

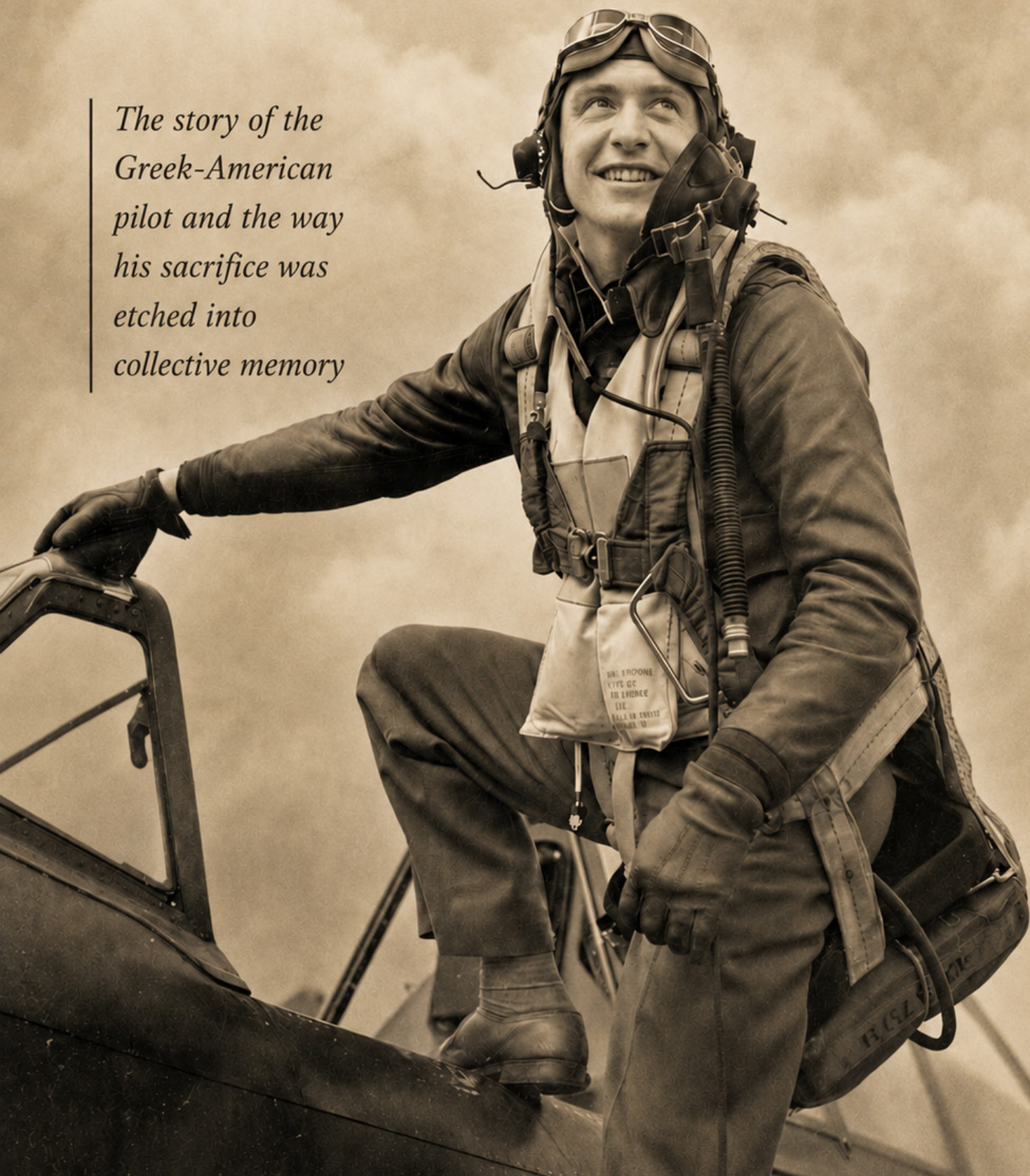
— GREEKS IN FOREIGN COCKPITS —

ARTHUR SUGAS

FROM TRIKALA TO ETERNITY

56th FIGHTER GROUP / 63rd FIGHTER SQUADRON

*The story of the
Greek-American
pilot and the way
his sacrifice was
etched into
collective memory*





FAMILY ORIGINS, GREECE, IMMIGRATION & EARLY LIFE

Arthur Sugas was born Athanasios Sugas on 27 December 1919 either at Trikala in Corinthia, in the Peloponnese, or at Trikala in Thessaly Greece, the son of Constantine Z. Sugas and Maria—Mary—Sugas.¹ The family's roots in Trikala extended beyond Arthur himself. The 1928 immigration records give the same place as the birthplace of his mother Maria and his elder sister Stella, while Constantine's Michigan death certificate would later record that he too had been born at Trikala, Greece, on 21 May 1877.² Constantine had crossed the Atlantic before his wife and children. The family recollections later preserved through Arthur's cousin Helen Georgiou describes him as having made two journeys to the United States, the first before he had children and the later one in search of the stability that would eventually make family reunification possible. In southwestern Michigan he entered the region's paper industry. Georgiou remembered him as a papermaker in the mills around the Kalamazoo River; his 1944 death certificate independently confirms that connection, listing him as a laborer for the Bryant Paper Company. According to the family account, years of work and separation followed before he was able to bring Mary, Stella and Arthur to America. Constantine became a naturalized American citizen on 14 September 1927.³ Then, in August 1928, the family's long separation was nearing its end. On 23 August, the passenger manifest of the SS Edison, sailing from Piraeus, listed Maria Sugas and her two children: Stella, aged ten, and Athanasios, aged eight. All three were recorded as Greek nationals; the children were listed as scholars, and Trikala appeared both as their birthplace and as their last permanent residence in Greece.⁴ A companion immigration record gives the Edison's arrival in the United States as 10 September 1928 and identifies the family's destination as Maria's husband, Constantine Sugas, in Kalamazoo, Michigan.⁵ The eight year-old boy was not travelling entirely into the unknown. He was crossing the Atlantic toward the father who had gone before him and had spent years making a place for his family.

In Kalamazoo, the child entered on the ship's manifest as Athanasios grew into the Arthur Sugas of the American records. The exact point at which the American form of his given name was adopted is not documented, nor is there presently evidence of a formal legal change; by adulthood, however, Arthur Sugas was firmly established as the name by which he lived and served.⁶ Yet becoming Arthur did not mean leaving the Greek world behind. The Sugas family belonged to a small and closely connected Greek American community in Kalamazoo, one in which family relationships, friendship, church life and cultural identity overlapped naturally. Helen Georgiou remembered the immigrant generation around them as deeply appreciative of the opportunities the United States offered, while remaining closely attached to their Greek heritage.⁷ It was within that world that Arthur formed one of the defining friendships of his youth. Nicholas "Nick" Stampolis, another young Greek American in Kalamazoo, became his closest companion; those who remembered them described the two boys as virtually

From Greece to Kalamazoo: the transatlantic journey of eight-year-old Athanasios — later Arthur — Sugas aboard the S.S. Edison, his school years at McKinley Elementary School, and the world of early aviation in Kalamazoo formed the setting in which his fascination with flight first took root and grew.

inseparable. They passed through school together and, for a time, attended McKinley Elementary School.⁸ Their later lives would give the friendship a tragic symmetry, but nothing of that yet belonged to their childhood. Then they were simply two boys growing up together, sharing school, sport and an increasing fascination with airplanes.

Helen Georgiou remembered warm summer evenings at McKinley when films were projected against an outside wall of the school and people stood outdoors to watch. Among the subjects shown was Charles Lindbergh. It would be tempting, knowing what came later, to turn such a scene into the moment in which Arthur decided to become a pilot. The evidence does not allow that certainty. What the recollection does show is that aviation already occupied a vivid place in the world in which Arthur and Nick grew up.⁹ Aircraft could also be encountered in the sky over Kalamazoo itself. Georgiou recalled visiting airplanes at what was then Lindbergh Field, where short passenger flights could be purchased for fifty cents. She strongly believed that Arthur and Nick had taken one or more such rides, although this remains family recollection rather than independently documented fact. More tangible was what the boys brought into their homes. Both kept balsa and tissue model airplanes hanging from their bedroom ceilings. Georgiou's brother George did the same, while the younger Aristos Spugios later remembered building models of his own and Arthur and Nick helping him to "fly" them.¹⁰ Long before flying became a profession, aircraft had already become part of the physical landscape of Arthur's boyhood.

His adolescence was by no means defined by aviation alone. Arthur was active and competitive. He played tennis for his highschool team, also played basketball, hunted with Nick, and later joined the YMCA, where his wider interests included ice skating and fishing.¹¹ None of these pursuits needs to be read backwards as preparation for the fighter pilot he would become. Their value is simpler and more human: they reveal a young man before the uniform, physically active, sociable, competitive and drawn to a life that extended well beyond the classroom. He also learned early that personal independence required work. Arthur wanted money of his own with which to buy his clothes, and he earned it. He shined shoes in a shoeshine parlor and worked as a newspaper carrier in Kalamazoo.¹² It is a modest detail, but an important one. The young officer who would later appear in photographs wearing the uniform of the United States Army Air Forces had first known the ordinary discipline of earning his own spending money. At the same time, the Greek American community remained one of the fixed points of his life. Arthur and Nick were active in their Greek Orthodox church and in the Sons of Pericles, the youth organization associated with the Order of AHEPA. Its activities brought young people of Greek background together socially and through sports such as softball and bowling, while helping preserve their connection with the language, customs and cultural world of their families.¹³ There was no simple dividing line in Arthur's youth between a Greek past and an American present. His life in Kalamazoo was made from both.

Music perhaps provides the most intimate glimpse of that continuity. Arthur played the violin, while his father taught

him the mandolin.¹⁴ The detail needs no later drama to give it meaning. Before combat missions, decorations and fighter aircraft, there was a father teaching his son an instrument, and a young man whose interests could move easily from tennis courts and model airplanes to music.

As Arthur approached adulthood, the documentary record becomes more precise. A surviving Army Classification Questionnaire of Reserve Officers records four years at Kalamazoo Central High School, lists mathematics as his principal field of study, confirms that he graduated and gives the year 1939. A wartime Kalamazoo Gazette profile independently stated that he had graduated from Central High School.¹⁵ His secondary education therefore belongs not merely to later recollection but to the contemporary documentary record. His former high school adviser, Mildred Conkey, later left perhaps the most personal surviving description of the student she had known. Writing during the war, she remembered “his bright shining eyes, his kindly smile, his courteous manner” as something no teacher could forget.¹⁶ Her words were affectionate recollection, written years after Arthur had left her classroom, but they accord strikingly with the wider picture preserved by those who knew him: a young man active in school and community life, athletic without being defined solely by sport, fascinated by aircraft yet equally at home with music, and remembered warmly by those around him. By 1939, the eight year-old Greek immigrant once entered as Athanasios Sugas on an American passenger manifest had become a graduate of Kalamazoo Central High School. Behind him were Trikala, the Atlantic crossing, the Greek homes and church life of Kalamazoo, McKinley, Nick Stampolis, model airplanes, tennis courts, newspaper routes, violin and mandolin. Ahead lay Western Michigan College of Education and the path that would turn a boyhood fascination with airplanes into actual flight.

