

The History of One-Hundred Thirteen P-38 Lightning Aircraft  
Constructed by Consolidated-Vultee Aviation Corporation  
of Nashville Tennessee, 1945

George Bitzer

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Science in Aviation Administration

Middle Tennessee State University

December 2015

Thesis Committee:

Dr. Wendy Beckman, Chair

Dr. Ron Ferrara

This thesis is dedicated to the many men and women that spent hours in factories, day and night throughout the United States during the years 1939 – 1945, building airplanes and the many other military equipment needed for the support of our troops. Thousands of human beings died to preserve our freedom from aggression. Here it is seventy years later and we are still at war. Let the pride of the United States Military Forces continue to be strong for our grandchildren and keep us free of tyranny and social injustice. If we could only practice what Jesus, the Christ said:

“Love one another as I have loved you.”

John 13:34

“Love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you.”

Matthew 5:44

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research project was to trace and locate 113 P- 38 Lightning Aircraft that were constructed by Consolidated-Vultee Aviation Corporation of Nashville-Tennessee. A determination as to where they were located at the end of World War II, along with their subsequent location, was attempted. This project utilized historical research with a qualitative approach where data was accumulated, evaluated and formulated based on events that happened 70 years ago. A triangulation practice is the process of collecting data, not from just one source, but from several sources. This process helps strengthen the individual data, compensated by others to create a complete picture of the phenomenon being researched. The research does not focus on pilots that flew the P-38's. However, a few pilot names may be mentioned that were involved in an accident the aircraft may have suffered. The Army Air Force requested 2000 P-38's Model " L " built by Consolidated-Vultee for the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation in Burbank, California. The War Department did not know at the time how long the present conflict of war might last.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A number of e-mails and other literature have been provided by individuals who have presented material that was relevant to the preparation of this thesis. I am pleased to acknowledge the following persons for their information: Steve Blake, Harold Brewer, John Bolin, Duane Cates, Rob Chilcoat, Archangelo Difante, Robert E. Dorr, Richard Guinan, Dan Hagedorn, Chris Hammerbeck, Loretta Hill, Tammy Horton, Colby Karr, Amber Korb, Chris McCarty, J.A. Bill Saaveclia, Brett Stolle, Sarah Swan, Wayne Waldrond, Dale Wilson, and Alan. I want to thank my son Thomas, President of Merit Builders, and my grandson Thomas for showing me how to use Microsoft Word. To my devoted wife Georgiana, for the many hours that she sat up at night keeping me company while writing. Many times, I was ready to toss the paper away. She would say: "You have spent so many hours researching that you should try and finish. It is amazing how many people you have contacted around the country. I am here to support you in whatever you decide to do and will always be here for you."

I want to thank Dr. Ron Ferrara for serving on my thesis committee. His enthusiasm for and knowledge of aviation history was influential in developing my interest in aviation history. His advice and guidance has been invaluable in writing this paper. For Dr. Wendy Beckman, I want to thank her for the guidance and counseling, when she inherited me due to staff changes a few years ago. She has been a very patient professor and encouraged me throughout the completion of my class requirements. Now, we are at the point of completing a thesis and possibly taking the comprehensive exams. It is due to her positive attitude toward my abilities that I have lasted this long.

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## CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

In the early part of 1945, Consolidated-Vultee (C-V) of Nashville, Tennessee was asked to build two thousand P-38 Lightning aircraft. Once the aircraft were constructed, accepted, and available, they were delivered to the Air Transport Command (ATC) which then ferried these aircraft to various Army Air Force (AAF) base locations where needed throughout the United States. The company had constructed one hundred and thirteen (113) aircraft when VJ day occurred in Japan, so the contract was cancelled.

The curiosity regarding and later the search for the 113 P-38L aircraft actually began around 1975. In a conversation with fellow church members, who were and had been employed by the southern division of Avco Manufacturing Corporation, it was found that the company, at that time known as Consolidated-Vultee, was very active as a military aircraft manufacturer during World War II. It seemed very exciting that there was a local aviation factory in Nashville that had produced aircraft such as the A-35B Vengeance attack dive bomber and the twin boom P-38 pursuit aircraft.

The more recent encouragement for researching “where and what” happened to the P-38 aircraft from C-V after the war came in an e-mail from Harold Brewer. First, Mr. Brewer, who is a historian working for the Triumph Group in Nashville, was very interested in the history of the aircraft built by C-V and felt it would be pertinent to find out what happened to the 113 P-38’s after the war. Second, in communicating with Mr. Brewer, an introduction was made to Steve Blake, historian and editor for the P-38 Association journal “Lightning Strikes.” Mr. Blake provided information about another individual who had been inquiring about C-V P-38’s, and was excited to hear that someone else was researching the same phenomenon. Shortly after being introduced to

Mr. Blake, materials were received revealing that some of the aircraft in question were possibly located in the Panama Canal Zone (PCZ). The purpose of this study was to find out and document what happened to as many of these aircraft as possible.

## **Literature Review**

### **Consolidated-Vultee**

Having mentioned Consolidated-Vultee (C-V), a brief history of the company is historically significant. Before Triumph Aerostructures-Vought Division of Nashville became Consolidated-Vultee, it was known as Stinson Aircraft Company, a division of the Aviation Corporation of California. In 1939, Thomas Cummings, elected Major of Nashville in 1938, persuaded the Aviation Corporation to build a factory abutting Barry Field in Nashville, which is now the Nashville International Airport (Binnicker, 2013).

In 1940, the company merged with Vultee becoming the third largest war military manufacturer of the time. Vultee later merged with Consolidated in 1943. It was during this period the 113 P-38L-5-VNs were fabricated. In 1959, the company became the Avco Corporation and in 1966 was renamed Avco Aerostructures. Once again, in 1985, the aviation company was acquired this time, by Textron Aerostructures. A name change occurred in 1987 with the company becoming Textron Aerostructures. The company changed names and ownership four more times, beginning with the Carlyle Group acquiring the facility in 1996 and renaming it the Aerostructures Corporation. Two years later, Contour Aerospace and The Aerostructures Corporation merged, becoming one company. In July of 2003, The Aerostructures Corporation and Vought Aircraft Industries merged and the location again changed its name to Triumph Aerostructures-

Vought Aircraft Division. As of June 24, 2015, Mr. Brewer confirmed, that the company is still Triumph Aerostructures – Vought Aircraft Division, Nashville operations.

With the minimal history of the various name changes, Consolidated-Vultee was the construction company for the P-38's. Harold Brewer, the historian with the Triumph Group, along with other employees of the Avco Corporation shared interesting hearsay stories regarding the corporate history of C-V.

In the early nineteen-forties, there were many companies, throughout the United States, that were involved in the production of military equipment. In Nashville-Tennessee, C-V was building the A-35B attack-bomber and other aircraft for the war. In Burbank, California, Lockheed was also busy building aircraft for the war effort, but in January of 1943, production was limited to 210 P-38's in one month at a single factory. So, Lockheed gave their contract to C-V to build 2000 more P-38 Lightning's. In order for C-V to construct an assembly line for P-38's, they had to outstrip a previous production line of bombers. It took some time to fully activate an assembly line for P-38's (Bodie, 1991).

Fabrication of the P-38J's and L's lasted for about 18 months before production began to be stepped up. It was October 1943 when the Army Air Force (AAF) wanted to step up production of the P-38J's. The Lockheed plant in Burbank had operated just one assembly line for P-38L's. In order to increase production for P-38J's, Lockheed had to stop production on at least three aircraft and perform a massive conversion to construct more P-38 Lightnings.

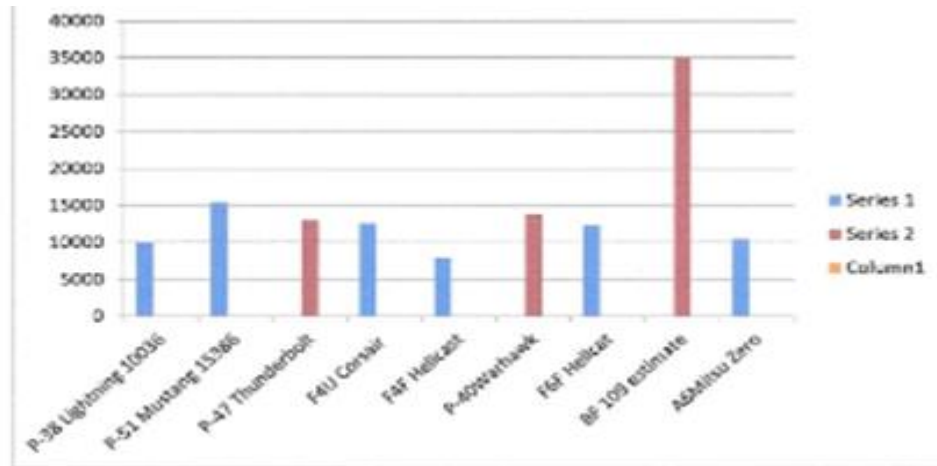
It was mid-1944 and the War Production Board (WPB) was in a crisis. The AAF in Dayton, Ohio and Washington D.C. were still shipping aircraft that commanding

officers did not want. It had taken some 13 months to complete modifications for the P-38J and the improved 'L' models, incorporating improved dive flaps, leading edge wing tanks, and power ailerons which were required by the AAF. Consolidated-Vultee (C-V) was one of Lockheed's subcontractors that had been working on the fuselage-wing center section of the P-38J project. The AAF and WPB asked C-V to manufacture 2000 more P-38 Lightnings. Finally, there was a second manufacturer to construct P-38L's (Bodie, 1991). Beginning on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January-1945, the company was able to assemble 113 aircraft before V-J Day occurred in Japan. With the help of the Air Transport Command (ATC), from January to June 1945, the aircraft were individually dispersed from Berry Field. They were ferried to various locations throughout the United States, and others were desperately needed by the Sixth Air Force in the Caribbean Defense Command and Panama Canal Zone.

The histogram seen in Figure 1 compares the production of P-38 and various aircraft produced before and during World War II. The Lightning, Mustang, Thunderbolt, Corsair and Warhawk totaled over 67,400 aircraft compared to the Bf 109 German aircraft of 35,500 and the Japanese Zero of 10,500 that started in 1937. The longevity of the P-38 began in 1939 and continued to be manufactured throughout the entire Second World War.

- 1.) P-38 Lightning was built by Lockheed and Consolidated-Vultee from 1939 to 1945 for a total of 10,037 aircraft.
- 2.) P-51 Mustang was built by North American from 1942 to 1945 for a total of 15,386.

- 3.) P-47 Thunderbolt was built by Republic Aviation from May 1941 to the end of 1945. Total number aircraft built was 15,677.
- 4.) The F4U Corsair built by Vought in August 1941 was delivered in June 1942. A total of 12,571 aircraft were built to January 31, 1953. The Corsair saw combat in the Second World War, Korean and the French in Indochina (Vietnam).
- 5.) The Curtiss P-40 War Hawk began in 1937. A total of 13,738 were built. Until the P-38, 47, or 51 were available, the P-40 battled the Bf-109 and Mitsubishi Zero.
- 6.) The Grumman F4F Wildcat was in production from August 1939 to the fall of 1945 for the Navy and Marines. A total of 7,885 Wildcats were built with 19 variants, of which some are still airworthy.
- 7.) The Grumman F6F started service in the latter part of 1942 after first flying in August of the same year. Production ceased in 1945. Total aircraft built, 12,275.
- 8.) The Bf 109 Messerschmitt went into production in September of 1937. An estimated 35,000 built. The Bf 109 was licensed and operated in 11 countries.
- 9.) The model A6M2 Mitsubishi Zero were built in 1941 and Model A6M3 was in production in late 1942. It was known as the fastest carrier born fighter of the time. A total of sum 10,500 aircraft were built (Hawks, 2014).



*Figure 1: Aircraft Production During World War II*

### **Air Transport Command**

In order for the aircraft to be ferried where needed the Air Transport Command (ATC) serviced Consolidated-Vultee (C-V) at Berry Field. A component of the United States Army Air Force, the ATC was created during World War II and performed ferry service for military manufacturers throughout the United States. The ATC was started by General Henry H. Arnold on May 29, 1941 with the name “Air Corps Ferrying Command.” There was a Lend-Lease Act that became law on March 11, 1941, requiring the ATC to perform critical assignments. The first assignment, according to the Lend-Lease Act, was to ferry aircraft from the manufacturer. Once an aircraft was constructed, accepted, available, and ready for delivery, it could be ferried to a certain location and used for training pilots to fly that particular aircraft. Next, they had the option of being flown to an air base for modifications so as not to disturb the assembly line at the manufacturer, or the ATC would ferry the aircraft directly to combat areas or theater where needed. After December 7, 1941, with the devastating attack on Pearl Harbor, the ATC air lifted bombers,

pursuit aircraft, Lend-Lease aircraft, personnel, supplies, and equipment to combat areas. The ATC expanded far beyond expectations after Pearl Harbor. It was divided into six geographical areas beginning with Northwest Sector, Boeing Field, Seattle, Washington; California Sector, Long Beach Municipal Airport, California; Nashville Sector, Berry Field, Nashville, Tennessee; Detroit Sector, Wayne County Airport, Romulus, Michigan; Middle Western Sector, Hensley Field, Dallas, Texas; and Northeast Sector, Logan Field, Baltimore, Maryland. This information was reference material prepared by the Assistant Chief of Air Staff Historical Division, HQUSAAF, 1945 and retrieved from the website by Wikipedia

### **Ferrying Division**

What had been operating as a six region ferrying division since December, 1941, was reorganized in October, 1944 into three components, the East, West, and Central ferrying divisions. Each ATC Ferrying Division had several regions and routes to service. They would supply materials, aircraft, personnel, and ferry aircraft to locations for pilot training. The Lockheed subcontractor Consolidated-Vultee of Nashville was serviced first by the 4<sup>th</sup> Ferrying Group, headquartered out of Cincinnati, Ohio. The ferrying group flew out of Lunken Airport. The Greater Cincinnati Airport, located in northern Kentucky and slightly across the Ohio River, had not been built at this time.

## **Research Questions**

### **Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this thesis is to determine what happened to the Lockheed P-38L-5-VN Lightning aircraft that was manufactured by C-V of Nashville. The materials researched explore the experiences the AAF, the Sixth Air Force, and the various



Commanding Generals through the acquisition of these aircraft and track the fate of those aircraft as long as records permit. The study research questions are:

1. Where were the 113 P-38 Lightning aircraft, constructed by C-V of Nashville, Tennessee ferried immediately after the war?
2. What has happened to these P-38 Lightning aircraft constructed by C-V, and is it possible to trace these aircraft from their ferry flight up to the current time?

## CHAPTER TWO-METHODOLOGY

The design of this thesis is a historical research study using a qualitative approach by collecting data from the dispersion of the airplanes in question to various locations. To insure the data is trustworthy, a process known as “triangulation” was practiced by utilizing data sources from the following: Individual Aircraft Record Cards, Air Transport Command, manufacturers, and the United States Air Force. Additional reference material of a historical nature will be utilized, including e-mails received from the United States Air Force, enthusiastic archivists, and reliable trustworthy individuals. Using the historical approach is appropriate given the passage of time, since these events previously occurred, and the reporting of this history in a narrative fashion will best accomplish the objective of explaining what happened to these aircraft (Gay, 2006).

In addition to the previously mentioned reference material, inquiry letters were directed to various military bases where the planes were dispersed for the purpose of being used as trainers, modified for photo-reconnaissance, sold to civilians, left for salvaging, or scrapping after the war. Other letters and e-mails were sent to the following establishments: Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson, Dayton-Ohio; P-38 National Association at March Air Reserve Base in California; Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery-Alabama; and the Triumph Group of Nashville-Tennessee. Finally, letters and e-mails were sent to Armed Forces personnel, aviation historians, and family members or friends of P-38 pilots or ground crew. Responses were limited to Air Force persons and aviation historians.

