

USAF Almanac

Air Force Magazine's Guide to Aces and Heroes



Striking a pose in front of Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker's airplane are (l-r) 1st Lt. Joseph Eastman, Capt. James A. Meissner (eight victories), Rickenbacker (26 victories), 1st Lt. Reed M. Chambers (seven victories), and 1st Lt. Thorne C. Taylor (two victories).

Some Famous US Fighter Firsts

May 28, 1918	First AEF-trained AEF ace: Capt. Edward V. Rickenbacker
Dec. 7, 1941	First AAF victories (WW II at Pearl Harbor): Lts. Harry W. Brown, Philip M. Rasmussen, Lewis M. Sanders, Gordon H. Sterling Jr., Kenneth M. Taylor, George S. Welch
Dec. 16, 1941	First AAF ace (WW II): 1st Lt. Boyd D. Wagner
Nov. 8, 1950	First jet-to-jet victory (Korean War): 1st Lt. Russell J. Brown
May 20, 1951	First USAF ace of the Korean War: Capt. James Jabara
Nov. 30, 1951	First USAF ace of two wars (WW II and Korea): Maj. George A. Davis Jr. (7 in WW II and 14 in Korea)
Jan. 2, 1967	First (and only) USAF ace with victories in WW II and Vietnam: Col. Robin Olds (12 in WW II and 4 in Vietnam)
Aug. 28, 1972	First USAF ace of Vietnam: Capt. Richard S. Ritchie

By tradition, anyone with five official victory credits is an ace. In compiling this list of aces who flew with the US Air Force and predecessor organizations (the Air Service, Air Corps, and Army Air Forces), *Air Force Magazine* relied on USAF's official accounting of aerial victory credits, which is the responsibility of the Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, Ala.

Air Force historians have kept the official records of aerial victories by USAF pilots and crew members since 1957. The Office of the Air Force Historian initially published four separate listings—for World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. The four volumes have been corrected, updated, and combined into one comprehensive volume.

In each war in which its members flew and fought, the Air Force established criteria for awarding aerial victory credits. These criteria varied from war to war, and therefore one cannot make direct comparisons of aces across all wars.

In many cases during World War I, several aviators worked together to down a single aircraft. The Air Service awarded one whole credit to each aviator who contributed to the victory. A single victory could—and often did—result in three or four victory credits.

In World War II and Korea, the criteria were changed. The service divided one credit among all aviators who contributed to destruction of an enemy airplane. With the awarding of fractional credits, a single victory could result in no more than one credit.

The rules were changed again in the Vietnam War. When an F-4 downed an enemy aircraft, USAF would award two full aerial victory credits—one to the frontseater and one to the backseater. As in World War I, a single victory resulted in multiple victory credits.

Thus, the standards for World War II and Korea were more restrictive than those for World War I and Vietnam.

Leading American Aces of World War I

(10 or more victories^a)

Rickenbacker, Capt. Edward V.	26
Luke, 2nd Lt. Frank Jr.	18
Vaughn, 1st Lt. George A.	13
Kindley, 1st Lt. Field E.	12
Springs, 1st Lt. Elliott W.	12
Landis, 1st Lt. Reed G.	10
Swaab, 1st Lt. Jacques M.	10

^aIn World War I, pilots who shared victories were each given one credit. This list uses the World War I counting rule.



2nd Lt. Frank Luke Jr.



Maj. Richard I. Bong

Ranks are as of last victory in World War II.

^aAces who added to these scores by victories in the Korean War.

^bSL stands for Squadron Leader, a British designation. Gladych was Polish and flew in service with American units. The Polish government in exile was headquartered in London. Thus, Polish pilots had British designations.

