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AIRSHOW

CAF FRENCH WING - BULLETIN MENSUEL - MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
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EDITORIAL

The month of November was a quiet one for the French Wing. Cold weather and our member's busy lives largely account for this. Be it as it may, here is a new issue of our monthly newsletter!

Colonel Roger Robert has been particularly active. He has been visiting the US and fulfilling one of his dreams: attending the annual Commemorative Air Force airshow in Midland. He wrote a very interesting account of his visit.

Having collaborated with Dimitrios Vassilopoulos on his book about Greek pilots in Allied air forces during World War Two, I was recently contacted by Dan Manthos, the eldest son of one of these pilots. Dan has created a website dedicated to the memory of his father and wanted permission to use my profiles to illustrate it. The website includes a very interesting collection of photographs, many of them in colour, which I wanted to present in these columns. However, I thought it would be appropriate to begin by introducing his

father Atlee Manthos. The article and photos about "Pappy" Manthos are from this website. You will learn of Manthos' both typical and unique story. Unique because every man's life resembles no other. Typical because it is representative of the commitment and sacrifices

made by thousands of European immigrants who arrived in the early 20th century and fought for their adoptive country and the liberation of a continent they had left not-so-long ago.

- Bertrand Brown



MIDLAND: CAF AIRSHO 2014



"PAPPY MANTHOS": A GREEK IN THE USAAF

Photo: cclark395 (CC BY-NC2.0)



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CAF Airsho

The annual CAF airshow in Midland

Photo: eblan (CC BY-3.0)



Article: Roger Robert.

Where can one see the greatest gathering of World War II warbirds in flight? My answer to this question is, without hesitation, in Midland during the Commemorative Air Force annual airshow.

Attending this airshow was a long-time dream which recently became reality. This trip allowed me to get to know Texas better (696 000 km²). I seized the opportunity to visit several museums: aviation museums (4 more), Presidential Library (Lyndon Johnson in Austin, a beautiful town), George Bush in College Station), the superb Pacific War museum in Fredericksburg, The Texas Rangers and Dr Pepper, in Waco, etc ...!

But let's get back to Midland : the first airshow was organised in 1963. Today, the CAF regroups over 160 flying warbirds in Wing and Squadrons based in 24 American states as well as 4 foreign countries.

Saturday, I arrived on the parking lot at 7:00 AM. I was by no means the first on the spot as the main hangar and its surroundings were already buzzing with activity.

8:30 AM: the public is let in, everything is ready for breakfast. Now, and until 11:30 AM, is also the chance to go admire the fighters and bombers which will fly in the afternoon. Some of them are available for rides.

11:40 AM: the American

and Texan flags are presented.

11:45 AM: the new CAF Colonels are welcomed.

12:00 PM: National hymn. Although I am fairly accustomed to such ceremonies from my various visits to the States, I am still moved to see the public so silent and respectful of these traditions.

The airshow officialy starts at noon, and the stands are already alive with activity. The flight demonstrations will be practically non-stop and visitors will have to eat while staring at the sky.

Of the various presentations, the following caught my attention:

Aerobatics by:

- Adam Baker on the Extra 300 XL,



- The Falcon Flight, composed of 9 experimental Van's RV from Oregon.
- Franklin's Flying Circus on the Franklin Demon 1 « Dracula »,
- The exceptional MiG-17 flight demonstration made by Randy W. Ball, one of the most acclaimed jet aerobatic pilots.
- The P-51 Acro

One could add to this list the Flashfire jet truck, the world's fastest Chevy pick-up truck (375 mph), and many others.

Tora! Tora! Tora!

This is the famous reconstitution of the Japanese December 7, 1941 aerial attack on Pearl Harbour. It all started in 1972, when six Japanese warplane replicas used for the movie bearing the same name were given to the CAF. The first appearance was at the Galveston airshow on 25 June 1972. In 2000, the show's aircraft and pilots participated in the shooting of the movie "Pearl Harbour".

On average, the Tora group participates in 12 to 16 show with 8 to 10 aircraft per show. Each display involves over 60 pyrotechnics

effects, and mobilises 20 to 26 people.

This being said, imagine the scene. We have just seen several delightful flight demonstrations, and the public is still under the charm when all all of a sudden... sirens ring. We're being attacked!