## Literary Resources

There are several books, magazines and historical memos that contribute pertinent stories and pictures concerning early P-38's but unfortunately, the literature is considerably limited with regard to information about P-38's made by C-V. Finding the location of all the 113 P-38's may hopefully satisfy a void in P-38 history. The literature in search of the 113 P-38L's began with a letter containing information about three P-38L aircraft, that were listed in a book by Kevin Grantham titled "History of Surviving Lockheed P-38 Lightnings." This book has information regarding the 39<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron; Lightnings in various museums; stories of the Experimental Aircraft Association involving Lightnings; and memorials to ace pilots that flew the P-38 Lightning. The same book has a section on surviving P-38's. The tail-numbers of three aircraft include #43-50281, #43-50310 and #43-50312 which were built by Consolidated-Vultee (Grantham, 1994).

The next book that has information regarding the 113 P-38's in question is titled "Lockheed P-38 Lightning" by Steve Pace. This book presents stories of various P-38 models and has many pictures with P-38 test flights, combat missions and flight training. On pages 53, 59, and 110 of this text, the author mentions the contribution that Lockheed-Burbank and Consolidated-Vultee made for the war effort. Lockheed constructed 10,037 P-38's, with 9924 from Burbank and 113 from Nashville. Pace quotes that "it was one of the most successful production runs during World War II ... one of the most important ones as well," (Pace, 1996, p.59). In 1945, some 1666 P-38J and 'L' model aircraft were delivered to the Army Air Force before VJ day.

Warren Bodie wrote a book titled “The Lockheed P-38 Lightning” which is referred to as the definitive story of Lockheed’s P-38 fighter. The book contains stories of the prototypes, combat missions, and photo-reconnaissance aircraft from all models of the P-38. The P-38 Lightning was in places where the P-51 and P-47 was not. References of P-38L-5-VN’s are found on pages 193, 195, 238, 240, and 256 of this text (Bodie, 1991).

To continue with literature that pertains to the search for the P-38’s after the war is various excerpts from the Department of the Air Force, provided by the Office of Air Force History. A letter dated September 5, 2014, was received that included eight different items referred to in the course of this study.

Finally, it was fortunate to have the Individual Aircraft Record Cards for all 113 P-38 aircraft made by C-V in 1945. The cards indicated where the planes were ferried prior to the war’s end. The cards were provided on a Compact Disc from the Maxwell Air Force Base Historical Research Agency in Montgomery, Alabama.

### **Letters of Inquiry**

In order to obtain information needed to determine the location of the aircraft, letters and e-mails were sent to private individuals, Aircraft Museums, Army Air Force fields, the United States Department of the Air Force, and the National Archivist agency. Some letters were written to airfields that existed in 1945 but do not exist in 2015. The letters were returned marked undeliverable. A few of the airfields answered with e-mails and one just called long distance from Kingman, Arizona and gave a verbal critique of the P-38’s at their field.

Below is a list of names where e-mails were sent, forwarded, or received during the search for information: Steve Blake, John Boling, Harold Brewer, Duane Cates, Rob Chilcoat, Bailey Diaz, Archangelo Difante, Richard Guinan, Loretta Hill, Tammy Horton, Amber Korb, J.A. Bill Saavedra, Brett Stole, Sarah Swan, Wayne Walrond and Dale A Wilson. Some of the e-mails that were forwarded had the same related information. Other participants shared information that was already in circulation either through books, aircraft magazines, aircraft record cards, or historical archive resources. Information found in these resources is not limited to just P-38 aircraft history: there are stories about many aircraft from transports, fighters/pursuits, helicopters, and bombers that functioned throughout World War II. The 113 aircraft from C-V may have seemed to be a small number, 1.13 percent (%) of the total P-38's produced, there were stories of the pilots being trained to fly these aircraft properly, and the ground crews being trained to maintain the aircraft for air worthiness. Also, maintenance was a very serious concern because where the aircraft were heading, the ground crews were used to maintaining P-40 and P-39 single engine pursuit aircraft. The information from each individual is described below.

**Steve Blake**, Membership Chairman and Historian for P-38 National Association, has sent several references via e-mail regarding P-38 history. He has contributed articles from past "Lightning Strikes" issues and provided information from various sources.

First, there was reference to Bodie's book on "Lockheed P-38 Lightning." Second, Mr. Blake indicated that P-38L-5-VN #43-50266 was with the 51<sup>st</sup> Fighter Squadron (FS) at Howard Field, (PCZ). Third, he indicated a book on Santa Rosa Army Air Field in California recorded three airframes #43-50248, #43-50234, and #43-50244.

He also furnished e-mail attachments on three more very popular aircraft with tail-numbers #43-50281, #43-50310, and #43-50312. These three aircraft were mentioned in the book "History of Surviving Lockheed P-38 Lightning's - P-Screamers" by Kevin Grantham. These three aircraft constructed by C-V were sold as surplus. Mr. Blake made a suggestion that a source for P-38 accidents could be found in the Aviation Archaeological Investigation and Research website. His most recent sources include a photo of a P-38L #43-50258 (#19) with the 28<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron of the Sixth Air Force in the Canal Zone. (S. Blake, personal communication, May 5, 2014) The other source came from browsing old "Lightning Strikes" issues. It was a story about a Lieutenant General pilot Winton W. "Bones" Marshall who flew a P-38L #43-50237 while in the Canal Zone before entering the Korean conflict. There will be a reference to "Bones" Marshall in Mr. Dorr's personal review taken from a telephone conversation (see Appendix A).

John Boling, a former basic engineering student that Harold Brewer and Dale Wilson voluntarily mentioned for P-38 information. Mr. Boling indicated that before Germany surrendered the P-38 was being replaced by P-51's in the Pacific and the P-47's in Europe.

Harold Brewer is a historian for the Triumph Group in Nashville, Tennessee. It was Mr. Brewer that mentioned some of the P-38's constructed by C-V went to Central America. In addition, he mentioned a few persons such as Mr. Blake, Mr. Boling, Miss D. Cates, and Mr. Walrond that might provide information regarding the P-38's constructed by Consolidated-Vultee.

Duane Cates, from the Triumph Group sent an e-mail that she had a few old negatives of the P-38 line in Nashville. She included a picture of General Knudens, who visited the plant often to observe the P-38 production line. He was the receiver of the Vermilye Medal 1941, Distinguished Service Medal 1945, American Campaign Medal and WWII Victory Medal for his wartime service. He worked for Ford, Chevrolet and later became president of General Motors. In 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked him to come to Washington and help with war production (Knudens, 2013). (D. Cates, personal communications, August 26, 2013)

Rob Chilcoat is the unofficial historian for the Kingman Army Air Force Base and curator for the field's Museum. He has been there for over 20 years and after the war, over 400 P-38's were at Kingman for scrapping. Mr. Chilcoat called after receiving an e-mail asking if any P-38's survived Kingman and he indicated that 5600 aircraft had been "chopped up" during that time. No P-38's survived as far as he could tell. The only aircraft that survived were some PT-13's and about 6 or 7 ET-6's. Having researched the data from the Individual Aircraft Record Cards, a total of 41 P-38's from C-V were ferried to Kingman for disposition. He advised checking the site of Joe Baugher for serial or tail-number information. (R. Chilcoat, personal communication, September 30, 2014)

Bailey Diaz was able to introduce three persons: Duane Cates, Richard Drumright and Dan Simmons. She asked if they could help with the tail-numbers: P-38's #43-50281, #43-50310, and #43-50312. These three aircraft received civil registration that helped in their popularity as they frequently appear in other references and flying events.

Archangelo Difante, representative from the Historical Research Agency at Maxwell Air Force Base, provided two compact discs that contains information of Individual Aircraft Record Cards (IARC) for the 113 P-38 Lightning built by C-V. He also explained several of the codes that are used in the IARC's. He advised interested persons of Air Force history to make a visit to the research facility and also recommended a website for information.

Robert E. Dorr is considered to be an outstanding writer of aviation military history. His research project of pilot Winton W. Marshall is based on the captivating fascination that one pilot had over the clean lines of Lockheed's P-38 Lightning. Mr. Dorr's research on Bones Marshall has him with the 28<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron (FS) in the Canal Zone in February 1945, and later with the 32<sup>nd</sup> FS. His aircraft was a P-38 with the tail-number #43-50237, one of the planes from C-V. There is a picture of the plane with Marshall's wife standing in front of the P-38 at Chame, Panama in 1945 (see Appendix A). The information was furnished by Mr. Blake. A long distance telephone conversation with Mr. Dorr suggests what may have happened with many of the P-38's in Panama.

Richard Guinan is the historian for the 97<sup>th</sup> Air Mobility Wing at Altus Air Force Base, clearly reinforced the establishment of the Reconstruction Finance Center (RFC) and the War Asset Administration (WAA) in May of 1945 to handle the disposal of excess aircraft after the war. He believes the missing P-38 aircraft might have been at Altus but the records were no longer there. He mentioned that when the base reopened in 1953, all WWII aircraft were gone except for a B-17F #41-24485 nicknamed "Memphis Belle" and a B-17G #44-85790 nicknamed "Lacey Lady" (see Appendix B).



Dan Hagedorn, Curator and Director of Collections at the Museum of Flight in Seattle, Washington is the author of the book titled “Alae Supra Canalem” or “Wings Over The Canal.” Mr. Hagedorn’s book lists 61 P-38L-5-VN aircraft that were in the Panama Canal Zone (PCZ). At the end of the war, all of the Sixth Air Force units in the Canal Zone were equipped with P-38L’s and many were from the Nashville plant Consolidated-Vultee.

Loretta Hill, Office Manager at the Altus Air Force Base in Oklahoma, reported a few days after Richard Guinan that they did not have any P-38’s on their field. She sent this e-mail on Friday, November 15, 2013. However, she wished the search for the P-38’s in question be successful.

Tammy Horton, representative from the Historical Research Agency at Maxwell Air Force Base, provided a compact disc for researching the 113 P-38’s that were constructed by Consolidated-Vultee in Nashville. The contents include microfilm of the Individual Aircraft Record Cards which was purchased for thirty dollars.

Amber Korb, Librarian and Archivist from the Walter P. Story Research Center for the California State Military Museum in Sacramento, responded that the museum has never had any P-38 aircraft at the facility but hoped the search would be successful.

Raymond Meyer, Safety-Security Manager for the Aerospace Museum of California, responded to an inquiry regarding P-38’s from Nashville. Data from the IARC card had the P-38’s stationed at McClellan Army Air Force base for tactical, combat and air crew training. He indicated that between July 1943 and January 1945 that 307 P-38’s had overhauls. These were aircraft already in service and there was no evidence of the

aircraft from Nashville in the archives. The P-38's from C-V were ferried to McCellan and other Air Force bases in California and surrounding states.

Colonel J.A. Bill Saavecia, retired from the Department of the Air Force Office of Air Force History, responded to a letter of inquiry pertaining to the 113 P-38L's and the Sixth Air Force. He decoded several terms used in IARC forms and sent eight items that included information for P-38's, F-4, and F-5; book excerpts; references; production statistics; accident reports; excerpts from the aircraft status in the Sixth Air Force stationed in the PCZ; and the disposition of aircraft after the war (see Appendix C).

Bret Stolle, Manuscript Curator for the National Museum of the United States Air Force Research Division/MUA at Wright-Patterson AFB in Ohio, replied that they do not keep assignments or disposition of aircraft in question. They did offer the information of one P-38 they have on exhibit. The airframe was an aircraft made by Lockheed in Burbank, P-38 Lightning #44-53232, with a history of having been constructed and delivered to the United States Air Force on July 21, 1945. This airframe had been ferried to the Dallas Modification Center in July of 1945. Then the aircraft arrived at the San Antonio Air Depot for a brief time and then it was delivered to Kelly AAF base, Texas in September-1945, where it was declared excess. In February of 1946, the airframe was possibly ferried to Kingman AAF base and was disposed of as surplus, meaning that the airframe was saved and became the exhibit airframe for the National Museum. Mr. Stolle provided additional information by pointing out where material for an aircraft was ferried. It could be furnished from the Historical Research Agency at the Maxwell Air Force Base. The date for this e-mail was received on Friday, December 18, 2013.

Sarah Swan, Public Affairs Division of the National Museum of the United States Air Force, replied they had two P-38's in their collection. The tail-numbers of these two aircraft are P-38G #42-13400 at Elmendorf AFB Arkansas and P-38L #44-27183 at McGuire Field, New Jersey. The P-38L is in the World War II Gallery and Sarah provided two websites of pictures of aircraft on loan from the museum.

Wayne Walrond, was an acquaintance of Harold Brewer, historian at C-V, and presently resides in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Mr. Walrond was most helpful in sending e-mails with material regarding P-38's made in Nashville, Tennessee. Several statements may reiterate what has already been mentioned earlier. Mr. Walrond suggested that one could follow the missing or lost aircraft in Joe Baugher's website mentioned above in Rob Chilcoat's e-mail. He described in great detail the final production version of the P-38L. Lockheed in Burbank built 3810 "L" models and C-V of Nashville constructed 113 aircraft. The P-38L's were much like the P-38J's except for a more powerful engine. Mr. Walrond wrote in his e-mail that in June of 1944, the Army Air Force (AAF) increased Lockheed's output of airframes by offering C-V of Nashville an order for 2000 additional aircraft, similar to the P-38L-5-LO's coming out of Burbank, California. Delays in production took place from changing the construction line over for P-38's, resulting in Vultee being able to construct 113 aircraft before the war was over. Victory over Japan took place so the contract was cancelled. He mentions in his e-mail of January 20, 2011 to Mr. Brewer and forwarded on August 27, 2013 that many of the P-38's were scrapped or salvaged after the war. Only a few were retained by the United States Air Force and renamed F-38L. Another e-mail was sent to Mr. Brewer with the following tail-numbers: P-38L's #43-50281, #43-50310 and #43-50312. On February 10, 2015 he sent an e-mail

of accident reports of the following aircraft: P-38L's #43-50237, #43-50233, #43-50303, #43-50241, #43-50270 and #43-50295. He also listed the P-38L-5-VN #43-50281, which seems to be one of the most popular P-38's made in Nashville. Mr. Walrond sources were from the aviation archaeology website. Pictures were received on February 11, 2015 of P-38L's and crew members at France and Howard field in the Canal Zone, 1945 (see Appendix D).

### **Deciphering IARC Reports**

Each P-38 aircraft, as well as any other aircraft might have, comes with an Individual Aircraft Record Card. This card has the following information: Date of Construction, Factory, Type and Model of Aircraft, Contract Number, Serial or Tail Number, Allocation, and Project or Lend or Lease requisition number. The rest of the card has hand written notes from the time the aircraft was accepted, available, and delivered to the United States Army Air Force until the aircraft is considered for salvage, disposition, or condemned. Once the aircraft is referred to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, the aircraft is dropped from the inventory. Before the aircraft is scrapped, the P-38 could very well be sold to someone or company and given a Civilian Registration. There are several P-38 aircraft surviving today in private collections or museums but very few constructed by C-V.

In order to read and decipher an Individual Aircraft Record Card (IARC), particularly the ones associated with the 113 P-38's constructed by Consolidated-Vultee, a small glossary of terms that has been provided which occur repetitively in the IARC's. With the help of the Maxwell Air Force Base Historical Research Agency, the Office of the Air Force History, and a reference book titled "Aircraft Record Cards of the United

States Air Force” by Robert A Mann, one is able to read, with some understanding, what, when, and where each aircraft fly-away location was assigned. The following terms appear most frequently in the 113 IARC’s of the P-38’s from C-V:

1. BADE denotes the Sixth Air Force in the Canal Zone and Caribbean area.
2. BU or BAS UT indicates Base Unit.
3. ATC denotes Air Transport Command that ferry aircraft to locations where needed.
4. ATSC denotes Air Technical Services Command.
5. ACFT is short for Aircraft.
6. CL-32 is not used very often but means “Aircraft sent to Air Force Museum”.
7. CON means aircraft is considered Condemned.
8. SAL means aircraft is recommended for Disposal or Salvaged.
9. DEL denotes the aircraft is ready for delivery.
10. DEP US means the aircraft is departing the United States.
11. DES refers to the aircraft being destroyed.
12. REC (L), RECLAMATION is the process of restoring the usefulness of parts that might be unsuitable items back in the supply channel (Mann, 2008, p.71).
13. RFC refers to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation established after WWII.
14. SAA means the aircraft became Salvage After Accident.
15. SAC and SAL denotes Salvage and Salvage and Disposal respectively.
16. LU means the aircraft was lost to a unit outside the USAF.
17. GB means transfer of aircraft from another organization; USAF property before and after transfer.
18. SCR refers to Scrapped.