Leading Army Air Forces Aces of World War II

(10 or more victories)

Bong, Maj. Richard I.	40	Moran, 1st Lt. Glennon T.	13
McGuire, Maj. Thomas B. Jr.	38	Parker, Capt. Harry A.	13
Gabreski, Lt. Col. Francis S.	28 ^a	Stephens, Maj. Robert W.	13
Johnson, Capt. Robert S.	27	Williamson, Capt. Felix D.	13
MacDonald, Col. Charles H.	27	Brueland, Maj. Lowell K.	12.50
Preddy, Maj. George E.	26.83	Brown, Maj. Quince L.	12.33
Meyer, Lt. Col. John C.	24 ^a	Brezas, 1st Lt. Michael	12
Schilling, Col. David C.	22.50	Chase, Lt. Col. Levi R.	12
Johnson, Lt. Col. Gerald R.	22	East, Capt. Clyde B.	12
Kearby, Col. Neel E.	22	Gleason, Capt. George W.	12
Robbins, Maj. Jay T.	22	Hively, Maj. Howard D.	12
Christensen, Capt. Fred J.	21.50	Ladd, Capt. Kenneth G.	12
Wetmore, Capt. Ray S.	21.25	Moore, Maj. Robert W.	12
Voll, Capt. John J.	21	Olds, Maj. Robin	12
Mahurin, Maj. Walker M.	20.75 ^a	Schreiber, Capt. Leroy A.	12
Lynch, Lt. Col. Thomas J.	20	Skogstad, 1st Lt. Norman C.	12
Westbrook, Lt. Col. Robert B.	20	Sloan, 1st Lt. William J.	12
Gentile, Capt. Don S.	19.83	Watkins, Capt. James A.	12
Duncan, Col. Glenn E.	19.50	Megura, Capt. Nicholas	11.83
Carson, Capt. Leonard K.	18.50	Blakeslee, Col. Donald J.M.	11.50
Eagleston, Maj. Glenn T.	18.50 ^a	Conger, Maj. Paul A.	11.50
Beckham, Maj. Walter C.	18	Kirla, 1st Lt. John A.	11.50
Green, Maj. Herschel H.	18	McDonald, Maj. Norman L.	11.50
Herbst, Lt. Col. John C.	18	Stewart, Maj. James C.	11.50
Zemke, Lt. Col. Hubert	17.75	Yeager, Capt. Charles E.	11.50
England, Maj. John B.	17.50	Norley, Maj. Louis H.	11.33
Beeson, Capt. Duane W.	17.33	Frantz, 1st Lt. Carl M.	11
Thornell, 1st Lt. John F. Jr.	17.25	Goebel, Capt. Robert J.	11
Varnell, Capt. James S. Jr.	17	Lawler, Capt. John B.	11
Johnson, Maj. Gerald W.	16.50	Lent, 1st Lt. Francis J.	11
Godfrey, Capt. John T.	16.33	Leverette, Lt. Col. William L.	11
Anderson, Capt. Clarence E. Jr.	16.25	Loisel, Maj. John S.	11
Dunham, Lt. Col. William D.	16	Lowry, 1st Lt. Wayne L.	11
Harris, Lt. Col. Bill	16	McCorkle, Col. Charles M.	11
Welch, Capt. George S.	16	McKennon, Maj. Pierce W.	11
Beerbower, Capt. Don M.	15.50	Mitchell, Lt. Col. John W.	11
Brown, Maj. Samuel J.	15.50	Molland, Capt. Leland J.	11
Peterson, Capt. Richard A.	15.50	Quirk, Capt. Michael P.	11
Whisner, Capt. William T. Jr.	15.50 ^a	Riddle, 1st Lt. Robert E.	11
Bradley, Lt. Col. Jack T.	15	Shubin, 1st Lt. Murray J.	11
Cragg, Maj. Edward	15	Smith, Capt. Cornelius M. Jr.	11
Foy, Maj. Robert W.	15	Sparks, 1st Lt. Kenneth C.	11
Hofer, 2nd Lt. Ralph K.	15	Turner, Maj. Richard E.	11
Homer, Capt. Cyril F.	15	O'Connor, Capt. Frank Q.	10.75
Landers, Lt. Col. John D.	14.50	Ceuleers, Lt. Col. George F.	10.50
Powers, Capt. Joe H.	14.50	Clark, Lt. Col. James A. Jr.	10.50
Brown, Capt. Henry W.	14.20	Doersch, Capt. George A.	10.50
Carr, 1st Lt. Bruce W.	14	Halton, Maj. William T.	10.50
Curtis, Maj. Robert C.	14	Hovde, Maj. William J.	10.50
Dahlberg, Capt. Kenneth H.	14	Littge, Capt. Raymond H.	10.50
DeHaven, Capt. Robert M.	14	Storch, Lt. Col. John A.	10.50
Emmer, Capt. Wallace N.	14	Glover, Maj. Fred W.	10.33
Goodson, Maj. James A.	14	Anderson, 1st Lt. Charles F.	10
Jeffrey, Lt. Col. Arthur F.	14	Aschenbrener, Capt. Robert W.	10
McComas, Lt. Col. Edward O.	14	Blickenstaff, Lt. Col. Wayne K.	10
Roberts, Capt. Daniel T. Jr.	14	England, Maj. James J.	10
West, Capt. Richard L.	14	Giroux, Capt. William K.	10
Bochkay, Maj. Donald H.	13.83	Gladych, SL ^b Michael	10
Strait, Maj. Donald J.	13.50	Goehausen, Capt. Walter J. Jr.	10
Bryan, Capt. Donald S.	13.33	Harris, Capt. Ernest A.	10
Carpenter, Maj. George	13.33	Lines, 1st Lt. Ted E.	10
Brooks, 1st Lt. James L.	13	Rankin, 1st Lt. Robert J.	10
Hampshire, Capt. John F. Jr.	13	Reynolds, 1st Lt. Andrew J.	10
Head, Capt. Cotesworth B. Jr.	13	Scott, Col. Robert L. Jr.	10
Holloway, Col. Bruce K.	13	Stanch, Capt. Paul M.	10
Millikan, Capt. Willard W.	13	Summer, Capt. Elliot	10



