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# USAAF MTO Aces of WW2

## Redtails, Checkertails, and More

By [Stephen Sherman](#), July, 1999. Updated June 23, 2011.

In the Mediterranean theatre, the fighter pilots of the Fifteenth and Twelfth Air Force fought German and Italian planes, in aerial battles ranging from North Africa, through Italy, and over the oil fields of Ploesti, Romania.

They flew more varied aircraft than any other group of pilots, many units started out in P-40 Warhawks, transitioned to P-47s, and finished the war with P-51 Mustangs (some flew British Spitfires). William Leverette accomplished one of the war's outstanding fighter pilot accomplishments while flying a P-38

The 332nd Fighter Group, the famous [Tuskegee Airmen](#), fought and flew in the MTO.

<b>Top Aces of the MTO</b>	<b><a href="#">Kills</a></b>	<b><a href="#">Medals</a></b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Plane</b>
<a href="#">Lance Wade</a>	23.0	DSO	RAF 145 Sqn	Spitfire
<a href="#">John Voll</a>	21.0	DSC	31FG	P-51
<a href="#">Herschel "Herky" Green</a>	18.0	DSC	325FG	P-47
<a href="#">James S. "Sully" Varnell</a>	17.0	SS	52FG	P-51
Samuel J. Brown	15.0	-	31FG	P-51
Robert C. Curtis	14.0	-	52FG	P-51
James L. Brooks	13.0	-	31FG	P-51
Harry A. Parker	13.0	-	325FG	P-51
Michael Brezas	12.0	-	14FG	P-38
<a href="#">Levi Chase</a>	12.0	SS	33FG	P-40
William J. Sloan	12.0	-	82FG	P-38
Norman C. Skogstad	12.0	-	31FG	P-51
<a href="#">William Leverette</a>	11.0	DSC	14FG	P-38
<a href="#">Robert J. Goebel</a>	11.0	SS	31FG	P-51

Charles M. McCorkle	11.0	-	31FG	P-51
<b>Other Noted MTO Pilots</b>	<a href="#">Kills</a>	<a href="#">Medals</a>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Plane</b>
<a href="#">Jack Ilfrey</a>	7.5	SS	1FG	P-38
<a href="#">Roy Whittaker</a>	7.0	SS	57FG	P-40
<a href="#">Lee Archer</a>	4.5	DFC	332FG	P-51

## John Voll

He flew Mustangs with the 308th FS of the 31st Fighter Group, 15th Air Force. John Voll was the third highest scoring Mustang ace of the war, and the top U.S.A.A.F. ace of the MTO, with 21 victories. He graduated from pilot training on Jan. 7, 1944 and joined the 308th FS, 31st FG in May of 1944, his first mission a bomber escort over Italy. He opened his score on June 23 on a mission over Ploesti.

- 06-23-44 Ploesti, Romania- FW-190, first victory
- 06-26-44 Vienna, Austria- Escort mission- 30 Me 210's and 30 Bf-109's attacked the B-24's. Voll responded by downing an Me-210 and an Bf-109.
- 06-27-44 Budapest, Hungary- Escort mission- Bf-109 Victory
- 07-02-44 Budapest, Hungary- Escort mission- Bf-109 Victory
- 07-18-44 Memmingem Aerodrome- FW-190 Victory
- 08-17-44 Ploesti Romania- Escort mission- On the return home, Voll spotted 3 Bf-109's at 3000'. He had followed Lt. Shipp down after bailing out because of engine trouble. Voll surprised the 109's and downed two of them and probably the third one also.
- 08-25-44 Czechoslovakia- Escort mission- Fi-156 Storch, 1 damaged, 1 destroyed
- 08-29-44 Czechoslovakia- Escort mission- FW-190 Victory
- 08-31-44 Czechoslovakia- Escort mission- (2) Ju 52 transports ? Italy- Macchi 202
- 10-17-44 Blechhammer, Germany- Escort mission- Voll aborted because of engine trouble. On return home, he saw (6) Bf-109's and attacked. He dove through them at 15,000' firing and headed for the deck. While pursuing him, 2 of the Bf-109's collided with each other and went down. Once back at altitude, Voll spotted a Do-217 5,000' below. He slipped in behind and destroyed it.
- 11-06-44 Vienna, Austria- Bf-109 Victory
- 11-16-44 Northern Italy- Returning from a mission, Voll spotted a Ju 52 and began the pursuit. While gaining on the Ju52, seven FW-190's and five Bf-109's bounced him. He downed the Ju52 and began the fight with twelve enemy

fighters! When it was over, he had bagged (2) FW-190 and (1) Bf-109 while damaging several others, "it was just a matter of shooting everything that passed in front of me." This made him the top scoring ace of the 15th AF.

