

**John William (Wild Bill) Crump** was one of the 356th Fighter Group pilots based at RAF Martlesham Heath during WW2. Bill flew Republic P-47 Thunderbolts. That is not particularly unusual. But what is unusual is that Bill carried a passenger in his cockpit on at least five sorties.



ENGLAND - 1944

**BILL CRUMP WITH HIS COYOTE.. THE ONLY MASCOT IN THE WORLD TO FLY 5 COMBAT MISSIONS IN A P-47 THUNDERBOLT FIGHTER.**

During the 1930s Depression in America, Bill tried to make a living by helping farmers with their coyote problem. On one occasion a farmer presented Bill with a baby coyote in a box and said he could “start with this one”.

Bill could not find it in himself to kill the animal and adopted it as his pet. He later smuggled it into the UK when, after earning his wings as a pilot, he was posted to Martlesham Heath. Bill discarded his gas mask and "smuggled" the baby coyote aboard the Queen Elizabeth. The Coyote became a family member at the 360th Squadron, 356th Fighter Group, 8th Air Force. The coyote had "dog" tags, a log book ("Form 5"), Immunization record. The coyote was called "Jeep" NMI Coyote ( NMI stands for "No Middle Initial"), and he accompanied Bill on his missions, in the cockpit of his Thunderbolt, named “Jackie.” Bill later flew P51, Mustangs.



Bill was billeted at Playford Hall during his stay here, and it was at Playford Hall that “Jeep” sadly died when he was run over.

Jeep received a Military funeral, "missing man" formation, taps and a victory roll roll by his master, before being laid to rest with a gun salute of Colt 45s, in the grounds of Playford Hall. A plaque marks the spot.

Over 60 years later, In the week preceding the VE Day celebrations at Martlesham Heath, I received an email from Lt Col Allen Klein and Lt Col James Delaney both USAF (retd), both living in Tennessee.

Jim is friend of Bill Crump and had been asked to visit the grave on his forthcoming visit to England. Al was a WSO in B-58 (Hustler) and Jim was a pilot in KC-135s. I arranged to meet them both, along with their English friend Sandra (a Boeing 737 pilot) at the Duxford VE Day show on the 7th May. We had a great day together and I was enthralled with their stories.

On Sunday 8th May the group attended the MHAS's VE Day celebration, where they met our gang and also Lt Nichelle Brokering (also a KC-135 pilot ).



Later, Bob Dunnett and I accompanied the three guests to Playford Hall to see and film the grave of "Jeep." It was a moving occasion.

Tarkey Barker

**A biography of Wild Bill Crump can be found on , [www.wildbillcrump.com](http://www.wildbillcrump.com) a website created by Bill's son as a tribute to his father and celebration of his life.**