

*James A. Mullins and the Snortin' Bull:  
A Combat History  
By Steven D. Mullins*

Copyright 2005



*Ignē Ferroque Hostem Armatum Contere*

*“With fire and steel crush the armored foe.”*

So reads the Latin inscription below the 404<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group's insignia that contains a cracked shield, fallen helmet and broken sword, all being struck by a mighty thunderbolt. It accurately portrays the fate that German troops, trucks, tanks, and railways suffered at the hands of 404<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group pilot James A. Mullins and his P-47 Thunderbolt, the **Snortin' Bull**, in France, Belgium and Germany during the Second World War.

This is the combat story of James Mullins, a fighter pilot. Most of the events described herein have been substantiated by the “**404<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group Combat History**”, edited by Andrew F. Wilson, who also served in the 507<sup>th</sup> Squadron of the 404<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group, the same squadron commanded by James A. Mullins from November 1944 until April 1945. A few of these events are based on “war stories” told by a reluctant father to a very persistent son.

My sincere thanks to my sister in law, Ginger Mullins, and my brother and sister, James Marshall Mullins and Toni Ogle, for suggesting that I share these stories.

James A. Mullins

began his career as an aviator with this letter written in 1940, just four days after his 21st birthday. He was subsequently admitted as a flying cadet in the Army Air Corps (at the time there was no separate branch of the military known as the “Air Force”) and started his flight instruction at Hicks Field, Texas in March 1941.

James' very first experiences as pilot are recorded in his training logbook below. On March 4, 1941, he flew a Stearman P.T. 18 for 39 minutes and practiced "Shallow and Med.(ium) turns". Things got a bit more exciting on March 15<sup>th</sup> when he and his instructor practiced (experienced?) "stalls & spins" and a "FORCED LANDING".

Postman Arkansas  
June 25, 1940

Recruiting Officer  
Federal Bldg.  
Little Rock Ark.

Dear Sir:

I am a young man 21 years of age.  
I have two years of college work.  
Will you send me information about  
the flying cadets. I should also  
like to know about educational courses  
offered in the service.

yours truly,  
James R. Mullins  
Postman Ark.

Enclosed are three application forms. Fill out, have them sworn to (all 3)  
and mail them to the Commanding General 7th Corps Area, Federal Bldg,  
Omaha, Nebraska, TOGETHER WITH YOUR ~~THE~~ TRANSCRIPT OF COLLEGE CREDITS AND  
YOUR BIRTH CERTIFICATE. They will give you further instructions.

James R. Mullins  
JOHN A. LEESEN,  
SGT DEM RS

DATE	AIRCRAFT FLOWN			CROSS-COUNTRY		No. PASS.	REMARKS OR INSTRUCTORS SIGNATURE CERT. NO. & RATING
	MAKE AND MODEL	CERTIFICATE NUMBER	ENGINE	FROM	TO		
3/3/41	Spencer P.T. 18			HICKS	FIELD		2 + level level turns shallow + med. turns
3/9/41	"			"	"		climbing + steady turns
3/5/41	"			"	"		coasting + turns 5 turns, P.T. Co.
3/10/41	"			"	"		STALLS + spins P.O. R.D. SANDS
3/15/41	"	77		"	"		stalls + spins
3/15/41	"	77		"	"		STALLS + spins 5 turns
3/16/41	"	77		"	"		TAKE OFF LANDING
3/16/41	"	77		"	"		

I hereby certify that the foregoing entries are true and correct.

Signed James A. Mullins Pilot's Signature

AIRCRAFT WEIGHT AND ENGINE CLASSIFICATION			
Class.		Class.	
		25	
Hrs.	Mins.	Hrs.	Mins.
			35
			37
			32
			40
			45
			35
			35
			30
PAGE TOTAL		4 49	
TOTAL FORWARD			
TOTAL TIME TO DATE		4 49	

James Mullins received his wings while stationed in Montgomery, Alabama in November of 1941, where he posed for this photo with his (secret) new bride. The happy couple had only been married for five months when this photo was taken, but the marriage had to be kept secret because the Army Air Corps prohibited marriage among their student pilots.