After the war, he returned to his career as a teacher, but served again in Korea and Vietnam.

*Sources:*

## Herschel "Herky" Green

He served with the 317th FS, 325th Fighter Group, 15th AF. Top ace of the "Checkertail Clan" with 18 air victories, (3 in P-40s, 10 in P-47s, 5 in P-51s), plus 10 destroyed on the ground. Total Combat Sorties: 100.

Born July 3, 1920 at Mayfield, Kentucky. Education: Vanderbilt University at Nashville, Tennessee, enrolled in Civilian Flight Training Program in 1940.

Appointed Flying Cadet, September 1941. Commissioned 2nd Lt., 1942 at Foster Field, Texas. Initially assigned to 57th FG, at Boston/Bradley Field where he trained in P-40s, learning to overcome torque of the powerful engine. Sept. 1942: transferred to 317th FS, 325th Fighter Group HQ, at Hargrove, Rhode Island. January 1943: moved with the 325th FG to Langley Field, Virginia to train for aircraft carrier takeoffs and landings with the P-40E Warhawk. Disembarked for North Africa from the *USS Ranger*, January 8, 1943. Arrived at Cazes Aerodrome at Casablanca on Jan. 19, 1943. All P-40Fs launched safely and without incident. In late January, the Group was operating out of Tafaroui (Algiers); Green helped deliver P-40s to the 33rd FG in Tunisia, returning in a C-47. From February through May 1943 the 325th was at the Tafaroui base, without much to do. In May, with the securing of Africa, the "Checkertails" moved to Montesqui, to support operations against Pantelleria (an island stronghold off Sicily).

Green started out with the number "13" assigned to his P-40F. In his first "scrap" with enemy fighters on May 19, 1943, Green found himself involved in a horrible melee with many, superior Bf-109s. He took many hits, and was convinced he was going to die. Somehow, he scored his first victory in a head-on pass versus a Bf-109 that put nearly as many holes in his own aircraft. Green's unlucky "#13" was ultimately declared unrepairable and hauled away as junk and he switched to lucky "#11." A few days after his return, he learned of his promotion to Captain, which had nearly been a posthumous honor.

He was escorting B-26s to Sicily on June 28th when he downed two Bf-109s, the first after such a steep dive that he blacked out and another pilot had to confirm that the e/a splashed into the Mediterranean. During July, Green was on TDY, training for staff responsibilities at Twelfth Air Force HQ.

In his biography, Green related some non-combat stories at this point. The ground crews were very creative, using flattened Spam cans to patch bullet holes in the P-40s,

and devising stills to extract the alcohol from the readily available local *vin ordinaire*. They dubbed the lethal output of these stills, "Pop Skull." Observing that the drop tanks always had some leftover fuel in them, the 325th rigged up some fuses for the tanks, and then endeavored to drop them over enemy positions. Then there was the pilot who secured an old-fashioned round cast-iron, stove-top and sat on when flying, to protect the 'family jewels.' A herd of water buffalo, reputedly owned by the Bey of Tunis, grazed in the area of the Group airfield. Such livestock was off-limits to the members of the 325th, unless they constituted a hazard. They were able to coax one animal close enough to the actual airstrip to meet this criterion, whereupon they shot it, roasted it, and enjoyed a fine repast.

On August 17, 1943, the Allies captured Sicily, leaving no targets for the 325th except for some Italian forces on Sardinia, against which the Group began bombing missions with their P-40s. Knowing that the Italians on Sardinia were nearly at the end of their resources, and imagining headlines like "FIGHTER GROUP CAPTURES ENEMY ARMY," the 325th dropped surrender demands to the Italian commander on Sardinia. (He apparently resisted these, and eventually surrendered to regular Allied ground armies.)

In early September, Capt. Green flew in a B-25 on a supply trip to Cairo, returning with souvenir fezzes, 60 gallons of whiskey, 300 pounds of peanuts, and one hitchhiker. In the middle of the month, the Checkertails converted to P-47s, and were re-organized into the newly constituted Fifteenth Air Force. In December, they moved to a new base at Foggia, Italy, a very busy airbase, with British and American bombers operating almost round the clock. Living in tents during the cold, wet, harsh winter of 1943-44 was miserable. On New Year's Day, the strong winds and rain almost knocked down Herky's tent, He just managed to right the main center pole with a jeep. January was marked by daily bombing escort missions.