Kates, Vals and Zeroes dive on us from the sky, wave after wave and bomb us. Explosions go off, mixed with remarkably realistic special effects. It seems endless. A B-17, of the Texas Raiders, is hit, smoke pouring from three of its four engines! Hope emerges when a P-40 starts chasing a Zero, but that will not be enough. Finally, the "Japanese" leave Midland covered in smoke.

Loudspeakers play President Roosevelt famous radio statement: "Yesterday, December 7, 1941, a date which will live in infamy..."

But the show must go on. The Tora group has landed. After a moment of silence, all is appeased in Midland.

However, bombers appear in the sky: 3 B-17, 2 B-25,



1 A-26 and a moment later, the B-29. They come in closer and the bombs go off again.

After this:

- low-altitude strafing attacks by P-51s, P-40s, ...
- the SB2C Helldiver's splendid flight demonstration.

Naturally, all of these scenes are accompanied by the appropriate special effects...

Flight demonstrations

By T-6, SNJ (in formation), Navy warbirds (TBM, Hellcat, Bearcat,...), training aircraft (L-17, PT-13, PT-19, PT-26, SNJ, T-28, ..),

I must mention the "rides" which have a great success with the public, who gets a chance to fly on legendary aircraft such as the B-17, B-25, PT-19 Cornell, P-51 Mustang, B-29 Fifi, on which I was thrilled to fly in, the C-45, which I also tested, etc

Credit should be given on the organisation and the volunteers.

Young people are in charge of security between the active runways and the very-disciplined public. They



Photo: Roger Robert



Photo: Roger Robert

are stationed every now and then, with regular water supplies and relief.

Boyscouts take care of cleaning up the premises.

In the museum, military cadets are in charge of accompanying visitors.

I am not forgetting all of the other people who play an essential role in the success of these two days.

The airshow is practically over. A wave of applause greets the caravan of vehicles bringing back the pyrotechnic teams.



Photo: Roger Robert

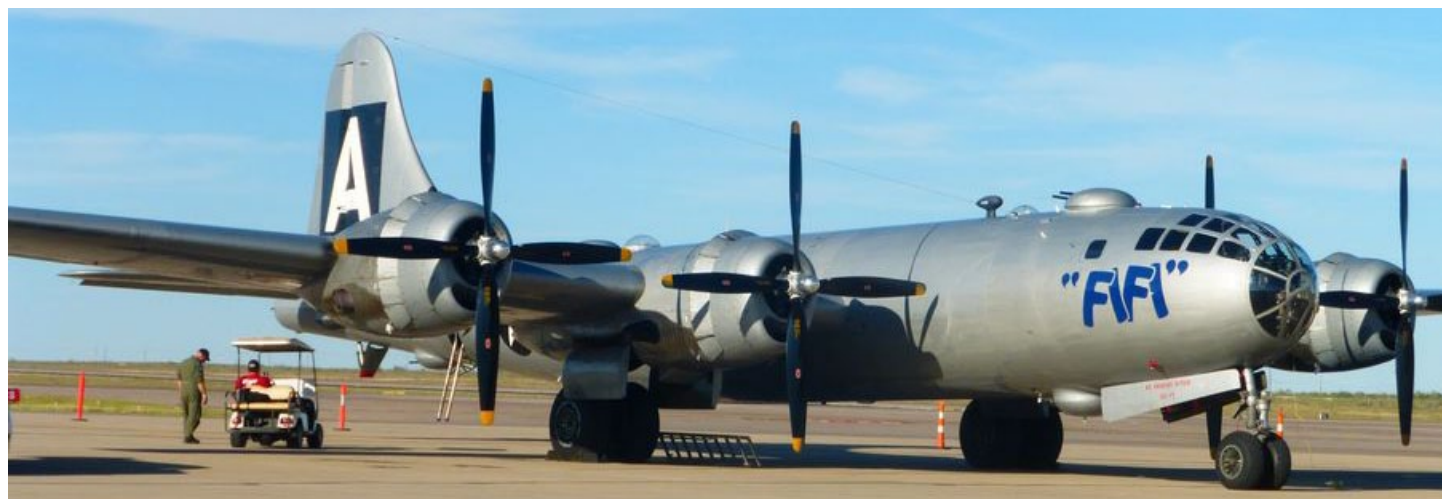


Photo: Roger Robert

At 5:00 PM, everything is over. The public leaves the premises in good order. In short, this was a splendid, well-organised show which makes one want to return.