Lieutenant Mullins underwent additional combat flight instruction at Dale Mabry Field in Tallahassee, Florida. Lt. Mullins trained there for a few months before he was sent to the Canal Zone in Panama as a flight instructor where he was stationed until December 1942.

Mullins experienced his share of excitement as an instructor in the P-39 Air Cobra (pictured with James and Gene here). The P-39 was such a poor fighter that the U.S. gave most of them to the Russians to use on Germany's Eastern Front, but they were also used in flight instruction. He saw many student pilots killed in this aircraft because it had an unreliable engine and would often stall and enter a fatal "flat spin" when flown by inexperienced pilots.



One aircraft in his flight was lost in transit to the Canal Zone. His flight of four P-39s was in route from Florida to Panama when the flight had to climb through clouds. Mullins was the flight leader and would fly on instruments while the inexperienced members of his flight would fly close formation with him, ignoring their instruments and simply following the leader. Unfortunately, one the new pilots got disoriented in the clouds, lost control of his aircraft and bailed out.

There was some time for levity along the route, though. The flight stopped for a few days in Mexico for fuel and parts where his flight relaxed, sipped tequila, and shot buzzards with their side arms. While in Panama, Mullins would use schools of sharks for gunnery practice. He knew when he had hit his "target" by the bloody feeding frenzies that would take place after a shark was hit by machine gun fire.

## The three Snortin' Bulls...

Mullins flew three different P-47s in his European combat tour. Each aircraft was given the same name, "Snortin' Bull", and all were painted with a variation of the snorting bull mascot, pictured to the right, that were on aircraft he flew while training at Myrna Beach, South Carolina.

This is the famous "Snortin Bull" insignia that was placed on the front of his aircraft's fuselage.



Mullins' first P-47 was the "D" model, also known as the "Razorback". This aircraft was most easily distinguishable from later versions of the Thunderbolt by a canopy that blends into the top of the rear fuselage and a canopy frame structure that limits the pilot's visibility. The view to the rear was completely blocked by the top of the fuselage.

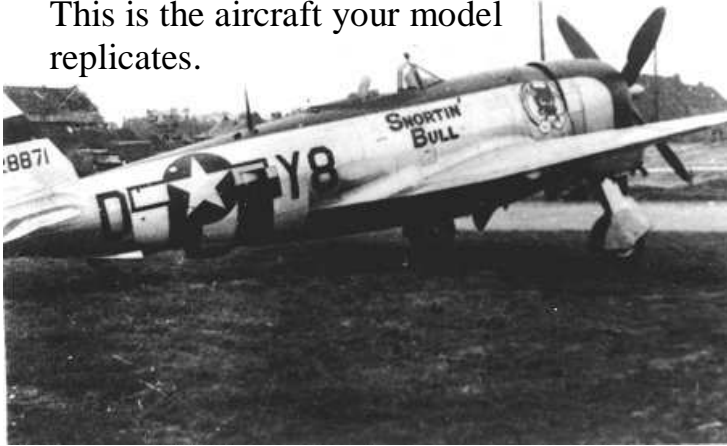


These two photos of Mullins' P-47D show the white and black invasion stripes painted on the wings and rear fuselage. The stripes were put on all allied aircraft just before the June 6, 1944 invasion of France so that allied ground and naval forces could better distinguish friendly aircraft from those of the German Luftwaffe. The 507<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron of the 404<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group received their orders to put the stripes on their aircraft on June 3, only three days before D-Day.





Mullins' second Thunderbolt, an N model with its distinctive "bubble" canopy, is shown here. The visibility from this aircraft was greatly improved over the D model. This is the aircraft your model replicates.



His last P-47 was **SNORTIN' BULL 3<sup>rd</sup>** shown in this color photo below that was taken in Belgium by Leo Moon, Mullins' CO at the time. This photo has been published in three different books devoted to the P-47.



