

Lightning Strikes!





This banner was displayed outside our P-38 Association Hangar on June 23, when the 82nd Fighter Group Association held its "closeout" reunion ceremony there. For a detailed account of this event, see John Parlman's article on Page 12.

Famed Lockheed P-38 test pilot—and original P-38 National Association Life Member—Tony LeVier poses with Dave Tallichet's Lightning (P-38L-5 serial number 44-27231), which was displayed at our P-38 Association Hangar as its centerpiece exhibit from 1997 to 2001. (The museum is, of course, named after Tony.) See Steve Blake's story about Tony's post-World War II adventures as a P-38 air racer on Page 10 of this issue.





P-38 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

PO BOX 6453
MARCH ARB, CA 92518

Website: p38assn.org | Email: staff@p38assn.org

Lightning Strikes is published three times per year: March, July and November.

Submissions of articles and photos are gratefully accepted and should be submitted to the above mailing or email address.

Should we publish your submissions, appropriate credit will be given. We reserve the right to edit articles and crop photos.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: Scott Frederick • 909-985-9891 •
scottfrederick474thfg@gmail.com

TREASURER and Co-Director of Docents: Howard Ramshorn •
hmrtwa@aol.com

SECRETARY: Jim Bridges • 951-675-9586 • wgasa@charter.net

DIRECTORS

Steve Blake: *Lightning Strikes* Co-Editor & Membership Chairman •
928-772-2290 • steveblake1944@gmail.com

Kelly Baquet Kalcheim: *Lightning Strikes* Co-Editor & Director of
Internet Operations • staff@p38assn.org

Tim Mallis: *Director of Museum Operations* • 951-788-1556 •
tsmallis@outlook.com

Maryann Ramshorn: *Co-Director of Docents* • mrsramshorn@aol.com

Denny Rugenstein: 951-797-0315 • calnaj610@elmtree.com

Lowell Stacy: 951-242-7865 • lowellslot@gmail.com

***Lightning Strikes* Design:** Marjorie Blake

Association Historians: Steve Blake & Denny Rugenstein

Legal Counsel: Sam Crowe



On Our Front and Back Covers

Two beautiful air-to-air shots of the classic Lightning warbird *Glacier Girl* (P-38F-1 serial number 41-7630), whose amazing history is the stuff of fiction: recovered from the icy depths of a Greenland glacier onto which it had belly-landed in 1942 a half century later and then meticulously restored to its former glory. It finally took to the air again in 2002.



Visit us on
Facebook

**for activities and photos
posted from the P-38
online community.**

MEMBERSHIP INFO

Annual Dues: US \$30, Canada/Mexico
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LIFE Memberships (US ONLY): \$300

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p38assn.org

Membership issues (dues, changes of address, nonreceipt of *Lightning Strikes*, etc.) should be directed to Membership Chairman Steve Blake at the above address or to his email address:
steveblake1944@gmail.com

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You should notify Steve Blake ASAP whenever you have a change of mailing address. If you don't and your copy of *Lightning Strikes* is returned to us, we must pay a USPS "address service" fee—and you will not receive that issue. There is a \$6 charge to mail a replacement copy.



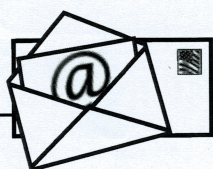
President's Report

It's hard to believe that another year is fast coming to an end. It has been a struggle to carry on during the COVID disruption, but our dedicated staff and docents have borne the load and done an excellent job. We owe so much to them for their commitment and diligence. With the holidays approaching we are hoping for some cooler and wetter weather to make their jobs easier.

We have received some truly wonderful donations and more and more of our members have purchased Life memberships. So, we are certainly moving in the right direction, although there is still much to do. Our editors have again done a fantastic job in putting together this edition of "Lightning Strikes."

Lastly, I want to extend best wishes to each one of you as we enter the holidays and approach a new year! Thank you all for supporting the P-38 National Association.

Sincerely,
Scott Frederick



We Get Mail

I want to thank you for all your work on putting together such a great magazine. I read them cover to cover and I save them up and send them to my son, who is a Navy Aviator, when he goes on deployment. It is because of my Dad's love of flying that my son now serves in the Navy as a Weapons Officer in an F18 Hornet and is a Top Gun Graduate.

Jim Carlton (son of the late Bob Carlton, a 49th Fighter Squadron P-38 pilot in North Africa)

Do You Know . . .

why P-38 pilots did not open their roll-down, car-like side windows in flight?

The answer is on Page 17.

MOVED?

**Please notify Membership
Chairman Steve Blake of any
Address changes
(see Page 3)**

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!

As time ticks by, the P-38 Association is finding it challenging to bring on additional docents for our P-38 Hangar in Riverside, California. We would like, therefore, to get in touch with anyone who might be willing to step up and help out. This is a once-per-month, Saturday or Sunday commitment. Although it is a volunteer position, you will receive a gas card each time you are a docent as a thank you.

Our Director of Docents, Howard Ramshorn, will be handling the introduction to the program as well as offering comprehensive training to all new docents. You do not need to be an expert on the P-38, just someone with a fondness for the plane, a spirit of willingness to learn and the ability to greet our visitors in a friendly and professional way. Your training will cover many of the potential questions you may be asked. The exhibits and memorabilia on display will also help to answer many of the questions that may come up. We have a complete timeline surrounding the plane which covers everything from concept to completion, including various missions and beautiful color images of those P-38s that are airworthy and participating in air shows. This display alone will educate our guests.

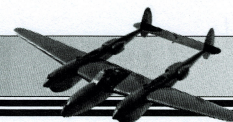


Part of the P-38 Association Hangar's timeline display

For practical reasons, it makes sense to live either in Riverside or the surrounding areas to sign on for this duty. If becoming a P-38 Association docent is something that appeals to you, there are a couple ways to find out how:

Email Howard Ramshorn: hmrta@aol.com
Complete the volunteer form on our website: p38assn.org/about-us/volunteer

Take the next step and help support our mission of keeping alive the memory of the P-38 Lightning by becoming a volunteer docent!



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Robert Blethrow, who has joined as a Life member
Mallen Cunningham, whose father, Floyd, was a P-38 mechanic on Guadalcanal

Jeff Green, a gift membership from Ron and Lydia Swearingen

David Lidstone, a gift membership from Jerry McDougald

Bruce Loewenberg, who joined as a Life member, is the son of Jerome Loewenberg, the administrative executive officer of the 82nd Fighter Group in Italy.

Janell MacMurray, the daughter of the late 479th Fighter Group P-38 and P-51 pilot Lt. Col. Arlett G. "Art" Mosier Jr. Her mother, Ardelle, is one of this issue's Folded Wings.

Rick May, a gift membership from Roger May

Thomas McKee, whose father worked on P-38s at Lockheed, has joined as a Life member.

Robert Pflumm

Matthew Reeser, a gift Life membership from his father, Edwin Reeser. He is the grandson of 94th Fighter Squadron P-38 pilot and C.O. James Hagenback.

Robert Shuemaker

Rear Admiral (Ret.) Murray J. Tynch III

Also, **Dan Flatley**, **Gary Houghton** and **Cindy Astor** have upgraded their memberships to **Life**.

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

We'd like to acknowledge the following individuals for their financial help and let them know how much we appreciate their donation:

82nd Fighter Group Association

Lillian Ayars

Robert Blethrow

Jeanney Horn

Dain Leadmon

Robert Nishimura

Kyle Riddle

E. D. Shaw III

Ron Swearingen

Patrick Swift

James Tyler

Kenneth Underwood

A Big "Thank You!" to our Volunteer P-38 Museum Docents:

Tim Atherton

Kris Blouir

Jim Bridges

Tim Mallis

Marcos Oviedo

Bob Pepper

Howard Ramshorn

Maryann Ramshorn

Leland Rash

Larry Segrist

Sherry Segrist

Isaiah Suso

It's Easy to Help!

As our friends, parents or grandparents who were "hands on" with the P-38 Lightning are continuing to leave us, keeping our website and this membership publication available as a tribute to them is vital.

This aircraft was an important part of their lives and our history, and to carry on this legacy we need funding. We are not affiliated with the USAF or Lockheed or any other support organization, and our entire operation is supported by people like you.

What would you pay for a good aviation DVD or book? If you enjoy *Lightning Strikes* and our P-38 Association website, please consider a financial contribution of the same amount to help defray our increasing costs and ensure that this part of aviation history continues to be available to people all over the world.

No donation is too small; after all, \$5 from a thousand visitors will keep us going for a long time! Donate here with your credit card (*it is completely secure and guaranteed against fraud*):

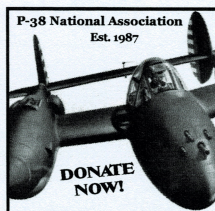
p38assn.org/about-us/donations

You'll also find a link to our complete list of donors there.

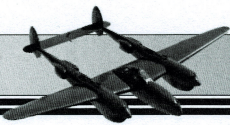
Since we are a 501(c)(19) non-profit organization, your donation may also be tax deductible. Check with your accountant. We also accept donations via USPS. Just make your check payable to "P-38 National Association" and mail it to:

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P-38 National Association
PO Box 6453
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92518



The following article appeared in the March 21, 1943, issue of The Los Angeles Times. It was written by Times reporter Marvin Miles and describes, in dramatic journalistic fashion, a ride he had recently taken in Lockheed's special "piggyback" P-38 (F-1 serial number 41-7485) with company test pilot Jimmy Mattern.

Can P-38 Take it? Reporter Convinced After Thrill Ride

Power dive! Fascinating seconds tick by as earth's voracious magnet plucks at us, for she will make a spectacular prize of this plummeting "piggyback" P-38—if she can.

Thousands of feet above we checked off 400 m.p.h.! Too close below, the lush green fields spread their treacherous welcome, luring us toward the roaring climax of this reporter's first ride in a fighter plane.