## **Six Kills over Udine**

Late in the month, Col. Robert Basler, 325th C.O., came up with a new mission plan, capitalizing on the knowledge that the Germans usually scrambled to hit American bombers about 15 minutes before they reached their targets. On January 30th a typical bomber mission to Villaorba/Udine was organized, including the normal fighter escort. But the 325th, flying low over the Adriatic, would arrive about 15 minutes ahead of the bombers, in hopes of catching the Germans as they were taking off & assembling. (This would be Herky's 40th mission.) The pilots flew at wavetop level, kicking up spray with their props, an exacting, exhausting 300-mile flight.

They arrived over the target at 11:45 AM, having climbed to 20,000-foot altitude. They caught a string of Ju-52 transports lined up for landing. The pilots of the 325th went down the string and shot them down. When came Herky around for a second pass, they were all gone! A huge dogfight ensued with Bf-109s and other e/a. He got on the tail of an Italian Ma-202 and shot it down, and later got a Do-217 bomber, which blew up spectacularly, probably due to mines it was carrying. During this mission, Capt. Green was credited with 6 enemy aircraft: 4 Ju-52 transports, the Ma-202, and the Do-217. Green was flying Capt. Buzz Hearn's P-47 instead of his assigned Jug that was in for maintenance. He was unaware that Hearn's plane was loaded with 800 rounds per gun

versus the usual Group practice of 400 rounds. Capt. Green broke off any further engagement when he began to see tracer fire from his guns which was a Group signal for "down to 50 rounds per gun" or his tally for the mission may have been even higher. Green and his flight were credited with 15 aircraft destroyed. The 325th FG total was 38 destroyed and 6 damaged for the Jan. 30, 1944 mission, for which it received a Distinguished Unit Citation.

In February, the Group moved to Lesina, a low-lying, swampy area, and Green contracted malaria. He was treated and recuperated for a month in a hospital in Tunis; during this time he was promoted to Major. On March 7, he returned to flying combat missions, and scored three more aerial victories in the month. In April and May, they flew more bomber escort missions, encountering relatively little opposition; "things were getting a little dull".

In early May, they transitioned to P-51 Mustangs, a plane that Herky had briefly flown in training. But he wasn't aware of changes to the plane's handling characteristics due to the addition of an extra fuselage fuel tank. The first time he took up a P-51, he almost killed himself. The plane went into a terminal spin, and he had to bail out. The plane crashed not far from where he safely parachuted down, and actually made a "deep hole" in the ground. He could see blue flames coming up and hear the 50-caliber ammunition cooking off. A short time later, the 325th went on their last P-47 mission. The pilots had liked the Thunderbolt, especially its ruggedness and ability to take damage. One pilot was involved in heavy fighting and had taken a lot of hits. After landing he reported to his crew chief that the P-47's engine was "running a little rough". On opening up the cowling, it turned out that two of the rotary cylinders had been completely shot away! On May 27, 28, 29, the Checkertails ran their first P-51 operations, hitting marshalling yards in France, Italy, and Austria.

One June 2, they flew one of the famous "shuttle" missions to Russia, where they stayed a few days. Herky related some humorous and touching stories in his autobiography. The guards at the airfield rightly considered their assignment to be a choice plum, as the alternative was front-line combat against the Wehrmacht. One guard had strict orders (all orders in Russia were strict) to guard a well. An old, bedraggled woman came up to get some water from the well, and he told her to stay away. For whatever reason, she went up to the well anyway, and he shot her dead. Herky observed "The Russians seemed to be fighting a different war than we were." Shortly, the Americans returned to their bases in Western Europe.

On June 13, Herky got a new wingman, Art Fiedler, and on this first mission of Art's, Herky shot down another Ma-202. On June 23, the 325th flew an escort mission to Ploesti, and Green hit a Bf-109 and damaged an FW-190.

Herky scored three more times; the last being an FW-190 on August 23. Later, as Lt. Col., he was assigned to Staff at Fifteenth Air Force HQ. At the time Green left combat flying for HQ XV, he was the leading ace in the MTO.

Decorations: Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross with OLC, Air Medal with 25 OLC, Purple Heart, French *Croix de Guerre* with Palm. Remained

in service post-war logging 4,000+ flying hours until retirement as a Colonel on April 1, 1964. Employed by the Hughes Aircraft Corporation until retirement in 1982.