While the airshow alone is worth the visit, I strongly urge you to visit the museum (on Saturday, as it is closed on Sunday).

The Airpower Heritage Museum was a great discovery for me. I've rarely seen a World War II exposition of this quality. It covers all of the important events of the war, spanning all the-

atres of operations, with well thought-out and illustrated panels, videos and artefacts.

- 1931 Japan invades China
- 1936-1939 Reign of terror Spanish Civil War
- WW II begins / invasion of Poland
- 1940 Fall of France, occupied France

- Battle of Britain (July 1940- May 1941)
- the Flying Tigers (1941-1942)
- Eastern front (June 1941)
- The Wasps
- The African campaign

- Navajo code talkers
- Tuskegee airmen
- Strategic bombing
- D-DAY (juin 1944)
- Birth of the atomic age
- The capitulation, etc ...

Other exhibitions



Photo: Roger Robert

A unique collection of 33 real "nose art" panels salvaged from scrapped combat aircraft.

The 507th Fighter Group which served in the Pacific, flying the P-47 Thunderbolts. It was the last group to enter the war between July

(June 1940 – February 1943)

- American isolationism
- Pearl Harbour (December 1941)
- A sleeping Giant awakens
- Doolittle's Tokyo raid (April 1942)
- The Coral Sea (May 1942) and Midway (June 1942)

1 and August 15, 1945.

The American Combat Airman Hall of Fame in which I discovered the first officially-recognized American ace, Major Arthur Chin, a « Chinese -American » who volunteered in 1937 to fight the Japanese.

The George Bush Sr. exhibition (58 combat mis-



Photo: Roger Robert

sions in the Pacific, flying the Avenger).

The work of de Peter Hurd, artiste and war correspondent for Life Magazine.

The Vietnam War Memorial: a static presentation for the fighters and helicopters that operated in Vietnam (F-105, Phantom, F-100, Bell Huey and Cobra, ...).

All in all, the airshow and the museum are worthy of the CAF's reputation, and I can only urge you to attend and visit.

I'll conclude with a homage to Lloyd Nolen who can be proud of his achievements.