Suddenly the pull-out crushes the incredible weight of seven-fold gravity down upon us, jamming us toward the floor until the fighter curves out of the dive and soars upward in a graceful Immelman turn.

How can two men ride in a P-38? By a unique arrangement Lockheed's single-place Lightning is fitted out to carry a "piggyback" passenger riding crouched over just aft of the pilot in the space ordinarily filled by radio equipment.

As a new and spectacular training technique Piggy has cut flying accidents from an index of 6.5 to a new low of 1.5 within two months by permitting fledgling fighter pilots to receive air instruction from veterans. Riding in the little capsule cockpit with a pilot who knows the intricacies of this fast fighter, a cadet can learn more in an hour's flight than he can in months of solo experimentation. As the first standard fighter able to accommodate two men (other single-seaters will be similarly modified for training) Piggy provided a chance in a lifetime to taste military pursuit power in combat maneuvers—without 10 seconds' flight instruction.

I found my pilot lolling in the sun eating ice cream and wearing such unromantic flying clothes as sport shoes, green slacks and a yellow polo shirt. "The name's Mattern," he said. "Jimmy Mattern." Jimmy Mattern! Crack Lockheed-Vega test pilot, P-38 specialist veteran of 10,000 air hours, hero of world-girding flights, polar adventures and spectacular air rescues. I lost a bit of my nervousness.

On the way to the flight line he told me of touring fighter bases of the 4th Air Force to demonstrate flight characteristics of the P-38 and help youngsters bridge the menacing gap between advance training planes and twin-engine fighters. "The trouble in a P-38 or any other ship," he explained, "is usually something that the pilot gets himself and his airplane into rather than the airplane getting the pilot into it."

His job, he added, is to clear up a lot of hangar hot air that has sprung up about twin engine fighters and single engine performance. "It's mostly a matter of a few tips," he grinned. "Nothin' to it."

We found the Lightning ready, her white spinners gleaming in the afternoon sun. You've seen her a hundred times—or fighters just like her—playing high in a broken sea of clouds, rocketing over your home trailed by an eerie whistle. You've heard of her exploits in North Africa, the Aleutians, the South Pacific, and, like me, you've probably wondered what it's like to fly in her.

Squeezed into the little "jump seat" on the main center beam, I found the P-38 looks entirely different than she does from the ground. Gone is the three-bullets-on-a-knife appearance. Instead there's the broad, husky expanse of wing, 52 feet from tip to tip; the long, shark-like booms close alongside, the whirling props almost within reach.



Jimmy Mattern is about to take another passenger for a ride in Lockheed's famous piggyback P-38. The passenger is a USAAF lieutenant—possibly a public relations officer (?). Behind him is an NBC radio transmitter or recorder, and he and Jimmy seem to be reading a script. No caption accompanied the photo, which was contributed by P-38 Association member Mike Bates—who believes this was probably a broadcast for a popular wartime NBC radio show called The Army Hour.

Buckled in the little rumble seat, I found myself looking at the back of Mattern's head a foot away. I sat higher than he, hunched over to clear the downward sweep of the plexiglass greenhouse.

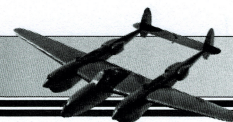
Soon after the engines coughed into life, the test pilot trundled her out to the head of the runway, tested the engines and turned into the wind. At full throttle he checked her eagerness for several seconds, then released the brake. Almost in a bound she was off the pavement and tucking up her wheels.

And her climb! It was unbelievable, as if she had been hurled from some gigantic slingshot. I waited fearfully for her to stall and spin, but Mattern simply grinned over his shoulder, increased the angle, and the Lightning sliced more steeply toward the sun. The altimeter needle moved around like the hand on a toy clock until at 10,000 feet Mattern leveled off to put Piggy through her paces.

He eased the red-handled throttles forward and when she was drilling through the patch-cloud at 400 plus (on the level) he horsed back on the wheel and shook the lift off the wings. Turbulence slammed into the tail and whipcracked us viciously.

"Just to prove she's rugged," the pilot shouted laconically. "Watch the tail this time to see if there's any flutter." Again came the whipcrack but I saw no flutter.

Mattern was just warming up. Under the sky's limitless canopy he put the Lightning through a one-plane air circus that must have started sky gazing all over the San Fernando Valley. Using the P-38's new



quick-acting flaps, he snap-rolled the seven-ton ship, slow rolled her and looped in 3000-foot circles while the earth capered around us, a crazy quilt gone berserk.

He pirouetted Piggy in tight, dizzy whirls, zoomed her straight up in mock attack and fell off in the seven-G dive that left me shaken—but envious of the kids who fly these demons.

"By giving cadets this demonstration," Mattern called back, "we give 'em the composite experiences of Lockheed test pilots and engineers who know this ship from the drawing board up. It's a sort of psychological weapon to combat wild and wooly tales!"

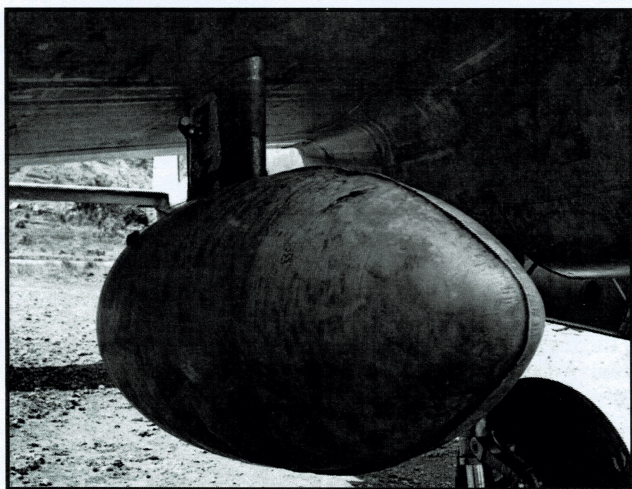
Still Mattern was not through. He cut the starboard motor and feathered the prop to show me one-engine efficiency, flying easily at better than 180 m.p.h., faster than Jimmy ever flew in his first 15 years of flying. He banked the ship into the dead engine, half rolled, rolled out and slipped neatly through figure 8's.

Finally he took her down low on one engine, so low that I held my breath; so low that we almost brushed the trees in a furious hedgehopping race that streamed the ground beneath us in a blur.

I relaxed when he took her up again, climbing in swift circles, still on one engine. In fact he took her all the way back to the airport and in for an eiderdown landing with one prop dead. "Just to show you it can be done," he chuckled.

I'm convinced! ☺

A P-38 Gun Camera Field Modification



This photo of a 9th Fighter Squadron P-38, taken in New Guinea in late 1943, displays an interesting field modification. P-38s' combat film was then notoriously poor, due to its designers' decision to place the gun camera in the nose close to the guns, the firing of which created a large amount of vibration, affecting the camera and its film quite negatively. Some 9th FS personnel came up with the idea of placing the camera in the left wing pylon. It was placed inside the middle of it, and the camera had to be tilted to the outside, into the slipstream, to take its pictures. Other combat P-38 units made similar experiments, including placing the camera in the leading edge of a wing. Finally, in mid-1944, Lockheed began placing the camera inside the left wing pylon on its assembly line—but in the front of it with a window through which the film could be shot.

Factory Fresh Lightnings!



This is a great publicity shot of the Lockheed Air Terminal strip, adjacent to the company's Burbank factory, from which Jimmy Mattern made his public relations piggyback flights. The P-38s would be towed here after rolling off the assembly line and then be flight tested by USAAF pilots before being officially accepted. Most of them would subsequently be flown to Army airfields around the country by ferry pilots, while some went to Lockheed's Modification Center near Dallas, Texas, to be converted to F-5 photo reconnaissance aircraft. In the foreground a Lockheed employee appears to be cleaning the guns of a brand-new P-38.

TIME TO RENEW?

IT'S EASY!

Mail a check for \$30 (made payable to P-38 National Association) for your annual membership dues to:

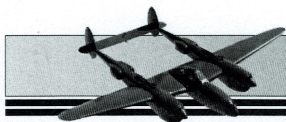
STEVE BLAKE
7211 E PRAIRIE RIDGE RD
PRESCOTT VALLEY AZ 86315

OR

Renew online with your credit card at the website:

p38assn.org

Check the dues rate for your country on Page 3.



THE BRIEFING ROOM

By Kelly Kalcheim

Keeping Cool

Well, it sure has been a long, hot summer here in Riverside. California is always hot at this time of year, but this season has been a whopper! Nevertheless, we have been keeping the P-38 Association Hangar open during our regular hours. This is thanks in no small part to the new A/C unit that Howard Ramshorn and Tim Mallis installed in the docent area. The docents have been stalwart in working with only the old swamp cooler we had been using to keep the docents' area bearable. But now it is more than tolerable, it is actually refreshing. Job well done guys. The entire roster of docents thanks you.

Calling All Volunteers!

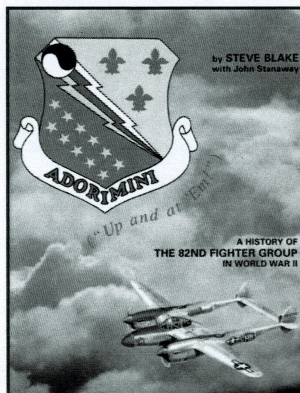
Speaking of docents, we are on the hunt for some more volunteers to docent at the P-38 Museum. We are currently open every Saturday and Sunday (except on holidays) but want to expand the days we are open, and would like you to consider volunteering as one of our new docents. You can see more details in the highlighted article on Page 4.

82nd Fighter Group Association Closing Their Doors



Maryann and Howie Ramshorn (seen here), along with our President, Scott Frederick, represented the P-38 Association at both 82nd FGA events.