Sources:

- Herschel Green, *Herky! The Memoirs of a Checkertail Ace*, Schiffer Military Publications, 1996



*Herky! The Memoirs of a Checkertail Ace*, by Herschel Green

Hardback, Size: 8 1/2" x 11," Over 150 b/w photos, 192 pages

The dramatic life story of one of the legendary USAAF fighter pilots of World War II who fought across the skies over the Mediterranean and southern Europe in the great aerial campaigns against the Luftwaffe - Herschel H. "Herky" Green. By the time Colonel Green was grounded by orders of higher headquarters, he was the leading ace of the 15th Air Force with eighteen aerial victories.

After we had done that for a while, we got to know the country pretty well ourselves and began to cook up other things to do. For instance, we knew that the enemy had only about a dozen locomotives on all their little lines down there, so we got to blasting them--for sheer diversion, we went after their oil and munitions dumps. Chase, my "One-Man Wave of Terror," was the best man I've ever seen in spotting those things from the air. One time he strafed a lot of haystacks and they all exploded, proving that he was right--the enemy had hidden ammunition under them.

We used to hunt light tanks all over southern Tunisia, and when we found them we would strafe them with our fifty-calibers. They would play dead, and then at night the crews would run them into Arab courtyards or dry gullies and camouflage them. So we'd track them down and shoot more holes into them before they could be repaired. We didn't have armament to blast them, but our "fifties" kept them out of action. Often we would observe troop movements, report them to the French and then go back and strafe them, and the French would occupy one or more towns.

Finally, the people back at headquarters saw what a job we were doing and sent us a squadron of bombers to fool around with--we had plenty of fun thinking up bombing missions and then escorting the jokers."

Major Chase returned to the States in July 1943, where he spent a year before deploying to Burma with the 2nd Air Commando Group. He later became commander of the First Provisional Fighter Group and was credited with two Japanese Oscars.

He planned and led one of the longest (if not the longest) raids of WWII by fighter aircraft. Flying P-51 Mustangs from their base at Cox's Bazaar in India, the two

squadrons of the 2nd Air Commando struck at Don Muang Airfield north of Bangkok for the first time on March 15, 1945. The raid covered over 1,500 miles (2413 km) round trip. The mission called for precise navigation and fuel management, but accomplished the task of deep penetration to strike at what were supposed to be secure rear staging areas for the remnants of the Japanese Air Force in the China-Burma-India theatre. The details of the raid and the Counter-Air campaign of the 2nd Air Commandos appear in the Spring 1994 issue of Air Enthusiast Magazine by Edward Young. The fighter squadrons of the 2nd Air Commandos received a Distinguished Unit Citation for the raids on Don Muang Field and Major Chase was awarded the Silver Star for his role in planning and leading the mission.

Following World War II, Chase entered civilian life, but was recalled to active duty in April 1951, and served in Korea as commander of the 8th Fighter-Bomber Wing, flying F-80s and F-86s.

Sources:

- [Levi R. Chase Website](#) - created by Levi Chase's son, and dedicated to his father's memory. It's great site, with lots of details & original documents from General Chase's long Air Force career.

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## William Leverette

*Reproduced with permission of Air Force Magazine, copyright protected Valor, July 1984, Vol. 67, No. 7, by John L. Frisbee, Contributing Editor*

### Seven Come Eleven

In the March "Valor," Bill Shomo was credited with being the only American to score seven victories in one mission. A sharp-eyed reader has named another who matched that feat.

On Sept. 3, 1943, as the Allied invasion of Italy got underway, the Italians threw in the towel. Even so, there were to be many months of fighting before German troops were driven out of the peninsula in a bloody campaign that absorbed virtually all Allied military power in the Mediterranean.

While granting that Italy had first priority in the Med, Winston Churchill also had his eye on another prize--the Greek Dodecanese Islands lying off the southwest coast of Turkey in the Aegean Sea. They were garrisoned largely by Italian troops who, Churchill judged, would cooperate if the islands could be seized before the Germans took over. Capturing the islands, he thought, might bring neutral Turkey into the Alliance and open the Dardanelles and Bosphorus as a short supply route to beleaguered Russia. But Allied forces in the eastern Med had been stripped to

support the Italian campaign and to prepare for the Normandy invasion. About all that was left was a Royal Navy squadron of a dozen ships and a few RAF aircraft.

Churchill's plea for a minor diversion from Italy fell on nearly deaf American ears. Finally, General Eisenhower agreed to send some long-range P-38 fighters and a few cannon-carrying B-25s to help out. The 14th Fighter Group was moved from its base in Tunisia to Gambut 2, an RAF strip of sand near Tobruk, a few miles west of the Egyptian border. From that desert paradise they were to escort Royal Navy ships and to attack German convoys headed for the Greek islands.