COLLEGE, CIVILIAN PILOT TRAINING & ENTRY INTO MILITARY AVIATION

In 1939, after graduating from Kalamazoo Central High School, Arthur Sugas entered the local college later identified by Gerard Pahl as Western Michigan College of Education; in Arthur’s own surviving aviation paperwork of 1941, the institution appears as Western State Teachers College. His later military education record credited him with two years of college but no degree. Pahl’s reconstruction places his close friend Nicholas Stampolis beside him during these years and preserves recollections of an energetic and intellectually gifted young man, but the firm documentary point is simpler: Sugas completed four semesters of higher education before aviation began to draw him decisively away from the classroom.¹⁷ Pahl’s later account likewise remembered Arthur and Nicholas as pursuing flying at roughly the same stage of their lives. By the spring of 1941 that interest had become formal flying experience. Sugas entered the Civilian Pilot Training Program, conducted under the Civil Aeronautics Administration, through Western State Teachers College. On 24 April 1941 he signed a statement specifically concerning his C.A.A. training. He recorded the school as Western State Teachers College in

Kalamazoo and the period of attendance as February–May 1941. More importantly, he stated that he was then undergoing C.A.A. flight training and that he had not yet graduated from either the Preliminary or Secondary Flight Training Course. The document therefore proves his participation in civilian flight training but does not by itself justify the stronger claim that he had already completed the entire CPTP syllabus.¹⁸

His ambitions were already extending beyond civilian flying. Six days earlier, on 18 April 1941, Sugas had sworn the affidavit accompanying his Application for Appointment as Flying Cadet, addressed to the Commanding General of the Sixth Corps Area in Chicago. The application asked that he be considered for appointment as a flying cadet in the Army Air Corps for heavier than air flight training and contemplated appointment as a Second Lieutenant in the Air Corps Reserve after successful completion of the prescribed course. His accompanying affidavit affirmed his United States citizenship and his willingness to accept the obligations of flying cadet training and a subsequent commission.¹⁹ The chronology is significant: Arthur had formally set his course toward military aviation months before the attack on Pearl Harbor brought the United States into the war. Later recollections preserved by Pahl remembered the decision chiefly in terms of patriotism. Helen Georgiou recalled the strong attachment of Kalamazoo’s Greek American community to the United States and the eagerness of its young men to defend their adopted country. Pahl also raised the possibility that the deteriorating situation in Greece may have influenced Arthur’s thinking, but no surviving contemporary document establishes any single political or military event as the decisive cause of his choice.²⁰ What the primary record does establish is more concrete: by April 1941 Sugas was simultaneously pursuing civilian flight training and formally seeking admission to Army flying training.

He did not remain at college long enough to earn a degree. During the interval before entering military service, he worked in Kalamazoo industry. His federal draft registration of 1 July 1941 listed his occupation with Hammond Machinery Builders, while contemporary Kalamazoo reporting later stated that at the time of his enlistment he was employed by the Kalamazoo Vegetable Parchment Company.²¹ His draft record independently confirms the Hammond employment. On the evidence presently available, the best supported date for his enlistment in the Air Corps is 29 October 1941, the date reported by the Kalamazoo Gazette while Sugas was still in service.²² The surviving documentation does not allow every intermediate flying school posting to be reconstructed with equal certainty. By 19 March 1942, however, Sugas was unquestionably at Foster Field, Victoria, Texas. His official Physical Examination for Flying recorded 130 hours of pilot time, all accumulated within the preceding six months, and found him physically qualified for flying duty, Class I.²³

Arthur Sugas and Nicholas “Nick” Stampolis — two inseparable friends since childhood in Kalamazoo, who grew up together, attended McKinley Elementary School, and from an early age shared the same passion for aviation, eventually both following the path of flight. Their parallel lives would ultimately acquire a poignant and tragic symmetry: both childhood friends lost their lives while serving during the Second World War, only 17 days apart. A friendship that began in the schoolyards of Kalamazoo thus came to bind forever the stories of two young airmen in the history and memory of an entire generation.





Contemporary reporting two months later makes the final phase of his training clearer. Sugas received his final flying training at Foster Field, one of the advanced single engine schools preparing pilots for fighter assignments. The older account that placed both his basic and advanced training at Randolph Field cannot therefore be retained in that form. Randolph Field remains associated with the graduation and commissioning of his class, while Foster Field is the documented location of Arthur's final flying training phase.²⁴ The surviving administrative papers place the culmination of that training across 19–20 May 1942. A later squadron document cites 19 May 1942 as the date of the special order establishing his grade as Second Lieutenant. On 20 May, Headquarters Army Air Forces issued Personnel Orders No. 120 formally rating Arthur Sugas, together with the other newly commissioned officers of his class, as a PILOT. Contemporary Kalamazoo reporting identified him with Class 42-E, reported the award of his wings and commission through the Randolph Field Air Corps Training Center, and specifically stated that his final training had been received at Foster Field.²⁴ His transition from cadet to fighter officer followed almost immediately. On 5 June 1942, Second Lieutenant Arthur Sugas was assigned to the 63rd Fighter Squadron, 56th Fighter Group. The date is not an inference from later unit history: it appears explicitly in the squadron commander's surviving recommendation for his promotion.²⁵ This primary document supersedes the much later claim that Sugas did not join the 63rd Fighter Squadron until January 1943.

Only four days after that assignment, on 9 June 1942, Sugas was involved in a serious but nonfatal training accident at Bradley Field, Connecticut, while flying P-40F 41-13758 during the 56th Fighter Group's transition training. His own signed statement survives in the official accident documentation. In its original wording, Sugas wrote:

*"I was approaching runway No. One for a landing. My glide was too slow and about ten feet above the ground the plane stalled and the left wing dropped. I pushed the throttle forward in order to lift the wing but I had the ship trimmed tail heavy and the plane stalled again. I cut the throttle and turned the battery, and ignition switches off as the plane hit the ground."*²⁶

The eyewitness, control tower and accident committee reports show that the episode was more complex than the pilot's concise account alone suggests. After the first contact with the runway area, the P-40 was brought momentarily under control, and an attempt was made to become airborne again; the aircraft then stalled once more and crashed. The investigating committee concluded that the accident was due largely to poor technique during the final turn and approach, followed by an error of judgment in attempting to continue after the initial mishap. It was specifically observed that the decision to apply power after the first accident could easily have turned the occurrence into a fatal one.²⁶ The original

Arthur Sugas and P-40F 41-13758. On 9 June 1942, just four days after his assignment to the 63rd Fighter Squadron, the young Second Lieutenant was involved in a serious training accident at Bradley Field, Connecticut, during his transition training on the P-40. Sugas survived the accident and subsequently resumed his training, continuing his progression as a fighter pilot. Also depicted in the composition is P-40F serial number 41-13758, the aircraft involved in that accident.

accident documentation, including Sugas's own statement and the committee finding, survives in the contemporary record. It was a severe lesson in the unforgiving demands of high performance, single-seat fighter flying, but it did not halt his progress. Within weeks he was already carrying responsibilities inside the squadron. At the same time, the pressure was considerable. The timing of his arrival in the squadron coincided with one of the most demanding transitions then being undertaken by the United States Army Air Forces. The 63rd had only been redesignated as a Fighter Squadron, and during June it began converting to the new Republic P-47 Thunderbolt. Sugas therefore did not simply join an operational unit as a newly commissioned Second Lieutenant; he entered a formation that was itself learning the aircraft with which it would soon go to war in Europe.

From 13 July to 11 September 1942, Sugas served as C Flight Engineering Officer; from 11 September he served as C Flight Operations Officer, while also acting as a C Flight element leader. When Major Philip H. Tukey recommended him for promotion in September, he recorded that Sugas had served as a pilot since joining the squadron and concluded simply: "His performance of duties in all capacities has been superior."²⁷ That evaluation is particularly valuable because it was not written in retrospect after his death. It was the judgment of his commanding officer while Sugas was still completing the demanding transformation from newly winged pilot to fighter squadron officer. The same document establishes beyond doubt that he joined the 63rd on 5 June 1942 and records the progression of responsibilities he assumed during the summer and early autumn. On 2 September 1942, the 63rd Fighter Squadron moved to Bridgeport Municipal Airport, Connecticut, where its preparations continued as the 56th Fighter Group began organizing for overseas deployment. By 17 December 1942, the Kalamazoo Gazette could report that Arthur had been promoted from Second to First Lieutenant and was serving with the 63rd Fighter Squadron at Bridgeport, Connecticut.²⁸ In little more than a year, the former college student and civilian flying trainee had become a rated Army pilot, a fighter squadron officer and an element leader. His period of preparation in the United States was ending. The next phase of his life would take Arthur Sugas and the 56th Fighter Group away from America and toward the air war in Europe.

ACROSS THE ATLANTIC AND TO THE THRESHOLD OF COMBAT

On 27 December 1942, the 63rd Fighter Squadron left Bridgeport and began its movement toward the European war.²⁹ The 56th Fighter Group assembled for overseas deployment through Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, and on 6 January 1943 its personnel sailed from the United States aboard the Cunard liner Queen Elizabeth, then employed as a high speed troop transport. Six days later, on 12 January, the great liner entered the Clyde and docked at Gourock, Scotland.³⁰ It was the Queen Elizabeth, not the Queen Mary, that carried the 56th across the Atlantic. From Scotland the Americans travelled south by rail. The Group level chronology records the 56th arriving at RAF King's Cliffe on 13 January 1943, but Sugas's own squadron

followed a slightly different station history. The official Air Force record of the 63rd Fighter Squadron dates its British station at Wittering from 12 January, and the contemporary movement chronology explains the apparent discrepancy: accommodation at King's Cliffe was insufficient for the entire Group, and the 63rd was consequently allotted barrack space at nearby RAF Wittering.³¹ Thus King's Cliffe marked the arrival and concentration of the 56th Fighter Group as a whole, while Wittering was the recorded station of Sugas's squadron.

The winter weeks that followed were a period of preparation rather than combat. Although the 56th had already accumulated extensive experience with the Thunderbolt in the United States, the aircraft with which it would enter the European air war had still to reach it in Britain. The first P-47C Thunderbolts arrived at King's Cliffe on 25 January, with further deliveries through February. Gunnery training was arranged on RAF ranges while the Group worked through the practical problems of bringing the big American fighter to operational readiness under British conditions.³² For Sugas and the other original pilots of the 63rd, this was therefore not a first conversion to the Thunderbolt, but the final refinement of a fighter discipline they had already spent months developing in the United States. By the end of March, the outward identity of the American Group was also taking shape. The three squadrons received their individual aircraft code letters: HV for the 61st, LM for the 62nd and UN for the 63rd.³³ The two letters that would soon appear beside the national insignia on Sugas's Thunderbolts thus belonged not to a personal marking but to his squadron. On 5 April 1943, the 63rd left Wittering for Horsham St Faith, near Norwich. The official squadron station record confirms the date, while the Group chronology notes that the move brought all three fighter squadrons together on one airfield for the first time since their earlier period in the United States.³⁴ The months of movement and preparation were over. Within days the 56th Fighter Group began operational flying with the Eighth Air Force.³⁵ Arthur Sugas had reached the point for which the long sequence of civilian flying, Army flight training, fighter conversion and stateside squadron service had prepared him. What followed would no longer be training for war, but war itself.

