

IT IS NOW THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF CHARLES A. LINDBERGH'S FAMOUS SOLO FLIGHT ACROSS THE ATLANTIC. HOWEVER,

# LINDBERGH

FEW PEOPLE REALIZE THAT THE AVIATOR FLEW "UNOFFICIAL" COMBAT MISSIONS

THIS IS THE A VETERAN

DURING WWII.

STORY OF LINDBERGH'S BATTLE WITH JAPANESE AVIATOR WRITTEN BY A P-38 PILOT THAT WAS THERE

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# THE KILL

The distinctive rumble of Allison V-1710-89/-91 V-12s emanating from the coral rimmed fighter revetments at Mokmer airstrip gradually died away. Heavily laden fuel trucks rolled into position before each of the twin-tailed fighters, and a "gasser" handed up a hose to each individual crew chief who topped off the aircraft's tanks. The Lockheed P-38J-10-LOs and J-15-LOs of the 433rd Fighter Squadron were ready for combat. It was 28 July 1944. The place was Biak Island of the Schouten Islands off the northern coast of Dutch New Guinea.

From 4 am on, sleep had become difficult if not impossible for the pilots of the 475th Fighter Group, even though their newly established permanent campsite near Sorido Village was a full 1.5-mi from the air-drome complex. One of those reluctantly accepting the inevitable necessity of arising was a taciturn civilian advisor whose angular frame, when fully extended, was almost too long for his Army cot. He bunked in the tent of Lt. Col. Charles MacDonald, the commanding officer of the 475th — Satan's Angels — and he heard, as did MacDonald, the approach of the corporal whose duty it was to rouse those pilots not fully awake. In the pre-dawn darkness, the enlisted man called out, "Colonel MacDonald? Colonel MacDonald, sir? It's time to get up, sir."

"Okay," came the perfunctory reply from the man who was to become the third highest scorer in the 5th Air Force with 27 victories. He pulled back the mosquito bar so carefully tucked around his air mattress the night before and placed his bare feet on the cold, rough hewn boards of the tent floor.

"You ready to go, Charles?" he queried of the vague outline on the nearby cot.

"Yes."

Lights flickered on along headquarters row as a portable generator began to chatter. MacDonald studied his companion by the feeble glow of the lamp in their tent. Charles Augustus Lindbergh, Jr., the last of the great American heroes, rolled to a sitting position and groped for his moist clothing.

Superb photograph of Charles Lindbergh returning from a flight in Richard Bong's Lightning.