The biggest event we've had since the last issue of *Lightning Strikes* was the 82nd Fighter Group Association Closeout Ceremony. The organization decided to call it a day and asked if they could hold their final event at our facility. We were happy to accommodate them. The ceremony took place on June 23rd, with an event at the P-38 Association Hangar and a sit-down dinner at their hotel that night to close out the celebration. The activities also included a very exciting up-close-and-personal fly-by of 23 *Skidoo* at our hangar. You can read all of the details about the event in John Parlman's article on Page 10.



John's last sentence in the above article includes: ADORIMINI! (Up and at 'Em!), which was their motto. Some of you may remember that our co-Editor, Steve Blake, and his late fellow P-38 Association Historian John Stanaway wrote a history of the 82nd Fighter Group called ADORIMINI that was published in 1992. Although out of print, it is still available on Amazon if you'd like to pick up a copy. Here is the link: [amzn.to/3d7DpkF](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B000APR000)

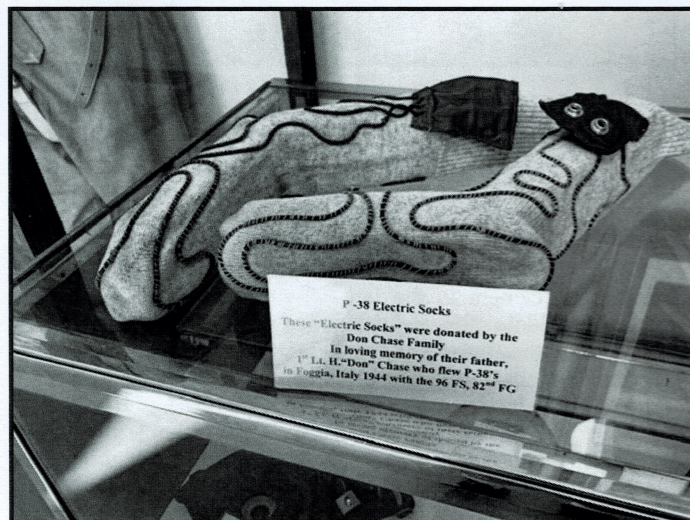
Although the 82nd Fighter Group Association will not continue as such, their mission carries on at their website, 82ndfightergroup.org/

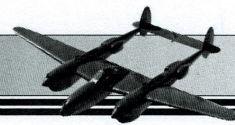
Keeping Those Toes Warm

You may have heard that P-38 pilots often got frosty feet at high altitudes and that the cockpit heating system in the Lightning was not that great. Due to the high altitude of bomber escort missions—typically 30,000 feet, with outside air temperatures of -70° Fahrenheit—P-38 pilots needed some help to stay warm.

So, they would wear socks and long johns with electrical resistor cords sewn into them. Each piece would snap together, and then the complete system plugged into a 24-volt electrical box in the cockpit. Those cords and snaps can be seen on the "electric socks" recently donated to us and now on display in the P-38 Association Hangar.

These government-issued electric socks were supplied to 1st Lt. H. "Don" Chase, who flew P-38s from Foggia, Italy, in 1944 with the 96th Fighter Squadron, 82nd Fighter Group. They were donated by the Don Chase family in loving memory of their father. Don's son, Jim Chase, is a member of our Association.





Hundreds of USAAF pilots were killed flying Lockheed Lightnings in World War II, whether in combat or—as in the majority of cases—in accidents. Among the *most* tragic of these tragedies were those pilots who survived overseas combat tours only to die in training accidents in the U.S. or another non-operational area. This is the story of one such P-38 pilot.

Urban Francis Stahl was born on September 27, 1921 in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and grew up there. After graduating from high school he joined the US Army Air Corps (USAAC) and was trained as an aircraft mechanic. In 1941, Urban was able to take advantage of a great new opportunity presented to enlisted USAAC personnel. The Air Corps was expanding rapidly as war seemed imminent for America, and it needed lots of new pilots—and quickly. To help obtain them, it suspended the requirement that aviation cadets have at least two years of college. This opportunity was first made available to USAAC enlisted men (EM); they could now apply for flight training if they had a high school diploma and met the age requirement (18 to 27) and would be accepted if they passed some rigid physical and written exams—all of which Urban Stahl did.

Urban began his flight training in January 1942 with Primary at Jackson, Mississippi; he then moved on to Basic at Montgomery, Alabama, and to Advanced at Columbus, Mississippi, where he graduated with Class 42-H and received the rank of Staff Sergeant, as did all the other former EM pilots. He moved on to single-engine operational fighter (Curtiss P-40 Warhawk and Bell P-39 Airacobra) training at Drew Field, near Tampa, Florida. After completing it he was sent overseas, traveling from New York with hundreds of other U.S. servicemen, including many new pilots, to Britain on the luxury liner *Queen Elizabeth* (which had been temporarily converted to a troop transport) in late November of 1942. Urban arrived in Scotland on the 30th and was then transported south to England, where he would spend the next two months.

In England he and the other pilots were first assigned to the Replacement Control Depot at Yarnfield, near Stone in Staffordshire, about 40 miles south of Manchester. This was a processing center where they underwent theater indoctrination and orientation while awaiting their slots in a training unit. While there, on December 20, Urban and his fellow staff sergeant pilots were promoted to flight officer (F/O), a temporary wartime USAAF rank that corresponded to Army warrant officer.

A week later the new flight officers were sent 30 miles southwest to Atcham, near Shrewsbury in Shropshire, where for the next month they received additional fighter training to prepare them for combat operations in the European Theater (8th Air Force). Urban trained in P-39s there, as he had in the U.S., although there was more classroom instruction than actual flying, due to the poor weather.

At the end of January 1943, Urban became part of a large group of USAAF fighter pilots

A P-38 Pilot Tragedy

By Steve Blake with Dick Butler

training in England who were suddenly reassigned to the 12th Air Force in North Africa. (The Allies had invaded French Morocco and Algeria in early November and were then fighting for Tunisia.) They shipped out from England aboard a passenger ship on the 24th and arrived in Oran, Algeria, a week later. On board the ship were 67 replacement fighter pilots who, soon after their arrival in North Africa, formed an informal group that called itself "The Sad Sacks," after a popular wartime cartoon character.

Starting in mid-February, these men received further instruction at the Médiouna airfield near Casablanca in French Morocco. The Fighter Combat Crew Replacement Center there trained them in the aircraft they would soon be flying in combat from North Africa. Urban was assigned to its P-38 squadron. Upon its completion, effective April 5, he was assigned to the 97th Fighter Squadron (FS) of the 82nd Fighter Group (FG) at Berteaux, Algeria, and was soon flying Lightning missions over the Mediterranean. (The group subsequently moved to Souk-el-Arba, Tunisia, in mid-June and to Grombalia, Tunisia, near Tunis, in early August.)

Urban accomplished quite a coup during the famous strafing of Axis airfields near Foggia, Italy, by Twelfth AF P-38s on August 25, 1943. While attacking the Triolo airfield, he exploded or burned four twin-engine Junkers Ju 88 bombers, all of which were confirmed destroyed.

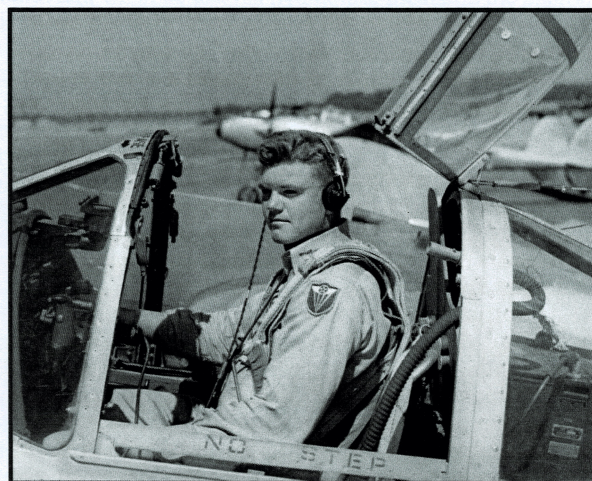
His only aerial victory was achieved three days later. This was an escort of North American B-25 Mitchell twin-engine bombers to the railroad marshalling yards at Cancelli, Italy, just north of Naples. As it left the target the formation was attacked by enemy fighters. According to the 82nd FG mission report, "Our fighters turned into them. The attacks were aggressive and persistent; they followed our fighters out to sea about 15 miles." Three of the enemy were claimed destroyed in these skirmishes, including an Italian Macchi MC.202 by F/O Stahl.

A week later, on September 5, Urban flew his 50th mission, completing his tour, and was soon on his way home. After enjoying some leave with his family, later that year Urban was assigned as an instructor pilot to a squadron of the 360th FG, a P-38 operational training unit, at the Van Nuys Metropolitan Airport, near Los Angeles—which, as of April 1, 1944, became the 441st Base Unit. He had by then received his commission as a lieutenant.

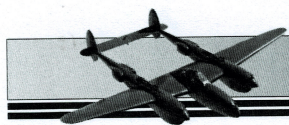
In the summer of 1944 Urban evidently requested another overseas assignment, and on August 24, as a first lieutenant, he joined the 72nd FS of the 21st FG, which was then based in the Territory of Hawaii at Mokuleia Field on Oahu's north shore. By that time Hawaii was a rear echelon area, as the war against Japan was then being fought several thousand miles to the west. The 72nd FS had been flying P-39s but began re-equipping with P-38s in July.

On December 1, 1944, Lt. Stahl, flying P-38J-20 serial number 44-23357, was killed when it crashed in a "power dive" two miles south of Kipapa, a small town between Honolulu and Wheeler Field, during a "local training" flight. The cause of the accident was determined to be "unknown." Yet another pilot hero had been killed in a flying accident after surviving a combat tour!