OPERATIONAL AND COMBAT SERVICE IN ENGLAND, 7 MAY–16 AUGUST 1943

By the beginning of May 1943, the long months of training and conversion had finally given way to the work for which Arthur Sugas and the other pilots of the 63rd Fighter Squadron had been preparing. The squadron was operating from Horsham St Faith, flying the new Republic P-47 Thunderbolt across the North Sea and Channel against occupied Europe. Sugas's first individually documented combat sortie came on 7 May 1943. Under Field Order No. 12, twelve Thunderbolts led by Colonel Hubert Zemke flew a Rodeo over the Walcheren and Gravelines areas at approximately 30,000 feet. Eleven enemy aircraft were reported in sight, but no engagement developed. Sugas flew WHITE 3, in P-47C-5-RE 41-6372, squadron code UN-S.³⁶

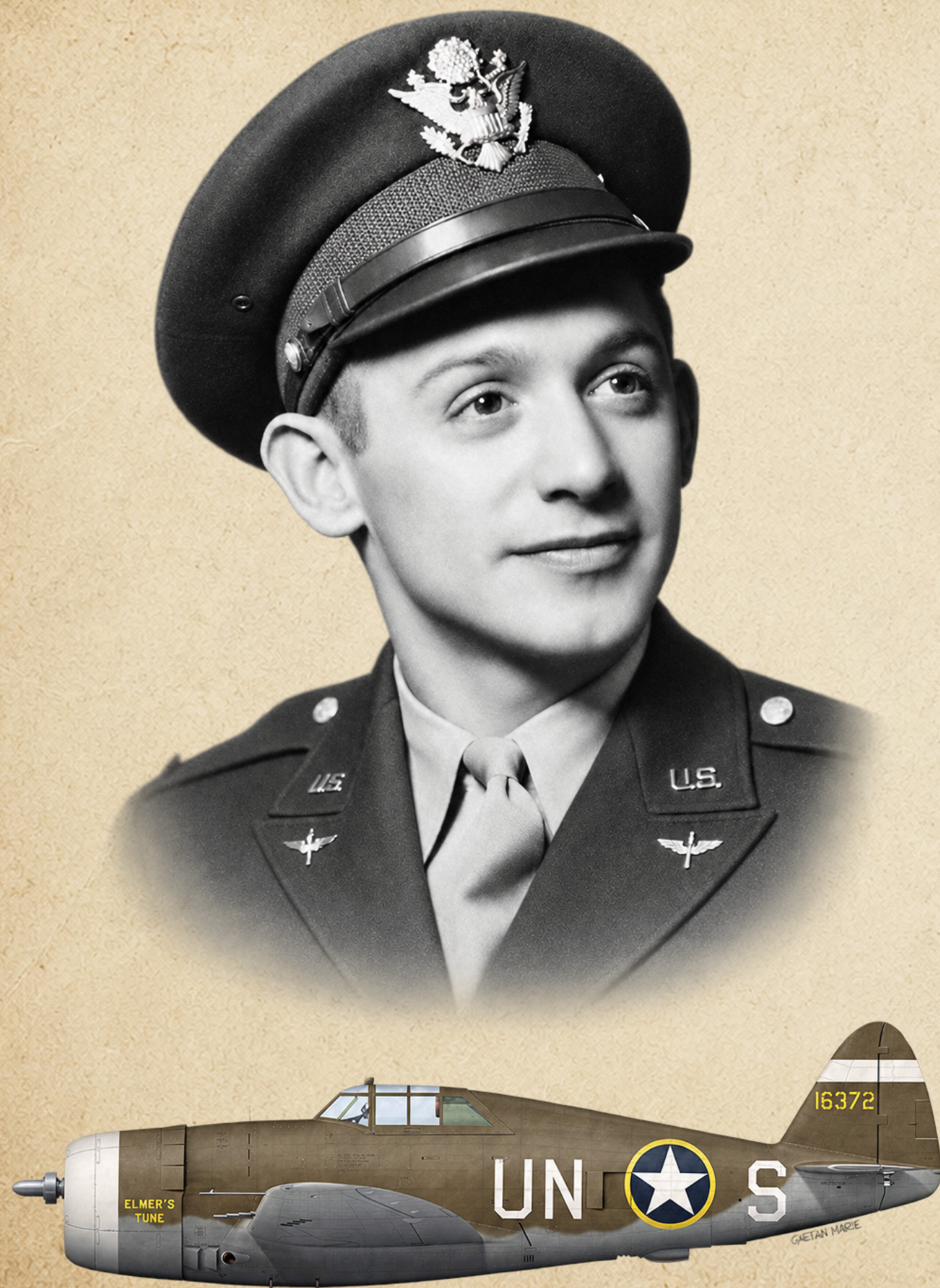
What followed was not a sudden succession of dramatic air battles, but the more representative process by which

a fighter pilot became operationally seasoned: repeated crossings of hostile coastlines; long periods at altitude and on oxygen; careful maintenance of formation; rendezvous with bombers whose timing could change by minutes; searches for enemy fighters that often never appeared; and the constant possibility of flak, mechanical failure, weather or fuel ending a mission before combat began. Sugas flew again on 14 and 15 May. The following day illustrates how easily a simple count of assignments can distort the actual flying record. He was allotted the first spare position for the morning Rodeo under Field Order No. 20, in P-47C-2-RE 41-6230, UN-E, but did not take off. Later, on 16 May he was assigned to the second Rodeo, Field Order No. 21, and this time flew as RED 3. Thus, the first assignment of the day was not a sortie; the second was.³⁷ The tempo accelerated. On 19 May he took part in a Circus operation supporting B-17s; during the final week of the month, he flew repeatedly on Rodeos and Ramrods, sweeping the Dutch and Belgian coasts or helping cover bomber formations moving toward targets in occupied Europe. By now the Thunderbolt was no longer simply the large and unfamiliar fighter to which the squadron had converted in America. It had become Sugas's working aircraft, and one particular machine appears with striking frequency in his operational record: P-47C-5-RE 41-6372, UN-S. It was not, however, his exclusive aircraft. On 25 May he flew P-47D-1-RE 42-7885, UN-N; on 29 May he was in P-47C-2-RE 41-6203, UN-J; further substitutions followed in June and July. The individual records therefore establish 41-6372 as his principal documented operational Thunderbolt rather than a machine that he flew on every mission. Later historical tradition strongly associates Sugas with the name "Elmer's Tune," but no surviving primary operational document yet fixes that name beyond doubt to a particular serial number, date or exact painted configuration.³⁸

One of the clearest glimpses of Sugas as an operational pilot comes on 31 May 1943. Field Order No. 34 sent sixteen aircraft, again led by Zemke, on a Rodeo through the Knocke–Courtrai–Dixmude area. Sugas was YELLOW 3 and was again flying 41-6372, UN-S. The sweep itself produced no enemy contact, but the mission became significant for a different reason. Lieutenant George A. Compton developed trouble with his aircraft and diverted to Hornchurch. The official monthly history records the episode in a single, unembellished sentence: "Lt. Compton landed at Hornchurch due to mechanical trouble, Lt. Sugas accompanying him."³⁹ It is a small incident, but a revealing one. Instead of continuing the sweep with the main formation, Sugas stayed with another Thunderbolt whose ability to return safely had become uncertain. Later accounts identify the fault more specifically with the supercharger, but the surviving squadron history itself says only "mechanical trouble." No reconstructed conversation or more elaborate account is necessary: the contemporary record already shows the practical obligation of one fighter pilot to another.

Arthur Sugas with the 63rd Fighter Squadron of the 56th Fighter Group. The group photograph shows the pilots of the 63rd Fighter Squadron, with Sugas isolated and enlarged within the composition. Above is the distinctive emblem of the 63rd Fighter Squadron, while below appears the emblem of the 56th Fighter Group bearing its motto, CAVE TONITRUM. The group photograph is from the James C. Stewart Collection, courtesy of The Museum of Flight.





June brought a heavier rhythm. Sugas flew on 7 and 10 June and twice on 11 June; on 12 and 17 June he was carried in spare positions. On 20 June he joined a Rodeo reaching toward the Liège–Rotterdam axis, followed on 22 June by a Ramrod connected with B-17 operations over the Antwerp region. That mission also exposed one of the persistent difficulties of early long range escort: the fighter group met the bombers after their target passage rather than before it, as had been planned. The latter part of the month brought further bomber support missions on 24, 26, 28 and 29 June. Between operations, the squadron continued camera and aerial gunnery work, high altitude and formation flying, dinghy drills, flying control practice and air-sea rescue training. Combat experience did not replace training; it sharpened its purpose.⁴⁰

The operational pattern itself reveals the chief limitation under which the early P-47 units worked. The Thunderbolt possessed excellent performance at altitude and formidable firepower, but in the summer of 1943 its usable combat radius still governed where and for how long it could protect the heavy bombers. Escorts therefore operated through carefully timed rendezvous, designated sectors and successive forms of support rather than providing uninterrupted cover throughout the bombers' entire journey. The terminology in the squadron histories—close support, general support, rear cover, Rodeo sweeps and Ramrod escort—describes a fighter force learning how to stretch its reach. On 10 July, for example, the 63rd took station on the right side of the bomber formation and accompanied it only to approximately fifteen miles southeast of Abbeville before turning onto a sweep. By 12 August, with belly tanks in use, Sugas's squadron could rendezvous with bombers northwest of Antwerp and accompany them into the Venlo area before returning to England.⁴¹ Within that system, Sugas's own place in the formation also changed. His early record includes a BLUE 4 assignment on 14 May, but thereafter he appears repeatedly as RED 3, BLUE 3, YELLOW 3 or WHITE 3—the No. 3 position associated with leading the second two aircraft element of a four aircraft flight. Later historical testimony likewise remembered him as an element leader. The clearest step beyond those repeated element positions came on 10 July, when his individual record places him as RED 1, the lead position of Red Flight, during the Ramrod toward the Abbeville–Poix area.⁴² The importance of such entries lies less in the colour call signs themselves than in what they show: by the middle of the summer Sugas was no longer merely occupying a junior wing position. He was being entrusted with responsibilities within the tactical formation.

That change coincided with another important transition. The 63rd Fighter Squadron moved from Horsham St Faith toward its new base at Halesworth on 8 July 1943; its official monthly history entered the formal transfer from AAF Station F-123 to AAF Station 365 as occurring on 9 July. The operational paperwork preserves the transition almost literally: the 9 July First Lieutenant Arthur Sugas and P-47C-5-RE 41-6372, UN-S, the Thunderbolt most closely associated with his operational career in the 63rd Fighter Squadron, 56th Fighter Group, and the aircraft he flew on both missions of 17 August 1943. The name "Elmer's Tune" has subsequently been associated with this aircraft; however, this identification has yet to be conclusively confirmed by a primary source.