19. SS refers to Sold for Scrap.

20. PAD refers to the Panama Air Depot.

This is just a small sample of codes from the IARC reports and codes book by Robert Mann. The book has 280 pages of deciphering information. Several examples of decoded IARC reports can be viewed in Appendix E, F, and G.

Each one of the IARC reports was deciphered step by step to trace where the P-38 was ferried by the Air Transport Command. The following data of aircraft P-38L-5-VN, #43-50226 exemplifies the format in an IARC report. The reports identify the type of aircraft, who constructed the plane, when the aircraft was available, where the aircraft was ferried, or the location for any modifications or combat crew training. Once the aircraft was ferried to a boneyard, the aircraft could be sold, declared excess or classified reclamation, prepared as salvage and eventually readied for disposition as indicated on the IARC report (see Appendix H).

P-38L-5-VN #43-50226 is the first P-38 that was accepted by the Army Air Force on January 12, 1945 and available on the 25<sup>th</sup>. The first part of the report is hand written, so interpretation is difficult due to unclear cursive writing and abbreviations. The IARC codes are type written once the aircraft reaches a certain location. The aircraft left Nashville for Ontario, California via Dallas, Texas. The following interpretation analyzes the codes used in an IARC report card for aircraft, #43-50226.

Ontario 4 443BAS CC GB ATC FERRY ACFT P-38L 43-5022 131 9159 11 4876

Line one: Ontario...Army Air Force Base, 4...Fourth Air Force, 443 BAS CC... is the Parent Unit Tactical Training or Combat Crew training, GB...means Transferring

within the AF organization, ATC...Air Transport Command, Ferried aircraft on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 9159...Closest to Ontario is Oceanside California.

Ontario CAF 443 BASUT GB CAF 443 BAS SU (T-N) 1016 9159 11 9159:

Line two: The aircraft was ferried to Ontario air force base to the 420 Base Unit of the Continental Air Force (CAF) and transferred (GB) to the 443 Base Stock aircraft (SU) for future personal use until 1016 October 23, 1945 at Ontario 9159. The 11 according to the author is an administrative code. The correct code for Ontario is 9199.

Ontario CAF 420 BASUT GB CAF 443 BAS FT (T-N) 1023 11 9159:

Line three: Aircraft still at Ontario Field with the 420 Basic Unit transferred from the 443 Basic FT possibly from Flying Training or Combat Crew Training on 1023, October 23 at Ontario 9158. Ontario's code number 9199. Not sure why 9159 was used.

Ontario CAF 420 BAS UT LU RFC (T-N) 1029 9159 11 9852:

Line four: The aircraft, still with the Continental Air Force 420 Basic Unit was transferred out of the USAAF (LU) to another organization not connected with the Air Force called the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) on 1029, October 29, 1945 from Ontario to 9852, Kingman Army Air Force Base at which time the aircraft was dropped from the Air Force inventory.

#### **Fourth Army Air Force**

When the P-38's from Consolidated - Vultee were accepted by the Army Air Force, they were delivered to various locations. Around 50% of the 113 aircraft were delivered mainly to Air Force Bases in California, Washington, Utah, and Idaho. The Fourth Army Air Force, originally with the Southwest Air District in October of 1940, was newly activated on December 18, 1940 with headquarters at March Army Air Force

Base in California. The Fourth AAF was re-designated two more times, in 1941 and 1942 during WWII. At this time, the Fourth AAF was assigned to the United States Army Air Force in September 16, 1943. On December 13, 1944, the First, Second, and Third Army Air Force were placed under a centralized Continental Air Force with the Fourth AAF following on April 16, 1945. During World War II the Fourth Air Force was the air defense command for California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. It was here where the P-38 aircraft was used in Tactical, Combat, and Air Crew defense training for newly formed units (Aerofiles, 2015). Many of the P-38 crews trained here due to the location of the air base from the manufacturer (Wikipedia, 2015).

### **Sixth Army Air Force**

On January 1, 1941, the 32<sup>nd</sup> Pursuit Group was activated and was promised to be equipped with P-38L's. In the latter part of 1942, the Sixth Air Force received P-39's and P-40's when they were expecting to have a complete supplement of P-38's.

The Sixth Air Force was an active major command that started in the Panama Canal Zone (PCZ) in 1917. In 1942, the Sixth Air Force patrolled the activities in the Caribbean, Central, and Southern coast of South America. One of the units assigned to the Sixth Air Force was the XXVI Fighter Command. Within the Fighter Command, there was the 24<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>, 32<sup>nd</sup>, 43<sup>rd</sup>, and 51<sup>st</sup> Fighter Squadrons. Fighter Squadrons were active in the PCZ from January to September 1945. It was during this period that several conversions to P-38's took place and dominated the runways. There were twin-beam P-38's located at France, Howard, Albrook, La Joya, and Chames Air Force Fields. When the war was over, flying ceased and the P-38's were placed in hangars and stored (see Appendix I).



All the fighter squadrons participated in the transition from single engine aircraft to the twin-engine P-38's coming to the Panama Canal Zone. It is most fortunate that when searching for WWII information, a great deal of the material is offered to the public for historical research, if one is able to visit the appropriate facility the public is able to research material personally.

The following information comes from extracted material from role A-4195 that consists of various letters, radiograms and daily reports from commanding officers of the Army Air Force in Washington D.C. and commanding officers in the Caribbean Defense Command (CDC), Panama Air Depot (PAD), Panama Canal Department (PCD), the Foreign Economic Administration (FEA), and the Sixth Air Force. The extracted reports begin with an officers meeting dated November 24, 1943, at the Sixth Air Force Headquarters, considered Secret # 40.1.

There are two sets of extracts from the files of the Sixth Air Force. The first set is titled "Aircraft" and explains how aircraft such as P-38's were needed to replace excess aircraft. The Air Force needed suitable aircraft for the rough terrain and water that would bring the squadron up to combat readiness. The second set is titled "Disposition of Excess Aircraft" and involves salvaging aircraft on foreign soil or territory. The references or secret footnotes number some 116. A few examples have been provided for reference (see Appendix J and K).

Of the 113 P-38 Lightnings constructed, there were fifty-seven (57) aircraft that were ferried to Brownsville, Texas and designated to depart the United States for the Canal Zone. The Air Transport Command (ATC) who served the Berry Field facility, which is now the Air Mobility Command (AMC) with headquarters located at Scott Air

Force Base, Illinois, assisted in the transfer of these aircraft. The reason for these aircraft to be considered for delivery to the Canal Zone was a result of a study by a board of officers investigating the numerous accidents that the P-39's had, indicating the P-39's were unsuitable for operations in the Panama and Caribbean areas (personal communication, Saaveclia, 2014).

The first thought was to substitute P-40's but these aircraft were not available for the Sixth Air Force, so they decided to substitute P-47's, which were scheduled to arrive in the latter part of 1944. The Air Force response to this endorsement was to use P-38's. This decision was based on several characteristics the P-38's had which were more advantageous than the P-47's. Some of these features included:

- P-38's rate of climb, 360 at 5000 feet, 390 at 15,000 feet, 414 at 25,000 feet, and could reach 20,000 feet in 7 minutes.
- P-38's tricycle landing gear reduced accidents on landings and taxiing.
- Maintenance personnel were already familiar with Allison engines.
- Twin engines would present more favorable odds over water and rough terrain.

Unfortunately, news came that P-38's were not available due to their needs in the Pacific theater. Since the Army Air Force (AAF) reported the P-38's were not available, the decision was made to accept the P-47's because of their low maintenance and accident rate.

As of September 30, 1944 the Sixth Air Force, in a radio message to Washington, had only 161 aircraft and with attrition rate of five aircraft a month, the Command's level for missions would be considerably short of its 189 target. Since the P-38's were not available, the Sixth Air Force requested P-47's be sent earlier since they were expected in

the near future. Once again, an unexpected announcement came that the P-47's were needed in the European theater and would not be available in October. With the production number now up on P-38's, it was determined they would be delivered after all. It was pointed out that with the acceptance of P-38's, maintenance on twin engines would require an increase of 162 troops. Assuming the program with P-38's was accepted, a request was made to have two aircraft equipped with two-seats for training purposes. This request was recorded on October 7, 1944. Colonel Taylor, the commander of the 26 Fighter Command, made a request that modifications be made for at least one-half of the aircraft to be equipped with rocket launchers plus an adequate supply of rockets, fuzzes (fuses) to ignite a projectile and allied ordnance. This request was made to train fighter pilots with the above equipment because the "pilot rotation policy" which was soon to be initiated, might put them in aircraft with similar equipment in other combat theaters. The request for rockets would have to be rationed to 5 per pilot each month because the supply of rockets was very critical. It was suggested that sub-caliber rockets be available for training. This information was available from unclassified letters of "Arming of P-38 type aircraft rocket launchers" signed by Colonel Taylor, Commanding General, (CG) Unit Type (AG) Projects #153 and #154, Sixth Air Force.

Tracing the P-38's from Nashville throughout the United States, through their arrival in Panama for the Sixth Air Force, was a slow process. A radiogram sent on November 15th to Arnold CG, of the Caribbean Defense Command (CDC) indicated that about 100 of the P-38 aircraft from Hawaii "being rendered excess but in very good condition, might be available." Due to the urgent need for aircraft, the Air Force

approved of the suggestion but still requested that each squadron should receive like aircraft (see Appendix L).

According to Dan Hagedorn's book titled "Wings over the Canal" the Sixth Air Force had reached 199 P-38's at the end of the war. There were 43 P-38J's and 149 P-38L's. Between November 6<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, 1944 there would be 10 other P-38J's coming from Hawaii, plus 9 brand new P-38L-5-LO coming right out of the factory. Next there would be two 'piggy-back' two-seaters for training purposes that would arrive in December-1944 (see Appendix M).

Meanwhile, there were several so called Projects to be received. Project #177 was an order for the two 'piggy-back' P-38L's to be delivered in early December 1944. Project #179 was for nine P-38L's to be delivered by November 15th, but one plane crashed shortly after landing and three others were delayed on the ferry flight due to a lack of replacement parts. Project #180 was an order for sixteen aircraft but was cancelled in the middle of November and replaced by Project #190 (see Appendix N). This was an order of ten aircraft to be delivered in February, 1945, but that was cancelled as well. (Arnold, 1944) This information was found in a radiogram from Lieutenant General Brett on November 18, 1944 to the Commanding General (CG), Army Air Force in Washington DC. At this time, P-38's most likely were from Lockheed. A radiogram concerning Project #190 was from Arnold, CG, to the CDC on November 21, 1944. During January of 1945, the XXVI Fighter Command expected to receive 69 P-38's but this is what they had:

- The Sixth Air Force received 21 P-38's out of 69 from the project #190.
- Survey showed one aircraft lost.

- The total number of airplanes available for the Sixth Air Force was 20.
- The aircraft still undelivered was 48 aircraft.

Of the 69 aircraft expected, 58 were scheduled to arrive from Hawaii. Eleven were deliveries direct from the U.S. factory. One aircraft was dropped, another one assigned to the XXVI Fighter Command, eight were assigned to the 51<sup>st</sup> Fighter Squadron at Howard Field and one in the Panama Air Depot waiting for parts to arrive for assembly completion. Some of the aircraft from Hawaii needed repair. When they were completed, the aircraft were delivered to the flight line one at a time. During the months of October-1944 through March of 1945, radiograms that promised arrivals were plagued with delays or accidents. It was not until April of 1945 that shipments began arriving.

A total of 71 P-38J's, with another 50 from Project #285, arrived near April 11, 1945. Upon the arrival of the above aircraft, the assurance for additional aircraft would bring the squadron up to 186 and combat readiness. Reports from the Sixth Air Force indicated that more aircraft were arriving in April of 1945 under Project #285, but some were grounded in cities in southern Mexico like Vera Cruz, San Jose, and Managua. Of the 50 aircraft en route, all but one made the transfer. This information was issued on May 1, 1945. A radiogram on April 23 was sent from the AAF Commanding General out of Washington and received by the 6th AF- CG indicating that Project #324 for 25 P-38's, were arriving late in April, and Project #334 for 50 P-38's was processing. Along with the above 75 P-38's being processed, a Project #982 of 11 P-38J's having been promised earlier from Hawaii, were arriving at the same time with another 7 P-38's on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1945. The information was retrieved from a Sixth Air Force daily status report

on April 25, 1945. By the end of April of 1945, the Sixth Air Force fighter status was 33 over the ceiling of 186 aircraft. Here is what the Sixth Air Force had on hand in May 1, 1945:

- Received by the Sixth Air Force...108
- Lost to Survery..... - 6
- Total.....102
- Due on Project.....+117
- Total 6<sup>th</sup> AAF.....219
- Ceiling.....- 186
- Overage.....+33

General Butler requested that the flow of P-38's, in and out of the Sixth Air Force, not exceed the quota. The increase of personnel needed for maintenance and the shortage of storage was a problem. However, during May of 1945, an additional 49 P-38L's and 1 P-38J arrived, plus another 7 aircraft from a Hawaii Project ROS #982. In addition, another Project number #317, with 50 more P-38's, would make a total of 275 P-38's that would be assigned to the Sixth Air Force. Possibly, the arrival of aircraft may have diminished and the fighter ceiling was reached in early June of 1945. For a recap, here is what the Sixth Air Force had on hand or en route as of the first part of June of 1945:

- Received by the Sixth Air Force ... 158
- Lost to Survey.....- 6
- Total.....152

- In route from Hawaii.....+ 3
- In route from United States.....+ 5
- Total on hand or in route.....160

In a monthly report from the Panama Canal Depot (PCD) dated June of 1945, it was noted that the flow of P-38's had increased. It was pointed out that Projects for the European Theater had been cancelled and therefore, the Sixth Air Force would receive an overage of P-38's that might reach 199, 13 over the combat ceiling of 186. During the month of June, 1945, the Sixth Air Force received 47 P-38's and 1 P-38J. Thirteen of those P-38's were from Hawaii, left over from Project #982. A number of the P-38's from Hawaii required maintenance that encompassed cleaning, wing installments, rigging of aircraft, plus 100 hour inspections. Once an aircraft was prepared for flying, it was placed on the flight line, ready for combat. The rest of the P-38's had been ferried from the United States. The information was from daily reports of the Sixth Air Force in June 1945 (see Appendix O).

By June of 1945 the Sixth Air Force had 199 P-38's which put the XXVI Fighter Command 13 aircraft over the combat peak strength. Some 25 aircraft were distributed between the 30<sup>th</sup>, 32<sup>nd</sup>, 43<sup>rd</sup>, and the 51<sup>st</sup> Fighter Squadrons (FS). The 24<sup>th</sup> FS had 20 aircraft and the 28<sup>th</sup> FS had 22 aircraft. Hagedorn makes a point to mention that the 24<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron had both P-38J's and P-38L's in addition to P-38J #44-23072 and P-38L-5-VN #43-50313. (Hagedorn, 1995 p.172) These aircraft underwent a transfer to the 48<sup>th</sup> Base Headquarters in September 28, 1945. It was August 10, 1945 that the four Sixth Air Force Bomber Squadrons began a conversion from B-24's to Sixty B-17 aircraft. However, just eight days later the Sixth Army Air Force received notice from Head-

quarters that it was not necessary to make the switch of B-17's for B-24's. When the war was over many P-38's were stored in hangars on air bases like Howard's Army Air Force Base until the Foreign Economic Administration (FEA) and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) were advised as to how they would be disposed. Information from the home front was announced by General H.H. Arnold that cut-backs in production were going to take place, and the P-38 Lightning will phase out by November, 1945.