The group's 37th Squadron was commanded by Maj. William L. Leverette, who had arrived in North Africa late in August. Leverette was not your average replacement. He had spent two years teaching fighter tactics in the States, had more than 1,000 hours in fighters, and was no stranger to the gunnery range.

On Oct. 9, Leverette led seven P-38s on a mission to protect Royal Navy warships near the island of Rhodes. As they reached the ships, a formation of some 30 Ju-87 Stuka dive bombers was sighted approaching from the west. Leverette dispatched one flight of three P-38s to fly top cover while his flight closed with the Stukas.

The Stuka was not a particularly nimble aircraft, but it wasn't to be approached casually, either, especially when encountered in wholesale lots. In addition to wing-mounted guns, it carried a rear gunner manning a flexible machine gun. And with so few hunters (Leverette's wingman was a new, nervous, slightly trigger-happy lad) attacking so many targets, conserving ammunition was the key: "Get in close and make every round count." What happened in the next few minutes is best described by Leverette himself in this debriefing account:

"We peeled off into the middle of them, and I got two almost before they knew we were there. The gunner in the first started to fire, but stopped as soon as I let go. We came back behind them and I got on the tail of another. His gunner stopped firing as soon as I opened up, and the pilot bailed out. My fourth was a 30-degree deflection shot from 200 yards. Then I gave a lone plane a burst of cannon and machine-gun fire from a 20-degree deflection. That finished him.

"I came in directly behind the sixth. His gunner opened up before I did, but I got him with my first shots. The plane nosed down a little, and I gave him a burst in the belly. I was closing fast and had started to go under him when he nosed almost straight down, his propeller shot off. I tried to dive under him, but didn't quite make it. My left prop cut two feet into his fuselage as he went down. My last hit was the best. I was closing on him from the right when he turned into me. I rolled into a steep bank to the left and got him while firing from an almost-inverted position."

While all this was going on, the leader of Leverette's second element downed five Stukas, and his wingman got three. After disposing of a Ju-88 that was escorting the dive bombers, the top-cover flight came down to drop another Stuka. A few got through to make their bomb runs; the rest either jettisoned, headed for home, or

ended up in the sea.

For his combat leadership and individual performance, Leverette was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, this nation's second highest award for valor. But his combat career didn't stop there. The group soon returned to the Italian campaign where again, Leverette downed two Me- 109s and two, Me-110s for a total of 11 victories, ending his war as one of the top 20 aces in the Mediterranean theater.

*Sources:*

- *Air Force Magazine, Valor*, July 1984, Vol. 67, No. 7, by John L. Frisbee

## Roy Whittaker

Roy Whittaker joined the Army Air Corps and was accepted as an Aviation Cadet. He took Primary Flight Training in the PT-17 and PT-18 at Cuero Field, Texas. He went on to Basic Flight Training at Randolph Field, Texas in the BT-9 and BT-14. Whittaker reported to Advanced Flight Training at Kelly Field, Texas and flew the AT-6. As the Commandant of Cadets of Class 41-I, Whittaker received his pilot's Wings and a commission of 2nd Lieutenant in the Army Air Corps on December 12, 1941. He then served as a Flight Instructor for a short period at Kelly Field before being assigned to the 65th Fighter Squadron of the recently formed 57th Fighter Group that was training for combat in the Curtiss P-40E Warhawk. The 65th FS was commanded by Capt. Phillip G. Cochran who was the prototype for the character "Flip Corkin" of "TERRY AND THE PIRATES" and the title character "STEVE CANYON" in Milton Caniff's comic strips. Caniff also designed the 65th Squadron's "Fighting Cock" emblem based on their very feisty Rhode Island Red rooster mascot, "Uncle Bud". 57th FG C.O. Col. Art Salisbury (Brigadier General, USAF Ret.) was also immortalized by Milt Caniff as the character "Art Solitary" in "TERRY AND THE PIRATES."