The P-47 was both loved and hated by its pilots. The aircraft was large and

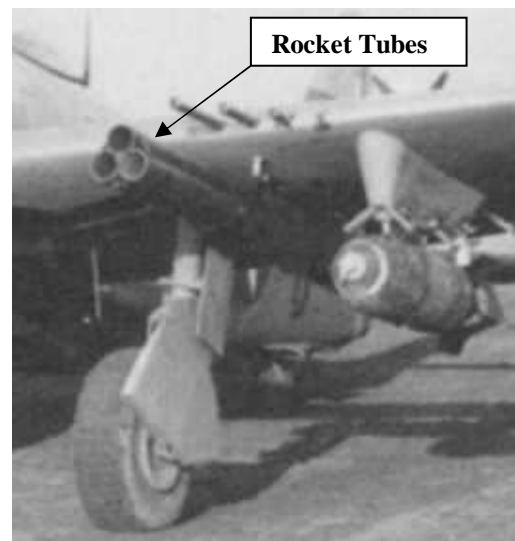


heavy compared to fighters flown by British and German pilots, and its climb and turn performance were poor by comparison. On the other hand, allied pilots loved the durability of the Thunderbolt. It soon earned a reputation as an aircraft that could take unbelievable battle damage and stay in the air. Many P-47s brought their pilots home with engines that had been partially shot away and with control surfaces that were either perforated with holes or missing altogether. This photo of the first Snortin' Bull shows a very large hole in the right wing and flap. Mullins sent this to his wife with the word "Flak" written casually across the photo. Other aircraft hit by flak in such a critical area typically plummeted from the sky.

Mullins described a number of other instances when his aircraft was seriously damaged yet managed to bring him home in one piece. On one such mission, ground-fire damaged his engine and the resulting oil, which spilled along the sides of the aircraft, caught fire.

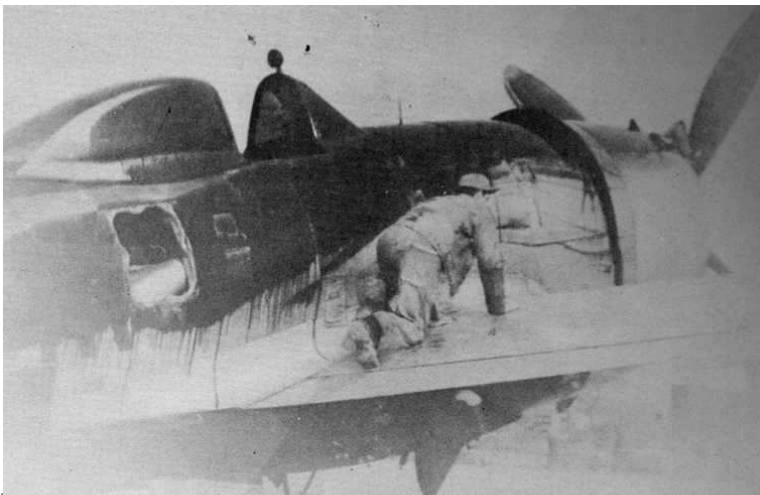
A burning aircraft is no place to hang out (if you have a parachute) so he opened the canopy and prepared to bail out of his flying torch. Just before he planned to jump, the fire extinguished itself. Mullins got back in the cockpit and returned safely to his airbase.

On another occasion, his squadron was experimenting with a new weapon to use against tanks and other 'hardened' targets that were difficult to destroy with the P-47's eight .50 caliber machine guns. The "fifties" (as they were called) fired a large slug at over 1000 rounds per minute, but they could not consistently penetrate the hardened steel used on German tanks. A new weapon was developed consisting of three rockets mounted under each wing (photo right) with explosive heads that could destroy a tank, if the pilot could hit it. The rockets were very crude by modern standards because they were unguided, so they had to be aimed by flying directly at the target using the gun sight for alignment.



Mullins was on patrol with his newly installed rockets and came across an isolated German tank. He fired all but one of his six rockets at the tank using a standard attack pattern which called for a shallow drive from altitude until the target was in range at which point the rockets were fired. He continued to miss, so again and again he climbed back up, turned, and came back after the tank. Finally, with one remaining rocket, Mullins decided to try a different approach. He put his Thunderbolt down “on the deck” and flew directly at the tank at over 200 mph. At a distance of a few hundred feet he fired and the rocket hit the tank. Unfortunately, he was so low and close to the tank that he flew right over it at about the same time that the rocket’s blast was scattering pieces of German tank in all directions. The shrapnel did serious damage to the entire underside of his aircraft, but the Snortin’ Bull again brought him home safely.