### **Disposition of Aircraft**

With the arrival of P-38's, even though the process was slow, the Sixth Air Force was having storage space and preventive maintenance problems. On September 23, 1944 the Army Air Force regulations #65-85 was revised. Washington advised the Caribbean Defense Command to store all excess aircraft the Air Force had waiting at the Panama Air Depot for disposition. Secret radiograms were being transmitted frequently to Commanding General H.H. Arnold in Washington to C. G. Brett during June, July, and September of 1944 regarding the Regulation 65-85 pertaining to the disposition of excess aircraft. No aircraft could be sold to Latin American countries before the Foreign Economic Administration (FEA) and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) were aware of this policy. The condition or action of the aircraft should be one of suspended activity. The Commanding General in Washington was quite adamant about P-39's not returning to the continental United States.

A conference in October of 1944 which the CDC, FEA, and the AAF attended, more clearly defined the role of the FEA:

- The FEA would certify to the AF what aircraft had no market life and should be salvaged.



- The local FEA members could acquire the market needs for aircraft but could not act on the disposition of the aircraft until notifying Washington.
- The FEA would report to the AAF as to what happened to aircraft that was already declared surplus.
- Any tactical aircraft would be referred to the FEA if initially regarded as salvage material.

From November 15 to December 16, 1944, the Air Force went through the waiting period of excess aircraft approval for the disposition by sales or salvage. The AAF had been waiting for P-38's to arrive so at this time there were no P-38's being considered for disposition. January of 1945 seemed to be a relaxed time for policy making regarding the disposition and processing aircraft for surplus and filing certain required forms. "In January, for the first time, aircraft were dropped from the Aircraft Status Board maintained by the Sixth Air Force" (Boek, 1945). Some of the aircraft in question and chosen as excess material were: B-24's, B-18's, RA-20A's, P-39's, RP-40C's, P-40E's, N's, C-78's, P-39D's, K's, and N's, BC-1's, UC-92, I-4A's, L-4E's, PQ-8A's, UC-61's and C-78's. There were a total of 237 aircraft chosen as excess that were waiting for the disposal through sales or salvage.

During June of 1945, monthly reports gave authorization to the FEA to salvage several aircraft and sell a few to the Venezuelan and Nicaraguan governments, the Ciricana Aviation Company, and a few independent individuals. A total of 127 airplanes were dropped from the Sixth Air Force inventory with only a minimal amount left for disposition. A check would be conducted to see if they were needed in another part of the country. If not, they could be disposed of immediately.

## **Reconstruction and War Programs**

The factory works in the United States constructed around 294,000 aircraft for World War II. Approximately 65,000 were lost in test flights, ferrying, training crews, or lost in route to combat areas. After the war what was the Army Air Force going to do with such a surplus of aircraft? The American production force had produced some 294,000 aircraft of all types. To dismantle that many aircraft would require many man hours of work, plus the storage area to place parts from the aircraft would result in an expense not considered. So, the method of salvaging and smelting was adopted. Several Air Force bases were considered for chopping up aircraft and melting them down into “aluminum ingots.” A few airports like Albuquerque AAF base in New Mexico, Kingman AAF base in Arizona, Altus AAF base in Oklahoma, Ontario AAF base in California, Walnut Ridge AAF in Arkansas, and Clinton Air Base in Oklahoma, were chosen by the War Asset Association (WAA) and the Reconstruction Finance Center (RFC) for the disposition of aircraft (see Appendix P).

The RFC was an independent government agency, chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1932 and operated until 1957. The RFC established about 30 sales-storage depots and 23 stores for selling operations, around the country to sell, store, or surplus aircraft after the war. It has been estimated that over 117,210 aircraft met the guillotine. When a plane was declared “excess” it was dropped from the USAAF inventory. Once the aircraft was deposited at a RFC depot, the aircraft could be sold for a price, salvaged, or scrapped into aluminum ingots in the post-war days of 1945.

The WAA was founded in the Office of Emergency Management by an Executive Order beginning March 25, 1946. The WAA, with the RFC, contracted a company

located in Jefferson City, Missouri called Wunderlich Contracting Co. that visited the Kingman Army Air Base. A letter requesting information was sent to locate the Wunderlich Company in Jefferson City, Missouri but the letter was returned marked “attempted unknown unable to forward.” The WAA’s purpose was to assist in the sale of military equipment ranging from mess kits to airplanes. The WAA was later abolished by the Federal Property and Administrative Act of 1949. Congress had provided loans to banks, railroads and other businesses to help stimulate the economy after the war. (“Planes of the Past,” 2013, Wikipedia, 2015, Conservapedia, 2015)

Information found in these resources is not limited to just P-38 aircraft history: there are stories about many aircraft from transports, fighters/pursuits, helicopters, and bombers that functioned throughout World War II. If the 113 C-V aircraft seemed to be a small number, 1.13 percent of the total P-38’s produced, there are the stories of pilots being trained to fly these aircraft properly, and the ground crews being trained to maintain the aircraft for air worthiness. Maintenance was a very serious concern because where 57% of the aircraft were heading, the ground crews were used to maintaining P-39 and P-40 single engine pursuit aircraft.

Mr. Blake from the P-38 National Association and Mr. Brewer from Triumph corresponded again on Tuesday, January 25, 2011, sending an e-mail discussing the Grantham book which refers to the same three aircraft mentioned on pages 12-13 and page 35. This information was forwarded by Mr. Brewer on Tuesday, August 27, 2013. Mr. Blake, knowing that he had another interested person concerning P-38’s, sent the same information on Thursday, August 29th, 2013. He had found another reference in a book by Warren Bodie titled “The Lockheed P-38 Lightning.” This e-mail listed an

aircraft in Bodie's book with a tail number #43-50266 which served in the 51st Fighter Squadron located at Howard Field in the Panama Canal Zone. Mr. Blake was not sure where he obtained the information.

**P-38L-5-VN #43-50266**

This aircraft departed the U. S. on May 23, 1945. It was accepted on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April and available for delivery to the Sixth Air Force on April 9, 1945. This aircraft left Nashville for Brownsville, Texas via Dallas, Love Field, and Kelly Field. It left Nashville on April 9<sup>th</sup> and arrived in Brownsville on May 22, 1945. It seems the aircraft was assigned to a foreign project (FP) and was lost to an organization outside the USAF. The plane was considered condemned for salvage and parts. After the war, it was transferred to Howard Field in the Panama Canal Zone. The P-38L-5- VN #43-50266 does not seem to have any more history, since it was considered condemned for salvage once it left the country on March 29, 1946. How long the aircraft was in the hangar after the war is not known because the directions were to put all aircraft in the hangars until further notice. In Hagedorn's book "Wings across the Canal" there is a list of the Sixth Army Air Force P-38 Lightnings after the war and the tail number #43-50266 is on the list. An interesting e-mail from Mr. Blake indicates that the P-38L-5-VN #43-50266 may have been converted with "Droop Snoot" modifications. The IARC report indicates the aircraft arrived in Dallas on April 19<sup>th</sup> and was available on May 14<sup>th</sup> after modifications. Assume the aircraft was modified with a Norton Bomb site, is theoretically valid.

In the same letter, he gives three more Vultee aircraft tail-numbers that were located in a book at the Santa Rosa Army Air Force Base: they were the #43-50248, #43-

50234 and #42-50244. They were sent to Altus, Oklahoma by the RFC for surplus, storage or disposal.

It seems the 32<sup>nd</sup> Air Operations Squadron (AOS) moved from France Field to Howard Field in the Panama Canal Zone to replace the 52<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Squadron, now part of the 26<sup>th</sup> Fighter Command. The 32<sup>nd</sup> AOS moved from France Field to Howard Field between the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 1945 and replaced the 43<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Squadron. It was there that they prepared to transfer over to P-38 Lightnings on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1945. Later that May, the war ends in Europe. Flying ceased and the P-38's were stored in a hangar. The question is: What happened to the P-38L's that were stored in hangars? The tail-numbers for the P38L's constructed by C-V and listed in Dan Hagedorn's book titled "Wings over the Canal" include #43-50252 to #43-50322. There were P-38L's given assignment orders including: #44-23992, #44-24001, #43-24015, #44-24018, #44-24463, #44-23992, and #44-24532. According to Hagedorn's book, it was later determined that these aircraft were actually P-38L-5-VN's (see Appendix Q).

### **CHAPTER THREE – DATA ANALYSIS**

The design of this thesis is an historical research study using a qualitative approach by collecting data from the dispersion records of the airplanes in question to locations specified. To insure the data is trustworthy, a process known as “triangulation” was practiced by collecting data sources from the Individual Aircraft Record Cards, the Air Transport Command and the Contractors of the United States Air Force. To have data that is trustworthy, Gay, Mills & Airasian (2006) recommends at least three participants. Additional historical data may develop after the analysis of the triangulation process is evaluated and create various patterns. Reference material included e-mails sent to the researcher from the United States Air Force, enthusiastic archivists, author’s writing historical subject matter and involved members of military personnel. Using a historical approach, the researcher is collecting data of a narrative nature for “the phenomenon being investigated.” (Gay, 2006)

#### **P-38 Aircraft after the War**

A survey was taken of the 113 aircraft that C-V constructed to establish their location at the end of the war. Individual Aircraft Record Cards (IARC) on compact disc from the Maxwell Air Force Base indicated where the aircraft were sent and where they might be located at the end of the World War II. Of the 113 aircraft constructed, the IARC has the following P-38L-5-VN aircraft dispersed according: 7.1% of the P-38L’s were ferried to the Altus AFB; 36.3% of the P-38L’s were ferried to the Kingman AFB; 50.4% were ferried to Brownsville, Texas and departed the United States to the Panama Canal Zone. (PCZ); and 6.2% aircraft were unclear as to their assignment.

Table 1 *Tail-numbers of the 113 P-38s built by C-V*

Altus Air Force Base	Kingman Air-Force Base	Panama C.Z. Howard Albrook & France Fld.	Miscellaneous State Side
#43-50234	#43-50226-#43-50232	#43-50251-#43-50257	#43-50233?
#43-50244	#43-50235-#43-50236	#43-50259 censored	#43-50237 Dropped
#43-50248	#43-50238-#43-50240	#43-50260-#43-50268	#43-50241-#4350242
#43-50258	#43-50243	#43-50271-#43-50278	Both accidents
#43-50269	#43-50245-#43-50247	#43-50280	#43-50270 Last seen in Cristobal
#43-50309	#43-50250 (Paine Field 10-13-1945)	#43-50282-#43-50286	#43-50295 Unclear needs work.
#43-50310	#43-50279	#43-50288-#43-50290	#43-50303 at BNA
#43-50312	#43-50281	#43-50292	
	#43-50287	#43-50294	
	#43-50291	#43-50296	
	#43-50293	#43-50298	
	#43-50297	#43-50300-#43-50302	
	#43-50299	#43-50304-#43-50308	
	#43-50323	#43-50311	
	#43-50324	#43-50313-#43-50322	
	#43-50325 Accident 1.5 mi. SE of Kingman		
	#43-50326-#43-50338		
8 aircraft for 7.1%	41 aircraft for 36.3%	57 aircraft for 50.4%	7 aircraft for 6.2%

*Note: this table of tail-numbers separates the IARC reports of each aircraft as to their location before and immediately after the war.*

#### **Aircraft to Altus Air Force Base**

The first list of tail numbers for the P-38L's ferried to Altus Army Air Force Base included: P-38L's #43-50248, #43-50310, #43-50234, #43-50244, #43-50258, #43-50269, #43-50312, and #43-50309. Two of the aircraft were partial survivors from disposition. All of the aircraft were ferried after the war to Altus for the purpose of disposition. Before the war was over, Altus Army Air Force Base was opened in January

1943 to train new pilots in twin-engine aircraft. Altus was an ideal place to learn to fly; flat terrain, 300 days of clear weather, and very few obstacles. The pilots were trained on Cessna AT-17 called Bobcat and Curtiss AT-9 Jeep. Once the student pilots' skills reached a proficiency objective, they were transferred to an air base where they trained on aircraft to be used in combat areas. The P-38 aircraft from C-V were ferried to air force bases for modifications and/or for pilot training. The aircraft was not easy to fly so they may have been used for trainers or modified for armament or photo-reconnaissance. When the war was over, a few P-38's from C-V were considered excess by RFC and if able, flown to Altus AAF base. At this time the aircraft was dropped from the Air Force inventory and assigned to an outside organization. This occurred between late October and December, 1945. Two of the P-38's with tail-numbers #43-50310, and #43-50312 escaped Altus Air Force base and continued flying for a few more years before being scrapped. Three of the above aircraft directed to Altus were chosen from e-mails that were mentioned in a book found at Santa Rosa. A brief scenario for each aircraft follows. Five of the eight aircraft had an active but brief history after the war.

The P-38L-5-VN #43-50310 aircraft was bought from the Altus Air Force Base depot in Oklahoma on May, 1947. The aircraft acquired the Civil Registration (CR) #N756666 by the N.B. McCreary of Little Rock, Arkansas. It was during the same year that the Tulsa Southwestern Aero Company bought the aircraft with a new CRNL, 75666. This P-38L-5-VN #43-50310 was accepted and available on May 21 and 22, 1945, respectively. The aircraft was delivered to the Sixth Air Force on May 24<sup>th</sup> and ferried to Brownsville, Texas via Nashville and Kelly Field. The plane departed the United States on June 1<sup>st</sup> and was listed with Hagedorn's P-38's in the Panama Canal Zone. It seems



the aircraft experienced a Ferry Flight Crash (FFC) on June 7<sup>th</sup> and spent some time in Cincinnati. It departed the U.S. on June 19<sup>th</sup> which explains why Hagedorn had the aircraft on his list during the war.

On January 22<sup>nd</sup> the plane returned to the U.S. and was ferried to the Altus Army Air Force Base for disposition by the RFC. According to the IARC report, the aircraft was outside the continental United States and was lost from AAF inventory. The aircraft was bought from the Altus Air Force base depot in Oklahoma in May, 1947. The aircraft was later exported to Cuba where it served with the Cuban Air Force before being scrapped. (Grantham, 1994, p.171)

The second P-38L-5-VN #43-50312 was manufactured by Consolidated-Vultee for the Sixth Air Force and was accepted and available on May 23, 1945. It was delivered on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May by the ATC to possibly Brownsville, departed the U.S. on June 6, 1945 and was lost to a location outside the continental United States. The aircraft seemed to have experienced Improper Deterioration (G) and was recommended to be returned to the Continental U.S. for reclamation or salvage. This aircraft was ferried back to the U.S. on January 27, 1946, and was then lost to the RFC organization outside the United States Air Force. This was another aircraft to be given a Civilian Registration, NL5016N, in 1946. It was purchased as surplus in June 1947 for \$500.00 by Pat Brandenburg of Metal Products Company, Amarillo, Texas. The aircraft had two more owners beginning in August of the same year: Edward Browder and Arthur Roscoe of Burbank, California. The P-38 was exported to Cuba and operated by the Caribbean Legion on the Cayo Confites base of Movimiento Revolucionaria Dominicana. On August of 1947, the aircraft was taken over by Cuba before being scrapped. The next three aircraft remained

at the Santa Rosa Army Air Force Base after the war until they were ferried to Altus in November of 1945. The Air Base became inactive and closed on January 31, 1946.

***P-38L-5-VN #43-50234.*** This aircraft was transferred to Altus, Oklahoma on November 26, 1945. It was accepted on February 22, 1945 and available on March 3<sup>rd</sup> of the same year. This P-38 was delivered on March 1<sup>st</sup> by the Air Transport Command to the Fourth Air Force via Love Field, Palm Springs and San Rose to the 434<sup>th</sup> Base (BAS) Combat Crew Training (CC), transferred (GB) to the Air Technical Service Command at McClellan 4127 Base Depot (DP), and transferred again to Lemoore 461 Base Unit. The aircraft was transferred back and forth inside the Air Force at San Rosa Air Base. While the aircraft was with the 434<sup>th</sup> Base Unit it was transferred to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) on November 27, 1945 and finally transferred to Altus for disposal arrangements on November 30, 1945.

***P-38L-5-VN #43-50244.*** This P-38 was accepted and available on March 17, 1945 and was delivered on March 19<sup>th</sup> from Nashville to the San Rosa Air Force Base via Palm Springs. It arrived at San Rosa Air Base in California on March 31<sup>st</sup> at the Fourth Air Force 434<sup>th</sup> Base Unit (BAS UT) and transferred (GB) later to the Continental Air Force (CAF) on October 3, 1945. On November 19<sup>th</sup>, this aircraft was transferred outside the USAAF organization to the RFC and was later transferred to Altus, Oklahoma on November 26, 1945 for the purpose of disposition.