Rodeo was still recorded as operating from Horsham, whereas the following day's Ramrod was logged from Halesworth.⁴³ From the new field in Suffolk, the Thunderbolts carrying the squadron letters UN continued the same demanding mixture of offensive sweeps and bomber protection, but now at an increasing tempo. Sugas flew again on 16 and 17 July. On 25 July he was assigned to and flew two separate operations on the same day, first as YELLOW 3 and then as a spare aircraft position. On 26 July he flew another squadron machine, P-47C-2-RE 41-6259, UN-Z, rather than 41-6372. These apparently small variations are important because they show the actual life of an operational fighter squadron. Aircraft were squadron resources, changed according to serviceability, availability and the day's flying programme; the relationship between a pilot and a preferred machine did not amount to exclusive ownership.⁴⁴

Recognition of Sugas's growing operational experience had already begun. The 63rd Fighter Squadron's June history lists 1st Lt. Arthur Sugas of 541 Pine Street, Kalamazoo, Michigan, among the pilots awarded the Air Medal, with the month's awards issued under Headquarters VIII Fighter Command general orders. In the July history his name appears again, this time among those awarded an Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal, under General Orders Nos. 16 through 19 for July 1943.⁴⁵ On 20 July, the squadron history further recorded that General Hoyt decorated the pilots whose Air Medals and Oak Leaf Clusters had been approved for May and June. Later captions attached to surviving photographs have given a different date and have identified General Hunter as the officer making the presentation; the contemporary squadron narrative, however, explicitly records 20 July and General Hoyt, and that is the chronology followed here.⁴⁶ The decoration system must not be confused with Sugas's total number of combat sorties. Eighth Air Force policy in this period provided an Air Medal credit for ten qualifying fighter sorties, with succeeding ten sortie qualifications earning Oak Leaf Clusters. In other words, the later reference to "30 operational sorties" belongs to the arithmetic of the decoration—ten for the Air Medal, twenty for the first cluster, thirty for the second—not to the complete record of Sugas's combat flying.⁴⁷ His operational chronology continued beyond that award threshold.

The first half of August shows how far both the squadron and Sugas had progressed since May. On 12 August, he flew with a seventeen aircraft formation providing general support to bombers penetrating toward the Beverloo area. The squadron made landfall south of Flushing, discarded its belly tanks near Walcheren, met the bombers northwest of Antwerp and escorted them toward Venlo. Two days later Sugas was again in the air as YELLOW 3 in 41-6372 during the 14 August Circus, in which the squadron met the bombers west of The Hague and covered the returning southern boxes well out across the North Sea. On 15 August, after an earlier squadron operation in which he did not participate, he flew the second mission of the day, Field Order No. 104, another Ramrod, again as YELLOW 3 in 41-6372.⁴⁸ By then the documentary record is precise enough to correct a long repeated figure. From his first individually recorded combat sortie on 7 May through 15 August, Sugas received 37 mission assignments. One of them—

the 16 May Field Order No. 20 assignment—was explicitly DNTD, Did Not Take Off. The remaining 36 were actual sorties. The record also makes clear that there was no Sugas sortie on 16 August 1943.⁴⁹ The 63rd Fighter Squadron did fly a major Ramrod that day, but Sugas is absent from its contemporary pilot roster, just as there is no 16 August entry in his individual mission chronology.⁵⁰ Thus, at the close of 16 August, Arthur Sugas stood at Halesworth not as the newly arrived pilot who had first crossed the hostile coast little more than three months earlier, but as a thoroughly operational Thunderbolt pilot with thirty six documented combat sorties behind him. He had flown sweeps and bomber support missions, worked as a spare when required, escorted damaged comrades, moved repeatedly through element leader positions and at least once into the lead position of a full flight, and accumulated the qualifying service reflected in his Air Medal and Oak Leaf Clusters. His combat record to that point was already fuller than later abbreviated accounts suggested. Nothing in the surviving record places him in the air on 16 August. His documented operational chronology for this section ends with the mission of the previous day.

17 AUGUST 1943 — THE FINAL DAY, FROM DAWN TO FIRST ENEMY CONTACT

On 17 August 1943 the 56th Fighter Group at Halesworth faced an unusually demanding operational programme. The Eighth Air Force was sending two major bomber forces deep into Germany: one against the Messerschmitt works at Regensburg, after which the bombers were to continue to North Africa, and another against the ball bearing industry at Schweinfurt, whose B-17s would have to fight their way back to England. The limited endurance of the P-47 still made continuous fighter escort impossible, so protection had to be divided into carefully timed sectors. For the 63rd Fighter Squadron, this produced two entirely separate Ramrod operations on the same day: morning support for the eastbound bomber force and a second mission in the afternoon to cover bombers on their withdrawal.⁵¹ The morning operation was flown under Field Order No. 38/106. Major Philip E. Tukey Jr. led sixteen aircraft of the 63rd Fighter Squadron as general support for the B-17 formation. Sugas's individual operational record enters the same mission under Field Order 106 and places him as YELLOW 3, flying P-47C-5-RE 41-6372, UN-S. The two forms of the Field Order notation refer to the same operation. In the four aircraft colour flight system then employed by the squadron, the No. 3 position placed Sugas at the head of the flight's second two aircraft element.⁵²

The squadron's contemporary history provides a particularly precise account of the route. At 10:10 the Thunderbolts made landfall at Haamstede at approximately 21,000 feet. Four minutes later, near Woensdrecht, they released their belly tanks, still at about 21,000 feet. At 10:18, ten miles north of Antwerp, the 63rd rendezvoused with the Fortresses and accompanied them eastward through Belgium into the Maastricht–Aachen area. The fighters left the bombers there at 10:32. During this phase the squadron observed two B-17s going down, one in the Diest area and another near Maastricht, a reminder that the bomber stream was already meeting serious resistance

before the P-47s reached the limit of their assigned support sector.⁵³ Sugas himself encountered enemy fighters during the return. At approximately 10:30, in the vicinity of Hasselt, he and Lieutenant Edgar D. Whitley fired at two Fw 190s from between roughly 20,000 and 26,000 feet. The squadron report describes their firing as sharp deflection shots at long range, closing from about 700 to 300 yards. Neither pilot made a claim. A few minutes later another 63rd pilot, Lieutenant Brown, fired on a Bf 109 near Eupen, again without an immediate claim. Thus Sugas's morning operation was not an uneventful escort flight: enemy contact occurred and he used his guns, but no victory was credited to him.⁵⁴ The squadron crossed outward north of Flushing at 10:58, at approximately 25,000 feet, and landed safely back at Halesworth at 11:40. Sugas had therefore completed another combat sortie in 41-6372 and returned with the rest of the formation.⁵⁵ The surviving operational papers do not record Sugas's individual movements during the hours that followed, and there is no documentary basis for reconstructing conversations, meals or personal reactions. What can be established is that the morning formation was back at Halesworth at 11:40 and that, only three hours and forty minutes later, the squadron was again taking off for occupied Europe.

The second operation was governed by Field Order No. 38/106, Amendment No. 4, entered in Sugas's individual chronology as 106/4. Its purpose was different from that of the morning sortie: the fighters were assigned as general support on withdrawal for B-17s returning from the deep penetration into Germany, in this case the bomber force coming back from Schweinfurt. The 56th Fighter Group put fifty one P-47s into this afternoon effort; Major Tukey led sixteen aircraft of the 63rd Fighter Squadron. They departed Halesworth at 15:20. Sugas was again assigned P-47C-5-RE 41-6372, UN-S, but his tactical position had changed from the morning's YELLOW 3 to POSTGATE WHITE 3.⁵⁶ The composition of the four aircraft White Flight can be reconstructed with unusual precision. WHITE 1 was Major Philip E. Tukey Jr., in 41-6375, UN-T; WHITE 2 was Lieutenant Edgar D. Whitley, in 42-7885, UN-N; WHITE 3 was Lieutenant Arthur Sugas, in 41-6372, UN-S; and WHITE 4 was Lieutenant George A. Compton, in 41-6326, UN-Q. In the surviving combat documentation the formation appears with the squadron radio prefix POSTGATE. White Flight consisted of two two aircraft elements: Tukey and Whitley formed the first, while Sugas and Compton formed the second. As White 3, Sugas led that second element; Compton, White 4, occupied the paired No. 4 position.⁵⁷ Harold "Bunny" Comstock was a different pilot and occupied Blue 3 elsewhere in the squadron formation; he must not be confused with George A. Compton, who was Sugas's White 4.⁵⁸

20 July 1943 — The presentation of the Air Medal to Arthur Sugas. At Halesworth, First Lieutenant Arthur Sugas was decorated alongside other pilots of the 63rd Fighter Squadron, 56th Fighter Group, who had already completed the required number of combat sorties. The squadron's official history records that on that day General Hoyt presented decorations to pilots who had been awarded the Air Medal and the corresponding Oak Leaf Clusters. For Eighth Air Force fighter pilots at the time, the Air Medal represented ten combat sorties, with each subsequent group of ten recognized by an Oak Leaf Cluster. By the summer of 1943, Sugas had already established himself as an experienced operational pilot of the 63rd Fighter Squadron and continued to accumulate combat missions over occupied Europe.





From Halesworth the P-47s crossed the North Sea toward the Dutch coast. The 63rd's contemporary account records landfall at Haamstede at 15:55, at 20,000 feet. At 16:05, approximately five miles north of Antwerp, the fighters released their belly tanks from the same altitude. The Group then climbed to approximately 27,000 feet and continued inland, penetrating to roughly fifteen miles east of Eupen. This was considerably farther inland than many of the squadron's earlier summer escort sectors and placed the Thunderbolts on the eastern side of Belgium, close to the German frontier.⁵⁹ At 16:21, near Eupen, the 56th rendezvoused with the returning Fortresses. The formation turned left onto the withdrawal course, and the 63rd took responsibility for covering the lead bomber box. Ahead of and around the B-17 formation the Americans could see a large concentration of enemy fighters. The squadron estimated approximately fifty to sixty aircraft, principally Fw 190s and Bf 109s, with about six twin engined Me 110s also present. The report noted that many of the single engined fighters were maneuvering at approximately the bombers' level and ahead of them, positioning themselves for head on approaches. The 63rd, above the Fortresses, was in the position from which it could descend against such attacks.⁶⁰

As the combined formation turned westward from the Eupen area toward Liège, the tactical situation compressed around the returning bombers. The squadron had climbed to approximately 27,000 feet, while the surviving documentation places the subsequent position of Sugas's aircraft in the Ans-Liège area. There, with the Fortresses beneath and ahead and German fighters maneuvering around the bomber stream, Sugas remained POSTGATE WHITE 3, leading the second element of Tukey's White Flight. George A. Compton remained POSTGATE WHITE 4, the other Thunderbolt in that element.⁶¹

17 AUGUST 1943 — THE FATAL ENGAGEMENT OVER ANS-LIÈGE

By the time White Flight reached the Ans-Liège sector, the air battle around the withdrawing B-17s had become fragmented and violent. German single engined fighters were manoeuvring around the bomber stream while the Thunderbolts of the 56th Fighter Group attempted to break up further attacks. Arthur Sugas remained POSTGATE WHITE 3, leading the second two aircraft element of White Flight in P-47C-5-RE 41-6372, UN-S; Lieutenant George A. Compton flew the paired WHITE 4 position. The surviving operational record places this phase of the squadron's fighting in the Ans area, while the individual reports show that the various sections of

