagon as an advanced R & D staff planner and as Director of Operational Requirements. Further, he served in Southeast Asia where he was Commander of the 355th Tactical Fighter Wing. Col Anderson flew bombing strikes against enemy supply lines and later was in charge of closing the first large air base when his combat wing was deactivated. Col Anderson was decorated 25 times. His awards include 2 Legion of Merits, 5 Distinguished Flying Crosses, the Bronze Star, 16 Air Medals and the French Croix de Guerre, as well as many campaign and service ribbons. He learned to fly at age 19 gaining his private pilots license in 1941 through the Civilian Pilot Training Program while attending college. In January 1942 he entered the US Army Aviation Cadet Program receiving his wings and commission in September 1942. He received his test pilot training by completing the AMC Performance Course (1948) and the Stability and Control Course (1949) while at Wright-Patterson AFB OH. Born in Oakland CA he spent his early years on a rural farm near Newcastle CA. He attended Placer Union High School, Sacramento Jr College and the George Washington University. Military education includes the Air Command and Staff College and the Army War College. He is a life member of the American Fighter Aces Association and holds the rank of Fellow in the Society of Experimental Test Pilots.

After retirement from the Air Force in Mar 1972 he joined the McDonnell Aircraft Company and served for 12 years at Edwards AFB as Manager of the Company Flight Test Facility. After full retirement in 1984 the Andersons moved from Lancaster and now reside in Auburn CA. Bud remains an avid pilot, maintaining his Flight instructor rating and flying P-51s. He lectures on his flying experiences and has consulted on computer flying games.'

So having seen the web site and read the book, I decided to approach Col. Anderson himself asked if I could interview him for Computer Pilot Magazine. Fortunately he agreed, and so what follows are some answers to some questions that I put to Col. Anderson.

CP: Hi Colonel, thanks for agreeing to do this interview for Computer Pilot. I've read your book: To Fly and Fight: Memoirs of a Triple Ace, and found it to be a rewarding read both in human terms as well as on a technical level. What made you put your experiences down on paper?

CA: The book to Fly & Fight would not have been written if it had not been for the books "Yeager" and "Press On." After they were so successful the book folks asked me to do a book. I did not want to do it for personal reasons but they persisted. After working on it for two years I still had second thoughts about having it published. Now, after receiving many letters from old friends and total strangers, thanking me for writing such a book, I guess somehow it was all worthwhile.

CP: From your book I get the impression that your overriding motivation seems to be not to scale the career ladder as an end in itself, but plain and simply to fly. Is this a fair assumption?

CA: Yes, I think that is a fair assessment. I always enjoyed the flying over the desk assignments. I did enjoy the assignments when I was in command of flying units where I could hold a career advancing position and still fly.

CP: Could you let our readers know what drew you to flying.

CA: I can not recall a time in my life when I was not fascinated with aviation and the thought of being able to fly. There were lots of airplanes that flew over our farm in California where I was growing up. My folks would take me to an airport with my friend and we would stay there all day watching airplanes. One time we washed down a big Boeing tri-motor transport just for a chance to get a ride. The publicity and attention over Lindbergh's solo flight across the Atlantic was also an early attraction for me.

CP: In your book you talk about "putting up walls", just for your own self-preservation. Was this common among fighter pilots of WWII?

CA: I do not know if it was common or not. We did not talk about these things. Chuck Yeager talked about not getting too close to anyone during his combat tour because he might not be there the next day. I was close to many other pilots but I certainly kept my emotions to myself.

CP: "You measured a pilot by his formation flying as much by dogfighting...you'd bank and go

down and the good ones would stay right there, no closer, no farther away." This is another quote taken from your book. This made me think, can you give a brief description of the kind of combat training you received during WWII?

CA: Our combat training consisted of doing the basics such as formation flying, aerial gunnery and bombing as well as mixing it up in mock dogfights. Much of the training was almost, do it yourself or by trial and error because we had no combat veterans to guide us. When I was selected as a flight leader in a new squadron I had just six months more experience than the newly assigned pilots coming from flight school.

