

MISSION STATEMENT

The WWII Flight Training Museum is a non-profit organization that is entirely funded by donation, grants and contributions. It is dedicated to sharing the story of the courage and spirit of the American men and women who became pilots during the Second World War. Our primary mission is to preserve, protect, develop and advance the understanding of our nation's aviation training heritage through collections, research, exhibits and interpretation of the 63rd Flight Training Detachment. Our secondary mission is to try to maintain the heritage and as much of the historical integrity of the Raymond-Richardson Aviation School as possible.

The WWII Flight Training Museum
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Douglas, GA 31535

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THE 63RD PRESERVATION SOCIETY WORLD WAR II MUSEUM

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Please visit our website and click on "About Us" for more information about becoming a member of the Douglas 63rd Preservation Society!

www.wwiiflighttraining.org

the Cadet Flyer

SPRING • 2024



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE 63RD PRESERVATION SOCIETY AND THE WWII FLIGHT TRAINING MUSEUM • DOUGLAS, GEORGIA

"Little Smitty" Norman L. Smith, Class 1944-A



"Little Smitty" was the name given to Norman L. Smith while in Douglas. It was said that he always needed four to five yellow cushions to sit on to fly the PT-17 Stearman. He was 5 feet 6 inches tall. He was a P-51 Mustang fighter pilot in the 376th Fighter Squadron 361st Fighter Group in England.



The 361st Fighter Group was the last P-51 Mustang Group to join the 8th Air Force. Between 21 January 1944 and 20 April 1945, the Group flew 441 missions, the majority in an escort role in support of bombers flying over occupied Europe. The Group also carried out dive-bombing missions of strategic targets in support of the Normandy invasion and battles being fought by ground forces moving eastwards. The Group also sent a detachment to France to support the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 to January 1945.

Smith was forced to crash land his aircraft at Montdidier airdrome in France. The base had just been abandoned by the Luftwaffe. To his horror he realized he had landed among live bombs left scattered around the field. He got a ride to Amien and took a C-47 to Brussels. There he ended up in a night club, being toasted by a Belgium official and his family amid celebrations of their recent liberation. Smith survived the war and settled in California.



800-H. CLASS 44A
7-9-43 Douglas GA

Wings & Things - Festival & Fly-In

Just a reminder that on 20 April, CAF Airbase Georgia will have their historic PT-19A at our "Wings & Things" event at the Douglas Municipal Airport and our Museum. Rides can be pre-purchased on their website: airbasegeorgia.org/purchase-ride or at the event.



VISIT DOUGLAS COFFEE COUNTY

WINGS & THINGS

FESTIVAL & FLY-IN

SATURDAY
APRIL 20
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

DOUGLAS MUNICIPAL GENE CHAMBERS AIRPORT (KDOH)

WWII AIRPLANE FLY-IN EVENT | CAR SHOW | HISTORIC AIRPLANES & VEHICLES
WWII REENACTORS | HOT WING CONTEST | WWII MUSEUM TOURS
ARTS & CRAFTS VENDORS | FOOD TRUCKS | KIDS ACTIVITIES | ENTERTAINMENT

Masters of the Air - A Story of Life During War



Before They Were Masters of the Air They Learned to Fly at the 63rd Flight Training Detachment

The 63rd had 15 cadets who went on to serve with the 100th Bombardment Group in England. Two Douglas cadets who trained at the 63rd Detachment, Major Robert “Rosie” Rosenthal and Captain John D. Brady, are portrayed in “Masters of the Air,” the miniseries that was streamed on Apple+ TV. This series offers viewers a glimpse into the experiences of these pilots during WWII, highlighting the bonds of friendship forged amidst their dangerous missions.

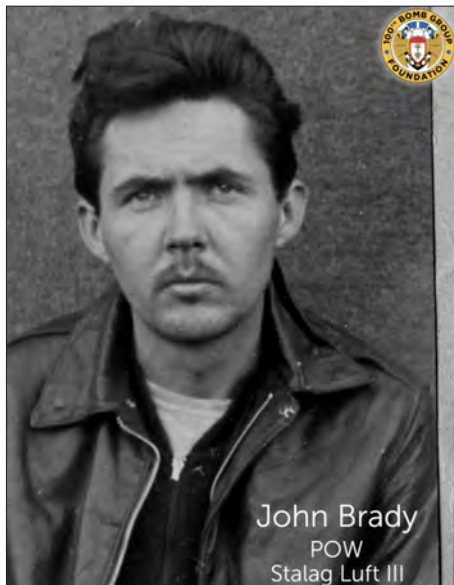
“Masters of the Air” is a story of life in wartime England and in the German prison camps, where tens of thousands of airmen spent part of the war. It ends with a vivid description of the grisly hunger marches captured airmen were forced to make near the end of the war through the country their bombs destroyed.



John D. Brady, Class 1942-G

John D. Brady, Class 1942-G, completed Basic Flying Training at Shaw Field, South Carolina and Advanced Flying Training at Spence Field, Moultrie, Georgia. He was a B-17 pilot assigned to the 418th Bomb Squadron 100th Bomb Group and one of the original 100th Bomb Group crews.

On October 10, 1943, on the raid to Munster, Germany, his B-17F, M’lle Zig Zig, was hit by flak and destroyed. An account of Brady’s B-17 crash can be found on pp. 15-16 of *Masters of the Air*, by Donald L. Miller, Simon & Schuster, 2006. Target: Munster, Germany. Lt. Rosie Rosenthal, another Douglas cadet, in another B-17 reported: “Saw #830 go down about halfway from Haltern to Munster. Had a flak hit under ship just in front of ball turret. Radio room was riddled. Looked as though ball turret gunner was being removed when ship peeled off to the left. Ship was under control when last seen. Believe the crew could have bailed out.”



The surviving crew bailed out in the vicinity of Haltern, some thirty miles southwest of Munster, captured by the Germans, and were Prisoners of War. Brady saw “all other crew members at one time or another since the various camps we were in were liberated.”

In the “Masters of the Air” series on Apple+ TV, Captain John D. Brady is portrayed by Ben Radcliffe, a 25-year-old British actor who made his film debut as Young Bruce in 2014’s *Cuban Fury*.

Robert “Rosie” Rosenthal, Class 1942-H

When Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Robert Rosenthal enlisted in the United States Army and requested to be trained for combat. He learned his piloting skills at the 63rd USAAF Flight Training Detachment and in August of 1943, joined the 418th Squadron of the 100th Bombardment Group as a pilot and aircraft commander of a B-17 Flying Fortress crew.

In March of 1944, his crew, nicknamed “Rosie’s Riveters”, completed their 25-mission combat tour and returned to the United States, but Rosenthal extended his tour, eventually flying a total of 53 missions. He later became commanding officer of the 350th Squadron.

Out of 13 B-17s on a mission over Munster, Rosenthal’s was the only plane to return, missing two engines, the intercom and the oxygen system, and with a large ragged hole in the right wing.



Robert “Rosie” Rosenthal was one of the most highly-decorated pilots of the Eighth Air Force of the United States Army Air Forces in WWII, receiving 16 awards. One of our shining stars! Nate Mann portrays “Rosie” in all nine episodes of “Masters of the Air.”



The Georgia WWII Heritage Trail is on both Instagram and Facebook.

Be sure to like and follow the Trail!!



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www.wwiiflighttraining.org