***P-38L-5-VN #43-50248.*** This aircraft was accepted and available on March 17, 1945. It left Nashville on March 19<sup>th</sup> for San Rosa and arrived on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March via Palm Springs by the ATC group. Ferried to the Fourth Air Force (4) 414 Base was out of commission (OC) and transferred by the ATC who ferried the aircraft to the CAF. While

the aircraft was with the 434 base unit, the aircraft was transferred outside the USAF on November 19<sup>th</sup> to the RFC. The aircraft was ferried to Altus Air Force Base in Oklahoma in November 23, 1945 for the purpose of disposition.

Having reviewed the IARC reports, the aircraft were separated into three more groups: Kingman AAF base, Con Sal Pastrs, (Panama Canal Zone) and a Miscellaneous Group. In the Canal Zone, the P-38 aircraft could be found at Albrook, Howard, France, and Cristobal Army Air Force Bases.

### **Eight Aircraft to Altus**

The following examples are Individual Aircraft Record Cards for P38L-5-VN from Nashville, Tennessee. All aircraft started at Berry Field in Nashville and were ferried by the Air Transport Command, the 4h Ferrying group from Lunkin Airport near Cincinnati, Ohio. The aircraft, at each arrival point, were involved with Base Unit activities such as combat, tactical, or air crew training before being transferred in or out of the organization. All aircraft were delivered from March 1<sup>st</sup> to May 24, 1945. The last date for an aircraft to arrive at Altus was January 29, 1946. The following tail-numbers correspond to those listed on page 38:

- 1.) #43-50234 ... via Love Field, Palm Springs, Santa Rosa, McClellan, Lemoore and back to Santa Rosa.
- 2.) #43-50244 ... via Barksdale, Pinellas Field and Santa Rosa.
- 3.) #43-50248 ... via Palm Springs and Santa Rosa.
- 4.) #43-50258 ... via Dallas, Love Field, Kelly Field, Brownsville, and Cincinnati before Altus.
- 5.) #43-50269 ... via Dallas, Love Field, Brownsville, and Cincinnati.

- 6.) #43-50309 ... via unidentifiable, Cincinnati and Balboa.
- 7.) #43-50310 ... via unidentifiable, Kelly Field, Brownsville, and Cincinnati.
- 8.) #43-50312 ... via Brownsville and Cincinnati.

Two of these aircraft, #43-50310 and #43-50312, escaped the guillotine at Altus Army Air Force Base for the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and War Asset Administration.

### **Aircraft Departing the United States**

The next group of P-38L-5-VN tail numbers that were classified as “Con Sal Parts” was assigned to the Sixth Air Force as indicated by the code “Bade.” The Air Transport Command stationed out of Cincinnati ferried all of the aircraft from Berry Field of Nashville to locations for departure from the United States. This group was ferried to Brownsville, Texas via Army Air Bases such as Dallas, Love Field, Kelly Field, Memphis, and possibly Little Rock, Arkansas and Barksdale, Louisiana before departing to the Panama Canal Zone. The tail numbers were: P-38L’s #43-50251-57, #43-50259-68, #43-50272-74, #43-50276-78, #43-50280, #43-5082-86, #43-5088, #43-50290, #43-50292, #43-50294, #43-50296, #43-50298, #43-50300-50302, #43-50304-50308, #43-50311, and #43-50313-50322. The above tail-numbers of these P-38L’s served in the Sixth Army Air Force during WWII. There were 57 aircraft with the code “Con Sal Parts” which meant the aircraft had been designated condemned for salvage, and ready for disposition. If the aircraft was designated “disposal,” either for replacement parts or meltdown, then it was removed from the inventory and the Air Force ceased to be accountable for that aircraft, (Mann, P.15) Those aircraft that were ferried to the Panama Canal Zone arrived in Brownsville, Texas through various routes,

not necessarily in the following order before departing the United States: Cincinnati, Allentown, Brevard, Memphis, Barksdale, Little Rock, Tucson, Ellington, Adams Field, Dallas, Love Field, Kelly Field, and Brownsville.

In the list of aircraft that departed the United States to serve with the Sixth Army Air Force, there were 4 P-38L-5-VN's that were retrieved on July 17, 1945. The assignment order was to reassign the following aircraft from the Air Depot to the XXVI Fighter Command. The date of the reassignment occurred after the war in Europe. This information was provided by Archangelo Difante from the Historical Research Agency/Maxwell Air Force Base because of my previous inquiries regarding the aircraft built by Consolidated-Vultee. The tail-numbers are: P-38L-5-VN #43-50273, #43-50296, #43-50300 and #43-50311. Each was marked with an 'E' which indicated that the aircraft had "Fair wear and Tear," due to general or abnormal deterioration in use. The report continues to reassign 4 P-38J's from the Flight Command back to the Air Depot pending disposition instructions. They too, were marked with an 'E' (see Appendix R).

***P-38L-5-VN #43-50267.*** This report is presented as a descriptive analysis of the many aircraft that departed the U.S. It was manufactured by the Consolidated-Vultee for the Sixth Air Force. The aircraft was available on April 6, accepted and delivered on April 7, 1945. It was ferried to Dallas for some modifications. On May 14, the aircraft was available and continued on to Love Field for processing until May 17, and then ferried to Brownsville, Texas on the 18<sup>th</sup>. The aircraft departed the United States on May 20<sup>th</sup> to the Sixth Air Force (Bade). The P-38 was assigned to a foreign project and lost to a location outside the Continental United States. On March 29, 1946 the aircraft was

condemned for salvage and dropped from the USAAF inventory which is similar to #43-50253 IARC report code (see Appendix G).

Of all the 57 aircraft that departed the United States from Brownsville, Texas Harlingen Army Air Force base, 6 were considered Condemned overseas, 5 had a history of accidents, and the other 46 aircraft all have the “Con Sal Partsr,” meaning the aircraft was condemned for salvage or disposition. After V/E day in Europe, personnel were being ferried back to the continent and the P-38’s were shared by six fighter squadrons and 2 were issued to the HHXXVII Flight Command. In Hagedorn’s book “Wings over the Canal” is a descriptive validation that the aircraft were located at Howard and other Air Force bases in Panama after the war. The e-mal from Mr. Hagedorn seems to validate the theory as to where the aircraft were disposed (see Appendix Q). (D. Hagedorn, personal communication, March 5, 2015)

***P-38L-5-VN #43-50301.*** This aircraft was manufactured by Consolidated-Vultee for the Sixth Air Force and was accepted on May 14, available and delivered on May 15, 1945. The aircraft was ferried by the ATC, out of Cincinnati, to Brownsville, Texas via Kelly Field. The aircraft departed the United States on May 31<sup>st</sup> for Balboa, Panama near Howard Army Air Force Base. This aircraft was dropped from the AAF inventory and assigned to a foreign project (FP). It was lost to a location outside the continental U.S. inventory (LT). A report from the Aviation Archaeological Investigation & Research (AAIR) dated August 7, 1945 indicates this aircraft had an accident 3 miles northeast of France Field, Panama.

### **Aircraft to Kingman Air Force Base**

Many of the P-38 aircraft that were built at C-V in Nashville were ferried by ATC to Army Air Force Bases in California, Washington, Idaho, and Utah. When analyzing the data of the IARC codes, each aircraft was flown to 1 of 18 different Air Force bases. In Utah, the aircraft was in Ogden, declared excess and waiting for disposition. In Washington, there were 9 aircraft: 1 each in Wala-Wala and Ephrata, 2 in McChord and 5 in Paine Air Force Bases. In Idaho, there was 1 aircraft that touched down in Gowen AAFB before being transferred to an organization outside the USAAF, the RFC. There were 21 P-38's in much the same situation before being ferried to Kingman Air Force Base for disposition. Next there were 3 aircraft from Charleston AAF base in South Carolina that had been declared excess on November 9, 1945 and were about to be transferred to the RFC. Another P-38 never left Berry Field in Nashville Tennessee. Twelve P-38's were in Air Force bases in California, namely Ontario (4), Lemoore and Sacramento (1 each), San Maria and March (2 each). The most unusual count comes from Cincinnati at Lunken Air Field, with 17 aircraft. Some of these aircraft had been declared excess on November 9, 1945 and eventually transferred out of the USAF inventory to the RFC. While the aircraft were being ferried by the ATC to various locations, personnel met with Basis Units of the Fourth Air Force where assignments in Combat, Tactical, Air, and Gunnery Crew training exercises were practiced with the P-38's available. A chart has been provided with the aircraft's route from Nashville to the assigned location. A simple random sampling of 8 aircraft headed for Kingman, similar to the Altus examples, was utilized picking every fifth tail-number. This is a sample of aircraft that were headed to the Kingman Air Force base at the end of the war.

P-38L-5-VN:

- 1.) #43-50227... Kingman via Memphis, Coolidge, Chico, Paine, and McChord.
- 2.) #43-50236 ... Kingman via Van Nuys, Oxnard, Portland, and Gowen.
- 3.) #43-50245... Kingman via Wright, Chico, Paine, and McChord.
- 4.) #43-50279 ... Kingman via Dallas, Love, Brownwood (?), Kelly, Tucson, McClellan and Cincinnati.
- 5.) #43-50299... Kingman via Chicago, Sacramento, McClellan, and Cincinnati.
- 6.) #43-50323... Kingman via Dallas, Van Nuys, McClellan, and Cincinnati.
- 7.) #43-50328... Kingman via Love, Sacramento, Paine, McClellan and Charleston.
- 8.) #43-50331... Kingman via Cheyenne, Sacramento, McClellan, and Cincinnati.

Except for a few P-38L-5-VN that were salvaged for Civilian Registration, most of the P-38's that were declared excess or transferred out of the USAF, were ferried by the Air Transport Service to Kingman Army Air Force base. According to Rob Chilcoat, historian for Kingman, all P-38's brought to Kingman were chopped up as far as he knew or could remember. Of all the 5,634 aircraft that came to Kingman, the only airplanes that were sold or saved there was 1 PT 13 and 6 or 7 AT 6's.

Of the 113 P-38's made by Consolidated-Vultee (C-V) of Nashville, Tennessee, the following aircraft also received Civilian Registration: P-38L-5-VN #43-50281 which was the nicknamed "Scatterbrain II," P-38L-5-VN #43-50310, and P-38L-5-VN #43-50312. Mr. Brewer, Mr. Blake, and Mr. Walrond's e-mails along with Mr. Grantham's book "P-Screamers" indicated these three aircraft received Civilian Registration after the war. Other P-38's that were constructed by Lockheed of Burbank also received civilian



registrations and are now in various museums throughout the United States and some foreign museums. The specification of these P-38's consist of models 'E', 'F', 'G', 'H', 'J', and 'L' for a total of 46 aircraft (see Appendix S).

*P-38L-5-VN #43-50281.* This aircraft was manufactured by Consolidated-Vultee and delivered on April 24, 1945 to United States Army Air Force at Norton Air Force Base via Dayton Ohio, Memphis, Sheppard---Texas (8618) and Kelly Field for storage. However, the aircraft was retained by the manufacturer for special modifications until July 12, 1945 and then delivered to the San Bernardino Air Technical Service Command at Norton Air Force Base. On September 12<sup>th</sup>, the plane arrived at Wright Field for the Air Material Command. (AMC) By October 1<sup>st</sup>, the aircraft was ferried to San Antonio Air Technical Service Center for the 4121<sup>st</sup> Base Unit. On December 27<sup>th</sup> the P-38 was declared excess and transferred to Kingman, Arizona on January 4, 1946 and subsequently dropped from the USAAF inventory for surplus. Still, aircraft #43-50281 became NX33638, intended for the Bolivian Air Force in 1949, but was not delivered. The aircraft had three civil registrations: N33638, N138X, and N38LL. It served with the Fairchild Aerial Surveys from 1946 to 1963. In September of the same year, Darryl Greenamyer purchased the plane, designed it to resemble Lockheed's 5000<sup>th</sup> P-38J-20-LO known as "Yippee"#44-23296. Greenamyer put the aircraft in the Lancaster Races and it placed fourth. In 1968, Revis Sirmon restored the aircraft and nicknamed it the "Scatterbrain Kid." There was an accident in October 1974, during a landing at Lafayette Airport- Louisiana which resulted in the aircraft being destroyed and the loss of life of the pilot. An old airframe was donated to the Confederate Air Force (CAF) parts from the damaged "Scatterbrain Kid" and parts from a P-38E-41-2260, that had crashed some 20

miles east of Portland, Oregon on March 26, 1943, were used to build the “Scatterbrain Kid II.” The first flight of the new aircraft took place at San Marcos, Texas on February 28, 1992 (Grantham, 1994, p.159). In an e-mail dated August 31, 2013, Steve Blake indicates that “Scatterbrain II,” still having parts from #43-50281, had crashed again on May 28, 1994, and was never reconstructed. It is believed the aircraft was in the Santa Monica “Museum of Flying” in California (Grantham, 1994, P.159). An e-mail from Dan Ryan at the museum writes “We have no information on this.”

***P-38L-5-VN #43-50293.*** This P-38 on May 7, 1945 was accepted by the AAF. It was available on May 7<sup>th</sup> and deliverable on May 8<sup>th</sup> to the Sixth Air Force, again indicated on the IARC report by the code “BADE.” It left Nashville and was ferried by ATC to McClellan Air Technical Service (ATS) via Nashville, Chicago, Portland, Ogden, Cheyenne, Chicago, and what looks like Sac: Sacramento or Strategic Air Command, (Mann, 2008) not likely, since the Strategic Air Command was not organized until March 21, 1946 under General George Kenney (Christy & Cook, 1994). This aircraft left Nashville on May 9<sup>th</sup> and arrived on June 22<sup>nd</sup> at McClellan. The P-38L-#43-50293 was declared excess on November 9, 1945 and transferred to another base unit at McClellan Army Air Force Base (9148). Nine-one-four-eight was code for the McClellan Air Force Base, as multiple cities and air bases were given a numerical code number. On January 1, 1946 the aircraft was ferried to Kingman Air Force Base in Arizona (9852) and was transferred to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC).

After the war, some P-38’s assembled in Nashville Tennessee avoided disposition and acquired civil registration. To begin with, there were the following three tail-numbers which have, among others, a history other than being chopped up. These three aircraft

constructed by C-V were sold as surplus. The P-38L-5-VN-#43-50281 was ferried by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) to Kingman Air Force Base for disposal but the history of that aircraft didn't stop there. The second aircraft was a P-38 Lightning with the tail number #43-50310. This aircraft was returned to the United States on the December 09, 1945 and ferried to the Altus Air Force Base for disposal but was not destroyed. The third aircraft mentioned was a P-38 Lightning with the tail-number #43-50312 and was headed to the Altus Air Force Base by the RFC on December 07, 1945, to be destroyed but was retained from disposition.

### **Miscellaneous Aircraft after the War**

Since there are only 7 aircraft in the Miscellaneous Column, a chart is provided to trace the tail-numbers of these P-38L-5-VN from Nashville to a location just before the war was over. Their longevity and location are slightly ambiguous, so below are a few descriptive examples as the aircraft are declared excess for reclamation, salvage, sold, or disposition. The following P-38L-5-VN tail-numbers are:

- 1.) #43-50233... Left Nashville in June 21<sup>st</sup> headed for Sacramento via an undetermined stop and Long Beach. Declared excess on November 11, 1945. Spent time in McClellan and Cincinnati before ferrying to Kingman by the RFC on December 12 1945
- 2.) #43-50242...Left Nashville in March, 1945 for Santa Maria. The aircraft was classified Reclamation. Aircraft was with the Fourth Air Force having repairs with the 4408 Basic unit and was transferred within the USAAF property. Possibly lost in reconnaissance survey. This aircraft arrived in Santa Maria on March 26, 1945, the last date recorded.