Capt. Joseph C. McConnell Jr.

USAF Aces of the Korean War

McConnell, Capt. Joseph C. Jr.	16
Jabara, Maj. James	15 ^a
Fernandez, Capt. Manuel J. Jr.	14.50
Davis, Maj. George A. Jr.	14 ^a
Baker, Col. Royal N.	13 ^a
Blesse, Maj. Frederick C.	10
Fischer, Capt. Harold E.	10
Garrison, Lt. Col. Vermont	10 ^a
Johnson, Col. James K.	10 ^a
Moore, Capt. Lonnie R.	10
Parr, Capt. Ralph S. Jr.	10
Foster, Capt. Cecil G.	9
Low, 1st Lt. James F.	9
Hagerstrom, Maj. James P.	8.50 ^a
Risner, Capt. Robinson	8
Ruddell, Lt. Col. George I.	8 ^a
Buttelmann, 1st Lt. Henry	7
Jolley, Capt. Clifford D.	7
Lilley, Capt. Leonard W.	7
Adams, Maj. Donald E.	6.50
Gabreski, Col. Francis S.	6.50 ^a
Jones, Lt. Col. George L.	6.50
Marshall, Maj. Winton W.	6.50
Kasler, 1st Lt. James H.	6
Love, Capt. Robert J.	6
Whisner, Maj. William T. Jr.	5.50 ^a
Baldwin, Col. Robert P.	5
Becker, Capt. Richard S.	5
Bettinger, Maj. Stephen L.	5
Creighton, Maj. Richard D.	5 ^a
Curtin, Capt. Clyde A.	5
Gibson, Capt. Ralph D.	5
Kincheloe, Capt. Iven C. Jr.	5
Latshaw, Capt. Robert T. Jr.	5
Moore, Capt. Robert H.	5
Overton, Capt. Dolphin D. III	5
Thyng, Col. Harrison R.	5 ^a
Wescott, Maj. William H.	5

^aIn addition to World War II victories.



