

**Major Jack McFarland,
Pilot, 416th Fighter Bomber Squadron
Chambley Air Base, France 1955 to 1957.
January 20, 1922 to August 27, 2006**

Major Jack H. McFarland entered the Army Air Corps on July 26, 1940 at Kelly Field in San Antonio immediately after graduation from Burnet (Texas) High School when he and his older brother Harold enlisted. After basic training, he was stationed at Gardner Field in Taft California when he received orders in February 1942 to report to Hemet Field for primary flight training, Class of 42 H. He was assigned to Company D, the “Dusty Butts”. Next was Basic Flying School at Minter Field, Bakersfield, CA and then to Luke Field in Arizona for Advanced Flight School. Upon graduation from Advanced Flying School on August 27, 1942, he received his silver pilots’ wings and a promotion to Staff Sergeant. He and his class mates were known as Staff Sergeant Pilots.

Jack was ordered to report for deployment to Europe and on November 4, 1942 boarded the Panamanian registered freighter “Buchanan” in NYC for the Atlantic crossing. Eight days into their voyage and off the coast of France, the Buchanan was sunk on November 12th after being hit by one torpedo. Jack spent 5 days in a life boat before the survivors were picked up by a British ship and taken to an RAF base in England. *(His grandsons particularly liked this recollection because they thought it funny that as a pilot he had been torpedoed and sunk during the war rather than shot down).* His duty in Europe included air combat in the P-39 aircraft in Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Italy, Belgium and France.

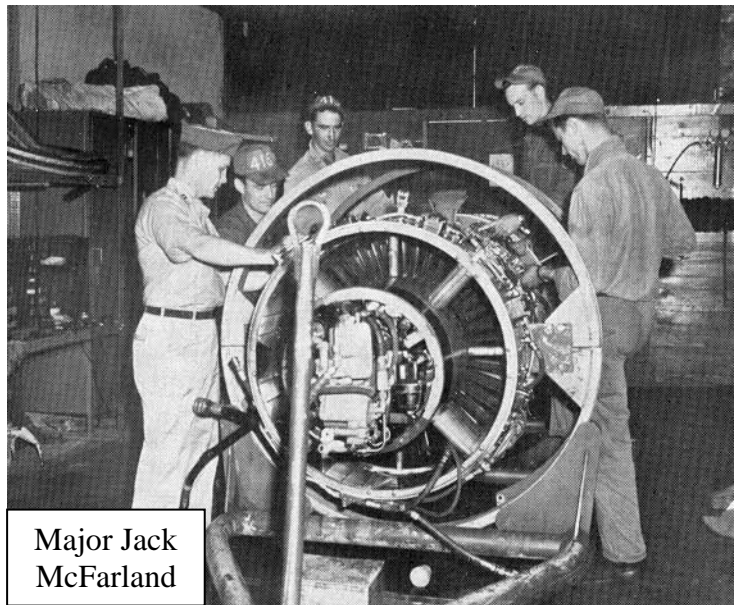


During his time in Tunisia, he earned a battlefield commission and became a Second Lieutenant. Jack flew 57 combat missions in Europe. Before returning stateside in September of 1944, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Immediately upon returning to the United States, he called a young lady named Bette Jane Keith whom he had dated when he was stationed at Gardner Field and had corresponded with throughout his service in Europe to ask her to marry him. They were married September 24, 1944.

After World War II, Jack remained in the service, becoming part of the newly designated Air Force and receiving training in jet aircraft. During the Korean War, he was stationed in Saudi Arabia at Dhahran AFB.

He reported to George AFB in California in 1952 where he joined the 21st Fighter



Major Jack McFarland



Major Jack McFarland is the third from the left.

Bomber Wing and the 416th Fighter Bomber Squadron. As the maintenance officer of the 416th, Jack was one of the last of the 416th to arrive in France, making sure all aircraft of the squadron arrived

after the long trip. His family was finally able to join him in June of 1955.

Daughter Fran was a student in the fourth grade class and daughter Bonnie was a first grader at the newly finished grade school on base that began holding classes that fall. The family remained until September 1957 when Jack returned stateside and began an assignment at Hanscom AFB in Massachusetts. His next and last assignment was with the Marine Corps at Cherry Point, N. C. He retired in July 1960 after 20 years of service. In addition to the Distinguished Flying Cross, he also has the Air Medal with 6 oak-leaf clusters. He was designated a Command Pilot.

Jack continued government service at Kelly Air Force Base in San Antonio Texas as a civilian employee and retired once again in 1984. Jack and Bette lived just south of San Antonio in Lytle where Jack enjoyed having horses and cattle and supplying his family with homegrown vegetables from his large garden. He was on the Lytle School Board and the Atascosa County Tax Assessment Board for many years as well as a deacon at his church.

Jack died on August 27, 2006 in San Antonio from complications following emergency surgery. He is survived by his wife Bette, four daughters, 2 sons-in-law, 8 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren.

(The preceding information was submitted by Fran Greve and Bonnie Jones, daughters of Jack and Bette. They were students at the Chambley grade school during their father's service at Chambley).