



Colonel Clarence E. “Bud” Anderson

Military Combat

Enshrined 2008, 1922-Present

As a fighter pilot with over 7,500 hours logged in over 130 types of aircraft, Bud Anderson once named his top three aircraft. The P-51, he said, because, “it’s a beautiful aircraft, flies like it looks, and the Merlin engine has an incredible sound.” He considers the F-86 “the fighter pilot’s fighter.” And the F-15, “Well, it has all the latest bells and whistles.” But when comparing the aircraft of the 1940s to today technical marvels, he exclaimed, “My, what I would have given for a GPS during World War II!”

- Anderson served two combat tours in Europe, flying 116 missions the P-51 Mustang and was a triple ace.
- During Vietnam, he commanded the 355th Tactical Fighter Wing, flying F-105s on bombing strikes against enemy supply lines.
- Anderson was decorated 26 times for his military service.

Biography

Born in Oakland, California January 13, 1922, he spent his early years on a farm near Newcastle, California. When he was 7, his father took him to a small dirt airfield where he got his first ride in a Stearman biplane. It was intoxicating, exciting and a little frightening Anderson recalls. Anderson learned to fly at age 19, while attending college in 1941, through the Civilian Pilot Training Program.

In January 1942, he entered the U.S. Army Aviation Cadet program, earning his wings and commission in September 1942.

During World War II, Anderson served two combat tours, escorting heavy bombers over Europe in the P51 Mustang. He served with the 357th Fighter Group, 363rd Fighter Squadron, in the 8th Air Force from November 1943 through January 1945. He had flown 116 combat missions – 480 hours – and destroyed more than 16 enemy aircraft in aerial combat and one more on the ground.

After being assigned recruiting duties, Anderson was all too happy to leave the desk flying behind him when he received his orders to report to Wright Field. His first assignment was 6 months in Alaska, cold weather testing the F-82. Returning to Ohio, he was assigned to Experimental Test Pilot School and following graduation was assigned to the Fighter Test Pilot Section.

From 1948 through 1953, Anderson was a fighter test pilot and later became Chief of the Fighter Flight Test Section at Wright Patterson. He flew many models of the early jet aircraft and was involved in some very unusual flight test programs. He made the first flights during an experimental program to couple aircraft together at the wing tips while in flight. The purpose was to gather data to prove a concept of increasing the range of an aircraft by attaching free floating panels that would carry fuel to the wing tips.

The first experiments were conducted using a Q-14 aircraft coupling with a C47A transport in 1949 at Wright Patt. In 1950, the full-scale program was conducted to obtain information to confirm that it would work. A B29 bomber was used with two F84D jet fighters attached at the bomber wing tips. Again, Anderson made the first flights.

Later in 1952, at the Convair facility at Carswell Air Force Base in Texas, Anderson participated in the flight tests to develop a parasite jet fighter to be carried by the large long range B36 bomber. He made the first flight and essentially the entire test flying to develop the launching and retrieving trapeze mechanism on the RB36.

From 1957 through 1965, Anderson was assigned to the Air Force Flight Test Center at Edwards Air Force Base in California where he served as Chief, Flight Test Operations and later as the Deputy Director of Flight Test. In this role, he flew the Century series of fighter aircraft and all other types of aircraft in the Air Force inventory during these flight test programs.

Other highlights of Anderson's 30 years of military service include duty as Commander of an F86 Fighter Squadron in post war Korea. He was Commander of an F105 Tactical Fighter Wing on Okinawa. At the Pentagon, he served two assignments, first as an advanced Research and Development planner and then as Director of Operational Requirement. In Southeast Asia, he was Commander of the 355th Tactical Fighter Wing where he flew the F105 in bombing strikes against enemy supply lines.

After retirement from the Air Force in 1972, he joined the McDonnell Aircraft Company. He served for 12 years as Assistant Manager and then Manager of the company's Flight Test Facility at Edwards.

His formal education included the Sacramento Junior College and George Washington University in 1962. Anderson's military education includes the Air Command and Staff College and the U.S. Army War College.

Anderson co-authored a book titled *To Fly and Fight: Memories of a Triple Ace*, in 1990. The book was described as "the finest pilot memories of World War II" by the historian of the Air Force.

Colonel Anderson was decorated 25 times. His awards include two Legions of Merit, five Distinguished Flying Crosses, 16 Air Medals, the Bronze Star and the French Croix De Guerre.

Anderson is now fully retired. He and his wife of 63 years, Eleanor, live in the California foothills. He is an avid fisherman and hunter, and occasionally gets airborne in "Old Crow," a P51 painted exactly like his World War II fighter.

For service to his country as an "Ace" fighter pilot, combat leader, and as a jet age test pilot, Colonel Clarence E. "Bud" Anderson has earned his place in the National Aviation Hall of Fame.

Source : The National Aviation Hall of Fame