CP: Many incorrectly know you as 'Chuck Yeager's wingman' - can you clear this one up for our readers.

CA: I was a flight leader and later Operations Officer in the 363rd Fighter Squadron. Chuck Yeager was assigned to the same squadron as a fighter pilot and later became a flight leader. Chuck Yeager and I flew many combat mission together but I never flew as his assigned wing man. The misconception started when Chuck wrote his book "Yeager" and my photograph was erroneously labelled Wing Man Bud Anderson without Chuck's knowledge. It was corrected in later editions but when the paperback was published the error was repeated in thousands of books again. The damage was done and I will probably go down in history as Chuck Yeager's wing man but I have been called worse things!!! We were actually squadron mates and both flight leaders during my second tour when our friendship developed.

CP: Your career spans the major wars of recent times, how would you characterise/differentiate each one in flying terms and dogfighting?

CA: My experience ranges from WW II to Vietnam, I am not sure that qualifies as recent times but here are some thoughts. Before WW II it was believed that the bombers could defend themselves and fighters were not required. The fighters were now so much faster than they were during WW I that there couldn't possibly be any dogfights. Both of these ideas were wrong. The bombers needed fighter escorts and we certainly had dogfights. Before the Korean war and the introduction of the jet fighters it was believed that now due to the greater speed of the jet aircraft there would absolutely be no dog fights. Wrong again. Before the Vietnam war and with the introduction of supersonic fighters and the air-to-air guided missile some said that there would positively be no further dogfights. The early F-4 Phantom did not even have a gun installed. Wrong again, jet fighters were having dogfights and we finally had to scramble to get a gun installed in the F-4. Of course each war had its differences and aerial warfare was becoming more and more complex and sophisticated. In 1944 I was flying a P51 firing six 50 caliber machine guns and dropping two iron bombs with a fixed sight. Later we received a lead computing K-14 gyro gun sight for aerial combat. In Vietnam I am flying the F105 and still dropping iron bombs with a fixed sight but at least I am going much faster in a jet airplane and carrying as much as a B-17 did in WW II. The F105 did have a radar lead computing gun sight for aerial combat and a 20mm cannon that fires at an incredible rate. Wars are becoming more and more complex with the introduction of "smart" weapons, ground to air missile, electronic warfare, stealth technology, unmanned vehicles, computer technology and on and on. Maybe some day we will not have any more dog fights

CP: On your website you say your favourite aircraft is the P-51. Could you describe what it's like to fly the Mustang. What kind of things do you have to watch out for when taking off and landing. Also, have you any hints or tips for virtual pilots when dogfighting in a P-51?

CA: The Mustang was a delightful airplane to fly. It was probably the best all around fighter made during WW II. It had great performance at sea level and at altitude. It had great range and could escort the bombers anywhere they want to bomb in Europe.

Further, it was very manoeuvrable in a dogfight. Take off and landings were critical since the P51 was a tail dragger (tail wheel equipped aircraft) with a long nose blocking your forward view. You had to make "s" turns while taxiing, looking left and right to see what was ahead of you. During the take off roll you had to pay particular attention to keeping the Mustang on a straight path until you got the tail up and had a forward view. The Packard built Merlin engine had lots of torque and we would pre-set 6 degrees of right rudder trim before take off but lots of right rudder was still required. In combat we normally were returning in formations and wanted to get the planes on the ground as soon as possible. We made wheel landings, touching down on the two main wheels while keeping the tail level to see over the nose. The leader (#1) would land on one side of the runway, keep his tail up maybe even using a little power until well down the runway. His wing man (#2) would land on the opposite side of the runway using the same technique lowering the tail after slowing well down the runway. The element leader (#3) would follow behind the leaders path and the last flight member (#4) would take the opposite side of the runway. After lowering your tail you paid particular attention to keeping it straight and staying on your side of the runway in a rare case the following aircraft passed by. I can not give many tips to virtual Mustang pilots, maybe just have fun!

