

## Personal memory of the late Colonel Gardner W Engel (Jim Engel)

Words and photos by Tarkey Barker, May 2007



a Captain when among other planes, Marion, and while Operation



I first knew of Col Engel when he stood on the balcony at the opening ceremony of the Martlesham Heath Control Tower Museum second anniversary in September 2002. Jim was stationed at Martlesham Heath and flew, a Thunderbolt which he called Maid doing this he was involved in the D Day

In September 2002 I was fortunate, as part of the second anniversary programme, I accompanied Col Engel (Jim) and his wife Diane on the visit to Imperial War Museum at RAF Duxford for the rededication of the American air Museum (photo, right). I became friends with them both and we have exchanged emails on a regularly basis, including Diane's jokes.

Whilst at Duxford I asked a question regarding a uniform being worn by a USAF Officer who turned out to be Col Snider the Deputy Commander of RAF Lakenheath. He got chatting to Jim and his closing remarks were "Thank you so much for leaving us such a nice air force..."

Just before Christmas 2006 I received an email from Richard Engel, Jim's son, saying that the family would like to commission an A2 leather flying jacket just like the one Jim had worn back at Martlesham Heath, as a present. Thanks to Eddie Malo, a jacket was manufactured but unfortunately Jim Passed away on his 87th Birthday.

Richard very generously offered the jacket to the Control Tower Museum to go on display beside Jim's uniform, which was already there. The wonderful garment was presented to MHAS on the 4th May at our monthly meeting, and will go on display in the The Martlesham Heath Control Tower Museum.

Once again we would like to thank the Engel Family for such a fine tribute to the happy times Jim spent at Martlesham Heath.