Cpts. Charles B. DeBellevue and Richard S. Ritchie

USAF Aces of the Vietnam War

DeBellevue, Capt. Charles B.	6
Feinstein, Capt. Jeffrey S.	5
Ritchie, Capt. Richard S.	5



Capt. Jeffrey S. Feinstein



Maj. George A. Davis (left), the first ace in two wars, was the leading ace in Korea with 14 aircraft destroyed when he was shot down on a mission for which he would receive a posthumous Medal of Honor. With him are Col. Ben Preston (center), 4th Fighter-Interceptor Group commander, and Maj. Winton W. Marshall, also an ace. Davis would eventually be surpassed by only three pilots, including Capt. Joseph C. McConnell Jr., USAF's leading ace in Korea.

AAF/USAF Aces With Victories in Both World War II and a Later War

	WW II	Korean/Other	Total
Gabreski, Col. Francis S.	28	6.50	34.50
Meyer, Col. John C.	24	2	26
Mahurin, Col. Walker M.	20.75	3.50	24.25
Davis, Maj. George A. Jr.	7	14	21
Whisner, Maj. William T. Jr.	15.50	5.50	21
Eagleston, Col. Glenn T.	18.50	2	20.50
Garrison, Lt. Col. Vermont	7.33	10	17.33
Baker, Col. Royal N.	3.50	13	16.50
Jabara, Maj. James	1.50	15	16.50
Olds, Col. Robin	12	4 ^a	16
Mitchell, Col. John W.	11	4	15
Brueland, Maj. Lowell K.	12.50	2	14.50
Hagerstrom, Maj. James P.	6	8.50	14.50
Hovde, Lt. Col. William J.	10.50	1	11.50
Johnson, Col. James K.	1	10	11
Ruddell, Lt. Col. George I.	2.50	8	10.50
Thyng, Col. Harrison R.	5	5	10
Colman, Capt. Philip E.	5	4	9
Heller, Lt. Col. Edwin L.	5.50	3.50	9
Chandler, Maj. Van E.	5	3	8
Hockery, Maj. John J.	7	1	8
Creighton, Maj. Richard D.	2	5	7
Emmert, Lt. Col. Benjamin H.	6	1	7
Bettinger, Maj. Stephen L.	1	5	6
Visscher, Maj. Herman W.	5	1	6
Liles, Capt. Brooks J.	1	4	5
Mattson, Capt. Conrad E.	1	4	5
Shaeffer, Maj. William F.	2	3	5

^aOlds's four additional victories came during the Vietnam War.



Col. John C. Meyer



Maj. James Jabara

Col. Robin Olds



Col. Francis S. Gabreski



Capt. Robert S. Johnson

Leading Air Service/AAF/USAF Aces of All Wars

Bong, Maj. Richard I.	40	WW II
McGuire, Maj. Thomas B. Jr.	38	WW II
Gabreski, Col. Francis S.	34.50	WW II, Korea
Johnson, Capt. Robert S.	27	WW II
MacDonald, Col. Charles H.	27	WW II
Preddy, Maj. George E.	26.83	WW II
Meyer, Col. John C.	26	WW II, Korea
Rickenbacker, Capt. Edward V.	26 ^b	WW I
Mahurin, Col. Walker M.	24.25	WW II, Korea
Schilling, Col. David C.	22.50	WW II
Johnson, Lt. Col. Gerald R.	22	WW II
Kearby, Col. Neel E.	22	WW II
Robbins, Maj. Jay T.	22	WW II
Christensen, Capt. Fred J.	21.50	WW II
Wetmore, Capt. Ray S.	21.25	WW II
Davis, Maj. George A. Jr.	21	WW II, Korea
Voll, Capt. John J.	21	WW II
Whisner, Capt. William T. Jr.	21	WW II, Korea
Eagleston, Col. Glenn T.	20.50	WW II, Korea
Lynch, Lt. Col. Thomas J.	20	WW II
Westbrook, Lt. Col. Robert B.	20	WW II
Gentile, Capt. Don S.	19.83	WW II

^bUnder World War II and Korean War counting rules, Rickenbacker would have been credited with 24.33 victories. The change would not alter his position on this list.