Although he was originally buried at the Schofield Barracks post cemetery, north of Honolulu, in 1949 Urban's remains were moved to the new National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, inside Honolulu's famous Punch Bowl. ☐



Lt. Stahl in the cockpit of a P-38 while serving as an instructor pilot at Van Nuys.
(Photo courtesy of Dick Butler)

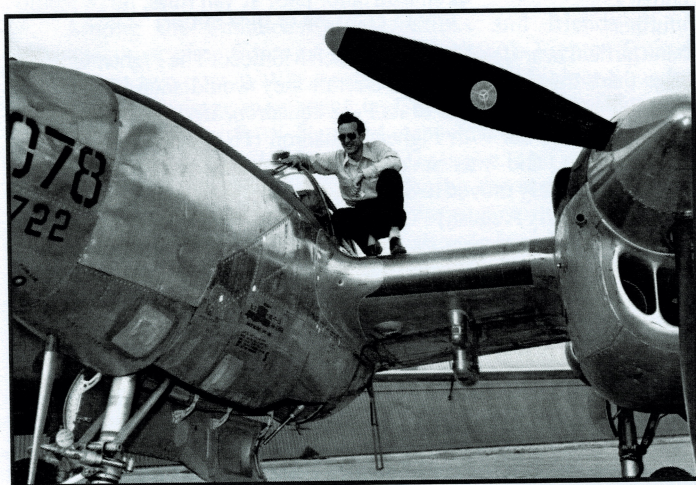


Tony LeVier: P-38 Race Pilot

By Steve Blake

Before he became a Lockheed test pilot, Anthony W. "Tony" LeVier was a successful air racer in the late 1930s. In September 1939, Tony and his plane placed second at the National Air Races in Cleveland, Ohio, in the most prestigious air race of them all, the Thompson Trophy.

Unfortunately, that would be the last National Air Race for seven years due to World War II, which broke out in Europe that same month. In 1941 Tony went to work for Lockheed, first as a ferry pilot and then as a P-38 test pilot, which job would make him famous in aviation circles. But he always vowed to race again if and when the opportunity arose, which it did in 1946, with the revival of the National Air Races at Cleveland's Hopkins Airport.



Tony LeVier proudly poses with his very own P-38 shortly after purchasing it at Kingman AAF in Arizona in January 1946.

They would be conducted pretty much as they had before the war; what was different were the participating aircraft. Prior to WWII, the top racing planes had been specially designed and built for that purpose, and were not cheap. With the drastic postwar downsizing of the American military services, there were suddenly thousands of surplus high-performance warplanes available for a pittance on the civilian market.

There was never any doubt as to what Tony would be flying in the new National Air Races—a P-38, of course! In January of 1946 he heard that hundreds of Lightnings had been flown to a makeshift air depot for the War Assets Administration at Kingman Army Air Field in northern Arizona, and were for sale there. P-38s and F-5 photo recon, which had cost the government around \$100,000, were going for \$1,250. The following day, January 23, Tony was at Kingman, cashier's check in hand. In his autobiography, titled, simply, *Pilot*, he remembered:

"I was escorted over to one corner of the field where about five hundred P-38s were lined up waiting for somebody to take them home. Most of them had been flown less than twenty hours. As far as the eye could see there was nothing but airplanes. I spent almost all day climbing in and out of cockpits, and finally satisfied myself I had found a winner."

Tony's choice was P-38L-5 serial number 44-53078, a stock Lightning except for the obvious absence of guns. It was the very first P-38 sold at Kingman and received the civil registration number (CRN) NX21764. He flew it to Lockheed's Air Terminal in Burbank, parked it outside the flight test hangar and soon, according to Tony, "I found myself collecting a large and very enthusiastic ground crew."

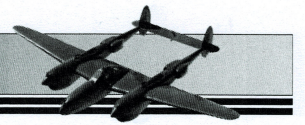
NX21764's first exhibition was at an air show at Mines Field (now LAX) on June 3. When Tony's turn came, he "held my P-38 down close to the runway all the way to the end of the field, where I pulled up and over on my back, followed with a half-roll to normal flight attitude, at which point I was going in the opposite direction from takeoff. I proceeded to execute my next maneuvers, first with both engines operating and then with one engine dead. This always got the crowd on their feet, and when I began my climb to altitude for the grand finale they were following me closely.

"Down I came, picking up speed, and when it seemed I would fly into the ground I pulled up and over in a half roll. Back up I went again. Then both propellers stopped turning and down I came once more in a nearly vertical dive. At the last moment the nose came up and at three hundred feet I pulled out of the dive and went around and landed."

Needless to say, Tony's performance was the highlight of the show.

Tony and his Lightning at their first public performance—the Examiner Air Show at Mines Field (now LAX) on June 3, 1946. He is wearing a G-suit, indicating how strenuous some of his aerial maneuvers were. (Photo courtesy of Mike Bates)





Not only did Tony plan to qualify for the 1946 Thompson Trophy Race at Cleveland, but he also obtained a contract to perform aerobatic maneuvers in his P-38 twice each day that weekend to entertain the spectators between races. By this time NX21764 had been painted in its racing colors, an overall bright vermillion red (which had been used on the famous *YIPPEE*, the 5,000th P-38 built—see the November 2019 issue of *Lightning Strikes*), with white lettering, including its racing number, 3.

Tony's crew did everything they could think of to improve their P-38's performance, as they knew the competition would be stiff. To lighten it, they removed all excess parts, including the armor plating and its complicated turbosupercharging system, which would not be needed at the very low altitude (literally a few feet off the ground) at which the Thompson Race was flown. One of them also came up with the idea of sealing over most of the seams and gaps in the airframe with extra-wide strips of Scotch tape; the resulting smoother surface would reduce wind resistance, thereby increasing the aircraft's speed.

Tony did qualify for the Thompson's R-Division (for reciprocating engines—the J-Division was for jets). The race was comprised of ten laps around a rectangular thirty-mile course with a pylon at each corner. In the time trials held the week before the Labor Day race weekend, his average speed of 376 mph, achieved on Thursday, August 29, placed him fourth among the twelve qualifiers—the only *Lightning* to make the cut.

It should be noted that while—other than Tony's—P-38/F-5s were not successful in the Thompson, they were the primary type entered in the Bendix, a very different, long-distance, race from Van Nuys, California, to Cleveland. In the 1946 Bendix Race, which was the first event of the Nationals, of the 28 entries 19 were *Lightnings*. Of the 17 actual participants, 10 were P-38/F-5s, although the best any of them could do was a fifth place finish.

The Thompson began at 4 p.m. on Labor Day, Monday, September 2. The National Air Races' director had excused Tony from his aerobatic performance that day so he could concentrate on racing.

The race favorite, for good reason, as it turned out, was Alvin "Tex" Johnston in his highly modified—and very fast—Bell P-39 Airacobra, *Cobra II*, the #1 qualifier and therefore the holder of the advantageous pole position. Tex was first off when the starting flag dropped, followed closely by Tony and by WWII P-38 ace and #2 qualifier George Welch, in a North American P-51 Mustang. The #3 qualifier, a Bell P-63 Kingcobra, had to drop out soon after takeoff when its landing gear would not fully retract. Then, on the second lap, Welch had to drop out due to a mechanical problem; his Mustang had actually begun emitting smoke on the starting line and it got progressively worse. It was then, and remained, a two-plane race. According to Tony:

"Up to the halfway point I was gaining on [Tex]. Then he put on more power and started to pull away. As I entered the sixth lap I knew that I couldn't catch him, barring accidents, as he just had too much speed for me, and I concentrated on holding my own. I finished second with an average speed of 370 miles an hour, only three miles slower than the winner."

When he landed after the race Tony forgot that his flaps were taped in the closed position and tried to extend them. The result was that the left outboard flap became completely "locked up" by the Scotch tape, tore its cables out by their roots and "practically ruined the flap system." That would be the last time they used the tape!

Tony and #3 were back at Cleveland for the 1947 races. The new modifications to the plane were clipped propeller blades and horizontal stabilizers. Unfortunately, this year his main competitors had "souped-up" engines that left his mostly stock P-38 with a big horsepower disadvantage.

That year there was also a new, consolation, race for P-38s only, since most of them could not compete with the much faster single-engined fighters. It was sponsored by Standard Oil of Ohio (Sohio), after which it was named, and Tony won it handily, with an average speed of 361 mph.

#3 also qualified for the Thompson, in which Tony was doing OK until the fourth lap, when he lost his hydraulics, including the aileron boost. This made his tight turns around the pylons, the only place where he held an advantage, much more difficult. He ended up finishing second to last as a result, with an average speed of just 357 mph. In fact, only six of the thirteen participants finished the Thompson that year, due to crashes and mechanical failures. A pilot was killed in one of the four crashes.

When it came time to land, lacking hydraulic pressure, Tony had to lower the landing gear with the P-38's hand pump (see Bob Alvis' P-38 Tech Talk in the July 2020 issue of *Lightning Strikes*). He later described the physical challenges of that procedure:

"With my hydraulic system out, I knew it was going to be a long, hard job to pump my landing gear down by hand. I went to the emergency system and started pumping, only to find I was able to move the pump handle just a couple of inches because the extra gas tank behind my seat was in the way.

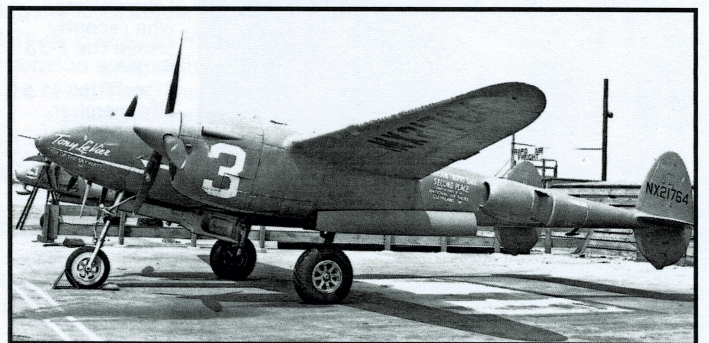
"This didn't have much effect on the gear, so I unhooked my safety belt and squatted down in the seat in order to get the maximum stroke possible on the pump. After five minutes my engines began cutting out, so I turned on a new set of tanks and returned to the pump. I kept up this process until all my wing tanks were dry and I was feeding gas from my last remaining fuel tank in the nose of the airplane.