Long live the Commemorative Air Force, and of course the French Wing! ■



Photo: Roger Robert



Photo: Roger Robert

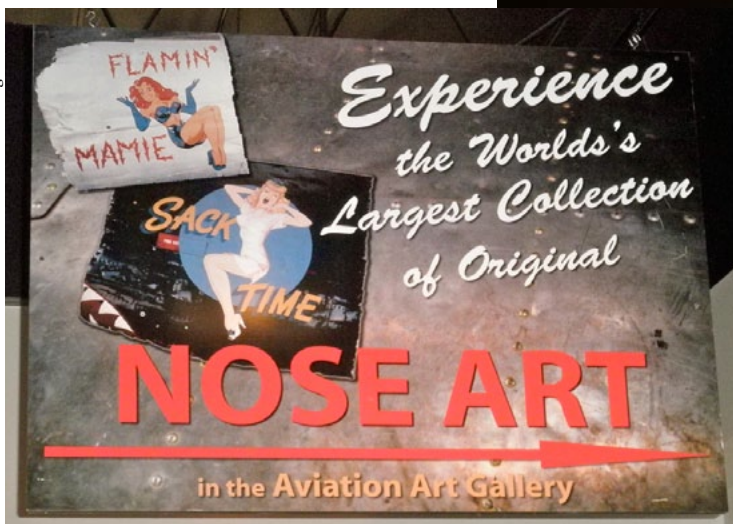
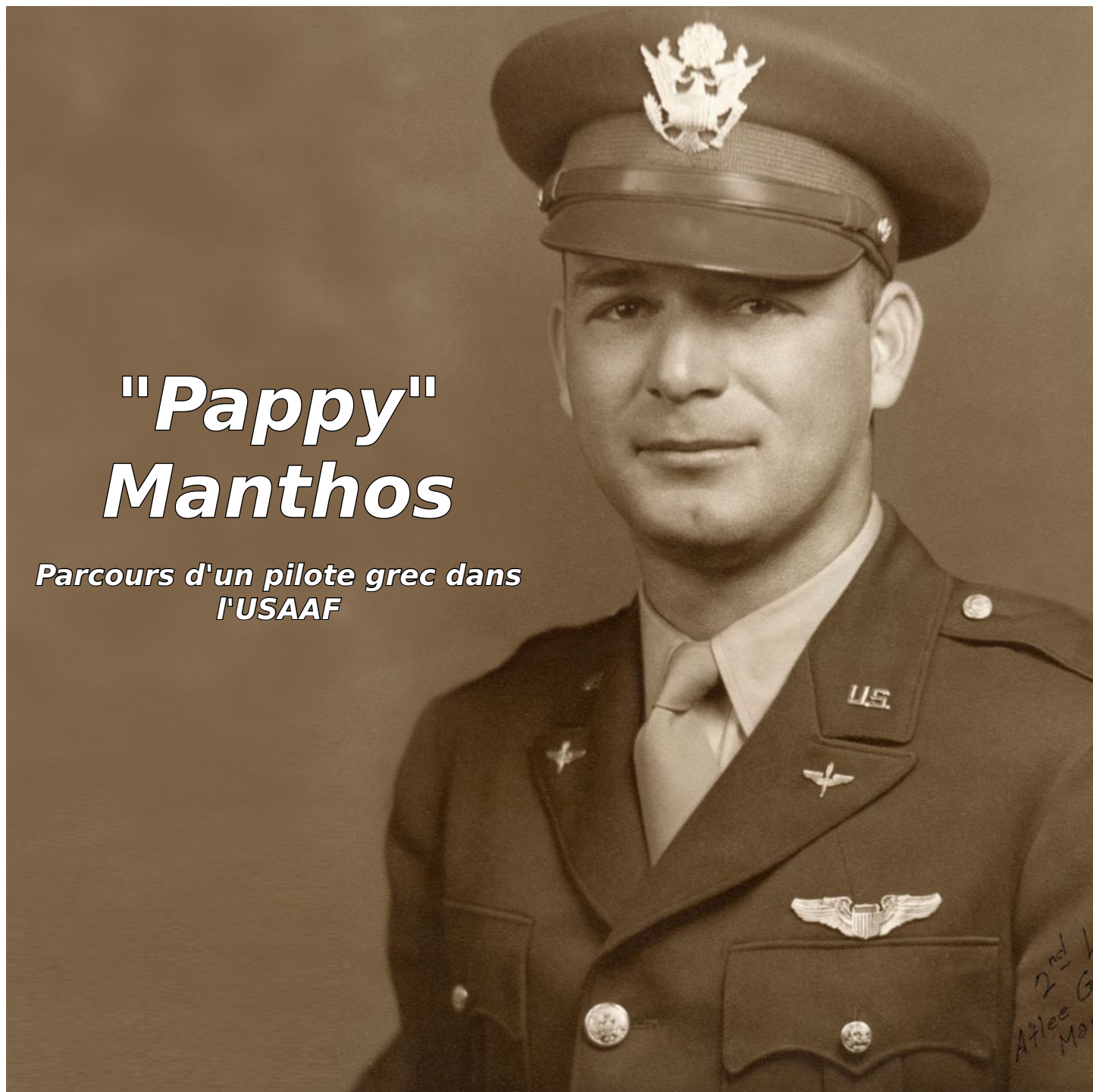


Photo: Roger Robert



"Pappy" Manthos

*Parcours d'un pilote grec dans
l'USAAF*



Article et photos: Dan Manthos, traduction: Bertrand Brown.

My father Atlee was a first generation American, a new-world amalgam of immigrants from different old-world cultures. His father came to these shores in 1905 from the beautiful mountain village of Kalavryta, nested in a valley in the north of the Peloponnesus in Greece. Mike Manthos chose to cast his fate to the clean open spaces of Central Texas and the embrace of the daughter of Swiss and German immigrants, Laura Klein, who was raised in the German farming community of Fredericksburg among other German speaking immigrants. Atlee was born on August 4,

1912, in San Antonio.