- 3.) #43-50270... Left Nashville for Brownsville on April 13, 1945 via Dallas, Love Field and Brownsville. Departed U.S. on May 20<sup>th</sup> for the Sixth Air Force. The aircraft was ferried by ATC to the Panama Canal Zone. This aircraft is on the list of aircraft in Hagedorn's book "Wings over the Canal." The last recorded date is November 1, 1945. (See Appendix Q)
- 4.) #43-50303... Remained in Nashville and retained at the factory. Beginning on June 12<sup>th</sup> the aircraft was classified reclamation excess on November 13, 1945.
- 5.) #43-50237, one of the aircraft in the miscellaneous column was built by Consolidated-Vultee and was accepted in February 24, 1945. The aircraft was delivered on March 7<sup>th</sup> and was ferried from Nashville to Van Nuys via Little Rock, Dallas, and Van Nuys, California. On March 10<sup>th</sup>, the aircraft was ferried to the Fourth Air Force 441<sup>st</sup> Base Combat Crew Training Center (CC) at Metropolitan Airport. This aircraft suffered an accident on April 4, 1945 at Van Nuys Municipal Airport with Harry J. Mayer Jr. at the controls. On May 10<sup>th</sup> the plane was taken by the Air Transport Service to McClellan Air Force 4127<sup>th</sup> Base Unit Air Technical Service Command (ATS) and found excess to military requirements (SX) at Sacramento (SAC). The aircraft was transferred back on August 11, 1945 to McClellan 4127<sup>th</sup> Base Unit Air Technical Service Center and declared excess. On August 21, 1945 the P-38 was dropped from the AAF inventory by reclamation.

There is still another story that goes with tail-number #43-50237 and that is the aircraft is pictured in Panama. Robert Dorr tells of a pilot by the name of Winton W.

“Bones” Marshall who was in World War II, the Korean, and the Vietnam conflicts. Marshall flew the P-38L #43-50237 aircraft. His dream came true when his squadron moved from the Canal Zone to Panama and the Squadron acquired the P-38 Lightning. Mr. Marshall was a member of the 28<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Squadrons that were equipped with P-39’s and P-38’s. There is a picture of the P-38, tail-number #43-50237 at Chame, Panama in 1945. There is concern as to what happened to the aircraft since it was not on the P-38 list in Hagedorn’s book “Wings over the Canal” (see Appendix Q).

6.) #43-50241 is one of the aircraft that was in the miscellaneous column because it was not considered excess or condemned by the Army Air Force to be ferried to one of the smelting air bases. This aircraft was constructed by Consolidated-Vultee and accepted on February 28, 1945. After a slight delay, the plane was available for pick up on March 16<sup>th</sup> and delivered to the Fourth Army Air Force on March 17<sup>th</sup> at Santa Rosa Air Field. The ATC ferried the aircraft to Santa Rosa via Memphis, Dallas, Long Beach, and an unknown stop-over, before arriving on March 24, 1945.

Upon arrival, the aircraft was ferried to the Fourth Air Force 434 Basic unit for Combat Crew Training. The aircraft had suffered an accident on August 13, 1945 ten mile East of Lakeport, California. On August 14<sup>th</sup>, the 434 Basic Unit recommended a survey due to a crash. The aircraft was then processed for Reclamation on August 21<sup>st</sup>, the process of rebuilding damaged material (Mann, 2008).

Throughout Chapter Two and mostly in Chapter Three, multiple scenarios have been described regarding the aircraft from Nashville were at the end of the war, and what their present location would be at the current time. Examining the dates of each

Individual Aircraft Record Cards, e-mails from recognized authors, and data from military research agencies, theoretically validates the credibility of the phenomenon being studied.

## CHAPTER FOUR – CONCLUSION

Tracing the P-38's from Consolidated-Vultee (C-V) after the war was relatively simple compared to the difficulty in locating the aircraft that survived disposition. There were companies or individuals purchasing aircraft that remained on the continent and those that were ferried to an organization outside the United States Army Air Force. The purpose of the study was to determine what happened to 113 P-38 Lightning aircraft manufactured by Consolidated- Vultee of Nashville, Tennessee in 1945 after World War II and if possible to trace their history from their ferry flight up to the current time. The search for this phenomenon required information from letters of inquiry, military radiograms, individual e-mail correspondence, historical information from various military agencies, photos and a few telephone conversations. This data has been presented in Chapters One and Two. In Chapter Three, the juxtaposition of Army Air Force strategy to acquire 186 P-38's from C-V that departed the United States has developed into a conflicting phenomenon. The best or acceptable solution as to where the aircraft were after the war begins with the following data:

- 1.) The War Department advised the Caribbean Defense Command to store the aircraft in hangars until the Foreign Economic Administration was prepared to handle the disposition of aircraft, but tail-numbers were not provided.
- 2.) The Canal historian Dan Hagedorn, in his book "Alae Supra Canalem," has a complete list of the 57 P-38's on page 172 that served in the Canal Zone air bases.
- 3.) In the same book, there is reference as to the P-38's being assigned to the following Fighter Squadrons: 30<sup>th</sup>, 32<sup>nd</sup>, 43<sup>rd</sup>, 51<sup>st</sup>, which all received 25 aircraft.

The 24<sup>th</sup> F.S. received 20 and the 28<sup>th</sup> received 22 while the HHS XXVI Fighter Command received 2. This makes a total of 144 P-38L's.

There is a question that may provide data in the search and tracing of P-38's after the war. Once the aircraft were shared by all squadrons, did the units take the aircraft with them or did they leave the aircraft for salvage, disposition or disposal at sea? A second Compact Disc (C D) from the HRA/MAFB was received late in June, 2015. The purpose of this C.D. was to seek data of the P-38 aircraft after they were shared with the Fighter Squadrons. Unfortunately, there was no supplemental data offered in the compact disc. There was data for military personnel inquiring about discharging procedures, educational opportunity, overseas duty, combat, et cetera. (HRA/MAFB, p. 68)

By June of 1945, P-38's dominated the 24<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron (FS) after the war. By September, aircraft receiving activities were slowing down. The squadron became inactive on October 15, 1946 and all aircraft were transferred to the 43<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Squadron. The 32<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Squadron was redesignated on May 15, 1942. Part of the squadron became a unit with the XXVI Fighter Command at Howard Field and eventually replaced the 43<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Squadron. At the end of the war, P-38's were stored in hangars and the squadron became inactivated in October 15, 1946. On January 10, 1945, the 43<sup>rd</sup> FS replace the 32<sup>nd</sup> FS at France Field. Flying activities ceased after the war in June of 1945 and became inactivated on October 15, 1946. The 51<sup>st</sup> FS was with the Sixth Army Air Force located at Howard Field, Panama. The FS began receiving P-38's in November of 1944 assigned to the XXVI Flight Command. After the war, the P-38's were stored in a hangar at Howard Field. Again the Fighter Squadron became inactive on October 15, 1946. The P-38 National Association Headquarters located in



March Air Reserve Base prepared a list of P-38's that were in existence in July, 2014.

There are some that are still flyable. Pat and Linda Carry are responsible for updating the list keeping it current. There are 31 P-38 aircraft listed. Unfortunately there are no P-38's listed from the 113 constructed by C-V.

### **Research Question 1 Analysis**

The first question to be analyzed was "Where were the 113 P-38 Lightning aircraft, constructed by C-V, ferried after the war?" After analyzing the aircraft IARC on microfilm, for the 49.6% of the 56 aircraft that remained on the continent, they were, if flyable, ferried to an air base waiting for the guillotine and the disposal procedure into aluminum ingots. The RFC and WAA used the following air bases for Post-War Boneyards: Albuquerque, Altus, Clinton, Davis-Monthan, Kingman, Ontario, Pyote, Robins, Victorville, Victory, and Walnut Ridge (Airplane boneyards, 2014).

The P-38's that remained on the continent from C-V were ferried to Kingman and Altus Army Air Force Base. During their ferry flight, there were a few that touched down in Ontario and Davis-Monthan. Evidence is clear that 56 aircraft concerning the phenomenon being researched were delivered to one of two locations at the end of the war. For those on the continent, the P-38's from C-V that had very low flying hours, were ferried to locations called "Boneyards" and there they were stripped of engines, radios, and armaments before stored disgracefully back to back on their nose until they were pushed in a large furnace or smelter and melted into aluminum ingots

The other 50.4% of the P-38L's that departed the continent for the Canal Zone were part of the Sixth Army Air Force. These 57 aircraft were under the XXVI Fighter Command and when the war was over in Europe, instructions from Washington D.C.

requested that P-38 aircraft be stored in hangars at various air bases in the Canal Zone. Since the aircraft departed the United States, the IARC notes indicate each aircraft were classified as “Con Sal Partrs.” Very little is known of the C-V aircraft in the Canal Zone except for one P-38L-5-VN tail number #43-50237 flown by William “Bone” Marshall. Refer to page 52 for additional information. The Fighter Squadrons for the Sixth Army Air Force may not have dropped a lot of bombs, had dog fights with the Japanese Air Force, but their strategy to defend the Panama Canal Zone is highly commendable.

### **Research Question 2 Analysis**

For the P-38 aircraft from C-V that were on the continent, we already know they were ferried to one of two “Boneyards” Fortunately, there were a few P-38 from C-V that survived Kingman and Altus by being sold for salvage to various individuals or companies. For the P-38L-5-VN constructed by C-V, tail-numbers #43-50310, #43-50312, and #43-50281 had a history from August, 1947, March, 1948 and February, 1992 respectively. After reviewing the IARC data presented in Chapters Two and Three, there was no significant difference in the aircraft that survived the boneyards or later when they were considered excess or prepared for disposition.

### **Discussion and Recommendations**

It is amazing how much military equipment the American people produced during World War II. It may be hearsay evidence, but it has been said the reason the United States won the war is because we over produced the other countries. Our military personnel did a fantastic job defending the country and liberating the oppressed from their aggressor. As the government examined the situation after the war, the decision to return all types of military equipment from their location would be too expensive.

Evidence is clear that the aircraft concerning the phenomenon being researched were in one of two places at the end of the war. Of the 113 P-38's built by C-V, 56 aircraft were ferried to boneyards. The other 57 aircraft that departed the United States to the Canal Zone were stored in hangars.

Therefore, airplanes and other military equipment were scrapped or buried in foreign countries on United States territory air bases. It is rumored aircraft in South America were loaded on barges, taken out to sea and shoved off into the deepest part of Panama Bay. During the war efforts manufacture's produced over 294,000 aircraft, and only about half of these returned to the U.S. It is estimated that 40.4% of the aircraft were stored for a while at boneyards until they were bought for memorabilia or disposed. If they were not sold then the aircraft was stripped, salvaged, or melted. It is disappointing that the P-38's from C-V that were in the Canal Zone, with such limited flight hours, were salvaged. The pilots were war weary and wanted to return home so the aircraft were left in hangars until the Foreign Economic Administration had facilities to handle the process for excess aircraft to be salvaged, sold, buried or melted.

The procedure for securing data was most rewarding due to meeting very interesting people who were researching similar military history. Several were middle aged grand children whose grandparents were either pilots or ground crew member during the war. One individual, whose grandfather was a pilot, was trying to decipher notes from a flight manual. Another family had photos from the 1940's. They were sharing with others whose grandparents were in units together. During the research for P-38's, there were telephone conversations with people who were willing to share information about their experience. One individual, whose parents worked at C-V, sat in

a P-38 cockpit that had stopped at Berry Field for aviation maintenance. The phone conversation lasted several minutes with one individual who was in his eighties and located in Alabama. There were two more phone conversations, one with Rob Chilcoat, a historian from the Kingman Air Force base, and a Mr. Dorr who was researching William “Bones” Marshall, a pilot who flew VN #43-50237 in Panama. There were several e-mails and letters sent to historians and archivists that responded graciously with information about the P-38’s in question.

### **Limitations and Further Research**

The limitation of data is not necessarily a question one researching military history has to confront. However, knowing where to research the subject matter is part of the educational experience, if one knows very little about that topic. All of the material referred to in this research was declassified. In the case of searching for information on the P-38 Lightnings and the Fighter Squadrons in the Canal Zone, the material was seventy years old and had been declassified. The Fighter Squadrons were inactive, deactivated, or possibly redesignated with a name change. The data is available and can be retrieved on line, through e-mails, by researching libraries for military books, museums, the National Archives, the Maxwell Air Force Historical Research Agency, and the Department of the Air Force.

The thing that was a constraint was the limitation of “time.” For example the research could have contained pictures of where the P-38’s were constructed. A request to visit the birth place of the P-38L’s was never approved but sources indicated that there were photos of the facility in the early forties:

1. In researching the IARC reports there was one project that was interesting and that was the number of cities and airfields the P-38's from C-V visited during their ferry flight to a designated location. Most of the traffic was heavy through Texas, while aircraft being ferried to California was directed either through the southwest or mid-America.
2. The other subject area was the different twin-beam aircraft that were appearing after the development of the P-38 Lightning: the North American Twin Mustang, the Vultee XP- 54 Swooze Goose, the Saab J 21RB, the Northrop P-61 Black Widow, and the Arado Ar E. 360.

As the thesis developed, it would have also been meaningful more to have visited the boneyards where some of these aircraft were disposed. There were visitors that mentioned they passed some of these boneyards as they traveled to work every day and visiting some of these would have been informative.

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047.pdf

APPENDICES



## APPENDIX A: Marshall's P-38

## Robert Dorr's "Bones" Marshall Research Project

Many American pilots flew to glory at the controls of the P-38 Lightning, but retired Lt. Gen. Winson W. "Bones" Marshall, 82, of Honolulu, Hawaii, may be the only man who joined the Army Air Forces specifically because he was captivated by the clean lines and high performance of Lockheed's famous fighter. I am working on a biography of Bones, who eventually flew the P-38 but is better known for his service in later wars. I would like to hear from anyone who can provide additional information about P-38 operations in Panama and the Canal Zone in 1945-46.

Dan Hagedorn of the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum says the P-38 was chosen for duty in Panama because possessing the Panama Canal required a long-range fighter with good over-water performance. Dan, the author of a book about wartime air operations in Central America, also says that the first P-38J and L fighters arriving in Panama in April 1945 were high-hour hangar queens that elicited numerous gripes from Headquarters, Sixth Air Force. Dan's book, "Alas Supra Caudam: Wings Over the Canal," is available from Turner Publishing in Paducah, Kentucky and describes the role of the Lightning in Central America, including a crash effort by the Panama Air Depot to get deficient P-38s tweaked up to operational status.

As for Bones Marshall, after getting his wings in April 1943, he initially drew the task of flying an AT-6 Texan used to train aerial gunners.



Retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Winson W. Marshall, P-38 pilot and Korean War ace, at home in Honolulu, July 2001. (Marshall family photo)

Subsequently, he flew the largely unloved P-39 Alacobra in Nevada, Texas and the Canal Zone. His dream of piloting the P-38 came true when his squadron (which had moved from the Canal Zone to Panama) acquired Lightnings in early 1945.

In his career, Marshall also flew the P-47, F-84, F-86, F-102, and other USAF fighters. Among the 40 Americans who became air aces in Korea, he is the one who reached the highest military rank. His 6.5 aerial victories include 4.5 MiG-15s, a Lavochkin La-9 fighter and a Tupolev Tu-2 bomber—all while flying the F-86 Sabre, as a squadron commander in the 4<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing.

"In my mind, the P-38 Lightning was the most beautiful thing I had ever laid my eyes on," Marshall told me in a May 2001 interview. "Every squadron has a pilot who yearned to fly since he was two years old. That wasn't me. It was the late 1930s and I was a young man when it hit me. A war was coming. I saw a P-38 in a movie newsreel. My father took me to an Army airfield, and I saw a P-38 taking off, all sleek and streamlined and beautiful. It was the newest and the greatest, and I said to myself, 'I need to fly that airplane.'"

After service in World War II, Korea and Vietnam (where he was the

second-ranking U.S. airman), Gen. Marshall retired in 1975. He has been active in the American Fighter Aces Association and operates the popular Fightertown website. Marshall was the victim of an apparent robbery and beating in Honolulu on June 7 and may suffer long-term memory and other problems as a result. I've seen him twice since then, and he is working his way through rehabilitation.