"I continued pumping until I had spots before my eyes and my head was aching, and after what seemed an eternity my wheels finally indicated down and locked and I got into the traffic pattern and landed. When my plane finally stopped I was so exhausted I had to be lifted out of the cockpit."

This turned out to be Tony's last race. His stock P-38 was no longer competitive with the highly modified single-engined planes, and the race itself was becoming increasingly more dangerous. So, bowing to pressure from his employer, Lockheed, and his family, he decided to give up racing.

Tony then sold 44-53078, now sporting the amended CRN NL21764, and it passed through four more owners before it was acquired by Mark Hurd Aerial Surveys in 1953 for aerial mapping, with the new CRN N504MH (for Mark Hurd). In 1965 Hurd sold it to J. Byron Roche, who was flying it near Los Olivos, California, on August 4 of that year when his fuel-starved engines failed. Roche managed to bail out, but suffered fatal injuries when he hit the horizontal stabilizer. ☹

Tony's P-38 after being modified for racing and having been painted in its vermillion red and white racing colors. This photo was taken after he came in second in the 1946 Thompson Trophy Race.





The 82nd Fighter Group Association's Closeout Ceremony

By John Netzer Parlman

[Editors' Note: The 82nd Fighter Group Association, made up of the unit's veterans, family members and friends, decided several years ago that it was time for it to be dissolved as a formal, legal entity. It was also decided to end it with a final "closeout" reunion and ceremony, and the following recounts that event.]

The Closeout Ceremony was held on the morning of June 23, 2022 at the P-38 National Association's Museum at March ARB in Riverside, California. Lowell Phillips, President of the 82nd Fighter Group Association (FGA), welcomed the attendees and introduced the Association's honored guests, its World War II veterans: Dick Ostronik and Lute Thompson of the 96th Fighter Squadron and Leo Press and Mel Roalsvig of the 97th. Dick is 98 years old, Leo 99 and Lute and Mel 100. Leo Fisher, who was unable to attend, turned 103 on the day of the ceremony and is the oldest 82nd vet.

Among the attendees were families and friends of the veterans, Instructor Pilots of the 96th and 97th Fighter Training Squadrons, two post-WWII members of the 95th Fighter Squadron (82nd FGA Heritage members Len Coleman and Bob Priest) and two officers of the P-38 National Association: Scott Frederick, President, and Howard Ramshorn, Treasurer. Our four honored veterans sat in front of the podium facing the audience with the group and unit flags behind them and the museum's full-scale P-38 replica to their right.

Bruce Loewenberg, 82nd FGA Historian, gave a memorable tribute to the men of the 82nd by highlighting their pride, professionalism, courage and camaraderie through stories of their wartime experiences. He is fortunate to have met many of those he spoke of in his early years in the Association. He related the stunning accomplishments of the 82nd: 3 Distinguished Unit Citations, 548 confirmed air victories, 58 probables and 227 damaged. The terrible cost for these achievements was 140 men killed in action, 37 killed in flying accidents and 3 killed in non-flying accidents. He summed up his presentation by saying, "We should all remember and never forget the brave actions and sacrifices made by all members of the 82nd. They were truly a remarkable group of men who accomplished so much for their country."



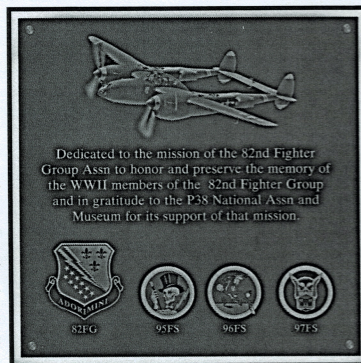
82nd FGA Historian Bruce Loewenberg, who recently joined the P-38 National Association as a Life member, presented a tribute to the men of the 82nd Fighter Group during the closeout ceremony.



The audience listens raptly to a presentation during the 82nd FGA ceremony in our Hangar on June 23. In the background is the Dick Willsie/Dick Andrews Rescue diorama—depicting a famous 82nd FG incident.

Al Norman, Chief Test Pilot for Lockheed Martin, reminded those gathered of the greatness of the P-38 and the commitment of Lockheed to excellence in the air. He fittingly mentioned he had been in flight operations in the 82nd FG as part of his Air Force career.

John Netzer Parlman, FGA Vice President, thanked the P-38 National Association for its assistance over the past few years with the closeout process, for hosting the ceremony and for perpetuating the memory of the 82nd Fighter Group of WWII. He presented a plaque with a check for \$1000 to Scott Frederick and encouraged those attending to support the P-38 Association with dues and donations. The plaque reads: "Dedicated to the mission of the 82nd Fighter Group Assn to honor and preserve the memory of the WWII members of the 82nd Fighter Group and in gratitude to the P-38 National Assn and Museum for its support of that mission."

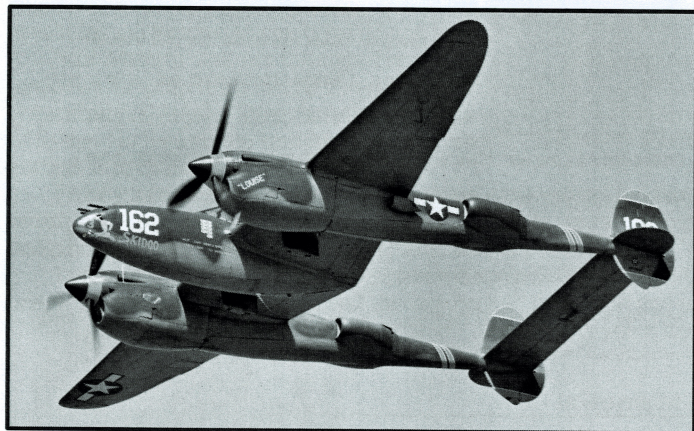


This is the plaque presented by the 82nd FGA to the P-38 Association, in appreciation.

The closing prayer was given by Todd Felton, USAF retired, past 82nd FGA President and former Instructor Pilot of the 96th FTS. He summarized the ceremony saying: "We're here today to remember the sacrifice of the 82nd Fighter Group, and their sacrifice was significant, awe-inspiring and world-changing. The 82nd Fighter Group Association was formed after the war to continue the fellowship of brothers who bonded during wartime. It is moving to a new, different season, which we commemorate here today. Whatever that

new season might look like, it will still be filled with immeasurable gratitude, pride and love for the men of the 82nd Fighter Group."

The ceremony aptly concluded with a flyover by the Planes of Fame P-38, from the nearby Chino Airport. The multiple passes and turns, the sound of the twin engines and the wing-wag were a fitting tribute to the 82nd FG men who flew, maintained and loved it. There were very few dry eyes.



The Planes of Fame P-38, 23 Skidoo, performed a flyover during the 82nd FGA's Closeout Ceremony.

The Final Reunion Banquet began that evening at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Ontario. Lowell Phillips welcomed the attendees and assured that the evening would be full of memories, tears and happiness. After the Pledge of Allegiance led by incoming President Peggy Jean Powell, John Netzer Parlman led the group through a history of the Association from its roots in the American Fighter Aces Association. He gave tribute to those who through 43 years led the 82nd FGA, edited the newsletters, kept the books, updated the membership rosters and hosted the reunions. Members of the 82nd's USAF Heritage Units from the 96th and 97th Fighter Training Squadrons who flew in the for the ceremony were also recognized for being present and for keeping the memory of the 82nd alive. He also recognized Nona Isaacson, 99-year-old wife of former 96th FS CO Clayton "Ike" Isaacson. Finally, he acknowledged the veterans present, in whose honor this event was held.

John then recited the Missing Man Ceremony, remembering those from all services and our members who are no longer with us and the pain of their loss by their loved ones. Following the ceremony, Todd Felton gave the blessing. After dessert, Nancy Medley Manduano gave the background on the tradition of the upcoming Rose Ceremony. Nancy related that in the early years of the Association, Col. Ben Mason decided to have roses presented to the wives of the 82nd veterans as a symbol of gratitude for their strength and support. Over the years the presentation was extended to all women present. The honor of presenting the red roses at this final reunion went to the members of the 96th and 97th FTSs.

Lowell Phillips then gave Certificates of Appreciation and Challenge Coins in recognition of those whose efforts have benefited the Association and helped bring it to a fitting and appropriate closure. Steve and Peggy Powell and John and Judy Parlman, hosts of the reunion, gave Lowell gifts in recognition of his leadership over two terms at this critical time in the Association's history. The closeout would not have happened without his persistence and vision.

To conclude, Peggy Powell, as incoming President, gave a brief but encouraging speech explaining that the Association, though no longer a legal entity, will continue to fulfill its mission to honor the

men of the 82nd Fighter Group. We are "redefining" ourselves. There are no dues or formalities, just a network with a shared purpose. Our website is being redesigned and the archives expanded. We will be reaching out to family members to add pictures, videos and documents to the site and to join our private Facebook group for news and updates. We will experiment with "virtual" online social gatherings and group emails to keep in touch. And yes, there may be more reunions—informal, low-key and low-cost.

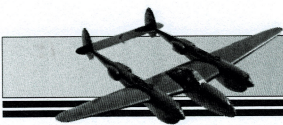
When all is said and done, Lowell's prediction at the beginning of the night was fulfilled. It was a long and memorable day. We were exhausted but full of wonderful memories, renewed and new friendships and a sense that we had properly honored our veterans and preserved the memory of the 82nd Fighter Group and Association. More importantly, we left knowing that we are still on mission. Our association may be different, but it is continuing. After all, ADORIMINI!—Up and at 'Em! (the 82nd FG motto).