Sadly, Mike and Laura divorced only a few years after their son was born. Mike moved to Houston where he started another family. Atlee lived for several years with his Uncle Carl in Fredericksburg where he spoke German before he spoke English. When he was nine he went to live with his mother and her new husband John Halbardier in San Antonio. Atlee was mechanically inclined from an early age and by the time he was eighteen he owned a model T Ford "Flivver". He had a thirst for speed, and in the days before bumper stickers he painted his own messages on the rear fenders. One reads "Pass me, Hell ain't half full".

Once the Great Depression came to Texas things were difficult for everyone and work was scarce. Atlee graduated from San Antonio High School in 1930 and entered the University of Texas in Austin in the fall of 1931. He had no financial assistance from anyone and had to work long hours for depression era wages to pay for school and living expenses. He struggled and left the university at the end of the academic year in the spring of 1932.

In 1933 he joined the Civilian Conservation Corps, the "Tree Army", a federally funded depression-era job program that offered full time employment for young men building roads and planting



Before the war, Atlee Manthos worked as a geologist in Texas.

trees in national parks and forests and other public lands. He worked for thirty dollars a month at CCC Camp F-17-N in the Lincoln National Forest near Carriazo in the mountains of south-central New Mexico, and later at a camp in the Medicine Bow National Forest in south-eastern Wyoming.

In the fall of 1934 Atlee left with the money he had saved and entered St

Mary's University in San Antonio where he began to study Geology. He took light loads at St Mary's, picked up an Analytic Geometry class from San Antonio Junior College and got nothing but A's and B's. He also joined the Reserve Officer Training Corps.

After spring semester 1936 he transferred back to the University of Texas where he continued to study Geology, earning his way with drafting and surveying jobs. He graduated with honours in 1938.

After college he found a position as a petroleum geologist where he spent his working days looking for oil. There are geological formations in Texas that bear his name.

Once the US entered the Second World War Atlee heard the call to arms in general and the call to the Army Air Corps in particular. As a college graduate he was accepted as an officer and pilot and began training as a cadet at Hicks Field in Fort Worth in August of 1941. As the oldest member of his class was called "Pappy" after Al Capp's Li'l Abner cartoon character "Pappy" Yokum. He was Pappy to everyone who knew him the rest of his life.

He completed his training at Randolph Field and Kelly Field in San Antonio, and in March of 1942 was commis-

sioned as second lieutenant and assigned to Waco Army Air Field as flight instructor with his two best friends, Alva Murphy and Daniel "Stretch" McKinnon.

For the next two years he trained new pilots in both basic and advanced flight techniques as well as aerial gunnery. They were great years. He had an exciting and glamorous job, fast friends, a girl, and his relationships with his mother and father and their families were better than ever.

Then everything changed. On 16 May 1944 his father Mike Manthos died. Less than a month later he married Mary Alice Judd. Two weeks after his wedding day Pappy left his wife and his family to go to war.

In June of 1944 the three friends boarded a ship for England and the "Mighty" Eighth Air Force to train for duty flying bomber escort and ground support missions. Atlee was assigned to the 496th Fighter Training Group in Goxhill and it's likely Murphy and McKinnon joined him there where they trained in early models of the P-51 Mustang.

In August the pilots were transferred to their respective combat units. They

Having received his pilot's wings, "Pappy" was assigned as a flight instructor in Waco. He is seen here in a BT-13.



travelled by train from Goxhill to Cambridge along with Captain Fred Brown, then went their separate ways. One of the collection's photograph is most poignant in this respect: Murphy, McKinnon and Manthos, the three great friends, are seen together for the last time. They would never meet again as a group.

Daniel McKinnon was killed in action on 10 January 1945 over Vianden Luxembourg on the German border during the Battle of the Bulge. Alva Murphy, an ace with eight victories, was shot down by anti-aircraft fire while strafing an airfield near Rhuland Germany on 2 March 1945, just two months before the German High Command surrendered and the war in Europe came to an end.