First Lieutenant Harold "Bunny" Comstock was an experienced pilot of the 63rd Fighter Squadron and one of the most important figures in reconstructing Arthur Sugas's final aerial engagement. During the afternoon mission of 17 August 1943, Comstock was flying as POSTGATE BLUE 3, at approximately 26,000 feet in the Ans-Liège area, in a different flight from Sugas. According to the account later recorded by Gerard Pahl, Comstock observed two Fw 190s descending toward two Thunderbolts and warned the American pilots by radio; he then reportedly saw one of the P-47s being hit and departing controlled flight. This account remains particularly important to the reconstruction of the engagement, but is used with appropriate caution, since the original Comstock statement upon which Pahl's account was based has not yet been located for independent verification. Shown below is P-47 Thunderbolt 41-6328, UN-Y, of the 63rd Fighter Squadron, the aircraft Comstock was flying during the mission.

the 63rd were already becoming involved in separate combats at different altitudes.⁶²

The clearest contemporary account of the moment at which the danger closed directly upon Sugas comes from Compton. His statement, dated 19 August 1943 and incorporated into Missing Air Crew Report 265, identifies their respective positions without ambiguity. Compton reported that while they were circling the bombers over Ans, approximately thirty Focke-Wulf 190s made a head on attack upon the bomber formation. Two of the German fighters then came upon the two Thunderbolts. At this point the American fighters were at approximately 28,000 feet. Compton stated that the two FW 190s opened fire and that he attempted to contact Sugas by radio but was unable to reach him. He then broke into the attacking enemy aircraft and dived.⁶³ The sequence is important because Compton's original statement is considerably more restrained than some later accounts of the engagement. It establishes the presence of the two FW 190s, the opening of fire, Compton's unsuccessful attempt to reach Sugas by R/T, and Compton's own break and dive. It does not establish that Sugas failed to see the attack, nor does it record Compton seeing the first rounds strike 41-6372. Most importantly, Compton did not describe Sugas's aircraft entering a spin. His statement ends the visual relationship between the two pilots much more simply: after breaking into the enemy aircraft and diving, he had seen Sugas for the last time and did not believe that Sugas had followed him down.⁶⁴ This was therefore the instant at which the second element of White Flight effectively ceased to function as a mutually supporting pair. Whether Sugas attempted a manoeuvre of his own cannot be established from Compton's statement. Nor can the absence of a reply over the radio be interpreted safely as evidence that he had not seen the enemy. It establishes only that Compton called and received no response. In an engagement involving multiple fighters, rapid changes in relative position and simultaneous attacks around the bomber formation, the surviving evidence permits no reconstruction of what Sugas himself saw or attempted during those seconds.⁶⁵

A second and potentially crucial view of the engagement was later published by Gerard Pahl in *Air Classics*, attributed to Lieutenant Harold "Bunny" Comstock. Comstock was not Compton and was not Sugas's WHITE 4. He was operating elsewhere in the 63rd Fighter Squadron formation. The contemporary squadron record places him as BLUE 3, at approximately 26,000 feet in the Ans area, and records his own combat during this period against enemy fighters.⁶⁶ According to the separate account attributed to Comstock by Pahl, two FW 190s suddenly dived ahead of his position, exposing their undersides, and then turned left as they pulled out. Comstock reportedly then saw two Thunderbolts "directly below us" and gave a radio warning that enemy aircraft were approaching. This relative position cannot be reconciled with certainty with the recorded altitudes. The contemporary operational record places Comstock at approximately 26,000 feet, whereas Compton places WHITE 3 and WHITE 4 at about 28,000 feet when the attack began. The observations may therefore refer to different moments during which the relative altitudes had already changed, or one of the recorded altitudes may

not represent the precise altitude at the instant described. The surviving evidence does not permit a confident choice between these possibilities.⁶⁷ Pahl's account then attributes the decisive observation to Comstock: the first FW 190 pulled out of its descent, fired a short burst, and struck one of the P-47s. Comstock reportedly saw pieces of metal come away from the Thunderbolt before it entered what he described as an uncontrolled spin.⁶⁸

This evidence must be treated with a qualification. The underlying original Comstock statement from which Pahl apparently derived this passage has not been located among the primary documents available for examination. His known contemporary combat record for 17 August identifies him as BLUE 3 and describes a separate engagement with two Messerschmitt fighters; it does not contain the passage about the two Thunderbolts and the FW 190 attack. Pahl's published attribution is therefore retained because it provides a highly specific airborne observation consistent with the circumstances of Sugas's disappearance, but it cannot presently be accorded the same documentary status as Compton's surviving signed statement in MACR 265.⁶⁹ Taken with that reservation, however, the Comstock account supplies the most detailed surviving description of what may have happened immediately after Compton broke away. From Compton's position, two FW 190s had opened fire upon White 3 and White 4; Compton turned into the attack and descended, losing effective contact with Sugas. From the viewpoint attributed to Comstock, a pair of FW 190s had descended toward two P-47s below, one fired, and one of the Thunderbolts was visibly hit and departed controlled flight. The two observations overlap closely enough in aircraft type, number of attackers and immediate tactical circumstances to make their association compelling, although not sufficiently to justify inventing a precise second by second sequence.⁷⁰ The identification of the damaged P-47 as Sugas's 41-6372 follows most strongly from the formation circumstances and from his immediate disappearance. Compton survived the encounter; Sugas did not return, and MACR 265 was subsequently opened for P-47 41-6372, with the loss recorded in the Ans area. No surviving airborne statement examined here records seeing Sugas leave the Thunderbolt, and none provides reliable evidence of a parachute. Equally, the absence of such an observation cannot demonstrate that no attempt to leave the aircraft was made. The airborne evidence ends with the loss of contact and, if the Comstock account preserved by Pahl is accepted with the qualification stated above, a P-47 visibly damaged and entering an uncontrolled descent.⁷¹

Lieutenant Edgar D. Whitley's contemporary combat evidence provides useful context but does not close this evidentiary gap. Whitley occupied WHITE 2 and was engaged in the wider battle around the bombers. His observations concern enemy aircraft—including Me 110s—and another P-47 involved in the confused fighting, but the surviving evidence does not securely identify that Thunderbolt as Sugas's. Whitley's report therefore demonstrates how widely the combat had dispersed the squadron and why individual visual contact became difficult, but it cannot be used as an independent eyewitness account of the destruction of 41-6372.⁷² The German victory records provide another means of testing the American

evidence. The strongest correspondence is a P-47 claim credited to Hauptmann Johannes Naumann, then commanding 6./JG 26. Naumann's claim is recorded in the Liège sector on 17 August and has long been associated with the loss of Sugas. The geographical and tactical correspondence is significant: the American evidence places Sugas's disappearance in the Ans–Liège battle, identifies the immediate attackers as FW 190s, and the German record places Naumann's P-47 claim in the same general combat area.⁷³ This attribution should nevertheless remain an attribution rather than be converted into an absolute statement of individual responsibility. A large number of fighters were engaged over a broad area; American and German times cannot always be synchronized to the minute; and neither Compton nor the Comstock account identifies an individual German pilot. What can be said is that Naumann's claim provides the best supported German match for the loss of Sugas when aircraft type, unit, locality and the American eyewitness evidence are considered together.⁷⁴

An alternative attribution to Unteroffizier Heinz Papendick of 9./JG 3, flying a Bf 109, has appeared in later loss compilations and was once associated with 41-6372.⁷⁵ That identification is less convincing. Most importantly, the immediate American eyewitness evidence describes FW 190s, not a Bf 109, attacking Sugas and Compton. In a battle involving many simultaneous claims, geographical proximity alone is insufficient to overcome that aircraft type discrepancy. Papendick's claim therefore cannot be excluded from the wider P-47 losses of the battle merely on the evidence presently available, but it is a poorer match for the specific attack described by Compton and attributed to Comstock than Naumann's FW 190 claim.⁷⁶ Thus the final airborne reconstruction can be carried only so far. Arthur Sugas was still leading the second element of White Flight as POSTGATE WHITE 3 when two FW 190s closed upon his element. Compton, WHITE 4, attempted to reach him by radio, received no reply, turned into the attackers and dived. He never saw Sugas again. A second account, attributed to Comstock but not yet independently verified from its underlying original document, describes an FW 190 firing upon one of the two P-47s below and the struck Thunderbolt shedding pieces of metal before entering an uncontrolled spin. Sugas did not rejoin the formation, and P-47C-5-RE 41-6372, UN-S, was recorded missing. Among the surviving German claims, Johannes Naumann's FW 190 victory remains the most convincing match for that loss.⁷⁷

First Lieutenant George A. Compton was Arthur Sugas's wingman on his final mission. On 17 August 1943, Compton flew as POSTGATE WHITE 4, directly alongside Sugas, WHITE 3, together forming the second element of White Flight of the 63rd Fighter Squadron, 56th Fighter Group. Over the Ans–Liège area, at approximately 28,000 feet, two Fw 190s moved to attack them. Compton attempted to warn Sugas by radio but received no response; he then turned toward the attackers and went into a dive. He never saw Sugas again. Compton's signed statement of 19 August 1943, incorporated into Missing Air Crew Report No. 265, constitutes the most important surviving primary eyewitness account of Sugas's final moments in the air. The composition features Compton and MACR 265, while below is the Thunderbolt of Harold "Bunny" Comstock following a forced landing on 3 March 1944 — a later image from the wartime career of the other key witness to Sugas's final aerial engagement.





