



Lt. Col. Rolland Wilfred Funk, USAF (Ret)

Portland, Oregon, Saturday, March 31st, 2007

Lt. Col. Rolland Wilfred (Rollie) Funk, USAF (Ret), a highly decorated WW2 pilot died at Providence Portland Medical Center, Portland, Oregon on Monday March 20, 2007. On Monday March 26, 2007, at 14:00 hours, "Rollie's" last parade attendance was held at Willamette National Cemetery. This name and these two dates cannot begin to chronicle the life or the spectrum of experiences so represented.

Born to John William and Madge Anna Funk, on October 16, 1919 in Yamhill, Oregon, he was raised, educated and then graduated from Yamhill High School in 1937. Going on to employment with Cunningham and Quigley, in Carlton, coincided with his volunteering to join the USAAF on May 9, 1942, in Portland, Oregon. After training he received his wings at Luke Field, Arizona on February 6, 1943 and on October 22nd of the same year, he married Dorothy May Johnson.

He went on to join Col. Anthony Grossetta's Ninth Air Force, 406th Raider Group, 513th Squadron, flying the superb P-47 Thunderbolt. Following activation of the group and combat training, "Rollie" accompanied the group overseas as a Flight Commander to take the fight into the European Theater. Together with his beloved mount, the "Paper Doll", a P-47D, there became one of two top ranking "Tank Busters" of the whole European Theater of Operations.

Promotion and decorations soon attended his exploits, amounting to the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) as a Captain on November 13, 1944. He was also awarded the Air Medal with 18 Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters and 6 Bronze Stars during his time in Europe thus marking the contribution of this remarkable airman. Whilst on leave at home in Oregon, awaiting his return to Europe from his last tour of duty that ended on March 7th, 1945, the war itself in Europe came to an end on May 7th, 1945 with the unconditional surrender of all German forces to the Allies.

"Rollie's" record had included a total of 109 missions, including 201 sorties against the enemy, spanned famous battles such as flying cover over the Normandy Beaches on D-Day, Operation 'Market Basket' and the 'Battle of the Bulge', spending a majority of his time flying cover for Patton as he (Patton) crossed Europe. At wars end Captain Funk continued to serve and fly with the USAAF (USAF) for many years as an instructor and test pilot, finally retiring from flying duties in 1959 and military service altogether on October 31, 1964. A much more mundane life followed! Retiring as Lt. Colonel Funk, he became a 'journeyman' electrician but still working on major projects until his final retirement.

He is survived by his sister Virginia Rose Coon (Funk) of Boise, ID; Son, William O. (Willie) Funk, CPP. Of Garland, TX; Daughter, Margaret A. LaPlante (Funk) of Brush Prairie, WA; Son, Donald G. Funk, of Apache Junction, AZ: and an impressive parentage of 7 Grandchildren and 8 Great Grandchildren.

A Memorial Web Site is in situ that more fully chronicles a distinguished military and personal career, together with photos and a video record has been sited at: FlightOfThePaperDoll.com