[The 82nd Fighter Group was constituted by the USAAF on January 13, 1942, and activated on February 9 at Harding Field, Louisiana. It received an influx of recent Sergeant Pilot graduates of Class 42-C and at the end of April moved to several airfields in southern California to train on P-38s. In September 1942 the group moved to the East Coast and then shipped out to Northern Ireland. It trained there for a couple of months before moving to Algeria at the end of December to become part of the 12th Air Force. In October 1943 it moved to Italy and was assigned to the new strategic 15th Air Force, with which it flew long-range missions throughout southern and eastern Europe for the rest of the war. It was inactivated there on September 9, 1945.]

The origin of the 82nd Fighter Group Association was a reunion of the American Fighter Aces Association (AFAA) in 1976 (25 of the 82nd's pilots had qualified as aces by scoring five or more confirmed air victories). It was decided to have a mini 82nd FG reunion as part of the AFAA gathering the following year, and 82nd FG veterans held independent reunions in 1979 and 1981. During the latter it was decided to form the 82nd FGA and by the following year its by-laws had been prepared and a slate of officers was elected. Since then, regular 82nd FGA reunions have been held in cities around the country, and an excellent unit newsletter has been published.]

82nd FGA members pose with the P-38 replica in our Hangar. Third from the left, standing, is John Parlman, this article's author. Sitting, left to right, are the four World War II pilots: Dick Ostronik, Lute Thompson, Leo Press and Mel Roalsvig. Dick, Lute and Mel are, like John, also members of the P-38 Association.





Your P-38 Website

By Kelly Kalcheim

The redesign of our P-38 Association website has been completed and is now available for viewing.

Most of the functions will remain the same as they were on the previous design (becoming a member, renewing your membership, making donations, etc.). So if you were familiar with the website before, you should be comfortable using the new format. We have already had many membership renewals (including upgrades to "Life" membership) as well as donations, and everything seems to be working as it should. We are still adding content and making a few corrections, so if you should find anything that you believe needs fixing, please send us an email at: staff@p38assn.org

In this edition, we will focus on one of the people who have become familiar to many of you P-38 fans, Tommy McGuire. His page is here:

p38assn.org/tommy-mcguire/

It includes his biography, his Medals and Decorations (among other things) and some great photos. There is also an Amazon link to "The Last Great Ace: The Life of Major Thomas Buchanan McGuire, Jr." if you care to pick up a copy.

Following are Snippets from Tommy McGuire's page

(Hint: all of McGuire's P-38s were named "Pudgy," and now you will know why.)

Biography



He attended Georgia Institute of Technology and enlisted as an aviation cadet when the United States entered the war. He trained at Corsicana, Texas, and at San Antonio, where he met his wife, Marilynn. She was a trim, attractive young woman, who had somehow picked up the incongruous nickname "Pudgy."

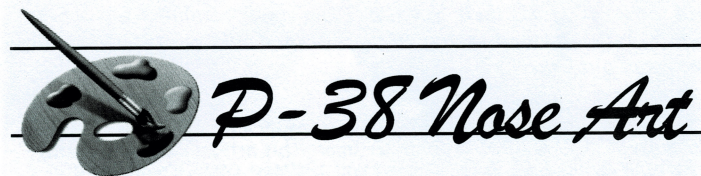
Memorial

Major McGuire Memorial on Negros Island, Republic of the Philippines.



Lindbergh

When Charles Lindbergh visited the 475th FG in the summer of 1944, he and McGuire spent time together, flying, fishing, and visiting local caves. McGuire even got so comfortable in their friendship that one time he asked Lindbergh to get him a cup of coffee, much to the amusement of his more awestruck squadron mates. Apparently, the great man quietly fetched the brash young flier a hot cup of joe.



First Lieutenant Walker L. "Whitey" Whiteside, of Claremont, California (on the right), poses with his ground crewmen and their P-38, J-10 serial number 42-68176, named *Sky Cowboy* (which nose art was painted in yellow and black) and squadron coded LC-1. Second from the left is its crew chief, Staff Sergeant Harry G. Keife, from Whittier, California. The other two men are its assistant crew chief and its armorer.

Whiteside was assigned as a replacement pilot to the 8th Air Force's 20th Fighter Group (77th Fighter Squadron), based at King's Cliffe in Northamptonshire, England, in November 1943. He was made a flight commander in June 1944.

Lt. Whiteside scored his only air victories during a bomber escort mission to Frankfurt, Germany, on January 29, 1944, when he shot down an Me 109 and shared in the destruction of a twin-engine Me 210 (note the two swastika victory markings on the plane's fuselage). That day he was flying P-38J-10 42-67758, coded LC-Q.

42-68176 received repairable battle damage on April 27, April 29 and June 23. It was destroyed in a takeoff accident on July 12 while being flown by 2nd Lt. Richard Robbins Jr., who was seriously injured.

Sadly, Lt. Whiteside was killed in action on August 6, 1944, while flying a P-51 Mustang (to which the 20th FG had recently converted) on another bomber escort mission to Germany. He had been awarded two Distinguished Flying Crosses.

OUR FOLDED WINGS

Gifford, Homer L., passed away on September 3, 2022. Homer was a P-38 ground crewman with the 344th Fighter Squadron, 343rd Fighter Group of the 11th Air Force in the Aleutian Islands.

Hallett, Jack H. Sr., May 15, 2022. Jack joined the 394th Fighter Squadron, 367th Fighter Group of the 9th Air Force in Europe in October 1944. On December 16, the first day of the Battle of the Bulge, he shot down an Me 109 while escorting some RAF Lancaster bombers to a target in Germany. He recalled later that, "This was the only time I saw enemy aircraft in the air." Jack retired from the USAF with the rank of major.

McCloud, Paul D. (Life Member), July 27, 2022. "Don" enlisted in the USAAF shortly after graduating from high school in 1942 and received his Preflight training at Santa Ana, California; Primary at Santa Maria, California; Basic at Chico, California; and Advanced at Luke Field, Arizona, where he was awarded his wings and commission with Class 43-K. He subsequently served as a P-38 flight instructor with the 433rd Base Unit at Chico, California, before being sent to China (the 14th Air Force), where he served with the 449th Fighter Squadron in 1945, flying four combat missions. (Check out Don's story in the July 2007 issue of *Lightning Strikes*.)

Mosier, LesLee A., May 21, 2022. Ardelle was the widow of 479th Fighter Group P-38 pilot Lt. Col. Arlett G. "Art" Mosier Jr. She assumed her husband's membership in the P-38 National Association in 2007.

Phillips, Henry P., June 3, 2022. Hank won his wings with Class 44-I in September 1944. After completing operational P-38 training with the 443rd Base Unit at Ontario, California, he was sent to Italy as a replacement pilot and assigned, in November, to the 96th Fighter Squadron, 82nd Fighter Group at Vincenzo. After the war he joined the Washington State Air National Guard and in 1951, during the Korean War, he transferred to the USAF. In Vietnam he served as a forward air controller and two years later, in 1969, he retired from the Air Force with the rank of lieutenant colonel. Hank was very active in the 82nd Fighter Group Association and was one of the original members of the P-38 National Association (his wife Marlene has assumed his membership in the latter).

Preece, William R. (Life Member), June 24, 2022. After winning his wings with Class 44-E at Williams Field, Arizona, Bill received F-5 photo reconnaissance training before being sent to Italy. He served there with the 32nd Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron (PRS) of the 15th Air Force's 5th Photographic Reconnaissance Group (PRG) at San Severo from November 1944 to June 1945, flying 13 missions. Bill was recalled to active duty during the Korean War, during which he flew B-29 weather reconnaissance missions from Japan.

Sanchez, Gilbert C., January 20, 2022. Gil was a big Fan of the P-38.

Weir, Arthur J. W. (Life Member), August 27, 2022. "Jack" was in the ROTC program at Iowa State College and completed officer candidate training there. He joined the USAAF after graduating, won his wings, and received

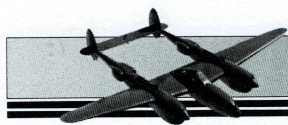
advanced twin-engine training with the 402nd Base Unit at La Junta, Colorado. After additional photo reconnaissance training he was sent to the CBI Theater, where he joined the 40th PRS of the 10th Air Force's 8th PRG. Besides photo recon missions he also flew C-47 transports over the "Hump." After the war he joined the California Air National Guard and was recalled to active service in the Korean War. Jack retired from the USAF in 1971.

Willett, Ralph P., July 30, 2022. After graduating from high school Ralph worked as a civilian airplane mechanic at Westover Field in Massachusetts. He joined the USAAF and received additional training at Greensboro, North Carolina. He was sent to Italy in April 1944 and served as a crew chief with the 12th PRS of the 12th Air Force's 3rd PRG.

Flight Officer P-38 Pilots

These three flight officers were all assigned to the 97th Fighter Squadron of the 82nd Fighter Group in North Africa during the spring and summer of 1943. They are, from left to right: Heber M. Butler, Urban Stahl and Richard M. Butler, Heber's brother. The Lightning is P-38G-15 serial number 43-2316, which was assigned to Richard. He had named it after his wife—*Geneil "Genie With The Light Brown Hair"*. Richard and 43-2316 were shot down during an air battle near Naples, Italy, on August 20, 1943. He shot down an Me 109 during a head-on duel, but his plane was also badly damaged and he had to bail out of it near the island of Capri. He was rescued from the water, taken prisoner, and spent the rest of the war in a German *stalag*. His brother and F/O Stahl completed their tours shortly thereafter and returned home. Although Stahl survived his combat tour, he did not survive the war; see his ultimately tragic story on Page 9.





P-38 FIGHTER TACTICS

The following is an excerpt from a study wherein experienced fighter pilots of the 5th Air Force in the Southwest Pacific shared their proven tactics with that theater's replacement fighter pilots. It was written by then-Major John S. Loisel, a P-38 ace with the famous 475th Fighter Group, who ended the war with 11 confirmed air victories. He was then the Group Operations Officer; he had previously commanded its 432nd Fighter Squadron and he later became the Group C.O. Loisel was a member of the P-38 National Association from 1992 until his death in 2010.