I would like to hear from anyone who can add details or provide reminiscences and/or the brief loan of photos of P-38 operations in Central America—or any other aspect of Bones Marshall's many years of service to our country. Robert F. Dorr, 3411 Valewood Drive, Oakton, VA 22124, tel. (703) 264-8950, fax (703) 264-1295, e-mail robertdorr@aol.com. ■

*(Editor's note: Bones Marshall joined the 28<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron in the Canal Zone in February 1945 and later served there with the 32<sup>nd</sup> FS. Both units were equipped with a mixture of P-38s and P-38s. As most of you probably know, Bob Dorr is a preeminent military aviation historian and writer.)*



Wife Millie Marshall stands in front of 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. "Bones" Marshall's P-38 "Mr. Bones" (P-38L-5 serial # 43-50237) at Chama, Panama, in 1943. Millie was a Women Airforce Service Pilot until the WASPs were disbanded in December 1944. (Photo courtesy of Jonathan Chuck)

APPENDIX B: Information on Altus Army Air Force Base

TDS Webmail

Page 1 of 1

TDS Webmail

bitzerg@tds.net

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**War Asset Association Aircraft at Altus**

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**From :** RICHARD S CIV USAF AETC 97 AMW  
GUINAN/HO <richard.guinan.1@us.af.mil>

Fri, Mar 06, 2015 09:38 AM

**Subject :** War Asset Association Aircraft at Altus

**To :** bitzerg@tds.net

**Cc :** 97 AMW/PA <97AMW.PA@us.af.mil>

Mr. Bitzer,

Thank you for your letter, I wish I could provide you with more assistance. While Altus Army Airfield did serve as a location to scrap WWII aircraft, private contractors, first the Reconstruction Finance Corporation in 1945 and then Esperado Mining company in 1947, handled the operations. When they finished in September 1948, the records were either kept with them or turned over to the War Department.

Of all the aircraft scrapped or sold here only two are known for sure. The "Memphis Belle" and the "Lacey Lady." The Belle is currently being restored at the National Museum of the Air Force, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio and the Lady is being restored near Milwaukie, Oregon.

Over the past 15 years as the historian here I have heard a few stories. The estimates of how many aircraft fell to the guillotine here range from 2,500 to 6,000, mostly bombers. From what I understand, the operation at Walnut Ridge handled more of the fighter aircraft.

I wish I could provide you the specifics you are requesting.

Feel free to contact me anytime.

Richard S. Guinan  
Historian  
97th Air Mobility Wing  
Altus AFB, Oklahoma  
Office: (580) 481-5975  
DSN: 866-5975

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APPENDIX C: Eight References from the USAF

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON DC



5 September 2014

Office of Air Force History  
HQ USAF/HOH (Anacostia Annex)  
3 Brookley Avenue, Box 94  
Washington DC 20032-5000

<http://www.afhso.af.mil/>  
(202) 404-2264

George Bitzer  
754 Arbor Springs Drive  
Mount Juliet, TN 37122-8414

Dear George:

This responds to your request for information regarding the status of the 113 P-38L-VN aircraft built by Consolidated Vultee Corporation in Nashville, Tennessee.

The code BADE denotes the Sixth Air Force, while CON means Condemned and SAL means Salvage & Disposal. Once an aircraft was designated for disposal, either for parts recovery or aluminum meltdown, or both, it was removed from accountability.

Normally, regardless of where the aircraft were located, once designated for disposal they were (if flyable) sent directly to a "Boneyard."

I hope that you will find some useful information among the enclosures provided.

The following items are enclosed:

- 1) Book Excerpt – *United States Military Aircraft since 1909, Lockheed P-38, F-4, F-5 Lightning*
- 2) Book Excerpt – *Wings Over the Canal, Sixth Air Force*
- 3) Book Reference – *Aircraft Record Cards of the United States Air Force*
- 4) P-38/F-4/F-5 Production Statistics
- 5) Accidents Involving P-38L Aircraft w/ 43-xxxx Serial Numbers
- 6) Accident Reports – No. 46-2-4-501 & No. 46-8-17-500
- 7) Joe Baugher's Serial Number Records
- 8) Excerpts – Microfilm Roll A4195 – *Sixth Air Force: 1) Aircraft; 2) Disposition of Excess Aircraft*

We do not hire civilians to do research; the History Office is staffed by full time civilian and military members of the Air Force and some volunteers.

Sincerely,

J. A. (Bill) Saavedra  
Colonel, USAF (Ret)

APPENDIX D: Squadron at France Field with P-38

Page 1 of 1



Page 1 of 1





24th Fighter Squadron P-38J Lightning (Squadron #12), France Field, Panama,



1945

APPENDIX E: Aircraft Declared Excess on November 9, 1945

**INDIVIDUAL AIRCRAFT RECORD CARD**

TYPE MODEL SERIES **P-38L** A. F. SERIAL NUMBER **43-50293** MANUFACTURER AND LOCATION **Cons. Vultee, Nashville, Tenn.**

CONTRACT NUMBER **AC-760** FOREIGN SERIAL NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ FINAL DESTINATION IN U. S. \_\_\_\_\_

ALLOCATION BY OR FROM: *Apr 1944* PROJECT OR LEASE ACQUISITION NUMBER **94827A** *Low 9116*

MANUFACTURER'S SERIAL NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

UPPER COLUMN HEADINGS ARE FOR HAND-POSTED OPERATION IN RACKS  
LOWER COLUMN HEADINGS ARE FOR I. B. M. POSTED OPERATION IN VERTICAL CABINETS

LOCATION	ORGANIZATION	RECIPIENT	NEXT DESTINATION	CREATED OR FLT AWAY	CONDITION	DATE	ACTION	REMARKS	
STATION	CORRARD	PARENT UNIT	GAINED FROM OR LOST TO	SERIAL NUMBER		1945	STATION NO.	REMARKS	
Nashville	Cons. Vultee	<i>Base</i>	<i>Nashville</i>		Accepted	5-7			
					Available	5-7			
					Delivered	5-7			
<i>Nashville</i>	<i>etc</i>			<i>7-5 base</i>		5-9			
<i>Chicago</i>				<i>7-4 depot</i>		5-9			
<i>Omaha</i>	<i>200 Oregon ATC</i>		<i>Nashville</i>	<i>7-8 base</i>		5-12			
<i>NY</i>			<i>II</i>	<i>Conquest</i>		6-11			
<i>Denver</i>				<i>10-2 engine</i>		6-12	<i>SD</i>		
<i>Chicago</i>				<i>4-4 engine</i>		6-25			
<i>Chicago</i>				<i>1-1 fuel</i>		6-16			
<i>Inc</i>				<i>4-4 material</i>		6-17			
				<i>7-4 engine</i>		6-19			
				<i>7-4 engine</i>		6-20			
				<i>7-7 engine</i>		6-22			
		<i>Declared Excess - Report</i>		<i>11-9-45</i>					
MCCLELLAN ATC	4187	HASBUTCH	41275	ASUT	P 38L	43	50293	1115	9148
CINCINNATI ATC	FR	DV & URE	(KINGMAN)	P 38L	43	50293	1	9148	
	1	DUYK	10445	NFC	(KINGMAN)	P 38L	43	50293	6

SIGNAL OVER MONTH: GATE - U.S. ORANGE - BRITISH RED - RUSSIAN PURPLE - CHINA BUTCH - TAN BLUE - OTHER

FACTORY MOD - MODIFICATION CENTER DEP - DEPOT STA - STAGING 183 - OBSERVATION 184 - ENROUTE FOR - PORT 500 - GROUND

PLANE: P-38L A. F. SERIAL NO. 43-50293 STATUS: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE REPORTED: \_\_\_\_\_

**AAH**

This aircraft was declared excess in November of 1945 and delivered to Kingman by Reconstruction Finance Corporation in January 4, 1946.



APPENDIX G: The Aircraft Departs U.S. for PCZ

INDIVIDUAL AIRCRAFT RECORD CARD														
TYPE MODEL SERIES		P-38L		A. A. F. SERIAL NUMBER		43-50253		MANUFACTURER AND LOCATION					Cons. Vultee, Nashville, Tenn.	
CONTRACT NUMBER		AC-760		FOREIGN SERIAL NUMBER				FINAL DESTINATION IN U. S.						
ALLOCATION BLOCK PRIORITY NUMBER		447 Pri 1-2		PROJECT OR LEND LEASE REQUISITION NUMBER		942548								
MANUFACTURER'S SERIAL NUMBER														
UPPER COLUMN HEADINGS ARE FOR HAND-POSTED OPERATION IN RACKS LOWER COLUMN HEADINGS ARE FOR I. B. M. POSTED OPERATION IN VERTICAL CABINETS														
LOCATION	ORGANIZATION		RECIPIENT		NEXT DESTINATION		CREATED OR FLY-AWAY	CONDITION	DATE	ACTION	REMARKS			
STATION	COMMAND	PARENT UNIT	SUB-UNIT	GROUP	GAINED FROM OR LOST TO		SERIAL NUMBER		MO DA	STATION NO	CCA	BCU		
Nashville		Cons. Vultee				Dallas		Accepted	8-24					
Memphis		ate						Available	3-27					
Dallas								Delivered	8-24					
Love fld		ate				Balboa		3-2	3-2-1					
Brownsville								4-4	3-25					
								5-15	5-26					
								Quail	5-19					
								21-1	5-16					
								36-5	5-16					
								11-7	5-11					
								Sept 10	5-20					
GINCH IATCHYAC EFMPLT UEP US P 38L 43 50253 520 5381 y BADE CON BAL PARTSR P38L 8 06 43 50253 8 446 32946														

This aircraft was headed to the Sixth Army Air Force in Balboa, Panama via Nashville, Memphis, Dallas, Love Field, and Brownsville before departing the United States. Con Sal Partsr refers to condemned, for salvage of parts.



APPENDIX H: See Page 21 for IARC Report

**INDIVIDUAL AIRCRAFT RECORD CARD**

TYPE MODEL SERIES **P-38L** A & F SERIAL NUMBER **43-50226** MANUFACTURER AND LOCATION **Consolidated Vultee, Nashville, Tenn.**  
 CONTRACT NUMBER **AC-760** FOREIGN SERIAL NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ FINAL DESTINATION IN U. S. \_\_\_\_\_  
 ALLOCATION, BLOCK, PRIORITY NUMBER **Mag Ori 1-4** PROJECT OR LEASE REQUEST NUMBER **Del 30 46** **H**  
 MANUFACTURER'S SERIAL NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

UPPER COLUMN HEADINGS ARE FOR HAND-POSTED OPERATION IN KARDEX  
 LOWER COLUMN HEADINGS ARE FOR I. B. M. POSTED OPERATION IN VERTICAL CABINETS

LOCATION	ORGANIZATION	RECIPIENT	NEXT DESTINATION	CREATED OR PLACED	CONDITION	DATE	ACTION	REMARKS
STATION	COMMAND	PARENT UNIT	SUBUNIT	EVENT	GAINED FROM OR LOST TO	SERIAL NUMBER	MO DA STATION NO. CCA	RCU
Nashville	Cons. Vultee					Accepted Available Delivered Turn 1-12 1-25 1-29 1-31 lpi		
<i>Pelles Ontario</i>	<i>etc</i>					43 50226	131 9159 11	4876
	ONTARIO CAF	443BASSUTGHC AF	443BASSU P JHL			43 50226	1016 9159 11	9150
	ONTARIO CAF	420BASUTGHC AF	443BASFT P JHL			43 50226	1023 9159 11	9159
	ONTARIO CAF	420BASUTLU	RFC P JHL			43 50226	1029 9159 11	9852
		1 31044444444444444444 RFO	KINGMAN P JHL			43 50226		

(4578)

SIGNAL OVER MONTH: GREEN-U.S. ORANGE-BRITISH RED-RUSSIA PURPLE-CHINA BUNCH-DEN MISC-JP/EN  
 FAC: FACTORY REG: REGISTRATION CLAS: DEP-DEPOT STA-STAING INS-INSTALLATION ENR-ENROUTE FOR-FORT GRO-GROUNDED  
 AIRCRAFT DISTRIBUTION OFFICE: A.P.M.E.D. MATTERSON FIELD OHIO FORM EAR 1109

PLANE: P-38L A.C. SERIAL NO. 43-50226 OTHER SERIAL: \_\_\_\_\_ STATUS: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE REPORTED: \_\_\_\_\_  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

This aircraft was the first of 113 P-38 off the assembly line at Consolidated-Vultee and ferried to Ontario Army Air Force in California on January 1, 1945.

APPENDIX I: P-38s Stored in Hangar at Howard Field

28th FS P-38s stored in 51st hangar.jpg - TDS Telecom - ids.net Mail

Page 1 of 1



*Painted*

*INSIDE OUR HANGAR - (28th FS) 71*

APPENDIX J: Reports on P-38s for Sixth Air Force

THIS PAGE IS UNCLASSIFIED

## HEADQUARTERS SIXTH AIR FORCE

II  
AIRCRAFT

PCD Monthly History  
May 1945

The flow of P-38's continued during May with forty-nine P-38L's and one P-38J arriving.<sup>1</sup> Seven of these were received from Hawaii on Project RCS 982,<sup>2</sup> but the remainder were flown from the United States. Early in the month Project 317 was established for fifty P-38's, making a total of 275 allocated to the Sixth Air Force.<sup>3</sup> Although there was no apparent diminishing of the rate of arrival as the month ended, it was presumed that the supply would be shut off when the Air Force reached the fighter ceiling;<sup>4</sup> it appeared that this would occur early in June, as a recapitulation for the end of May shows the following:

Received Sixth Air Force	158
Lost to Survey	<u>6</u>
On Hand Sixth Air Force	152
Enroute from Hawaii	<u>3</u>
Enroute from U.S.	<u>5</u>
Total on Hand or Enroute	170

In May the Air Force also received the following planes:<sup>5</sup>

1. A-3 Periodic Report, 8 June 1945, Secret.
2. Daily Report of 6AF Aircraft, 3 May 1945, Secret.
3. Rad, subj: Weekly Aircraft Project Status, AAF, 1 May 1945, Secret, (A-3 Project File)
4. Rad, subj: Fighter Aircraft Strength Ceiling, AAF, 30 April 1945, Secret, (A-3 Project File)
5. A-3 Period Report, 8 June 1945, Secret.

APPENDIX K: The Disposition of Excess Aircraft

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HEADQUARTERS SIXTH AIR FORCE

III

PCD Monthly History  
June 1945

## DISPOSITION OF AIRCRAFT

Considerable progress was made during the month of June in eliminating surplus aircraft from the Sixth Air Force inventory. A major factor was the receipt of authority from the Federal Economic Administration to salvage 67 F-39's, 18 F-40's, and 2 EC-1's.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the FEA completed the sale of 13 BT-13's and 10 PF-19's to the Venezuelan Government, 2 BT-13's to the Nicaraguan Government, 8 L-4's to the Ciricana Aviation Company, and 3 L-4's and UC-92 to various individuals. As a result of accidents one F-38L and two UC-64A's were dropped from records. Thus, 127 planes were dropped from Sixth Air Force records, leaving a relatively small number of excess planes to be disposed of.<sup>2</sup>

There are only about 4 UC-78's now in the Sixth Air Force which have not been declared excess; these planes are being utilized by the Fighter Command for transition training. The Fighter Command was to be required to determine if these planes are still needed. If not, a check will be made to see if they are needed elsewhere in the command; if replies are negative it is believed advisable to dispose

1. 6AF Aircraft Inventory as of 30 June 1945, Secret, Statistical Control.
2. 6AF A-3 Section History for June 1945, Secret.

UC-64A  
UC-78 (65)

APPENDIX L: Request for Squadrons to Have Like Aircraft

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two mission of six rockets per pilot per month be authorized.<sup>1</sup> In answer, the Army Air Forces explained that rocket production was at present extremely critical but promised that sub-caliber rockets suitable for training would be furnished immediately and that combat rockets would be supplied in the summer of 1945, when production had been accelerated.

