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LIGHTNING STRIKES!



OUR 100th ISSUE!



The Lady Buys a Lightning Final Takeoff



This is a great photo of Nadine Ramsey and her new, personal F-5. Below is the text of an article about her purchase of it that appeared in *The Los Angeles Times* on February 15, 1946 (see the review of the new book about Nadine on Page 15).

"While most women are still waiting for their postwar dreams of nylons, clothing and household articles to materialize, Nadine Ramsey of 5300 Hanbury St., Long Beach, had hers all wrapped up yesterday. Only it wasn't a feminine item. For Miss Ramsey bought herself a P-38 from the War Assets Corp. in Kingman, Ariz., yesterday morning and flew it home to the Long Beach Municipal Airport in the afternoon."

"It's what I've been dreaming about," said the attractive young woman who is a civilian preflight instructor attached to the 6th Ferrying Group at Long Beach. "I used to fly P-38's when I was a member of the WASPs two years ago, and I've wanted one of my own every since. It's an exciting plane to handle."

"Miss Ramsey, who has held a pilot's license for nearly 10 years, demonstrated and sold light planes before the war. She joined the WASPs in 1942 and ferried planes for the A.T.C. She is the only woman to have purchased a P-38."

"The officers at the Kingman field thought I was crazy when I picked out the plane," she said. "It cost me \$1250 as surplus property and the original price was somewhere around \$165,000. All the regular equipment was left in the plane, including a VHF radio set."

"After registering the plane with the C.A.A. [Editor: Civil Aeronautics Authority], Miss Ramsey plans to use it 'just for pleasure flying,' though she may use it for commercial work at a later date."



The caption for these official USAAF photographs is deceptively simple: "Lockheed P-38 of the 1st Fighter Group which was wrecked on a runway by collision with another Lockheed P-38 at Biskra [Algeria], North Africa. 15 January 1943."

Typically, the full story of this incident was less simple and much more tragic, as a witness to it, 27th Fighter Squadron pilot 1st Lt. Elmer Hartman, described in his diary:

"This afternoon a [flight school] classmate, [1st Lt. Richard W.] McWherter in the 94th [Fighter Squadron] was taking off with a flight of new boys on a practice mission and hit another ship on the runway taxiing. Threw him clear of the ship but killed him. Dust was so thick he couldn't see the other airplane."

Dick McWherter, who was from Dallas, Texas, and had graduated with Class 41-I at Luke Field, Arizona, was one of his squadron's best pilots. He had been awarded an Air Medal for his participation in the mass flight of the 1st FG's P-38s over the North Atlantic from Maine to England the previous July, as part of Operation *Bolero*. He had also shot down two Me 109s in an air battle over Gabes, Tunisia, on December 2, 1942, for which he was awarded a posthumous Distinguished Flying Cross.

The plane Lt. McWherter was flying that day was probably his assigned P-38F-1, serial number 41-7550, which he had received back in California, flew to England and continued to fly in North Africa after the group moved there in November, but it cannot be confirmed due to the paucity of official records from that unit, time and place. As has been noted in *Lightning Strikes* before, many more P-38 pilots were killed in flying accidents than died as the direct result of enemy actions.

MOVED?

**Please notify Membership
Chairman Steve Blake of any
address changes
(see page 3)**