



Whitey : From Farm Kid to Flying Tiger to Attorney

Wayne G. Johnson

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Whitey, is the fascinating and riveting story of a boy, the 11th of 14 children of Norwegian immigrant parents, who grew up on tenant farms in rural Minnesota during the Great Depression. Johnson describes in graphic detail the harsh conditions under which the family lived and survived. "We were poor but didn't know it." With commendable honesty, Johnson's story illuminates the indiscretions of youth against the backdrop of a rural farm family. His story takes us through the extraordinary journey of one man who has seen more in his life, so far, than most of us could ever imagine. Wayne "Whitey" Johnson enlisted in the Air Corps on 8 December, 1941, the day after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Trained as a fighter pilot in the P-40 Warhawk and the P-51 Mustang, Wayne was sent to China to join the famed Flying Tigers. He was stationed in an area of far eastern China referred to as the "pocket," surrounded by Japanese troops less than 50 miles away. He relates the grim realities of war with startling realism, graphically portraying the triumphs and tragedies - and the joys and sorrows - of young men at war. Whitey, as part of a flight of 16 P-51 Mustang fighters? participated in the first fighter strike against Japanese airdromes near Shanghai. Coming in at tree-top level, and catching the enemy by complete surprise, they destroyed 97 Japanese planes - mostly on the ground - without loss of any Americans. After the war, he became a successful attorney, setting a record as the longest-serving City Attorney in the United States, serving two cities for over fifty years. Continuing his activity in Aviation, Johnson was named Mr. Aviation of Minnesota in 1968. He was inducted into the Minnesota Aviation Hall of Fame in 2001. The Silver Bay (MN) airport was renamed the Wayne Johnson Airport in his honor in 2005 - an honor few living airmen enjoy. He has flown over 60 military and civilian aircraft and piloted his own plane into his mid-eighties.

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