These are not photos of the Snortin’ Bull, but they do illustrate the toughness of the Thunderbolt. If it were not for the P-47s survivability, it is unlikely that James Mullins would have survived to become a father and grandfather.



Maggie Zass brought Russ Christopher back although two cylinders were shot away. The coat of oil on the windshield completely blinded him . .



(Below) The pilot of this 367th FSq, 358th FGp P-47D-20 brought the aircraft home with extensive damage to the port wing during one of the many D-Day strikes carried out by Thunderbolt crews. The full D-Day striping is well illustrated. (Olmsted)



**Pilots of the 404<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group** flew their first combat missions in the P-47D in April 1944 from a strip in Winkton in southern England.



Mullins, his wife and his middle son visited Winkton in the spring of 1991 and looked for any remnants of the airbase from which he flew almost a half-century earlier. They did not find anything of the base, but since then the gatepost at the intersection of the two runways was marked with a bouquet of white roses and a plaque with the following inscription was left there. *“In memory of the United States Army Air Force Personnel of the 404<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group; 506, 507 and 508 squadrons who, between April and July 1944, operated P47 Thunderbolts from the landing ground site on these fields in support of Operation Overlord.”*

The 404<sup>th</sup> flew from the Winkton field until early July 1944. On the day of the invasion of France, the Snortin’ Bull flew cover for the troops landing on the beaches at Normandy. Mullins’ logbook entry for June 6, 1944 simply reads, “Beach Patrol, invasion of France.”

One of the more notable missions flown from Winkton took place on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 1944, less than one week after the Normandy invasion. The mission was to destroy transportation assets that could reinforce German troops trying to fight the allies on the beaches of Normandy. According to the *404<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group Combat History*, Mullins was leading a patrol near Paris when he saw movement along a main rail line.

“The track was dark against a light roadbed,” he reported later. “I saw the glow of engine boilers, then grayish-white smoke. There were two trains approaching each other from different directions.” His flight dropped bombs on the track and stopped both trains. The Thunderbolts then riddled the trains with 50-caliber fire that resulted in a number of secondary explosions. Tracers from anti-aircraft fire came up after the attacking aircraft from boxcars...the trains were clearly carrying war material.



## A Very Bad Day...

Just one day before receiving orders to move operations to France, Mullins suffered his greatest personal loss of the war. He and his buddy Bob Green were returning from a mission on June 25 when Bob encountered a serious problem. The cluster bombs they used on that mission had not released from Bob's airplane, and since it is very dangerous to land an aircraft with live ordinance, Bob flew a number of high G maneuvers to shake the bombs loose. After a series of loops and rolls the bombs had still not released, so Mullins flew close to Green's fighter and overlapped the two aircrafts' wings. Mullins then rocked his wings so that the top of his wing would bang against the bottom wing of the other aircraft, hopefully shaking the bombs loose. In spite of their attempts, the bombs would not release. Mullins suggested to Green that he bail out, but Green insisted on trying to save the aircraft. After some debate, they agreed that the aircraft could be landed. Mullins landed first just in case the airstrip was damaged during Green's landing. Understandably nervous, Green made a poor landing and the bombs released and exploded when he touched down. This account of the landing is recorded in Chapter 4 of the *404<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group Combat History*.

"Coming back from the second mission of the day, Bob Green waited until the rest of the 507<sup>th</sup> was on the ground, then landed with a cluster of eighteen 20-pound frag bombs on one wing. When he hit the steel-plank runway, the cluster fell off and ten of the bombs exploded. The squadron medics, already on their way out in the ambulance saw Bob jump out of the plane, which began to burn; and as they ran to support him, he collapsed. Five minutes after the frags went off, he was in the Group Dispensary, receiving morphine and plasma. He was sent to the 95<sup>th</sup> General Hospital at Ringwood, and died there before dawn the next day. He was reported as a calm, smiling patient, who asked that letters be written to his mother, and to his girlfriend, telling her he wished they had married before he left the States."