CP: Can you tell us what went through your mind when you're in a dogfight in terms of flying and fighting techniques?

CA: When you were engaged in combat you had to react by instinct. You had to instantly assess the situation and react correctly without a lot of analysing. You had to rely on your training and experience to make the right moves. Training and experience are the key. The more experience you have the better you will be.

CP: In your book you rate the Mustang over the Spitfire. Can you tell our readers why you are of this opinion.

CA: The Mustang is my favorite aircraft for the obvious reasons that it got me through 116 combat missions (480 hours) without an abort for any reason and virtually without a scratch. It had that great range that no other fighter had and yet it could beat or hold it own with most of the others. The Spitfire is a fine aircraft but it was designed to fight over it's own airfield where it was a deadly adversary. We could fly to Berlin and engage the enemy and still make it back to England with fuel to spare. The Spitfire could not even reach Berlin and get home.

CP: The 357th Fighter Group had the highest scoring rate in the USAF, what do you put this down to?

CA: I believe that we were highly motivated and fairly well trained. But the biggest factor in our achieving the highest rate of kills measured against time was being assigned the P51 Mustang as our combat aircraft and becoming the first P51 Fighter Group in the 8th Air Force. The 354th Fighter Group was the pioneer Mustang (P51B) combat group but they were assigned to the 9th Air Force and after the invasion of Europe they were primarily engaged in ground support while we continued bomber escort missions. They had a fantastic record with more total kills than we had, as did other Fighter Groups, but they were all engaged in combat a much longer time than we were.

CP: You consulted on WWII Fighters, could you tell us what that involved. Where do you think it succeeds in conveying what it was like to dogfight and where do you think it fails?

CA: As a consultant for Jane's WW II Fighters, I attended a trade show with them, gave interviews, and flew the computer game. I was retained as a consultant to answer any questions the game makers had about the airplanes and combat flying. Once a week I would receive the latest "build," load it in my computer, fly it and then make comments about what I saw. I think that Jane's WW II Fighters did a fantastic job in giving the player a balance between what it was really like and being able to have fun playing a game as

do many of the other computer games. It is impossible to convey on a computer screen what it was really like to dogfight during WW II. Number one, thank god, there is no possibility that you will be killed. You can not simulate what that is like emotionally. No one knows how he will react in real combat until it happens. With a computer game, you can get shot down, punch escape and have another go at it again. The flight modelling in all computer games can not simulate the “g” forces on you body, the noise, vibrations and the aerodynamic “feel” of an airplane during manoeuvring flight. Situational awareness is a big factor in successful aerial combat and yet that is the most difficult thing to accomplish with a computer. A skilful computer person who knows how to manipulate the proper keys is more likely able to defeat a skilful pilot who knows what he should do but is all thumbs with a computer. Forget fully realistic there is no such a thing in computer combat flying games. If there is a need to have different levels of difficulty then it should be just that, beginner, intermediate and expert. Hopefully, the future holds only cyberwars, all the aces are computer pilots and everyone survives!!!!

CP: When it comes to flight sims in general, where do you think improvements could be made?

CA: I would like to see a breakthrough in improvements for situational awareness. Being able to know what is going on around you in combat is all important. Graphics are getting to be incredible but when I think of the first “stick” airplanes and what is available today, graphics need to keep improving. Combat damage needs to be improved when things bend and get crumpled. Background scenery needs to continue to get better and better.

CP: Of all the mission types in a flight simulation, escorting bombers is probably the most difficult to succeed in. Can you tell us what it was like to defend bombers in real life? Did you adopt any particular technique when the bombers were being attacked?

