

Return to the Cockpit

With the permission of Warbird collector and museum founder, Ron Fagen, our veterans were able to renew their acquaintance with the North American P-51 Mustang. Ron flew his polished P-51D, "Sweet Revenge", to Ohio from his home in Granite Falls, Minnesota. With his blessing and the assistance of his pilot son, Evan, each of our veteran pilots was assisted onto the wing before climbing into the cockpit. Truth be told, that assistance onto the wing was more often lifted, heaved, hoisted, hauled up, or used a ladder. For most, this was the first time in 60 years to sit in a Mustang. Smiles were ever-present, for both the pilots and their families on the ground.

It was interesting to see how quickly their comfort returned to be in the cockpit. The throttle, the stick, the rudder pedals were just where they left them years ago. If they had permission to start up the Merlin, there is now doubt the giant Hamilton-Standard propeller would have started to turn. Additionally, it would have only taken a little encouragement to push the throttle forward to take the Mustang into the air once again. Whether the above report is true, those of us watching beside the plane knew for a fact our fathers still had that skill. You could just see that gleam in their eyes.

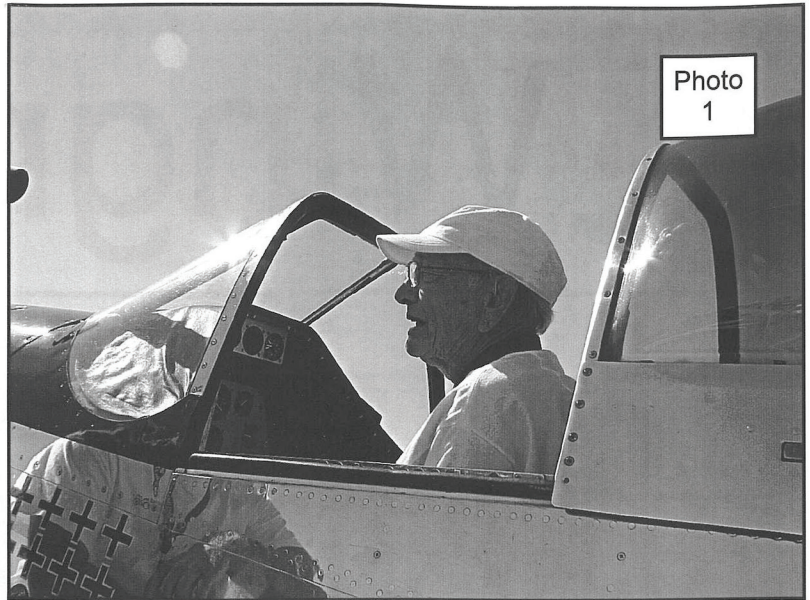


Photo
1



Photo
2

Cockpit Photos

- Photo 1: G.B. Lambert, 458th, Mineral VA
- Photo 2: Jack Keim, 462nd, Tulia TX
- Photo 3: Jack Westbrook, 458th, Knoxville TN
- Photo 4: Bill Peterson, 458th, Orlando FL
- Photo 5: Harvey Bishop 458th, Zelenople PA
- Photo 6: Bill Ebersole 462nd, Gainesville FL

Thanks to Robert Grant (seen below), son of J.J. Grant 462nd, for these cockpit photographs and all the pictures used in the newsletter. Robert is also our webmaster.

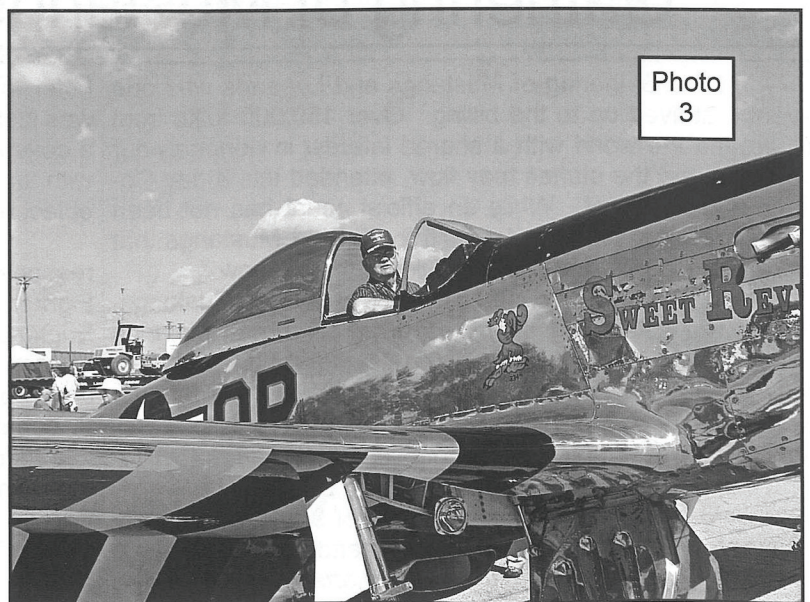


Photo
3

Photo
4



Thanks to the Fagen Family

Pictured kneeling on the wing to the left is Evan Fagen who, for two days, took the time to re-acquaint our veterans with the P-51 cockpit. He even sent us a thank you note which in part reads:

"I do have to say it was an absolute honor to get to meet those guys and listen to their stories. This generations is leaving us quickly and I truly do appreciate any chance I get to talk with them."

While most of us will never be able to afford to own a P-51, it is great that this family sees themselves as caretakers of these prized airplanes.

Chalet for 506th Fighter Group at the
Gathering of Mustangs & Legends



Photo
5



Photo
6



Members Gone West

We will remember you! Always!

2007

Francis Albrecht
Charles Barr
Bennett Commer
Edward Conner
John Fair
Allan Hunter
Wesley Murphey
Grady Pool
Evan Stuart
Lon (Joe) Todd
Robert Turgerson

Prior Years

Taylor Green ('80)
Domenick T. Manno ('92)
Richard Seaman ('05)