Bob Green was one of James Mullins' closest friends. They had been in training together and he and his wife had socialized with Bob and his girlfriend back in the states. The day of the accident, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1944, was the same day Mullins received a letter from his wife informing him that his daughter, Carol, had died shortly after birth. On the very next day, the 404<sup>th</sup> received orders to prepare to move operations to France.

**This is Bob Green..**



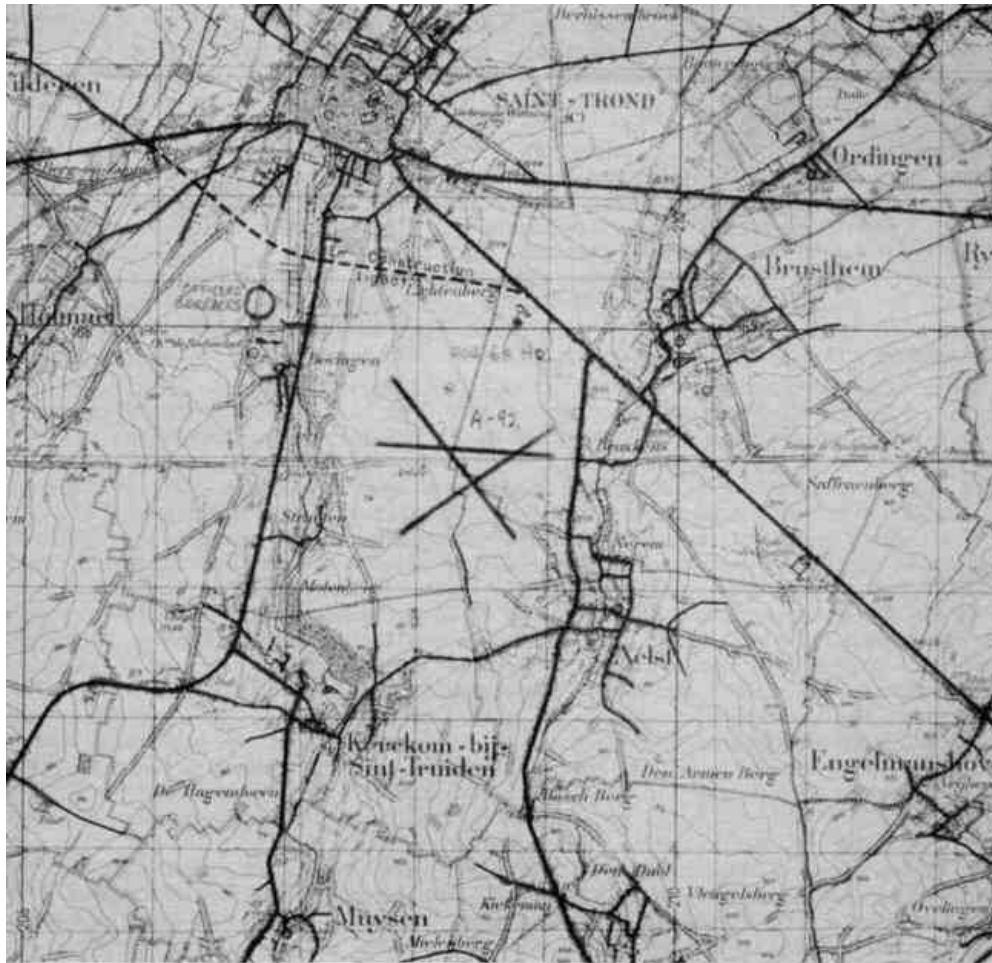
1st Lt.  
Robert W. Green

**..and this is a photo Mullins took of Green's  
burning P-47 minutes after his crash landing.**



Shortly after the June invasion, the 404<sup>th</sup> moved from Winkton to an airbase in Normandy, located a mere 3 miles from the line separating the advancing allied troops and the defending Germans. It was at this base that the 404<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group experienced what was truly a “surprise attack”. It was July 24, a Monday, and the squadron’s pilots were sitting in their aircraft waiting to take off, all the while listening to the drone of heavy bombers headed for the front lines overhead. Then a sudden series of explosions sent everyone scrambling for cover. Two men were killed instantly; two died later of their injuries, and 14 were injured. The bombing destroyed three P-47s, and eight more were damaged. Three unexploded American 100 pound bombs were later found on the airstrip, and it was finally determined that an American bomber had accidentally released its 20 bombs over the airbase. The bomber had dropped its load at least 10 miles short of its intended targets, representing a navigation error that was hard to understand, even under overcast weather conditions.