17 AUGUST 1943 — THE CRASH AT WOLDER

What happened inside Arthur Sugas's Thunderbolt after George Compton lost contact with him cannot now be reconstructed. No surviving verified airborne witness saw Sugas leave his aircraft, and no contemporary account records a parachute. What can be followed with much greater certainty is the final path of his P-47 after it descended out of the battle. German casualty documentation later recovered by the Allies placed his death at Wilre, near Maastricht, while local evidence identifies the actual crash site more precisely at Wolder, on the south western edge of Maastricht close to the Belgian frontier.⁷⁸ The distinction is important. "Ans," which appears in the Missing Air Crew Report, belongs to the broader geographical description of the aerial loss and should not be read as the place where the aircraft ultimately struck the ground. German records brought the location closer to Wilre near Maastricht; the surviving local tradition places the impact at Wolder itself. There, in the late afternoon of Tuesday, 17 August 1943, residents saw an American P-47 descending toward the village. In the account assembled by the local historical society more than six decades later, the damaged fighter was remembered as coming down in a circling descent. Another local version recalled that the approaching aircraft was making an unusual sound.⁷⁹

Its final course carried it close to the church at Wolder. The later local account states that the Thunderbolt passed very near the church tower before continuing beyond the built up part of the village and striking farmland toward the Vroenhovenweg, close to the Belgian border. The accepted crash site area was also described locally as lying behind the Leonidas sports fields.⁸⁰ These details form a consistent geographical picture, but their limits must be respected. The surviving material does not provide a contemporary measurement of the aircraft's clearance from the tower, nor does it establish that Sugas deliberately manoeuvred to avoid the church or the houses. The later belief that he consciously steered the aircraft away from the village therefore remains interpretation rather than demonstrated fact. The evidence establishes only that the Thunderbolt passed close to the church and came down outside the densely built part of Wolder.⁸¹ Nor is it possible to reconstruct the last seconds of the descent in mechanical detail. The surviving local accounts do not securely establish

On 17 August 1943, Hauptmann Johannes Naumann, then commanding officer of 6./JG 26, claimed the destruction of a P-47 Thunderbolt in the Liège area. This claim represents the strongest German match for the loss of Arthur Sugas, as both the combat area and the type of attacking aircraft identified by George A. Compton correspond with the circumstances of Sugas's disappearance. Nevertheless, attribution to Naumann remains the most probable identification rather than an absolutely proven fact. Naumann was one of the Luftwaffe's experienced fighter aces on the Western Front, credited with 34 confirmed aerial victories in approximately 350 combat missions, all achieved in the West, including seven four-engined bombers. He had begun scoring victories during the Battle of Britain and continued fighting against the Western Allies until the end of the war. His combat record was recognized with a series of major German decorations, including the Iron Cross 2nd and 1st Class, the Ehrenpokal der Luftwaffe (25 June 1943), the German Cross in Gold (31 August 1943), and ultimately the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross on 9 November 1944. Naumann survived the war and, following the establishment of the West German Luftwaffe, returned to military service, eventually attaining the rank of Colonel (Oberst). He later commanded Hubschraubertransportgeschwader 64, a helicopter transport wing. Johannes Naumann died at Fürstenfeldbruck on 22 March 2010, aged 92.

whether the aircraft was still under effective control, whether its engine was producing normal power, or whether Sugas was conscious. They likewise provide no reliable contemporary observation of an open canopy or a parachute. What they do preserve is the sudden arrival of the damaged American fighter over Wolder, its passage beside the church and its impact in the fields near the frontier. Four Wolder residents who were still alive in 2005—Servatius Aarts, Reng Bastiaans, Johan Groeneweg and Theo Hogenboom—were publicly identified as eyewitnesses to the event. Their survival into the twenty first century gave the local account unusual continuity, but the recollections preserved in the available material were recorded many decades after the crash and cannot always be separated into four fully independent narratives.⁸² German soldiers reached the crash area quickly. According to the later Wolder account, the site was immediately closed off and civilians were prevented from approaching. An army vehicle subsequently arrived in connection with the removal of the wreckage.⁸³ The surviving sources do not identify the German unit responsible, and it would be unsafe to assign the recovery to a particular Luftwaffe, Wehrmacht, police or civil authority. What is clear from the documentary trail is that German authorities assumed custody of the casualty and recorded Sugas by name and service number.

A very different account of his death emerged many years later in Kalamazoo. William Nikitas recalled having been told that Sugas had escaped from his Thunderbolt by parachute, had then been captured and shot by a German officer. Aristos Spugios related a connected story in which an unidentified former squadron mate of Sugas later traced the incident to Holland and Belgium and learned from a Dutch farmer that Sugas had survived, only to be shot by German policemen; another version identified the men as Gestapo. In this telling, the farmer secretly buried the body and later produced Sugas's identification tags.⁸⁴ The story cannot be reconciled comfortably with the strongest surviving documentary evidence. No identified contemporary witness in the available record states that he saw Sugas descend by parachute, land alive, be taken prisoner, or be shot. More importantly, a later American Graves Registration investigation consulted the Maastricht cemetery records and questioned the cemetery caretaker. According to the resulting report, Sugas's body had been brought to the cemetery by a German patrol. The caretaker further stated that there had been no identification tags or other means of identification on the body; instead, the Germans had supplied his identifying information on a slip of paper, from which the cemetery record was made.⁸⁵ The official burial documentation subsequently treated the casualty as the result of an aircraft crash.⁸⁶ This evidence does not allow the precise instant of Sugas's death to be determined. It does, however, make the later execution story substantially less persuasive than the crash and recovery sequence preserved in the German and Graves Registration records. The surviving contemporary evidence therefore does not support the proposition that Sugas successfully bailed out and was executed after capture. The most defensible reconstruction is that he died in connection with the crash of his Thunderbolt at Wolder and that his remains then passed into German custody.⁸⁷

The same caution applies to the surviving identification tag associated with Sugas. A physical tag bearing his name and service details was later preserved and was said to have reached his family through another American pilot. Its existence is not in question; its precise chain of custody is. Because the cemetery investigation specifically reported that no identification tags were present on the body when it was delivered for burial, the tag cannot by itself establish that Sugas had survived the crash, that it had been removed by a farmer, or that the later execution narrative was correct. It may have been separated from him during the crash or recovered from the crash site under circumstances that are no longer documented.⁸⁸

German records nevertheless show that his identity was known. A captured German casualty record lists Arthur Sugas, O-660213, records the date of death as 17 August 1943, and gives the place of death as Wilre near Maastricht. The same documentary chain places his burial at Maastricht. When American Graves Registration personnel later investigated the cemetery records, the caretaker’s entry identified him by name, gave his Kalamazoo home address, and recorded his burial in grave no. 163.⁸⁹ The date requires particular care because the later Wolder narrative stated that Sugas was buried on the day after the crash. The surviving cemetery record, however, gives the burial date as 17 August 1943 itself. Because that entry derived from the wartime cemetery documentation and was recovered through the Graves Registration investigation, it carries greater evidentiary weight than the recollection published decades later. The first burial should therefore be dated to 17 August unless earlier cemetery documentation proving otherwise is discovered.⁹⁰

The grave designation also needs qualification. In one transcription of the German burial information the entry appears with an “E” before grave 163. The American document accompanying the captured record explicitly explains that this indicated a single or individual grave; it was not a cemetery section designated “E.” Later American administrative papers also rendered the location as “CC-163,” but there is no basis for converting that later notation into the original wartime grave designation. The secure fact is therefore grave no. 163, an individual grave.⁹¹ Local sources identify the cemetery more specifically as the General Cemetery on the Tongerseweg, while the captured German and American records use the broader designation of the cemetery at Maastricht, Province of Limburg. These descriptions are compatible rather than contradictory. By the close of 17 August 1943, the German authorities had recorded the dead American pilot as Arthur Sugas, his death had been associated with Wilre near Maastricht, and he had been entered into the Maastricht cemetery record and laid in individual grave no. 163.⁹²

FROM MAASTRICHT TO MARGRATEN AND HOME

After Arthur Sugas was buried at Maastricht on 17 August 1943, his individual grave, no. 163, remained the documentary point from which the later American recovery process began. Nothing in the surviving Individual Deceased Personnel File establishes that his remains were moved again before the

Allied Graves Registration authorities took custody of them in 1945. Some later American paperwork rendered the Maastricht location as “CC-163,” but this was a postwar administrative notation and must not be confused with the original German burial designation. The wartime record itself used the German notation “E,” subsequently explained by the Americans as referring to an Einzelgrab—an individual or single grave—not to a cemetery section.⁹³ The next documented movement came in July 1945. At 15:30 on 10 July, remains associated with Arthur Sugas arrived at the United States Military Cemetery at Margraten from the 3060th Quartermaster Graves Registration Company, which was also recorded as the organization that had recovered them. Significantly, the Margraten processing sheet headed the case “UNKNOWN X — Sugas, Arthur.” This did not mean that the Americans possessed no suspected identity; rather, it reflected the fact that the identity attached to the Maastricht grave had not yet passed the complete American evidentiary process. Another disinterment checklist prepared at this stage gives 14 August 1943 as the date of death and 20 August as the date of burial. Those dates conflict with the German derived records, the later Maastricht investigation and the established chronology, and must therefore be treated as clerical or transcription errors rather than as evidence for an alternative chronology.⁹⁴

At 09:30 on 11 July 1945, the remains were reburied at the United States Military Cemetery Margraten, Holland, in Plot KK, Row 10, Grave 247. The formal Report of Burial recorded Arthur Sugas, 1st Lieutenant, O-660213, date of death 17 August 1943, and identified the cause as “Plane Crash.” It also stated that the remains had previously been buried in an isolated grave in the civilian Catholic cemetery at Maastricht. No wartime identification tag was recorded as having accompanied the remains. The basis then cited for the identity was the record of the civilian cemetery at Maastricht; a Graves Registration form and embossed GRS tag accompanied the reburial.⁹⁵ That evidence was not, however, accepted immediately as conclusive. On 12 September 1945, Headquarters, U.S. Theater Graves Registration Service, reviewed the Margraten report and specifically questioned the identification procedure. The cemetery record from Maastricht, it stated, “is not considered conclusive identity in itself; it is a clue to the establishment of identity.” An investigation was therefore ordered to determine the actual means by which the wartime cemetery had attached Arthur Sugas’s name to the body buried there.⁹⁶ The resulting investigation was conducted by the 3059th Quartermaster Graves Registration Company. On 29 September 1945, its investigators examined the Maastricht cemetery records and questioned the cemetery caretaker. His name was not preserved in the report. He stated that the body of 1st Lt. Sugas had been “brought to the Cemetery by Germans for burial.” There had been no identification tags or any other means of identification on the body. Instead, information

Digital artwork by Antonis Karydis, created for the first volume of Greeks in Foreign Cockpits, depicting Arthur Sugas’s final aerial combat on 17 August 1943. The composition is primarily illustrative and does not reproduce in precise detail the tactical situation as it can now be reconstructed through the later cross-checking of American and German sources. At the same time, the depicted P-47 does not carry the supposed nose art that later literature has associated with Sugas’s aircraft; the existence and exact form of that marking, however, have not yet been conclusively established by primary-source evidence.