"Aggressiveness is a quality which must be possessed by every fighter pilot. It is the aggressive pilot who gives, not receives, the punishment. A good combat outfit will not coddle the weak pilot, but will build a strong fighting machine around pilots who have confidence in the planes they fly and in themselves. The importance of teamwork in aerial combat cannot be over-emphasized. If teamwork is to be achieved and the effects of mutual support gained, each flight leader must know the position of every man in his flight. This is possible only when strict formation discipline is observed at all times. I prefer to have my wingman at a distance of about 100 yards and at a 45° angle to the rear. In combat he will be more in trail and at a distance of ten ship lengths behind me. The leader's primary objective is to shoot down the enemy; it is the wingman's responsibility to stick with him and at the same time be on the lookout for possible attackers. The wingman constitutes the defensive part of the unit and his primary responsibility is the protection of that unit. I do not believe in breaking up the basic four ship flight, definitely never less than two ships together. Flight leaders should position their flights close enough to the lead flight to be able to effectively support any attack or defensive maneuvers.

"In entering combat, hit the enemy with everything you've got. The initial attack will generally govern the outcome of the fight. A piecemeal entry into the scrap will not be as effective as several flights hitting the enemy simultaneously. Head for the main body of the enemy if you are leading a flight or a squadron. Disregard the stragglers. In my experience at hitting enemy formations, a few wingmen have seen me coming and have taken evasive action, but where the enemy was most concentrated there were several who obviously didn't know of our presence. I well remember one incident in which the squadron leader first turned to pick up the highest stragglers of a large group of Nips. This gave the main body of the enemy the opportunity to gain superior altitude advantage which they utilized by positioning themselves on our tails. Plow into the largest bunch you see. After such an attack the enemy will be forced to break up. Stay together as a squadron as long as the enemy maintains a semblance of large flights. If he breaks up into singles and elements you can best cope with him by breaking down into flights. Always maintain a numerical superiority in size of formations involved and it will pay dividends. Elements are completely satisfactory for attacking singles or other elements, but in a general melee, as most fights turn out to be, you must always be prepared to contact a larger enemy group. In one particular instance, I chased a flight of six enemy fighters with just my element, and was promptly chased out of the fight for my pains.

"Knowledge of the maneuverability limits of your ship enables you to figure out just how long you can turn with the enemy in a pass. The new L's we are getting have better maneuvering characteristics than any previous P-38 model, but the Nip can still out-maneuver any fighter we have. Dive flaps do not increase your rate of turn. Some fellows have been throwing them down after rolling into a turn and, because back pressure on the controls is decreased, they falsely imagine they're pulling their nose through faster. Superior speed is still our greatest advantage. Come down on the enemy, if possible, attack him level, but NEVER make a climbing pass on his fighters without lots of speed. When you zoom, turn or slow up in any way you are especially vulnerable.

"The long range operations of the past nine months have increased the fighter pilot's problems many times. Knowing your airplane, its possibilities and operation under all conditions will greatly help. Too many pilot do not know how to get maximum performance out of their aircraft and engines. Just as an example, on very long missions we had trouble at first getting pilots to use 1600 RPM and 28 to 32 inches of manifold pressure. They'd been accustomed to using 2100 to 2300 RPM for the same manifold pressures, not knowing that the P-38 operating instructions gave the lower figures for maximum gas economy.

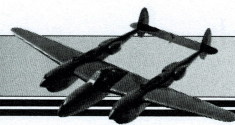
"When you are leading a flight or a squadron your problems are multiplied; if covering bombers your responsibility extends to them. If you can maintain radio discipline and formation, and everyone knows what you are expecting of them, your problem is greatly reduced. As soon as the enemy is sighted the squadron goes into string formation 10 ship lengths between planes. Stay together and don't allow stragglers. In a string formation the flights can weave and cross meeting any attack. If with bombers, speed can be maintained and yet stay with them by weaving.

"In very rare instances does a good squadron get jumped. Keep looking around and be ready for a fight at all times. When tackling an enemy formation try to achieve the element of surprise but don't forget speed and firepower are still your greatest assets.

"When enemy fighters are scarce and the missions call for strafing and dive-bombing, don't relax the discipline of your outfit. Keep up the spirit and teamwork by never allowing sloppy formations, patterns, or a low caliber of flying. Give every flight everything you've got and it will pay dividends in combat."

Then-Captain John Loisel poses with his assigned P-38 (H-1 serial number 42-66682) sometime in early 1944, after scoring his eighth victory. He named this plane, unit number 161, *Screamin' Kid*.





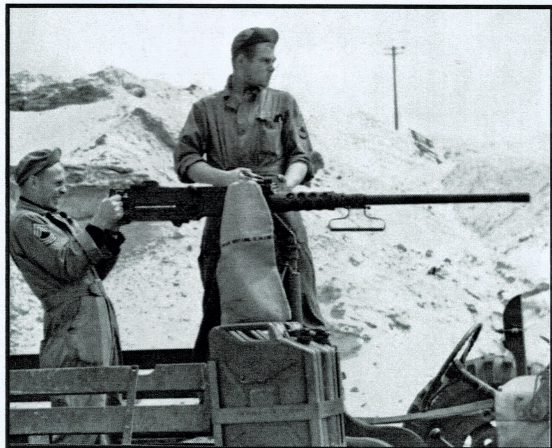
They Also Served . . . and Died

By Scott Frederick

[Editor's Note: Any regular reader of Lightning Strikes knows that the casualty rate among World War II Lightning pilots was high; hundreds of them died while flying a P-38 or an F-5, whether the victim of enemy action or (as in the majority of cases) in a non-combat-related accident. While the pilots' ground support personnel were much less likely to be killed, some of them were, mostly in accidents but also occasionally due to enemy action. The following is the tragic story of two such men of a 9th Air Force P-38 group in France.]

August 8, 1944, was another day for the men of the 474th Fighter Group, principally devoted to getting settled at their new base, A-11 (Neuilly/Isigny), a temporary Advanced Landing Ground in Normandy. It was marked, however, by a fatal accident that shocked and saddened not only everyone in the 428th Fighter Squadron but also all Group personnel. Late in the afternoon, Technical Sergeant (T/Sgt) James W. McDonald, from De Soto, Georgia, and Master Sergeant (M/Sgt) John D. Walton from Berry, Alabama, an ordnance and an armament chief respectively—two of the finest all-around soldiers any organization could have hoped to have—were instantly killed in the accidental explosion of four 500-pound bombs they were transporting to the line. The tragic mishap took place less than a hundred yards from where scores of engineers were working to complete a taxi strip; several of them were injured, as were M/Sgt. Lewis E. Fitzgerald, T/Sgt. Walter W. Scheible and T/Sgt. William H. Jackson Jr., none of the latter seriously. Bomb fragments ripped through the nearby living areas, narrowly missing dozens of other officers and enlisted men.

What caused the accident will never be completely known. One theory, advanced by Brigadier General Elwood R. "Pete" Quesada, C.O. of IX Tactical Air Command, of which the 474th FG was a part, who happened to be visiting the field and who was one of the first to rush to the scene, was that the bomb-carrying truck with which the two sergeants were working had passed over a mine that somehow had been missed when the field was cleared. The 428th's ordnance officer, Lt. Loyal P. Stewart, leaned to another conclusion—that the tragedy was caused by the detonating of a new type of 500-pounder which had somehow been mixed in with the old TNT variety and which was much more susceptible to jarring and vibration than were the "standard" type bombs. ☹



M/Sgt. John Walton (on the left) and T/Sgt. James McDonald test fire a .50-caliber machine gun at Warmwell, England. Both these men died in a tragic accident in France a few months later.

SCRAPPED!

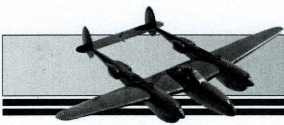


Thousands of USAAF aircraft were declared "salvage" during World War II, meaning that, because of serious damage—whether due to accidents or enemy action—they were no longer flyable and hence expendable. Typically, they would be stripped of reusable parts and what was left cut up, crushed, burned, buried and/or dumped in the ocean. The accompanying photos are of two such aircraft, in the Pacific Theater of Operations. The official USAF caption for the above photo is: "A GI looks over the remains of a Lockheed P-38 'Lightning' at a base somewhere in the Pacific Area. Usable parts of the wrecked planes are salvaged." The photo below is of a 12th Fighter Squadron P-38 being salvaged for spare parts prior to destruction at Clark Field in the Philippines in July of 1945.



And the answer to the question on Page 4 is . . .

When the Lightning's windows were open in flight, the wind pressure created an aerodynamic anomaly that caused tailplane buffeting.