USAF Recipients of the Medal of Honor

Names, Alphabetically by Wars, and Rank at Time of Action

^aLiving Medal of Honor recipient.

Hometown	Date of Action	Place of Action	
World War I			
Bleckley, 2nd Lt. Erwin R.	Wichita, Kan.	Oct. 6, 1918	Binarville, France
Goettler, 1st Lt. Harold E.	Chicago	Oct. 6, 1918	Binarville, France
Luke, 2nd Lt. Frank Jr.	Phoenix	Sept. 29, 1918	Murvaux, France
Rickenbacker, 1st Lt. Edward V.	Columbus, Ohio	Sept. 25, 1918	Billy, France
World War II			
Baker, Lt. Col. Addison E.	Chicago	Aug. 1, 1943	Ploesti, Romania
Bong, Maj. Richard I.	Poplar, Wis.	Oct. 10–Nov. 15, 1944	Southwest Pacific
Carswell, Maj. Horace S. Jr.	Fort Worth, Tex.	Oct. 26, 1944	South China Sea
Castle, Brig. Gen. Frederick W.	Manila, Philippines	Dec. 24, 1944	Liège, Belgium
Cheli, Maj. Ralph	San Francisco	Aug. 18, 1943	Wewak, New Guinea
Craw, Col. Demas T.	Traverse City, Mich.	Nov. 8, 1942	Port Lyautey, French Morocco
Doolittle, Lt. Col. James H.	Alameda, Calif.	April 18, 1942	Tokyo
Erwin, SSgt. Henry E.	Adamsville, Ala.	April 12, 1945	Koriyama, Japan
Femoyer, 2nd Lt. Robert E.	Huntington, W.Va.	Nov. 2, 1944	Merseburg, Germany
Gott, 1st Lt. Donald J.	Arnett, Okla.	Nov. 9, 1944	Saarbrücken, Germany
Hamilton, Maj. Pierpont M.	Tuxedo Park, N.Y.	Nov. 8, 1942	Port Lyautey, French Morocco
Howard, Lt. Col. James H.	Canton, China	Jan. 11, 1944	Oschersleben, Germany
Hughes, 2nd Lt. Lloyd H.	Alexandria, La.	Aug. 1, 1943	Ploesti, Romania
Jerstad, Maj. John L.	Racine, Wis.	Aug. 1, 1943	Ploesti, Romania
Johnson, Col. Leon W.	Columbia, Mo.	Aug. 1, 1943	Ploesti, Romania
Kane, Col. John R.	McGregor, Tex.	Aug. 1, 1943	Ploesti, Romania
Kearby, Col. Neel E.	Wichita Falls, Tex.	Oct. 11, 1943	Wewak, New Guinea
Kingsley, 2nd Lt. David R.	Portland, Ore.	June 23, 1944	Ploesti, Romania
Knight, 1st Lt. Raymond L.	Houston	April 25, 1945	Po Valley, Italy
Lawley, 1st Lt. William R. Jr.	Leeds, Ala.	Feb. 20, 1944	Leipzig, Germany
Lindsey, Capt. Darrell R.	Jefferson, Iowa	Aug. 9, 1944	Pontoise, France
Mathies, Sgt. Archibald	Scotland	Feb. 20, 1944	Leipzig, Germany
Mathis, 1st Lt. Jack W.	San Angelo, Tex.	March 18, 1943	Veogesack, Germany
McGuire, Maj. Thomas B. Jr.	Ridgewood, N.J.	Dec. 25–26, 1944	Luzon, Philippines
Metzger, 2nd Lt. William E. Jr.	Lima, Ohio	Nov. 9, 1944	Saarbrücken, Germany
Michael, 1st Lt. Edward S.	Chicago	April 11, 1944	Brunswick, Germany
