



P-51 Mustang



P-47 Thunderbolt



American Campaign



WW II Victory



Frank Eugene Speer
First Lieutenant U.S. Army Air Corps
January 1942 – 17 December 1946



POW Medal



Air Medal



Distinguished Flying Cross



European-Africa Middle Eastern Campaign

Frank was born on 6 January 1922 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He attended grade school in Danboro, Pennsylvania, and graduated from Allentown High School in Allentown, Pennsylvania, in 1939. Frank worked at Lehigh Valley Dairy as a truck driver from 1939 to 1940 and as a Cable Splicer for Bell Telephone Company in Allentown from 1940 to 1942. He was living in Lower Macungie on Alburtis Road when he entered the Army Air Force Aviation Cadet Program in January 1942. He was sent to Moore Field, San Antonio, Texas, for training as a fighter pilot. Upon graduation on 1 October 1943, Frank received his wings and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Army Air Corps. He then went to Dale Nebry, Florida, for a week of ground training prior to being transferred to Bartow Field in Florida, where he flew P-51 aircraft with the 54th and 57th Fighter Squadrons from 22 October 1943 to 1 February 1944. He then left for England aboard *HMS Arara* from Camp Kilmer, New York, on 1 March 1944, arriving at Bristol, England, on 14 March 1944, where he underwent P51 combat flight training for a month with the 496th Fighter Training Group. On 17 April 1944, Frank was assigned to the 334th Fighter Squadron, 4th Fighter Group, and began flying combat missions out of England over Germany. On his 17th mission, he was shot down near the Polish border on 29 May 1944, and became a prisoner of war in Sagan prison camp. In January 1945, Frank and other prisoners were marched from Sagan to Nuremberg through sub-zero weather in deep snow, without food or water, for 77 hours. On a subsequent march enroute Mooseberg, Frank and a companion escaped and made their way to Allied Forces near Mooseberg on 29 April 1945. He returned to the States in June 1945, and was given leave in Florida until 8 August 1945. He then left for five months training at Luke Field, Arizona, before assignment to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware in December 1945, where he served as an Assistant Traffic Officer for three months. While there, he went on six weeks temporary duty to Kelly Field from which he ferried P-47 aircraft overseas until 14 June 1946. He returned to Dover, and became Assistant Rail Transportation Officer for a month. He then left for three months duty successively at the Overseas Replacement Depot in Greensboro, North Carolina, and Camp Stoneman, California. He returned to Dover in October 1946, where he served as Assistant Aircraft Supply Officer prior to his discharge as a First Lieutenant at Fort Dix, New Jersey, on 17 December 1946. Frank was credited with shooting down two enemy aircraft in the air and destroying four others on the ground. Besides his campaign medals, Frank was awarded the Prisoner of War Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross, and Air Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters. Frank returned to work for Bell Telephone until 1952, when he became a founder and co-owner of Kwik Kafe, a food service company in Allentown. The company was sold in 1994, and Frank became a realtor with Coldwell Banker. While working at Bell Telephone, Frank attended Pennsylvania State Technical School, earning an Industrial Electronics Degree in 1950. He authored three books based on his wartime experiences: *One Down, One Dead, The Debden Warbirds*, and *Wingman*. Frank married **Marjorie Louise Poust** (23 June 1922 – October 1995) in 1940. They lived in Greenville, South Carolina, for a while before moving to the Allentown area where they lived in numerous places, including Lower Macungie Township, before settling in Emmaus in 1992. Frank's parents were **Peryl Henry Speer** (17 June 1899 – 25 March 1968), who served in the Army Infantry during World War I, and **Ruth Parker Andrews** (29 Oct. 1902 – Sept. 1987).