However, despite Air Force expectations, the P-38 project had not yet been finally settled. On 15 November word was received that there would be a retarding of the project because of higher operational requirements elsewhere but that about 100 P-38J's and L's, rendered excess by the reequipping of units in Hawaii <sup>the aircraft</sup> but less than six months old and in excellent condition, might be made available.<sup>2</sup> In view of the urgent need for new aircraft, the Air Force approved the suggestion, but asked that an effort be made to equip all the fighter squadrons with one type of airplane, supplementing the allowance of planes from Hawaii from current production and providing for an estimated attrition rate of five planes a month. Meanwhile, nine P-38L's of a total of twenty-seven included in Projects #177, #179, and #180, with a provisional delivery date of November and December, had already arrived in the area from the United States.<sup>3</sup>

*attrition*

*Commander Defense Command*

*EG  
Commanding General  
CDC*

These three Projects were not running a smooth course. Project #179, for nine P-38L's, was completed about 15 November, although one

1. Letter, "Arming of P-38 Aircraft with Rocket Launchers", CG, 6AF - CG, AAF, 23 October 1944 (AG 452.1 Secret #153)
2. Radiogram (W-63292) Arnold - CG, CDC, 15 November 1944 (AG 452.1 Secret #159) 3rd W/Ind. CG. 6AF - CG. PCD. 20 November 1944

APPENDIX M: P-38 Inventory by December 1944

## V

A total of 199 P-38's reached the Sixth Air Force during the war, all but seven of which are identified below. However, although assignment orders show that 43 of these were P-38J's and 149 P-38L's, in fact, the serial numbers for at least six of the aircraft identified as P-38J's were actually assigned to P-38L's. Therefore, the reader is advised to take this into account when totaling the numbers.

Most of the P-38J's received were "second-hand" aircraft, broken down and shipped to Panama after rather hard use in Hawaii. In fact, of the aircraft received from Hawaii, a list of 75 discrepancies per aircraft accompanied the shipment, and at least 30 more turned up upon inspection at the PAD.

The first nine aircraft to arrive were all 'new' P-38L-5's, fresh from the factory, which flew in between the 6th and 15th of November 1944. Sixth Air Force also received two "piggy-back" two-seat P-38L's in December 1944, to aid in the conversion to the type; however, these have not been identified by serial number. The first 10 P-38J's arrived from Hawaii on 31 December 1944.

Of the first 10 P-38L's in the Command, the 51st Fighter Squadron had the honor to receive the first eight for a tactical unit, and these were on strength by the end of December 1944. One other was assigned to IHS, XXVI Fighter Command, and one to the Panama Air Depot to aid in training tech-

APPENDIX N: Additional P-38s Arrive for the Sixth Air Force

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plane crashed soon after its arrival and three more were long delayed on the ferry flight by lack of replacement parts, and Project #177, for two "piggy-back" P-38L's, was completed early in December. But Project #180, sixteen planes, was cancelled in mid-November, to be replaced by Project #190, ten planes (due in February 1945), which was in turn also cancelled.<sup>1</sup>

For the delivery of planes from Hawaii two projects had been set up, ROS #980, twenty-six planes, and ROS #981, thirty-two planes. On 16 December the Air Force was notified by the Commanding General, CG AAFPOA, that the initial shipment of ROS #980, ten planes, declassified aboard the Pan Florida, a tanker, had departed Oahu 12 December, due in Cristobal about 30 December.<sup>2</sup> These planes, P-38J's, actually arrived on 21 December, and the subsequent shipments of ROS #980, fourteen P-38J's and two P-38L's, arrived on 15 January and 19 January. On 10 January the Commanding General, AAFPOA, announcing the completion of this project, stated that future shipment of P-38 aircraft to the Canal Zone would depend upon the availability of tankers departing for Cristobal,<sup>3</sup> and on 12 January he radioed that Project #981 would be delayed at least until after 15 February because of the delay in arrival of P-51's in Hawaii.<sup>4</sup>

1. Radiogram (WAR 66297) Arnold - CG, CDC, 21 November 1944 (AG 452.1 Secret #161)
2. Radiogram (AAFPOA 13121) CG, AAFPOA - CG, CDC, 16 December 1944 (AG 452.1 Secret #173)
3. Radiogram (AAFPOA 5134) CG, AAFPOA - CG, CDC, 10 January 1945 (AG 452.1 Secret #4)
4. Radiogram (AAFPOA 0494) CG, AAFPOA - CG, CDC, 12 January 1945 (Not in AG file)

APPENDIX O: Refer to Chapter Two Page 30

Nevertheless the flow of P-38's continued during May, with forty-nine P-38L's and one P-38J arriving,<sup>1</sup> seven from Hawaii on Project RCS #982 but the remainder coming from the United States direct. In addition, Project #317 for fifty P-38's was established by a radio on 1 May, making a total of 275 P-38's allocated to the Sixth Air Force.<sup>2</sup> But although there was no apparent diminishing of the rate of arrival, it was assumed that the supply would be shut off when the Air Force reached the fighter ceiling, perhaps early in June, for a recapitulation of planes either on hand or known to be en route showed:

dissipated.<sup>1</sup> Almost immediately the effect of the cancellation was apparent, and a recapitulation of projects indicated that the supply of P-38's was tapering off. [During June 47 P-38L's and one P-38J arrived, thirteen by boat from Hawaii, completing Project RCS #982, the rest from the United States,<sup>2</sup> and an Air Force inventory made at the end of the month showed 199 P-38's, 13 over the authorized fighter strength.<sup>3</sup> The following month the entire program for reequipping the fighter squadrons was brought to completion, and all P-39's and P-40's remaining in the hands of the squadrons were turned over to the Air Depot pending instructions for their disposition.<sup>4</sup>

W/1  
A/W/1

*This material is provided by the Department of the Air Force, Washington D.C.*



## APPENDIX P: Military Boneyards after WWII

### **Military Airplane Boneyards and Scrapping Depots After World War II**

Military aircraft played a key role in the United States's victory over enemy forces in World War II.

However, once peace was assured, the military found itself with a huge surplus of aircraft. The United States had manufactured about 794,000 aircraft for the war effort. Of that number, 21,583 (7.34%) were lost in the United States in test flights, ferrying, training accidents, etc., and 43,581 were lost en route to the war and in overseas operations.

By 1944 the U.S. Foreign Economic Administration began a program to scrap certain obsolete, damaged and surplus military aircraft overseas. Following the war, estimates of the number of excess surplus airplanes ran as high as 150,000. Consideration was given to storing a substantial number of airplanes, but the realization that the expense to store them was too great ... many needed to be sold or scrapped.

Some U.S. military aircraft overseas were not worth the time or money to bring back to the States, and were consequently buried, bulldozed or sunk at sea. Most, however, were returned home for storage, sale or scrapping.



Curtiss P-40 Warhawk fighters stacked vertically at Walnut Ridge, Arkansas after World War II (Photo by the Walnut Ridge Army Flying School Museum)

#### **What to Do with Tens of Thousands of Surplus Aircraft**

Within a year of the signing of peace treaties, about 34,000 airplanes had been moved to 30 locations within the U.S. The War Assets Administration (WAA) and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) handled the disposal of these aircraft.

The RFC established depots around the country to store and sell surplus aircraft. By the summer of 1945, at least 30 sales-storage depots and 23 sales centers were in operation. In November 1945, it was estimated a total of 117,210 aircraft would be transferred as surplus.

A study was conducted to determine the most cost effective way to dispose of planes; it was determined that too many man-hours were required to dismantle planes for parts, and the cost for storage areas for the parts was too high.

So the method of "salvage and melt" was adopted. Main components such as engines, armament, instruments and radios were removed from each plane. The remainder of the aircraft was cut into pieces, and pushed in a large furnace, or smelter. Aluminum was the prime metal sought after, melted and poured into ingots for sale and shipping.



#### **Post WWII Boneyards**

- [Aircraft Boneyards & Depots after WWII](#)
- [Long-Term Storage After WWII](#)

APPENDIX Q: P-38s with Eleven Months Service

1. This page is from Hagedorn's "Wings over the Canal" in the P C Z.
2. Notice the list of P-38's from C-V.
3. The next page is an e-mail describing the disposition of P-38's after the war.



*The fate of virtually all Sixth Air Force Lockheed P-38J and P-38L "Lightnings," which saw only 11 months service in Sixth Air Force before being scrapped en masse. The distinctive circled letters on the fus of these aircraft represented Squadrons of XXVI Fighter Command (via Kevin Grantham)*

*26th FC by Kevin Grantham*

**Sixth Air Force P-38 "Lightnings"**

P-38J's:	"44-2336"	"44-23032"	44-23065	44-23072
44-23078	44-23081	44-23082	44-23089	44-23091-23094
44-23096	44-23097	44-23101	44-23104	44-23105*
44-23107	44-23108	44-23110	44-23111	44-23118
44-23120	44-23123	44-23124	44-23127	44-23330
44-23332	44-23340	44-23346	44-23348	44-23364
44-23368	44-23373	44-23376	44-23381	44-23383
44-23992*	44-24001*	44-24015*	44-24018*	44-24463*
44-24532*				

NOTE: The aircraft identified above with an asterisk (\*) were listed on assignment orders as P-38J's but were, in fact, P-38L-VN's.

P-38L's:	43-50252-50267	43-50269-50278	43-50280	43-50282-50286
43-50288-50296	43-50292	43-50294	43-50296	43-50298
43-50300-50302	43-50304-50322	44-24014	44-24027	44-25159
44-25171	44-25183	44-25236	44-25239	44-25244
44-25249	44-25256	44-25291	44-25461	44-25462
44-26148	44-26355	44-26363	44-26370	44-26549-26552
44-26553	44-26554	44-26558	44-26594	44-26596
44-26602-26608	44-26611	44-26780	44-26784-26786	44-26788
44-26789	44-26792-26796	44-26798-26814	44-26816-26825	44-26828-26830
44-26832	44-26835	44-26836	44-26841	44-26842
44-26849	44-26851	44-26854		

TDS Webmail

bitzerg@tds.net

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**RE: P-38's over the canal**

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**From :** Dan Hagedorn  
<DHagedorn@museumofflight.org>

Thu, Mar 05, 2015 12:36 PM

**Subject :** RE: P-38's over the canal

**To :** George Bitzer <bitzerg@tds.net>

Good Morning Mr. Bitzer,

Thank you so much for finding me and contacting me about one of my favorite research subjects, aviation in defense of the (former) Panama Canal Zone. This is something that does not happen as often as I would like!

Unfortunately, when the war ended, nearly all of the remaining Sixth Air Force fighter units were equipped with P-38Ls and, as crews were released from activity duty to return home, there simply were not enough qualified pilots left to ferry these relatively low-time aircraft back to the Zone of the Interior (Continental United States), nor the institutional imperative to do so. The surviving aircraft were ignominiously stacked on their noses, back-to-back and scrapped, although some (according to locals) were placed on barges, taken out into the very deep Bay of Panama, and shoved off into the depths. None survived.

"Alae Supra Canalem" was supposed to still be in print with the lineal Turner successor organization, but that does not appear to be the case, and I fear that the only recourse is to locate used copies via such on-line sites such as Amazon Used Books. I have heard that these are commanding rather amazing prices of late, however! The book remains one of my proudest accomplishments amongst my 18 titles thus far

Dan Hagedorn | Curator and Director of Collections  
Museum of Flight  
9404 East Marginal Way S  
Seattle, WA 98108  
206-764-5738  
[www.museumofflight.org](http://www.museumofflight.org)

-----Original Message-----

APPENDIX R: Aircraft Assignment Order

HEADQUARTERS SIXTH AIR FORCE

Z-104

APO 825,  
c/o Postmaster, New Orleans, La.,  
17 July 1945

AIRCRAFT ASSIGNMENT ORDER )  
:  
NUMBER . . . . .121 )

1. The following listed aircraft are hereby reassigned from the Air Depot, APO #825, to the XXVI Fighter Command:

- P-38L-5-VN Aircraft, Army Air Forces Serial Number 43-50273 *E*
- P-38L-5-VN Aircraft, Army Air Forces Serial Number 43-50296 *E*
- P-38L-5-VN Aircraft, Army Air Forces Serial Number 43-50300 *E*
- P-38L-5-VN Aircraft, Army Air Forces Serial Number 43-50311 *E*

2. The following listed aircraft are hereby reassigned from the XXVI Fighter Command to the Air Depot, APO #825, for Type C storage:

- P-38J-15-LO Aircraft, Army Air Forces Serial Number 44-23089 *E*
- P-38J-15-LO Aircraft, Army Air Forces Serial Number 44-23092 *E*
- P-38J-15-LO Aircraft, Army Air Forces Serial Number 44-23093 *E*
- P-38J-15-LO Aircraft, Army Air Forces Serial Number 44-23097 *E*

BY COMMAND OF BRIGADIER GENERAL DeFORD:

JOHN M. SCHWEIZER, JR  
Lt Col, General Staff Corps  
Acting Chief of Staff

OFFICIAL:

*(1) Stone*  
W. STONE  
Major, AGD  
Asst AG

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- File. . . . . 1
- C of M, AD, APO #825. . . . . 2
- Base Op, APO #825. . . . . 2
- DSO, AD, APO #825, Attn Stat Sect . . . 1

## APPENDIX S: The P-38 had Several Variants

### The P-38 Lightning was produced throughout the second world war

The Lockheed P-38 Lightning was a World War II American fighter aircraft built by Lockheed. Developed to a United States Army Air Corps requirement, the P-38 had distinctive twin booms and a single, central nacelle containing the cockpit and armament. Named "fork-tailed devil" by the Luftwaffe and "two planes, one pilot" by the Japanese, the P-38 was used in a number of roles, including dive bombing, level bombing, ground-attack, photo reconnaissance missions, and extensively as a long-range escort fighter when equipped with drop tanks under its wings.

The P-38 was used most successfully in the Pacific Theater of Operations and the China-Burma-India Theater of Operations as the mount of America's top aces, Richard Bong (40 victories) and Thomas McGuire (38 victories). In the South West Pacific theater, the P-38 was the primary long-range fighter of United States Army Air Forces until the appearance of large numbers of P-51D Mustangs toward the end of the war. The P-38 was unusually quiet for a fighter, the exhaust muffled by the turbo-superchargers. It was extremely forgiving, and could be mishandled in many ways, but the rate of roll was too slow for it to excel as a dogfighter. The P-38 was the only American fighter aircraft in production throughout American involvement in the war, from Pearl Harbor to Victory over Japan Day.

### P-38E/F | P-38G | P-38H | P-38J | P-38L SPECIFICATIONS

#### Named Aircraft

23 Skidoo	Putt Putt Maru
California Cutie	Ruff Stuff
Glacier Girl	Relampago
Jap Sandman	Scatterbrain Kid
Joltin Josie	Scatterbrain Kid II
Marge (N3800L)	Scrapiron IV
Marge	Tangerine
Pudgy V	White Lightnin

#### P-38E/F Lightning

41-2048 (W-62)	42-12652 (R-02)	42-13105 (P-92)
41-7630 (A-07)	42-13084 (S-02)	43-2181 (W-47)
42-12647 (S-02)		

#### P-38G Lightning

42-12847 (P-02)	42-13400 (D-07)
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#### P-38H Lightning

42-66841 (D-07)	42-66905 (T-88)
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#### P-38J Lightning

42-67543 (W-96)	42-67762 (D-11)	42-104088 (S-02)
42-67574 (C-50)	42-103988 (R-02)	44-23314 (A-07)
42-67638 (D-07)		

#### P-38L Lightning

43-50281 (W-74)	44-27183 (A-04)	44-53097 (D-07)
44-24788 (Z-47)	44-27205 (W-64)	44-53180 (W-57)
44-25786 (S-02)	44-27207 (A-46)	44-53186 (D-06)
44-26670 (C-04)	44-27231 (A-07)	44-53193 (W-97)
44-26761 (R-02)	44-27254 (A-46)	44-53232 (D-05)
44-26961 (W-93)	44-53015 (D-02)	44-53236 (D-11)
44-26969 (W-97)	44-53078 (W-90)	44-53242 (S-02)
44-26981 (A-10)	44-53087 (D-07)	44-53247 (W-90)
44-27053 (D-02)	44-53095 (R-07)	44-53254 (R-07)
44-27083 (D-02)		