The 404<sup>th</sup> moved again to a field near St. Trond, Belgium in October 1944. Mullins was made operations officer of his squadron at that time, and he flew from this airfield until his transfer home in late March 1945.



Here is a large scale German map of the A-92-St. Trond area, with the airfield sketched in. The scale is 1:40,000 — or slightly more than one inch and one-half to a mile. The Germans called the field St. Trond-Bruchem (Bruchem is the village just northeast of the field). The area reportedly was used as a grass-field by the Belgian air force — but there is no sign of it on this map, which was based on surveys made about 1938. The Germans constructed the concrete runways and finished about a mile of the highway north of the field, marked “under construction, 1938” in dashes.

*There were many ways to die  
in the skies over Europe.*



This B-17 bomber suffered a mid-air collision and landed at the 404<sup>th</sup>s field in Belgium with the body of a man who had been on the other aircraft wedged into the bombardier's compartment. The man was thrown through this large gash in the B-17.



## The Distinguished Flying Cross

It was at St. Trond where General Vandenberg awarded James A. Mullins the Distinguished Flying Cross. Next to the Congressional Medal of Honor and the Silver Star, the DFC is the highest award that can be bestowed on a combat aviator. The driver of the Snortin' Bull was awarded this decoration because of a successful mission he led against a nest of pillboxes along the



Siegfried line on Oct 13, 1944. The pillbox was a fortified structure, usually dug into the side of a hill that contained enemy machine gun emplacements. They posed a serious threat to allied troops, and it was Mullins' job to navigate his squadron to the target and take it out. Unfortunately, the weather was poor. Clouds were "nine-tenths cumulus, with layers of clouds from 3,500 to 8,500 feet." In other words, when flying above 3,500 feet the ground was almost completely obscured by cloud cover and finding a ground target was almost impossible.

At great risk the flight dropped below the cloud layer at 3500 feet and 350 mph, and Mullins called to his wingmen "There is smoke off my left wing." He immediately broke 90 degrees left, dove to the target, and released his bombs at 1000 feet. While pulling up from his bombing run, he saw eight to ten camouflaged rectangular positions and calling in a second flight to destroy the bunkers that were left after his attack.

Busting enemy trains was also one of the Snortin' Bull's specialties. On November 9, Mullins led his squadron in a dive-bombing attack northeast of Geilenkirchen and cut rail lines in two places. His squadron's 500-pound bombs and 50-caliber slugs heavily damaged three trains and a nearby factory building.

These missions were typical for the Snortin' Bull, and its pilot soon developed a reputation as being the best navigator in the squadron because he often could lead his squadron to their targets under conditions that aborted the missions of others. This account of a mission flown on November 16 is provided from **404<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group History**.

“Over Aachen on the way out, the cloud cover was nine to nine-tenths. It was almost impossible to see enough of the ground to check landmarks. However, Major Mullins of the 507<sup>th</sup>, one of the Groups finest navigators, managed to get a quick peek through a hole in the clouds and reported ‘We’re directly over Wurselen, two minutes from Eschweiler.’

“Roselee” (the code name for the mission’s air-to-ground controller) called and told the Group to fly east and jettison its bombs, but Mullins insisted he knew where he was, and was going to find the target. He took the 507<sup>th</sup> down through a hole, called ‘There’s the smoke off of my left wing!’ and went in and hit Mariadorf. His was the only formation in the entire Command that was able to get in through the weather on the assigned target. XXIX TAC subsequently cited the Group for this mission.”



### A New CO for the 507th

James A. Mullins was 25 years old when he was given the job of commanding officer for the 507<sup>th</sup> Squadron on November 22, 1944. This responsibility was given to him just one month before the 404<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group would face its biggest challenge since the invasion.

