

# AVIATION WALL OF HONOR



## **Lieutenant Bruce Sleeman Fighter Pilot USAAF WWII**

Bruce Sleeman was born in Ishpeming, Michigan on June 25, 1920. After graduating from the Ishpeming High School in 1938, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps. Cadet Training at Merced, California in 1942 was followed by training to be a fighter pilot. On May 20, 1943 he received his wings and commission.

Promotion to Flight Commander and Instructor followed as he flew several different single engine planes at bases at Hamilton Field, Yuma, Arizona, and Chico Air Base, Bakersfield and Visalia, all in California.

Though he made several requests to go overseas, he was kept in the United States as a fighter pilot instructor.

He was most proud of the fact that he aided in the experimental phase of jet aircraft at Palmdale Air Base in California. The plane he flew and instructed in was the Bell XP59A Air Comet, an experimental prototype. This plane eventually was taken from the 412 Fighter

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Squadron and brought to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C. to be put on display.

Years later, the plane was refurbished and in 1996 was placed in the Air and Space Museum.

He was discharged from active duty on December 29, 1945. He died in 1994 and is buried locally at Memorial Gardens. He is survived by his wife Betty, of Negaunee, Michigan, a son, Darrel in Phoenix, Arizona, and a daughter, Peggy, in Frankfort, Kentucky.

TJ Mudge, May 2004