While McKinnon went to the 405th Fighter Group, Murphy and Manthos went to the legendary 357th Fighter Group at Leiston, on the coast about 100 miles northeast of London. The 357th consisted of three squadrons of 24 aircraft each, and according to his notes Pappy served in all three. We have no record of where he was from August until October, so he may have gone to the 362nd Fighter Squadron along with Murphy. By October 1944 however, he was attached to the 363rd Fighter Squadron where he flew 24 combat missions between 9 Oct and 18 Dec in the North American Aircraft P-51D Mustang he named for his new wife.

At the end of December 1944 Pappy left the 363rd FS for Eighth Air Force Fight-

Last moments of peacetime before heading for war: "Pappy" in Houston in 1944.



Second Lieutenants Alva C Murphy, Atlee G. Manthos and Daniel A. McKinnon, August 1942.

er Command Headquarters at High Wycomb where he remained until the end of January 1945. It was about this time that Alva Murphy was transferred to the 364th FS as operations officer. Pappy's whereabouts are unknown until he returned to flying missions for the 364th on 19 March, only two weeks after Murphy was killed in action. I can't help but wonder if the death of his great friend is what motivated him to return to combat duty as Murphy's replacement.

In any case, once he came to the 364th Pappy was assigned a new P-51D which he named Mary Alice II - Mad Pappy. He flew thirteen missions in Mary Alice II between 19 March and 8 May. There

is a record of damage claimed against a Messerschmidt Me-262, the acclaimed German jet-powered fighter, on Pappy's first mission with the 364th on 19 March 1945.

On 8 May 1945 Germany surrendered unconditionally and the war in Europe came to an end.

Two million American servicemen headed for home by any means available and as soon as possible. Pappy accepted reassignment to the 78th Fighter Group at Duxford as Operations Officer and remained in England until the end of 1945.

His return to Texas in 1946 was not a particularly happy one. Within a year he was divorced, and the rewards of civilian life could not match the lure of the skies and the new generation of jet fighters. The price of his return to active duty was the loss of wartime rank, but he decided it was an arrangement he could live with and in July 1947 he left Mary Alice and petroleum geology to wear first lieutenant's bars in the new US Air Force, where he would spend the next 16 years of his life.

Lt Col Atlee G Manthos, USAF, retired April 1963 as Command Pilot with 4300 flight hours. In May 1980 Pappy died of cardiac arrest and was buried in Fort Collins Colorado. ■



A P-51C Mustang of the 555th Fighter Squadron in which Pappy Manthos flew and trained on the Mustang before being assigned to a combat unit. Artwork © Gaëtan Marie.



The first of Pappy's P-51D Mustang was this P-51D-5-NA (s/n 44-13573) of the 363rd FS, 357th FG, which Pappy nicknamed "Mary Alice". It had previously been flown by RNZAF F/L Jack Cleland with the name "Isabel III". Artwork © Gaëtan Marie.



Upon his return to the 357th FG in 1945, Pappy received this P-51D-15-NA which he named "Mary Alice II / Mad Pappy". The individual code letter is unknown and could have been other than "F". Artwork © Gaëtan Marie.