CA: The 357th fighter Group began flying combat missions in February 1944. The 8th Air Force policy at that time was for the escorting fighters stay with the bombers at all times. If the bombers were attacked we were to chase the enemy fighter away. We could follow them to 18000 feet and then we were suppose to return to close escort. The bombers wanted to see us at all times. Later, when Gen. Doolittle took over the the 8th Air Force he changed that policy to allow the escorting fighter to follow up the attack and destroy the enemy fighters. We placed some fighters right on top of the bombers in close escort, flying a zig zag pattern to keep our speed up yet staying with the slow flying bombers. We had other fighters ranging along the side of the long bomber stream. Other fighters were allowed to free range to find the enemy fighters forming up and attack them before they could reach the bombers. If you were doing close escort it was difficult to prevent an attack but at least now we could chase them all the way to the ground. Our kills then began to soar and it is generally agreed that the spring of 1944 was when we broke the back of the Luftwaffe gaining air superiority and allowing the invasion of Europe to begin.

CP: Do you still fly? If so which aircraft?

CA: Yes, I still fly today. I have a commercial pilots license with single and twin engine land ratings. Also an instrument rating plus I am an authorized FAA Flight Instructor. Every month on an average I fly a Cessna 172 and a Piper Cherokee, occasionally a Husky. During the year I will fly a Piper Cub, a T-6 and a T34 a few times. Several times a year I do fly a P-51 Mustang. Jack Roush has a P-51 painted like the Old Crow I flew during WW II and is very generous in allowing me to fly it at air shows and special occasions. I still enjoy flying very much.

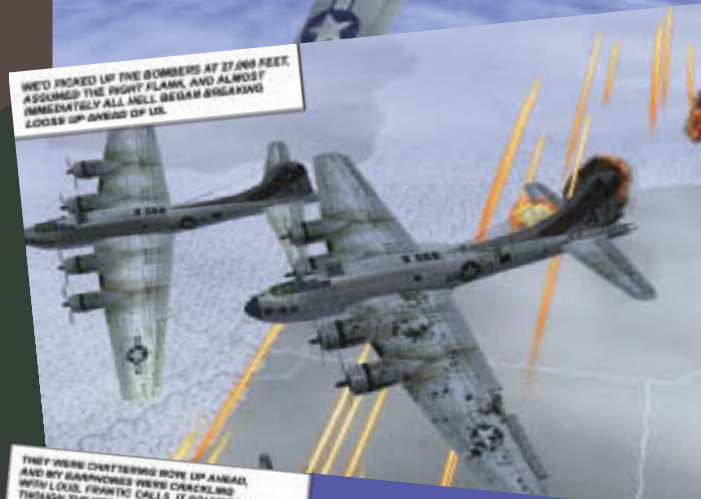
CP: Well Col., it has been a great pleasure talking to you and thanks again for giving your time in sharing your thoughts and experiences with our readers. Special thanks should also be made to Jim Anderson for his help in setting up this interview and for supplying the photos.

A memorable mission - An extract from “To Fly and Fight”, with images re-created in Jane’s WWII Fighters.

THE SHY ABOVE WAS A BRIGHT CRYSTAL BLUE, AND THE LAND BELOW A GREEN-ON-GREEN CHECKERSBOARD DIVIDED BY A SILVER-BLUE RIBBON. IN LOW WAS OCCUPIED FRANCE, BEYOND THE RIVER LAF GERMANIC AND IT ALL LOOKED THE SAME, ROLLING AND PEACEFUL AND BUBBLING WITH SPRING.



WE'D JOKED UP THE BOMBERS AT 27,000 FEET, ASSUMED THE FIGHT FLANK, AND ALMOST IMMEDIATELY ALL HELL BEGAN BREAKING LOOSE UP AHEAD OF US.



THEY WERE CHATTERING ROVE UP AHEAD, AND MY GARRIBONES WERE CHECKLING WITH LOUD, FOHNTIC CALLS. IT SOUNDED AS THOUGH THE WESBERSCHITTS AND ROCK-WALLS WERE EVERYWHERE.



TWO O'CLOCK POSN, PICK HIM UP!
BLUE LEADER, BREAK LEFT!
BARKITE, ALBURN O'CLOCK LEAD!

THEY'D WORKED OVER THE BOMBERS UP AHEAD AND NOW IT WAS OUR TURN. THINGS HAPPEN QUICKLY, WE GET AND OF OUR DROP TRUCKS, SLAM THE POWER UP AND MAKE A SWEEPING LEFT TURN TO ENGAGE.



