

## *Joe Meagher Memories*

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### **Joe Meagher, 416th BG Pilot**

Joe Meagher enlisted in the Air Corps in 1939.

"I went in when I was 18," Joe said. "It was a couple of years prior to Pearl Harbor."

Joe joined because his family's attorney said the U.S. would be entering war soon and if Joe waited, he would be drafted and not have the choice of services.

"I had never even heard of a draft," Joe said. "I went into the Air Corps because it sounded pretty good to me."

After enlisting and working as a mechanic, Joe qualified for flight training and rose to the rank of captain and flight leader.

"I was assigned to an A-20 Havoc," Joe said. "It was a twin engine bomber with a single pilot. All bombers from that had a pilot and copilot."

Joe was assigned to the 416th Bomb Group and flew 53 missions in the craft.

"We were the first A-20 bomb group in the European Theater," Joe said. "It was pretty interesting and I flew two missions on D-Day."

Joe was then assigned to fly an A-26 Invader, which was faster, to finish his 65th mission tour.

"I was shot down on my last mission," Joe said. "We were supposed to fly 65 missions and I was on my 65th in an A-20 with the serial number 44-093 when I got shot down." Lt. Jack J. Burg was B/N, SSgt Joseph E. McCreery and SSgt Charles Fetko were gunners.

A piece of German flak which covered the air in dark clouds hit his plane and broke his ankle.

Joe was sent back to the U.S. to recover.

Joe hopes the generations who listen to the oral histories will find more in the stories than just war experiences, and that those who listen gain a "desire to serve your country," he said.

"And [I hope they] gain a desire to be a good citizen," Joe said. "Don't leave it up to your neighbor. You [should] stand up tall and walk with your head up. Self image is the most important this we have."