

BLAKESLEE, Donald J.M.

“Colonel Don”

B: 11 September 1918 Fairport Harbor, OH

D: 3 September 2008 Miami, FL



"He was of medium height and build, with wavy brown hair, and pinned you with a penetrating gaze from steel-gray eyes which, if not accompanied by a smile, made one decidedly uncomfortable. He was all business...I've often wondered which scared us most on that first mission, meeting the Germans or displeasing Col. Blakeslee."

- Lt. Col. Richard Turner, from his book *Big Friend, Little Friend*, on his first impressions of Col. Blakeslee

Hometown: Fairport Harbor, Ohio

Rank: Colonel

MOS: 1013 - Air Base Commander

Unit: 335th Fighter Squadron

336th Fighter Squadron

4th Headquarters Squadron

Aircraft:

Spitfire Mk VB BL545 MD-

Spitfire Mk VB BL776 MD-C

P-47D-1-RE 42-7863 WD-C

P-51B-7-NA 43-6437 WD-C

P-51B-10-NA 42-106726 WD-C

P-51B-15-NA 42-106940 WD-C

P-51D-5-NA 44-13779 WD-C

4th Service: 29 September 1942 – 19 November 1944

29 SEP 42 Promoted to Captain

22 NOV 42 Transferred to 335th Fighter Squadron
Appointed Squadron Commanding Officer

12 JAN 43 Promoted to Major

19 MAY 43 Promoted to Lieutenant Colonel

Transferred to 4th Headquarters Squadron

Designated Group Executive Officer and
Group Operations Officer

10 JUL 43 Relieved as Group Executive Officer;
remains Group Operations Officer

1 DEC 43 Assigned to 354th Fighter Group to
instruct group on P-51 tactics (TD)

1 JAN 44 Appointed Commanding Officer, 4th Fighter
Group and USAAF Station F-356

8 MAR 44 Promoted to Colonel

21 JUN 44 Leads Group on Operation FRANTIC II, the
Russia Shuttle mission (RTB 5 JUL)

7 SEP 44 Departs station for leave in U.S (returns
20 OCT)

3 NOV 44 Relieved as Group and Station Commanding
Officer

19 NOV 44 Departed Debden for the U.S.

Victories:

16 (14.5 air / 1.5 ground)

Highlights:

22 APR 44 - 2 ME-109's

24 APR 44 - 1.5 FW-190's

Post 4th Fighter Group:

5 JUL 46 - Transferred to the Regular Army with the
rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

7 DEC 50 - Commanding Officer 27th Fighter-Escort
Group (until 3 MAR 51).

6 JUL 52 - Commanding Officer 27th Fighter-Escort
Wing (until 3 MAR 54).

15 MAR 63 Promoted to Colonel.

30 APR 65 Retires from the Air Force.

Decorations:

Distinguished Service Cross (OLC), Silver Star (OLC),
Distinguished Flying Cross (7 OLC), British
Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal (9 OLC),
Distinguished Unit Citation (OLC), Legion of Merit,
European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, World
War II Victory Medal, British 1939-45 Star, U.N.
Korean War Service Medal, Korean War Service Medal,
National Defense Medal.