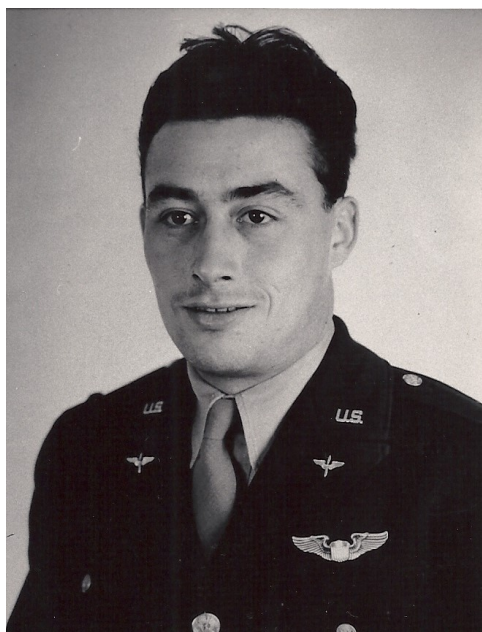


GILLETTE, Willard G.

“G.I.”

B: 11 May 1918 Ottawa, KS

D: 20 November 2019 San Jose, CA



“I closed to about 150-175 yards at 12-15° and fired. I looked at my altimeter and showed 2700 feet and airspeed 450 plus. I saw strikes in the rear of his fuselage and tail and he rolled into a vertical dive. I broke off because I saw some kites behind me and there were more 109's in the area.”

- Willard Gillette, from his combat report of 7 July 1944

Hometown: Homewood, Kansas

Rank: 1st Lieutenant

MOS: 1055 - Pilot, single engine fighter

Unit: 334th Fighter Squadron

Aircraft:

P-51C-1-NT 42-103292 QP-B *Betty Lou*

P-51D-5-NA 44-13673 QP-B

P-51D-5-NA 44-13884 QP-B

P-51D-5-NA 44-13372 QP-B

P-51D-5-NA 44-13984 QP-B

4th Service: 1 May 1944 – 25 October 1944

21 JUN 44 Participated in Operation FRANTIC II, the Russia Shuttle mission. (RTB 5 JUL)

25 JUN 44 Promoted to 1st Lieutenant

Victories:

4.5 (3 air/ 1.5 ground)

Post 4th Fighter Group:

1945 Assigned 2539th BU at Foster Field, Texas

1946 Flight Instructor; evaluated returning POW's abilities to recommend if they could return to flying status

1951-60 Contracted by the USAF as a Primary Flight Instructor

1968-84 Senior Flight Instructor, Japan Airlines

1978 Retired from USAFR as a Lieutenant Colonel

23,000 hours flight time

Decorations:

Distinguished Flying Cross (OLC), Air Medal (4 OLC), Presidential Unit Citation, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, American Campaign Medal.