



**Major Carl H. Leo
Commander
416th Fighter Bomber Squadron
Chambley Air Base France**

Carl was born in Mjolby Sweden May 4th 1920. His family came to America when he was about 1 year old. His family lived in Kansas City, Mo. where Carl went to school at Rosedale High School. After graduation Carl was asked to leave the house. Carl and a friend rode trains for 3 days without eating and joined the Calvary in Huston Texas.



Soon after he was sent to Air Corp training Flying on the Stearman PT-13 in Santa Ana Ontario, California. The PT-13 was typical of the biplane primary trainer used during the late 1930s and WW II. Whereas it was powered by a Lycoming engine, the same airplane with a Continental engine was designated the PT-17, and with a Jacobs engine, the PT-18. A later version which featured a cockpit canopy was designated the PT-27. While stationed in Santa Ana, California he met Melba Lee. He was then sent to Honington England on Feb 24th 1944 where he flew P-38 and P-51s in the 364th FBS 384th Group.

After flying a bomber escort on March 5th, 1944 Carl's aircraft received multiple gun shots from the enemy damaging his aircraft so severely that it lost the hydraulics system forcing him to bail out of his P-38 into the English Channel. Luck was with him that day because he was saved by the English Coast Patrol.

Carl flew seventy combat missions logging two hundred and seventy Combat hours with one recognized and many probable enemy kills.

After the war Carl returned to the Santa Ana, California and married Melba Lee. The wedding took place on Jan 26th 1944.



After he was married Carl started to train pilots for the Air Reserve. He also was retrained and became proficient on jet aircraft and flew the P-



80 also known as the Shooting Star. Few airplanes in the history of aeronautics have been as successful as the Lockheed Shooting Star. It was the first operational jet fighter in the United States when it went into service in 1945. It emerged as victor in the world's first all-jet combat, and it won the

distinction of remaining in production for a full 15 years after the experimental model was first flown.

Carl became a Flight Commander on this aircraft and was assigned to Okinawa from July 17, 1948 to October 1949.

He returned to the USA in late 1949 and was assigned as a squadron commanding officer at Pope Air Force Base Fayetteville, North Carolina. Pope is located next to Fort Bragg, North Carolina and is well known for its support of the US Army Airborne, Rangers and Special Forces. Carl was assigned to Pope from 1950 until late 1953.



He was then reassigned to George Air Force Base in Victorville, California to the 21st Fighter Bomber Wing. He was the Commander of the 416th Fighter Bomber Squadron and flew his F-86 Sabre Jet with his Squadron to France in 1954.

Carl's son Terry was born in Chambley Air Base France in 1955.

The 416th Fighter Bomber Squadron was awarded the Meritorious Achievement in flight safety for the period July 1955 to July 1957. This squadron flew throughout Europe to include North Africa, Greenland and France as well as Nellis, Nevada without an accident during this period. The photo to the right is a picture of the Flight Safety Award that they received.



The 416th was part of the 21st Fighter Bomber Wing that participated in the Atomic Warfare exercise "Carte Blanche," and went on to take an overall second place in the Nellis AFB, Nevada "Gunnery Meet" in 1956. Moreover, they won the United States Air Force European "Award for Tactical Proficiency" for the January-June period of 1957.

In 1957, the French Government decreed that all nuclear weapons and delivery aircraft had to be removed from French soil by July 1958. As a result, the F-86's of the 21st Fighter Bomber Wing had to be removed from France.

During October 1957 it was announced that the 21 FBW would be inactivated and Carl was reassigned to Hamilton Air Force Base, California.



When he arrived at Hamilton AFB Carl was assigned as Squadron Operations Officer in the 83rd Fighter Interceptor Squadron. This was the first operational squadron of F-104 Starfighter's a single-engine, high-performance, supersonic interceptor aircraft.

On August 23, 1958, Mainland China began massive artillery shelling of Quemoy, a tiny group of

islands off the Mainland China coast but was still held by the Nationalist China Government in Taiwan. US did not want to get into another conflict with Mainland China but was committed to defense Taiwan in the 1954 Mutual Defense Treaty. In the earlier conflict between Mainland China and Taiwan in 1955, Mainland China had captured the Tachens Islands 220 miles north of Taiwan off the coast of Mainland China. In response to the shelling of Quemoy in August 1958, US ordered the 7th fleet into the Taiwan Straits, expedited military aids to Taiwan and provided naval escort of Nationalist re-supply ships to Quemoy up to the 3 miles limit. To help defending Taiwan from any Mainland China air attacks, US Army Air Defense Command 2nd missile battalion's Nike Hercules surface-to-air missile systems were sent to Taiwan in October 1958. In addition, 12 F-104As from the USAF Air Defense Command were also sent to Taiwan. These F-104A's were not transferred to Taiwan Air Force but remained under the control of USAF's Air Defense Command. Carl flew one of the F-104's during this operation.



From 1959 through 1960 Carl was sent to be Squadron Commander at three different places. Kingley Field Oregon where he flew the F-101 Voodoo; Malstrom Air Force Base, Montana and Stewart Air Force Base, New York.

The photo shown here is a picture of Carl standing on the ladder of his F-101 while stationed at Kingley Field Oregon in 1959.

Carl attended the War College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama from 1961 to 1962. After his graduation Carl was sent to Vietnam as an advisor and as Director of Combat Operations. He trained the Republic

of Vietnam (RVN) soldiers in tactical air operations during this assignment from 1963 to 1964.

In September of 1965 until June of 1967 Carl was assigned as the Director of Combat Operations, First Air Force, Stewart Air Force Base, New York. He was responsible for combat training and effectiveness of the Combat Center for First Air Force located throughout the east coast.

After Stewart he was re-assigned to Adair Air Force Station, Oregon where Carl was Director of Operations and the last commanding officer when the Station closed in 1969.



Carl retired from the United States Air Force in 1970 as a Colonel.

After retirement Carl and his family moved to Eugene, Oregon where he played golf and entered the real estate business. Carl H. Leo passed away in 1974.

His son Terry was in Junior High School when his father passed so he never had the opportunity to talk about the war with his father but he could remember the feeling when news of Vietnam would come on the television. He also remembers the feeling he had when the Cuban Missile crisis raised its ugly head.

Two things that Terry found after the death of his father was a drawer full of his father's medals, that he had never seen and a trunk full of papers and pictures including his father's flight log book from World War Two. Terry Leo still gets chills whenever he holds the book.

This story was written by Terry Leo in loving memory of his father Carl.