Familien- u. Vorname: Sugas Arthur *1941*
geboren am _____ in: _____ Kreis: 6792
Truppenteil: _____
Dienstgrad: Flieger
Erkennungsmarke: O-66213 T 41
Tag des Todes: 17.8.1943 Ort des Todes: Wilre b. Maastricht Beerdigt am _____
Lage und Nr. des Grabes: Grav. Nr. CC 163
anmeldet durch: B.L. Ref. 1. W.B. 22 Waff. Truppe 31
Stellv. Gen. Xdo. _____ Woff. E. _____ St. _____

WAR DEPARTMENT
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE
WASHINGTON
REPORT OF DEATH

ARMY EFFECTS BUREAU
RECEIVED
FEB 13 1944
KCOMD

DATE: 10 February 1944
Kallen/Je660 4628

FULL NAME: SUGAS, ARTHUR ARMY SERIAL NO.: 0-660 213
GRADE: 1st Lt ARM OR SERVICE: Air Corps DATE OF BIRTH: 27 Dec 1919
HOME ADDRESS: Kalamazoo, Michigan
DATE OF DEATH: 17 Aug 1943 PLACE OF DEATH: European Area CAUSE OF DEATH: Killed in action
EMERGENCY ADDRESSEE (NAME, RELATIONSHIP, & ADDRESS): Constantine Z. Sugas(father) 541 Pine St., Kalamazoo, Mich.
BENEFICIARY (NAME, RELATIONSHIP, & ADDRESS): Constantine Z. Sugas(father) 541 Pine St., Kalamazoo, Mich
Mary Sugas(mother) 541 Pine St., Kalamazoo, Michigan.
BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:
DANTE J. REIDY
ADJUTANT GENERAL

THIS COPY FOR ARMY EFFECTS BUREAU BATTLE

CASUALTY MESSAGE

TELEGRAM

OFFICIAL BUSINESS—GOVERNMENT RATES

AG 201 SUGAS, ARTHUR (29 JAN 44) APXPO-M 033009 (1) 4 FEBRUARI 1944
ASN 0-660 213

MR CONSTANTINE Z SUGAS
1203 SOLESTON AVENUE
KALAMAZOO MICHIGAN

REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT IT HAS NOW BEEN DETERMINED THAT YOUR SON
FIRST LIEUTENANT ARTHUR SUGAS WHO WAS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED MISSING
IN ACTION WAS KILLED IN ACTION SEVENTEEN AUGUST WHILE ON MISSION TO
RUPEN BELGIUM THE SECRETARY OF WAR DESIRES THAT I EXTEND HIS DEEP
SYMPATHY TO YOU LETTER FOLLOWS

OFFICIAL: _____
ADJUTANT GENERAL

ULIO
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

BATTLE

ARMY EFFECTS BUREAU
RECEIVED
FEB 10 1944
KCOMD

THIS COPY FOR CASUALTY BRANCH FILE
Not to be delivered to the addressee without authorization by the sender.
Not to be delivered before the hour of 10 PM and sealed.

concerning the remains had been written on a slip of paper and given to the caretaker. From it the cemetery had recorded the name—rendered in the American transcription as “Sugas, Arthur”—the burial date 17 August 1943, Grave No. 163, and the home address 541 Pine Street, Kalamazoo, Michigan. Thus, the postwar American identification rested not on a dog tag recovered from the body, nor on dental comparison or newly discovered personal effects, but on the documented continuity between the German supplied wartime information and the Maastricht cemetery register.⁹⁷

The administrative position remained more complicated than the family facing correspondence suggested. On 12 November 1946, the Office of the Quartermaster General sent a formal letter to Constantine Z. Sugas, informing him that Arthur was interred at Margraten in Plot KK, Row 10, Grave 247 and stating that “identification and interment” had been accomplished. The cemetery was described as lying ten miles west of Aachen, Germany, under the care of United States military personnel. Yet Constantine could never have received the letter: he had died in Kalamazoo on 24 November 1944 and had been buried at Riverside Cemetery on 27 November. The 1946 letter therefore demonstrates that the Government’s next-of-kin records had not yet caught up with events in the Sugas family. It also shows that the language used toward the family was more definitive than the internal Graves Registration file, whose technical identification process had not yet reached its final administrative closure.⁹⁸ That discrepancy was corrected by Arthur’s sister. On 3 April 1947, Stella Sugas wrote from 1203 Egleston Avenue, Kalamazoo, advising the Quartermaster General that her father had died and that the family address had changed. She identified Mary Sugas, Arthur’s mother and Constantine’s widow, as the next of kin who should henceforth be contacted concerning the final interment of Arthur’s remains.⁹⁹

Within weeks the family situation changed again. Mary Sugas suffered a stroke on 18 April 1947. Two days later Stella married Nicholas Koukas. In a detailed letter dated 26 May 1947, now signing herself Stella Koukas, she explained that her mother was paralyzed on her right side, was unwell and could not sign documents except by making an “X” with her left hand. Because correspondence concerning Arthur would be distressing to Mary in that condition, Stella had obtained a power of attorney so that she could act for her. She also explained that she was “the only remaining child in the family.” She and Nicholas were moving to Astoria, New York, and Mary would move with them. Stella ended the practical explanation

From “Missing in Action” to the official confirmation of his death. Three of the most important documents tracing the administrative process that followed the loss of Arthur Sugas. At top, the German burial record identifies Arthur Sugas, O-660213, records his date of death as 17 August 1943, gives the location as Wilre, near Maastricht, and documents his burial at Maastricht in individual Grave No. 163. At center, the official War Department Report of Death, dated 10 February 1944, formally records Sugas as Killed in Action in the European Theater of Operations. Below, the Casualty Message of 4 February 1944 informed his father, Constantine Z. Sugas, that his son, until then officially listed as missing, had now been determined to have been killed while on a combat mission on 17 August 1943. Together, these three documents — one German and two American — connect the first wartime record of Sugas’s death and burial in occupied Holland with the formal notification of his family in Kalamazoo, almost six months after his final mission.

with a simple sentence that conveys more than any later reconstruction could properly add: “I am anxious that this be properly taken care of.”¹⁰⁰

Meanwhile, the identification case itself finally reached formal administrative resolution. An intra-office reference sheet dated 15 March 1948 recorded that the field identification in the cases of Arthur Sugas and another deceased serviceman had been accepted in accordance with a decision made by the Acting Chief, Memorial Division, on 25 February 1948. The Report of Burial was correspondingly annotated: “Identified by Field Decision Acting Chief Mem. Div. 25 Feb. 1948.” The sequence is therefore clear. The grave had been carried under Sugas’s name from the Maastricht records in 1945; that identification was then questioned as evidentially insufficient; the Maastricht investigation established the documentary chain by which the name had originally been attached to the burial; and only on 25 February 1948 was the field identification formally accepted within the American administrative system. No surviving document records dental comparison, a wartime identification tag on the remains, or another piece of physical evidence as the basis of that final decision.¹⁰¹ With the identity formally settled, the question became where Arthur would remain permanently. On 29 March 1948, the Quartermaster General sent the formal disposition package to Mrs. Mary Sugas, care of Mrs. Stella Koukas, at 19-18 21st Drive, Astoria, New York. Congress had authorized the disinterment and final burial program for the American dead of the Second World War, and the enclosed material explained the alternatives available to the next of kin. The family could leave Arthur permanently in an American military cemetery overseas or request his return for burial elsewhere under the options authorized by the Government.¹⁰² The completed papers leave no ambiguity about the family’s decision. Stella Koukas selected Option 2: Arthur was to “be returned to the United States ... for interment by next of kin in a private cemetery.” On the line naming the cemetery she wrote “Riverside Cemetery, Kalamazoo, Michigan.” She designated Freda Williams, 115 Hughes Avenue, Kalamazoo, to receive the remains. Because Mary was still legally the senior next of kin, her authority also had to be transferred formally. On 28 April 1948, Mary Sugas made her mark on the Relinquishment of Disposition Authority, witnessed by two persons, transferring the right of final disposition to Stella. The following day, 29 April, Stella’s own declaration was sworn and notarized at Astoria. Arthur’s return to Kalamazoo was therefore not an informal family arrangement and was not undertaken by his parents, as later secondary accounts sometimes stated. His father was dead; his mother was incapacitated but formally relinquished her authority; and his sister Stella completed the legal decision that brought him home.¹⁰³

The physical repatriation began later that year. The mortuary record states unequivocally that Arthur was disinterred from Plot KK, Row 10, Grave 247 at Margraten on 25 August 1948. The following day, 26 August, the remains were prepared and placed in a casket, which was then sealed, boxed and marked for shipment. The same record lists “Other Means of Identification: NONE”; the identification tags shown on the form were those of the Graves Registration system

and must not be confused with Arthur’s original wartime dog tag. A separate QMC Form 1194 dated 15 October 1948 carries the completed disposition and consignee information. Its date is the date of that later administrative directive, not the date of the physical disinterment, which the underlying mortuary record fixes on 25 August.¹⁰⁴ The surviving Record of Custodial Transfer allows the next part of the journey to be followed unusually far. From Margraten the casket passed into the port system at Antwerp, where it was handled through Antwerp Port Area 140 and the American Graves Registration organization there. The record then names the vessel on which Arthur crossed the Atlantic: USAT Haiti Victory. After reaching the United States, the custody trail continued through the New York Port of Embarkation and then by rail into the Army’s domestic distribution system. The individual handwritten dates on parts of the transfer sheet are not all equally legible, but the route itself—Margraten, Antwerp, Haiti Victory, New York and onward by rail—is explicit in the primary record.¹⁰⁵

By March 1949 the Chicago Quartermaster Depot was preparing the final delivery. The Government advised Stella that Arthur’s remains were en route to the United States and that its instructions called for delivery to Freda Williams in Kalamazoo. A subsequent message from Astoria told the depot to “go ahead as per original instructions” concerning delivery. The final arrangements made in 1948 therefore remained unchanged.¹⁰⁶ On 10 May 1949, Arthur Sugas returned to Kalamazoo. The Western Distribution Center of the Chicago Quartermaster Depot recorded that his remains were being shipped to Freda Williams, accompanied by a military escort, aboard New York Central Railroad Train No. 44. The train was due at Kalamazoo at 1:36 p.m. Central Standard Time on Tuesday, 10 May 1949. At the bottom of the same document Freda Williams signed the receipt, while the military escort signed as witness. After almost six years, the physical journey that had begun with the isolated grave at Maastricht had brought Arthur back to the city his family had made their American home.¹⁰⁷ Two days later, on 12 May 1949, Arthur was buried permanently at Riverside Cemetery, Kalamazoo, in Section HH, Lot 19, Grave 9. The cemetery record identifies him as “Arthur Sugas, 1st Lt., Returned veteran” and names Joldersma & Klein as the funeral home. The date is independently consistent with the Quartermaster file: a Request for Reimbursement of Interment or Transportation Expenses dated 12 May 1949 records \$203.00 paid in connection with Arthur’s interment at Riverside Cemetery. The surviving evidence does not establish the church, clergyman, pallbearers, veterans’ organization or the precise military honors, if any, used at the funeral; the military escort documented in the IDPF accompanied the remains during their final rail movement and must not be converted into evidence for an honor guard at the graveside.¹⁰⁸

Arthur Sugas’s wartime burial history had therefore encompassed three graves and almost six years: the individual grave at Maastricht in which the Germans buried him in August 1943; Plot KK, Row 10, Grave 247 at Margraten, where the American Graves Registration Service reinterred him in July 1945 while completing the long process of identification; and, finally, Section HH, Lot 19, Grave 9 at Riverside Cemetery. On 12 May 1949, that journey ended in Kalamazoo. Arthur Sugas was home.

