



Fritz Wolf was born on February 8th, 1916 and attended Shawano High School where he excelled in leadership, character and athletics including 1933 state basketball playoffs. In 1938 Fritz earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Carroll College, WI where he became an all-conference fullback for three straight years undefeated. About this time he realized that if he was ever going to learn to fly, now was the time. In 1939, he enlisted in the U. S. Navy. Upon completion of flight training in 1940 Ensign Wolf was assigned to the USS Saratoga as a Dive-Bomber pilot. During his training at San Diego naval base, Fritz was chosen as one of the fliers to perform in "Dive Bomber," a movie portraying Uncle Sam's Dive-Bomber pilots before the war.

In the summer of 1941 Fritz resigned his commission to join the AVG Flying Tigers. Like a lot of other pilots, he was looking for a little more excitement.

Wolf sailed in the first contingent of AVG pilots from San Francisco on July 6, 1941 aboard the Jaegersfontein. Fritz's passport read "agriculture student." The first month after Fritz's arrival was spent learning Chennault's tactics to fight Japanese pilots. On December 20, 1941, Fritz took part in the first Flying Tiger action near Kunming China, during which time he shot down two Mitsubishi bombers. On April 8, 1942, near Loiwing, China, Fritz took part in another action in which he shot down two zero fighters. Fritz was honorably discharged from the Flying Tigers when the AVG was officially disbanded on July 4, 1942. He had logged 220 hours of combat flying in the skies over Burma and China fighting the Japanese.

Fritz returned to the Navy with the rank of Lieutenant, senior grade and assigned as flight instructor at the Jacksonville Naval Air Station in Florida. After training his own team, Fritz's team was sent to Guam, assigned to the USS Hornet on January 8, 1945. Flying the Grumman F6F Hellcats, Fritz and his squadron struck Japanese targets in Hong Kong, Formosa, Hainan Island and French Indo China. While serving as skipper of VBF-3 aboard the Yorktown in 1945 and during the first carrier-based attack against mainland Japan, Fritz officially shot down his fifth Japanese plane making him an ace. Wolf closed the war at the Naval Auxiliary Air Station, Brown Field as executive officer. He left the Navy in 1946 to work for the Wisconsin State Aeronautical Commission. He remained in the Naval Reserves retiring as Commander in 1967.

Fritz became the first paid employee in the new Wisconsin State Aeronautical Commission and later headed up operations there. Fritz was appointed the Wisconsin Director of Aeronautics and later became the Bureau Director of Wisconsin's Dept. of Transportation. Fritz retired from state service in May of 1981 after 35 years of distinguished service. The capstone of Fritz's career came when he was inducted into the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame. He loved his work and as a result was presented with numerous career awards. Fritz passed away on April 24th, 1997.

-Contributed by Rick Wolf.-