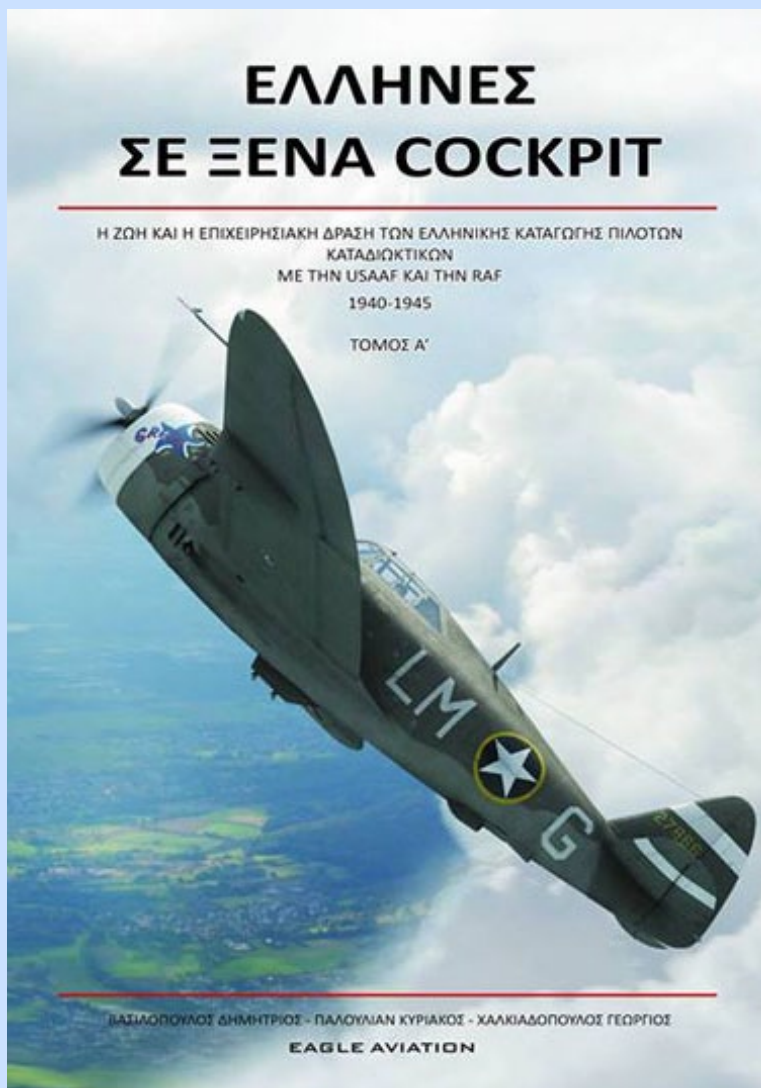
POSTSCRIPT

In 2011 my brother Jeff and I were contacted by a Greek engineer named Dimitrios Vassilopoulos, who was working on a labor of love. His interest in aviation and history had led him to write a book about Greek pilots who flew foreign fighter aircraft during WWII and was looking for information about Pappy. We were happy to oblige, and that led to something of an odyssey of research during which we both learned a lot more about the old bastard than we ever knew before, including some things he may not have known about himself. The short biography above is a result of that effort.

The book was recently published and contains the wartime stories of ten Greek pilots who flew foreign fighters all over the world. It's written in Greek but the volume is filled with 46 stunning colour plates by French aviation artist Gaëtan Marie. Four of these aircraft profiles depict Mustangs flown by Pappy during his time with the 357th Fighter Group.

Greeks in Foreign Cockpits

Dimitrios Vasilopoulos, K. Palouljian, G. Chalkiadopoulos



[Amazon link](#)



Battle colours: Spitfire Mk IX aces

Profiles: Bertrand Brown (aka Gaëtan Marie)

www.bravobravoaviation.com



Can we evoke Spitfire Mk IX aces without starting with Pierre Clostermann? In May 1944, he flew MH526 with No 602 (City of Glasgow) Squadron. It was a Mk IXc, which the French ace adorned with a Croix de Lorraine. As all 602 Squadron aircraft, it also carried Glasgow's lion. Clostermann does not appear to have achieved any aerial victories with this aircraft. MH526 ended its career by joining the Italian AF as MM4037 on 26 June 1947.



Poland's equivalent of Clostermann would probably be Stanisław Skalski (DSO, DFC). He was the first Allied ace of the war, having reached 'acedom' on 16 September 1939. He joined the RAF after rejoining France and became the first Polish ace of the war with 18 11/12th aerial victories, although some sources indicate 22 (and 11/12th). In 1942, he commanded a special fighter unit in North African, composed of Polish veterans: "Skalski's Circus". During that period, he flew this vividly-coloured Spitfire Mk IX. Returning to Poland in 1947, he was wrongfully accused of espionage and was sentenced to life in prison. He was eventually released in 1956 and returned to the Polish Air Force.



With 34 aerial victories, James "Johnnie" Johnson is the first British ace of the Western front. Most of his kills were achieved against fighters, and he is also credited with 7 shared victories, 10 damaged and one destroyed on the ground. He flew over 700 combat missions between 1940 and the end of the war. Johnnie Johnson flew this early-production Mk IX while he commanded No 144 (Canadian) Wing. After the war, he stayed with the RAF and flew in Korea. After he retired in 1966, he remained very active until his death in 2001.



Illustration by Howard Chandler Christy

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