P-38 TECH TALK:

Pylons and Shackles

Steve Blake

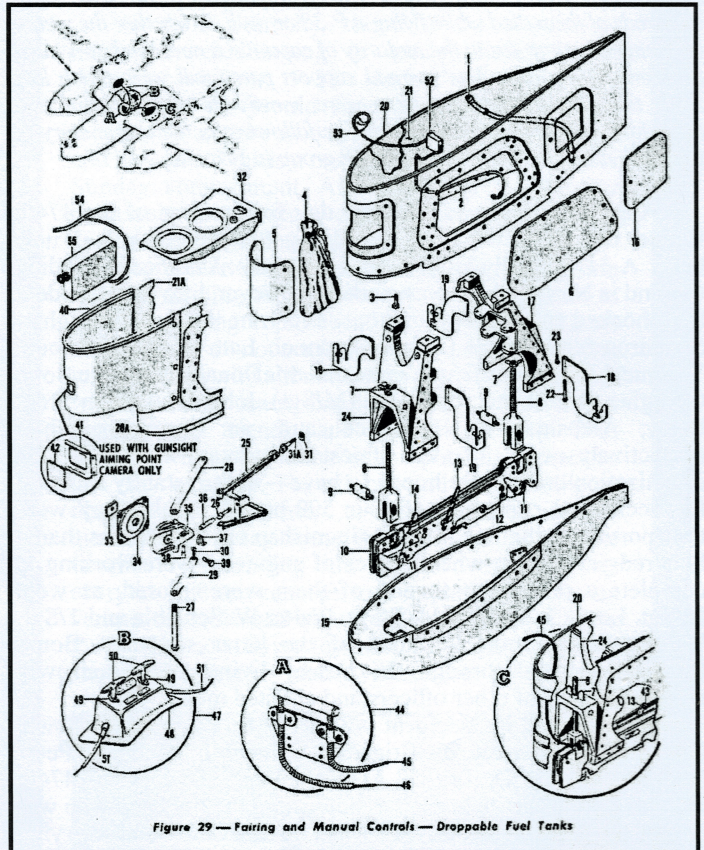
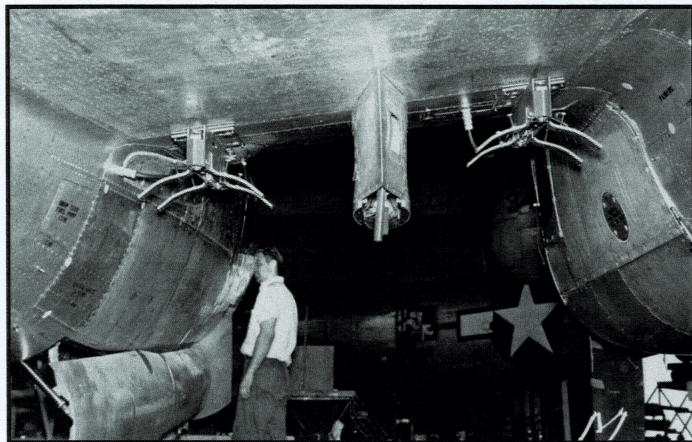
As the USAAC's 1937 proposal for the fighter that became the P-38 was for an interceptor, Lockheed's initial design did not include under-wing pylons and shackles for bombs and/or auxiliary fuel (drop) tanks. In late 1941, as the U.S. was becoming ever more likely to become a participant in the Second World War, it was decided that the Lightning would (a.) need more range (to serve as a long-range bomber escort fighter and photo reconnaissance aircraft) and (b.) be able to carry bombs. So, late that year, a P-38 was experimentally—and successfully—modified with Lockheed-designed pylons and shackles. (The company also designed some excellent auxiliary fuel tanks, holding 165 and 300 gallons.)

This modification was added to Lockheed's P-38 assembly line in the spring of the following year, beginning with the F-5 model, deliveries of which to the USAAF began in June of 1942. This consisted of the addition, under each now-strengthened wing center section, of a 2000-pound pylon, at the bottom of which fit the shackle. The earlier F and F-1 models also received them, *after* their delivery to the USAAF. Many P-38Es were also modified with them, including 25 of the 54th Fighter Squadron's in late May, after it was ordered to Alaska (the Aleutian Islands), where it would soon be flying long-distance missions to the Japanese-occupied islands of Attu and Kiska.

Over the course of the next three years the number of pylons and shackles, their locations under the wing and their design would vary. For example, starting with the new P-38L-1 model in June 1944, the pylon under the left wing would carry the plane's gun camera (moved from its former location in the nose), including a small window for its lens.

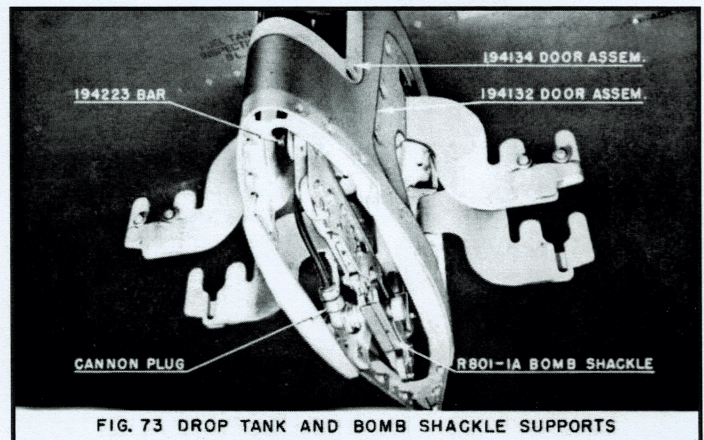
Without its under-wing pylons and shackles, the Lightning could not have become what was arguably World War II's most versatile military aircraft—and certainly one of its most successful.

On this late-model Droop Snoot P-38 there are two shackles with S-1 bomb racks attached directly to the wing, with the factory-installed pylon in the middle. Under the latter, protruding from *its* shackle, can be seen the fuel lines that attach to the auxiliary fuel tank.



These detailed technical drawings are of the various parts of a P-38's under-wing pylon. As indicated by the location there of the gun camera, this is the left wing pylon of a P-38L. The drawings (items 10 to 14 and illustration C) show how the shackle fit into the bottom of the pylon.

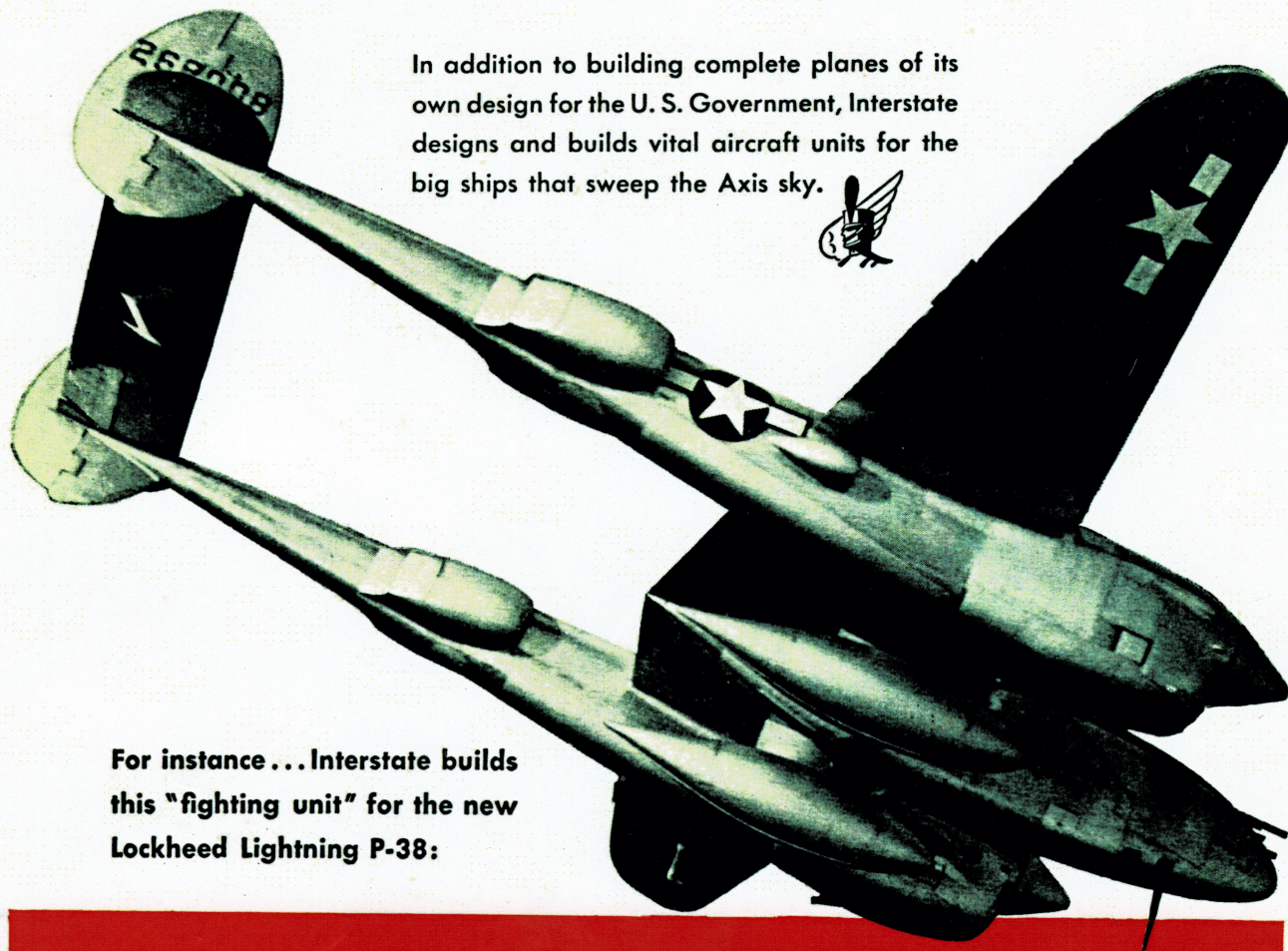
This technical photograph also shows how the shackle fit into the bottom of the pylon.



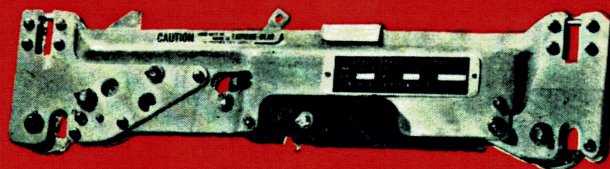
Interstate



IS MANY THINGS TO MANY PLANES

In addition to building complete planes of its own design for the U. S. Government, Interstate designs and builds vital aircraft units for the big ships that sweep the Axis sky.



For instance... Interstate builds this "fighting unit" for the new Lockheed Lightning P-38:



This Bomb Shackle is an original Interstate design. It is used on many American warplanes. It operates either electrically or mechanically. It weighs a scant few pounds, yet holds bomb loads varying from 100 to 4000 pounds. In addition,  it is used for auxiliary fuel tanks. Not only do these shackles support the tanks but they jettison them when empty, at the touch of an electric button. As a result, this  Lockheed Fighter Plane now reaches fighting fronts in hours instead of days!