HERE THEY COME

I AM IN THIS STEEP CLIMB, PULLING THE STICK INTO MY HANGL, MAKING IT STEEPER, STEEPER....



I BRING MY NOSE UP, HE COMES INTO MY SIGHTS, AND FROM LESS THAN 200 YARDS I THUNDER A LONG, MERCILESS BULLET FROM MY BROWNING. EVERY FIFTH BULLET OF THE 50 IS A TRACER, LEAVING A THIN TRAIL OF SMOKE, MARKING THE PATH OF THE BULLET STREAM. THE TRACERS RACE UPWARD AND FIND HIM. THE BULLETS CHIRP AT THE WING ROOT, THE COCKPIT, THE ENGINE, MAKING BRIGHT LITTLE FLASHES.



STRAIGHT DOWN HE FLUNG, FROM AS HIGH AS 20,000 FEET THROUGH TWO BEAUTIFUL, CRYSTAL CLEAR BAY MORNING TOWARD THE GREEN-ON-GREEN GARDENBOARDS FIELDS, LEAVING A WAKE OF BLACK SMOKE.



FROM FOUR MILES STRAIGHT UP I WATCH AS THE MESSERSCHMITT AND THE SHADOW IT MAKES ON THE GROUND RUSH TOWARD ONE ANOTHER... AND THEN, FINALLY, SILENTLY, MERGE.



... AND I AM LOOKING BACK DOWN, OVER MY SHOULDER, AT THIS CLASSIC GRAY ME AND WITH BLACK CROSSES THAT IS PULLING UP, TOO, STEEPER, STEEPER, THE PILOT TRYING TO GET HIS NOSE UP JUST A LITTLE BIT MORE AND BRING ME INTO HIS SIGHTS.



I LOOK BACK, AND I CAN SEE THAT HE'S SHUDDERING, ON THE VERGE OF A STALL. HE HASN'T BEEN ABLE TO GET HIS NOSE UP ENOUGH, HASN'T BEEN ABLE TO BRING THAT 50 GUN TO BEAR... HIS NOSE BEGINS CROPPING JUST AS MY AIRPLANE, TOO, BEGINS SHUDDERING. HE STALLS A SECOND OR TWO BEFORE I STALL, DROPS AWAY BEFORE I DO. GOOD OLD MUSTANG!



THIS TIME, IT'S THE MESSERSCHMITT THAT BREAKS AWAY AND GOES ZOOMING STRAIGHT UP, SMILING AT MAXIMUM POSE, WITHOUT MUCH ALTERNATIVE. I COME IN WITH FULL POWER AND FOLLOW HIM UP, AND THE GAP BETWEEN US SIMPLY, HE IS HANDLING BY HIS PRED... I HAVE HIM. HE MUST KNOW THAT I HAVE HIM.



"I sit on my porch, nearly a half-century and half-world removed from that awful business, looking out over a deep, green, river-cut canyon to the snow-capped Sierra, thinking about getting tires for the Blazer or mowing the lawn or, more likely, the next backpacking trip . . . and suddenly May 27, 1944, elbows its way to the front of my thoughts like a drunk to a bar. The projectionist inside my head who chooses the films seems to love this one rerun.

We were high over a bomber stream in our P-51B Mustangs, escorting the heavies to the Ludwigsbafen-Mannheim area. For the past several weeks the Eighth Air Force had been targeting oil, and Ludwigshafen was a center for synthetic fuels. Oil was everything, the lifeblood of war. Nations can't fight without oil. All through my training, and all through the war, I can't remember ever being limited on how much I could fly. There always was fuel enough. But by 1944, the Germans weren't so fortunate. They were feeling the pinch from the daily bombardments. Without fuel and lubricant, their war machine eventually would grind to a stop. Now that the Mustang fighters were arriving in numbers, capable of escorting the bombers all the way to their targets and back, Germany's oil industry was there for the pounding." →