On December 16, 1944, the Germans launched the infamous “Battle of the Bulge”, a desperate counter attack against allied forces in Belgium. For the next two months, the 507<sup>th</sup> Squadron was busy trying to stop heavy concentrations of German armor from advancing into the Ardennes hills, only 60 miles away.

On Christmas Eve, the group intelligence officer broke into the mess hall as the pilots were relaxing in front of a movie and announced “Parachutists have landed at the four corners of the field!” Chaos ensued as

men ran for their barracks to get their weapons, but subsequent machine gun fire turned out to be two scared sentries firing on each other. Thankfully, no one was hurt. Major Mullins called from the 507<sup>th</sup> officers’ barracks to ask, “Is it all right to start a poker game?” It turns out that the parachutes were those of RAF pilots who had abandoned a damaged aircraft.



A few days later, on New Year's morning, 1945, the group's pilots were preparing to depart on a mission to bomb rail yards near Junkerath when aircraft were spotted approaching the field from the east at low altitude. What were thought to be English Spitfires turned out to be German FW-190s and Me-109's. By the time the attack was over, the 507<sup>th</sup> suffered 5 aircraft damaged. The Germans lost five aircraft in the attack, one of which was a FW-190 that bellied in during a strafing run and was subsequently repaired, repainted, and kept as a war trophy.



OUR PRIZE WAR-SOUVENIR—before—and after—re-decoration . . . This FW-190 bellied in near St. Trond after strafing the field on New Year's Day . . . It was repaired with a new motor from a captured enemy supply depot at Reims . . . But higher Headquarters wouldn't let us take it off the ground. . . .



## A Busy Winter of 1945

According to the 404<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group History, the remaining four months of Mullins' service in Europe was very busy indeed. Two weeks after the air attack on the field, he led the 507<sup>th</sup> into the Monschau Forest region of the Bulge and knocked out 34 vehicles. One week later, on January 21, he led his squadron in an attack on nine locations around Scheid under low ceilings and poor visibility and destroyed 23 motor transports and damaged another 22 as well as "wrecking six fortified buildings and five guns. Mullins, probing the little valleys and dodging hills which suddenly loomed in the haze, was credited with a major share of the claims." Two days later, "Major Mullins' 507<sup>th</sup> outfit found 125 to 200 vehicles in the Schleiden area, heading eastward along a network of roads, and made one of the highest single-mission scores against motorized transport, with 78 destroyed and damaged." Mullins again demonstrated his talent for finding targets in bad weather in early March. The weather during the first of the month was so bad that it took a few days to find an important fuel depot just north of Cologne that had to be destroyed. Quoting from the *404th Fighter Group History*:

"Hoss" Mullins finally navigated to the target on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, and set it afire with four planes; another 507<sup>th</sup> flight guided by the flames 90 minutes later, helped the blaze along with another load of bombs.

The action slowed down a bit in mid-March because of an ammunition shortage caused by the high number of sorties flown during the Battle of the Bulge. With no bombs to drop on fleeing German troops and armor, the 507<sup>th</sup> had to resort to using only harsh language (and 50 caliber machine guns) against the enemy. He flew many patrol missions late in the war involved low altitude flights over the countryside looking for anything that appeared to be in a hurry to get back to Germany. On one such mission, Mullins engaged a German motorcycle-sidecar speeding down narrow lanes in an attempt to find cover from attack. The Germans on the cycle were apparently so concerned about getting away from the Snortin' Bull that they failed to notice that the alley into which they just turned came to a dead end. Mullins told his son that he was sure his guns never hit those young men, but their crash into the wall at the end of the alley was probably fatal.

The unit finally received additional munitions in late March and bombing missions were renewed. In an attack on an aircraft reporting station near the town of Wipperfurth, the 507<sup>th</sup> scored numerous hits on pylons and equipment in the area.