Morgan, 2nd Lt. John C.	Vernon, Tex.	July 28, 1943	Kiel, Germany
Pease, Capt. Harl Jr.	Plymouth, N.H.	Aug. 7, 1942	Rabaul, New Britain
Pucket, 1st Lt. Donald D.	Longmont, Colo.	July 9, 1944	Ploesti, Romania
Sarnoski, 2nd Lt. Joseph R.	Simpson, Pa.	June 16, 1943	Buka, Solomon Islands
Shomo, Maj. William A.	Jeannette, Pa.	Jan. 11, 1945	Luzon, Philippines
Smith, Sgt. Maynard H.	Caro, Mich.	May 1, 1943	St. Nazaire, France
Truemper, 2nd Lt. Walter E.	Aurora, Ill.	Feb. 20, 1944	Leipzig, Germany
Vance, Lt. Col. Leon R. Jr.	Enid, Okla.	June 5, 1944	Wimereaux, France
Vosler, TSgt. Forrest L.	Lyndonville, N.Y.	Dec. 20, 1943	Bremen, Germany
Walker, Brig. Gen. Kenneth N.	Cerrillos, N.M.	Jan. 5, 1943	Rabaul, New Britain
Wilkins, Maj. Raymond H.	Portsmouth, Va.	Nov. 2, 1943	Rabaul, New Britain
Zeamer, Maj. Jay Jr. ^a	Carlisle, Pa.	June 16, 1943	Buka, Solomon Islands
Korea			
Davis, Maj. George A. Jr.	Dublin, Tex.	Feb. 10, 1952	Sinuiju, Yalu River, N. Korea
Loring, Maj. Charles J. Jr.	Portland, Maine	Nov. 22, 1952	Sniper Ridge, N. Korea
Sebille, Maj. Louis J.	Harbor Beach, Mich.	Aug. 5, 1950	Hamch'ang, S. Korea
Walmsley, Capt. John S. Jr.	Baltimore	Sept. 14, 1951	Yangdok, N. Korea
Vietnam			
Bennett, Capt. Steven L.	Palestine, Tex.	June 29, 1972	Quang Tri, S. Vietnam
Day, Maj. George E. ^a	Sioux City, Iowa	Conspicuous gallantry while POW	
Dethlefsen, Maj. Merlyn H.	Greenville, Iowa	March 10, 1967	Thai Nguyen, N. Vietnam
Fisher, Maj. Bernard F. ^a	San Bernardino, Calif.	March 10, 1966	A Shau Valley, S. Vietnam
Fleming, 1st Lt. James P. ^a	Sedalia, Mo.	Nov. 26, 1968	Duc Co, S. Vietnam
Jackson, Lt. Col. Joe M. ^a	Newnan, Ga.	May 12, 1968	Kham Duc, S. Vietnam
Jones, Col. William A. III	Warsaw, Va.	Sept. 1, 1968	Dong Hoi, N. Vietnam
Levitow, A1C John L.	South Windsor, Conn.	Feb. 24, 1969	Long Binh, S. Vietnam
Pitsenbarger, A1C William H.	Piqua, Ohio	April 11, 1966	Cam My, S. Vietnam
Sijan, Capt. Lance P.	Milwaukee	Conspicuous gallantry while POW	
Thorsness, Maj. Leo K. ^a	Seattle	April 19, 1967	N. Vietnam
Wilbanks, Capt. Hilliard A.	Cornelia, Ga.	Feb. 24, 1967	Dalat, S. Vietnam
Young, Capt. Gerald O.	Anacortes, Wash.	Nov. 9, 1967	Khesahn, S. Vietnam
Peacetime			
Lindbergh, Col. Charles A.	Detroit	May 20–21, 1927	New York City–Paris record flight
Mitchell, Maj. Gen. W. "Billy"	Milwaukee	Posthumous award	Foresight in military aviation