

World War II Today



1944

CHUCK YEAGER DOWNS FIVE – BECOMES AN “ACE IN A DAY”

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Silhouettes of P-51s in flight over Europe.



Bundesarchiv, Bild 1011-062-0659-37
Foto: Hebenstreit | 1943/1944

Flugzeug Messerschmitt Me 109 in flight 1943-4.

Charles ‘Chuck” Yeager had already made a name for himself as a talented pilot. He had also had some remarkable adventures, **surviving being shot down over France** and escaping back to Britain via Spain. He had recently been promoted to Lieutenant with the 363d Fighter Squadron, 357th Fighter Group, stationed at RAF Leiston (USAAF Station 373).

On the 12th October 1944 Yeager was leading the 363rd Squadron as part of the escort for a bombing raid on Bremen. Other Squadrons remained as close escorts with the bombers while the 363rd ranged 50-100 miles ahead looking for trouble.



First Lieutenant Charles E. (“Chuck”) Yeager, U.S. Army Air Corps, standing on the wing of his North American Aviation P-51D-5-NA Mustang, 44-13897, Glamorous Glenn II, at Air Station 373, 12 October 1944. (U.S. Air Force)

This was how Yeager described the action in his official report:

I. I was leading the Group with Cement Squadron and was roving out to the right of the first box of bombers. I was over STEINHUDE LAKE when 22 Me. 109s crossed in front of my Squadron from 11:00 O’Clock to 1:00 O’Clock. I was coming out of the sun and they were about 1½ miles away at the same level of 25,000 feet.

I fell in behind the enemy formation and followed them for about 3 minutes, climbing to 30,000 feet. I still had my wing tanks and had close up to around 1,000 yards, coming within firing range and positioning the Squadron behind the entire enemy formation.

Two of the Me. 109s were dodging over to the right. One slowed up and before I could start firing, rolled over and bailed out. The other Me. 109, flying his wing, bailed out immediately after as I was ready to line him in my sights. I was the closest to the tail-end of the enemy formation and no one, but myself was in shooting range and no one was firing.

I dropped my tanks and then closed up to the last Jerry and opened fire from 600 yards, using the K-14 sight. I observed strikes all over the ship, particularly heavy in the cockpit. He skidded off to the left. I was closing up on another Me. 109 so I did not follow him down. Lt. STERN, flying in Blue Flight reports this E/A on fire as it passed him and went into a spin.

I closed up on the next Me. 109 to 100 yards, skidded to the right and took a deflection shot of about 10°. I gave about a 2 second burst and the whole fuselage split open and blew up after we passed.

Another Me. 109 to the right had cut his throttle and was trying to get behind. I broke to the right and quickly rolled to the left on his tail. He started pulling it in and I was pulling 6”G”. I got a lead from around 300 yards and gave him a short burst. There were hits on wings and tail section He snapped to the right 3 times and bailed out when he quit snapping at around 18,000 feet.

I did not blackout during this engagement due to the efficiency of the “G” suit. Even though I was skidding I hit the second Me. 109 by keeping the bead and range on the E/A. To my estimation the K-14 sight is the biggest improvement to combat equipment for Fighters up to this date. The me.

109s appeared to have a type of bubble canopy and had purple noses and were a mousey brown all over.

I claim Five me 109s destroyed.

J. Ammunition Expended: 587 rounds .50 cal MG.

Charles E. Yeager, 1st Lt, AC.

Contemporary USAAF briefing film on the P-51, with combat footage, describing the improved characteristics of the P-51 B:





Chuck Yeager's Mustang, Glamorous Glen III: North American Aviation P-51D-15-NA, serial number 44-14888, identification markings B6*Y, at USAAF Station 373 (RAF Leiston), Winter 1945. (U.S. Air Force)

◀ FIGHTERS

2 THOUGHTS ON “CHUCK YEAGER DOWNS FIVE – BECOMES AN “ACE IN A DAY””

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