Lt. Whittaker and the rest of the air echelon of the 57th FG arrived to North Africa in the European-African-Middle Eastern Theatre of Operations aboard the aircraft carrier, USS RANGER in June 1942. Whittaker's P-40F Warhawk was the second plane lunched off the RANGER's deck. All of the 57th Group's 72 Warhawks launched from the carrier safely and without incident to land for refueling at Accra, Gold Coast, then on to Wadi Sedina airfield near Khartoum, Sudan where the pilots continued to train for combat. The group moved for further training at Wadi Halfa airfield near Cairo, Egypt in July 1942. The 57th FG then moved to their first base at Muqueibila, Palestine and soon commenced operations attached to 112 Squadron RAF of 239 Wing, Desert Air Force. Lt. Whittaker was among five pilots selected to train with the RAF at Alexandria, Egypt and then pass on what he learned to U. S. pilots.

As Montgomery's British 8th Army launched the El Alamein offensive in late October 1942, the 57th FG with its main mission that of Close Support for ground troops,

continued to meet the enemy Axis air forces sporadically but now in greater numbers. Lt. Whittaker destroyed an Italian Macchi-Castoldi MC.202 for his first aerial victory on October 26, 1942.

Recently promoted Capt. Whittaker and the 57th FG would have their finest day, a slaughter that came to be known as the "Palm Sunday Massacre" for the day of the event, April 18, 1943. Over Cape Bon, Tunisia, an Axis force of \*60 Junkers Ju 52 transports escorted by 21 Messerschmitt Bf 109 and MC. 202 fighters were headed for the island of Sicily when they were spotted by patrolling P-40Fs of the 57th FGs three component Squadrons and the 314th FS of the 324th FG with a high cover of RAF Supermarine Spitfire Vs from No. 92 Squadron. The American P-40s dove out of the sun and when the smoke had cleared, 59 Ju 52s and 16 fighters had been shot down for the loss of 6 P-40s - arguably the finest single engagement for the P-40 Warhawks ever. In the massacre, Capt. Whittaker destroyed three Ju 52s and one Bf 109G, plus was credited further with one "Damaged" Ju 52 and one "Damaged" Bf 109G. On this day, Capt. Whittaker closed out his overall aerial "scoring" tally for a total of 7 e/a Destroyed, 2 e/a Probables and 4 e/a Damaged.

Capt. Whittaker rotated home to the USA ZI in June 1943 and following a short furlough, reported back to Randolph Field, Texas to attend Flight Instructors School. He attended Gunnery School and subsequently became a Flight Instructor at the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. Capt. Whittaker attended and graduated from the Army Command & Staff School at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas in the Summer of 1945. He again served as a stateside Fighter Pilot with command of the the newly formed 499th FS before he saw the end of WWII with the rank of Major.

Post-WWII, Maj. Whittaker remained in service with the USAAF and the new US Air Force. He eventually served in the Korean War (officially a "Conflict"). Lieutenant Colonel Whittaker graduated from the Air Command & Staff School in June 1951 and served in many various assignments before retirement with the rank of Colonel to Bradenton, Florida in 1973. Whittaker was a member of the American Fighter Aces Association, the Manatee County (FL) Retired Officer's Association and the Senior Golf Association. Col. Whittaker passed away in a Bradenton hospital on Saturday, June 24, 1989. A memorial service by McDill Air Force Base was held in his honor at the Mansion Memorial Park in Ellenton, Florida. Later, Roy E. Whittaker was recognized further with a certificate "...awarded by a grateful nation..." signed by President George Bush.

*\* Estimates of as many as 100 Ju 52s and 50+ fighters have been used in some sources to describe the enemy aerial strength during the "Palm Sunday Massacre".*

In Whittaker's own words:

"I attacked the JU-52s from astern at high speed and fired at two planes in the leading formation. The bursts were short and the only effect I saw was pieces flying off the cabin of the second ship. I pulled away and circled to the right and made my

second attack. I fired two bursts into two more 52s - again in the leading formation. They both burst into flames. The second flew a little distance and then crashed into the water. I lost sight of the first and didn't see it hit. I then made a third pass and sent a good burst into the left of the formation, at another Junkers. As I pulled away, it crashed into the water. By that time the Me-109s were among us. As I pulled up to the left, I saw a 109 dive through an element of four Warhawks and I tagged on his underside and gave him a long burst in the belly. He crashed into the sea from a thousand feet.

I then joined up with some Warhawks which were lufberrying with six Me-109s. I met one of these fighters with a quartering attack and hit him with a short burst. Pieces flew from the plane and he started smoking, but climbed out of the fight.

It was a pilot's dream. I'd never seen such a complete massacre of the enemy in my life. I was afraid someone would wake me up." - Capt. Roy E. Whittaker.

Read more about Major Whittaker at [warbirdsresourcegroup](http://warbirdsresourcegroup.com).



**Roy Whittaker**