## Going Home (Not a bit too soon)

Command of the 507<sup>th</sup> was transferred from Lt. Colonel James A. Mullins to Major John A. Marshall on April 4, 1945, at which point the Snortin' Bull's combat tour came to a timely end and Mullins returned to the states. Unfortunately, less than one week after the transfer of command, the new CO of the 507<sup>th</sup> was killed in action when his P-47 was hit by flak on a strafing run against ground targets. Major Marshall tried to bail out but was too low. His body was recovered a few days later attached to his partially opened parachute.

## Other Close Calls

James Mullins was asked on many occasions if he ever thought he might not survive the war. He said that, of course, he was scared but never had any doubt that he would make it home. His wife, Gene, shared this feeling. Gene, being as impartial as any wife of an aviator, said her husband was “the best damn Thunderbolt driver in the war” and that his skills would save him. Mullins did, however, tell of a few non-combat occasions that scared him as much, if not more, than his air-to-ground missions in Europe.

There was one close call before he became the CO of the 507<sup>th</sup>. He was flying as his CO's wingman and after stopped for fuel while ferrying a couple of 47s from one base to the next, he lost control of his aircraft and thought he was done for it. The CO didn't tell his wingman that he was going to perform a roll after takeoff, so Mullins was caught by surprise when the flight leader started the maneuver. Like all good wingmen, he tried to stay on his leader's wing, but a roll shortly after takeoff is a risky maneuver because the aircraft is both low and slow. Not having enough speed, Dad's P-47 stalled during the roll maneuver and he immediately dived to build up speed to recover. Unfortunately, he had little altitude and didn't think he would make it. He pulled out of the dive barely inches from the water and was both delighted and surprised that he wasn't killed that day.

He also almost toasted his buns trying to show off for his buddies in an aircraft he had not flown before; I believe it was a Navy Corsair. It was common practice for 'hot' pilots to retract the landing gear at the exact moment the aircraft breaks ground, so Mullins, being a 'hot' pilot, yanked what he thought was the lever that retracts the landing gear as soon as he lifted off. Unfortunately, in THIS aircraft, the flap handle was where the gear lever was in his P-47, so he inadvertently pulled the flap handle. This almost caused a crash, but he recovered and lived to have children and tell the story.

On another occasion he thought his goose was cooked flying a C-47 transport into Cleveland, Ohio on dark winter night after the war. He may have been the co-pilot on this mission, I can't recall, but he and the crew were trying to land in a blinding snowstorm. The airfield was technically closed because of the weather, but they were low on fuel and had no choice but to land ASAP. They tried flying the standard instrument approach and simply could not see the airstrip. After a few unsuccessful attempts to land, they became so desperate that they decided to descend much sooner than usual to see if they could follow the terrain to the airstrip. This is very dangerous because you can't see any obstructions such as towers, tall buildings, etc., that could be between you and the field, but they felt they had no choice; fuel was critically low and they had to make it on this pass. They saw sufficient landmarks at this unusually low altitude to find the airstrip and land safely, but it was apparently a very scary experience. Dad really did look pale when he told me this story. It must have shaken him up quite a bit.

Well, these are all of the Snortin' Bull stories that I can recall or have uncovered in my research on my father's WWII combat experiences. I hope you have enjoyed reading about the history behind the Snortin' Bull as much as I have enjoyed telling the story, and I appreciate your interest in my father's aircraft. The sacrifices made by dad, and the many thousands like him who were willing to pay the ultimate price to defend Europe from tyranny must never be forgotten.

Steven D. Mullins     June 21, 2005

P.S. This summer marked the author's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, and thanks to the generosity of his lovely partner, Regina, he had the privilege of performing combat training maneuvers for one hour in a T-6 Texan. The T-6 was one of the aircraft his father trained in before moving up to the Thunderbolt in the early 1940s. The author is a private pilot with over 1000 hours in a variety of single engine aircraft, but none compare to the T-6. The T-6 flight took place on June 6, 2005, the 61<sup>st</sup> anniversary of James A. Mullins' beach patrol mission on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Unfortunately, James Mullins did not live to share his son's joy. James A. Mullins, the pilot of the legendary "Snortin' Bull", passed away in 1991 at the age of 72. His family misses him more than words can describe.



James A. Mullins and the Snortin' Bull,  
Europe, 1944



Steven D. Mullins and the T-6 Texan  
Springfield Missouri, 2005