WOLDER MEMORY, EYEWITNESSES, CRASH-SITE RECOVERY, RELICS & COMMEMORATION

Arthur Sugas’s physical journey ended in Kalamazoo in May 1949. At Wolder, however, another history continued. It survived first without an archive: in the recollections of villagers, in the field and roads by which they remembered the place, in objects taken from the ground, and in stories passed from one generation to another. Only decades later were those separate strands brought together by historians, aviation researchers and the village itself. What remained at Wolder was therefore not one single body of evidence but several different kinds of evidence—memory, landscape, objects, documents and commemoration—each with its own strengths and limitations.¹⁰⁹ The local memory of the site was remarkably persistent. By 2005 the Stichting Heemkunde Van Wilre tot Wolder described the crash area as a field near the Vroenhovenweg, close to the Belgian frontier, and elsewhere as lying behind the Leonidas sports grounds. The parish church and its tower had likewise become enduring landmarks in the village narrative. Contemporary with the 2005 memorial project, a lesson prepared for the Petrus & Paulus primary school recorded that German soldier had quickly reached the place, closed the area and later removed the aircraft by military vehicle. Another local historical account stated that a number of Wolder residents had reached the aircraft before the Germans carried it away. These details are important as evidence of what the village remembered about the ground scene. They do not, by themselves, reopen the already settled reconstruction of the crash.¹¹⁰ Four men became the publicly recognised custodians of that memory in 2005: Servatius Aarts, Reng Bastiaens, Johan Groeneweg and Theo Hogenboom. Contemporary Wolder documentation explicitly described them as eyewitnesses, and the Stichting Heemkunde later confirmed that all four took part in unveiling Sugas’s memorial. The surviving corpus, however, does not yet contain a separate, securely dated first person deposition from each man establishing his age in 1943, exact position, or precisely what he personally saw. Their eyewitness status is documented; four independent detailed accounts are not. They must therefore remain four named witnesses rather than being merged into an artificial composite narrative.¹¹¹

A fifth and previously underused strand of Wolder memory has emerged through the family of Leo Theunissen. This evidence entered the present research indirectly and must be described with particular care. In correspondence with the researcher in August 2026, Lex Theunissen traced wartime fragments inherited from his father back to his father’s younger cousin Leo, whose family came from Wolder. Lex subsequently corrected the wartime ages: his father was nineteen in 1943 and Leo approximately nine and a half. According to Lex, Leo had repeatedly told the story throughout his life; the event

Arthur Sugas’s military identification tag, bearing the inscription ARTHUR SUGAS, O-660213, is one of the very few surviving personal effects directly associated with him. Its precise postwar provenance and the route by which it eventually reached the Sugas family have not yet been fully reconstructed; consequently, the tag cannot be used as evidence for the circumstances surrounding his death. Beside it is Sugas’s grave at Riverside Cemetery in Kalamazoo, where he has rested since 12 May 1949, following the long journey of his remains from their initial burial at Maastricht, to the American military cemetery at Margraten, and finally back to the city where he grew up.





had made a deep impression on him. Lex reported that Leo reached the crash site approximately thirty minutes after the aircraft came down and was among the early local arrivals. Leo's daughter, Märy, separately told Lex that her father had gone to the site with his own father.¹¹² The family tradition also preserves a more precise geographical memory. Lex reported that the crash could be located at the corner of a field only a few metres from the Belgian border. That description corresponds broadly with the Wolder tradition of a site near the Vroenhovenweg and the frontier, although it cannot be converted into metre level archaeological coordinates. An earlier version within Lex's family had referred more generally to a crash "along the Tongerse weg outside Maastricht"—understandable local geographical shorthand, since the Tongerseweg is one of the principal roads through the Wolder area. The later identification of a field immediately beside the frontier is more compatible with the Vroenhovenweg tradition, but the difference in road terminology should be preserved rather than silently harmonised.¹¹³

According to the family account, Leo personally picked up pieces from the crash area before the site had been completely cleared. Some of those fragments were later passed to Lex's father, although when this occurred is no longer known. Lex noted that young people at the time commonly exchanged such souvenirs. Märy remembered her father collecting many kinds of objects but did not specifically remember the transparent fragments and had not known that Leo had given such pieces to Lex's father. When Lex asked which cousin could have been the source, however, she immediately identified Leo as the likely man, and she confirmed the underlying family story of his visit to the crash site. The provenance is therefore significant but not perfect: Leo's presence at the site is preserved in family memory; the transfer of each individual fragment to Lex's father is reconstructed rather than documented by a wartime receipt or contemporary label.¹¹⁴ The most unusual of these objects are pieces of thick transparent aircraft material that remained among the Theunissen family's wartime souvenirs. Lex's father transformed part of the material into personal keepsakes: one piece was cut into a heart, another had a cross marked on it, and two surviving pieces appear to have been intended for construction into a cross. In 2021 Lex first approached the present researcher about the objects, explaining that his father had inherited fragments said to have come from a wartime aircraft crash at Wolder and asking whether they might have originated from Sugas's P-47. At that stage the family did not possess an original wartime identification naming Sugas.¹¹⁵ That absence is important. Lex stated explicitly in 2026 that his father had never known Arthur Sugas's name, and that he doubted Leo had known it either. His father remembered only an American aircraft, using a Dutch expression that Lex initially rendered as "lightning." It was Lex, through later investigation of the place, the Wolder memorial and the history of the crash, who connected the inherited fragments with Sugas. The relics therefore represent a genuine family tradition linked to a

The Theunissen family and the surviving relics of Arthur Sugas. Shown at left and right are the parents of Lex Theunissen, while at center is Leo Theunissen, a cousin of Lex's father. Below are small handcrafted keepsakes made from pieces of Plexiglas from the canopy of Arthur Sugas's P-47, material recovered from the crash site and carefully preserved by the Theunissen family for decades.

wartime crash at Wolder, while the identification with Arthur Sugas is a modern historical attribution, not a label continuously preserved with the objects since 1943.¹¹⁶ The transparent material nevertheless proved technically suggestive. Lex measured one surviving fragment at approximately 6 mm thick, noted that it was curved rather than flat, with roughly 1 mm of curvature over four centimetres, and observed that its concave face remained particularly smooth and glossy while the outer surface showed heavier scratching. He sent these dimensions and photographs to Ronnie Olsthoorn, an aeronautical engineer and aviation illustrator, who compared them with a technical drawing and concluded that the piece fitted the specifications of a P-47 canopy rear window. This is a useful technical identification, but not a laboratory proof of individual aircraft provenance: it supports identification of the material as compatible with a Thunderbolt canopy component; it does not by itself stamp the fragment as belonging to serial 41-6372.¹¹⁷

A quite different body of postwar memory developed around the fate of the pilot. Gerard Pahl's 2004 article *Fall of Hermes* preserved one of the earliest securely located published versions. William Nikitas, a Kalamazoo acquaintance of Sugas, remembered being told that Arthur had parachuted from his aircraft and was executed after capture. Aristos Spugios supplied a longer version in which an unidentified former 63rd Fighter Squadron pilot was said to have investigated after the Allied return to Belgium and the Netherlands and to have learned from an unnamed Dutch farmer that Sugas had survived and had then been shot by German policemen. Pahl added that Tom Kostakis had heard that the men involved were Gestapo. These are not independent eyewitness accounts of one event. They are layers of a later oral tradition transmitted through several intermediaries.¹¹⁸ The dog tag story became attached to that same tradition. In Pahl's version, the alleged farmer eventually handed over Sugas's tags when it was safe to do so; the old published biography subsequently presented the surviving tag as having reached an unidentified 63rd Fighter Squadron pilot who then returned it to the Sugas family. Its existence, however, does not establish the route by which it survived. As already established in Stage 4E, the American Graves Registration investigation recorded that no identification tag accompanied the remains when they were delivered for burial. The safest conclusion therefore remains unchanged: the surviving dog tag is genuine, but the evidence does not establish exactly when, where or by whom it was recovered. It cannot be used as proof of successful bailout, capture or execution.¹¹⁹

By the turn of the twenty first century the surviving memories had begun to acquire an organised documentary framework. In 2000, Gerard Seuren of Hoensbroek and Ton Clermont of Maastricht used an appeal in the *Limburgs Dagblad* feature "Sporloos" to locate members of the Sugas family and a childhood friend in the United States. Their work created an important bridge between Wolder and Kalamazoo. Pahl subsequently drew on Seuren, Clermont and a wider circle of Sugas family members, veterans, historians and researchers for his 2004 article. The result was historically valuable but also illustrates the mixture that would continue to characterise

the Sugas story: archival evidence, family memory, veteran recollection and local oral tradition entered the same narrative and therefore have to be separated again source by source.¹²⁰ The immediate impetus for permanent commemoration came through the Stichting Zuid-Limburgs "Hell On Wheels" Monument, which sought to honour individual American servicemen killed in South Limburg with memorial plaques near their places of loss. Stichting Heemkunde Van Wilre tot Wolder took up Sugas's case and carried out what its contemporary press release described as intensive research. Assistance came from Rik Willemse of Arnhem, who had lived in Maastricht and was cataloguing names of American servicemen carved into the caves of the Sint-Pietersberg, while the foundation also made use of the earlier work of Seuren and Clermont.¹²¹

A dedicated Arthur Sugas Project Group was formed. Its members were Theo Brüll, Christina de Jong, Erik Lamkin and Léon Schoenmakers. The surviving announcement names Schoenmakers as provisional contact, while contemporary press material names Christina de Jong as the Stichting Heemkunde contact. The available record does not justify assigning more detailed internal duties to Brüll or Lamkin. What is clear is that the working group brought together the Hell on Wheels memorial initiative, the historical work of the Wolder foundation and other village associations in order to transform historical research into a permanent public memorial.¹²² The educational dimension preceded the ceremony itself. On 2 September 2005, the Sugas story was presented to pupils at the Petrus & Paulus primary school. The lesson explained that surviving Wolder eyewitnesses would unveil the memorial and invited pupils to attend with their families; schoolchildren and scouts were expected to participate in laying flowers. The language of that text is commemorative rather than strictly source critical, but it records an important transition: Sugas had ceased to belong only to the memories of an older generation and had entered the historical education of children born six decades after his death. Stichting Heemkunde chairman Jos Gielen summarised the effect of the research with the phrase that Arthur had become for them "a man of flesh and blood."¹²³

The foundation's written memorial followed in September 2005: Arthur Sugas: zijn duel voor de vrijheid, by Léon Schoenmakers and Hub Schouteten, published by Van Wilre tot Wolder in connection with the memorial project. Contemporary sources describe it as a booklet on the pilot and the background to the accident. It remains significant as a record of what the Wolder researchers had assembled and understood by 2005. It must nevertheless be read as a combination of documentary research, oral testimony and commemorative interpretation rather than as an independent contemporary source for the events of 1943.¹²⁴ The public culmination came on Friday, 16 September 2005 at 7:00 p.m. at Monseigneur Vranckenplein. The programme had announced that the four surviving Wolder eyewitnesses would unveil the plaque; the foundation's subsequent account confirms that Servatius Aarts, Reng Bastiaens, Johan Groeneweg and Theo Hogenboom actually performed the unveiling. Alderman Jean Jacobs attended, Father Piet van der Aart blessed the memorial, and both Wolder bands participated. Scouting and other local organisations were also represented. Thus the

surviving witness generation occupied the central place in the village's formal act of remembrance sixty two years after the event.¹²⁵ The memorial was designed by Arno Lasoe and executed by Maastricht artist Pierre Lumens, with financial assistance that included sponsors from the Wolder community. Contemporary documentation calls it a bronze Purple Heart memorial plaque. It was mounted on the outside wall of the R.K. Sint Petrus en Pauluskerk, opposite the pastorate. The plaque itself, rather than later database transcriptions, is the controlling source for its wording.¹²⁶ The Sugas project also had a consequence beyond Sugas himself. At the 2005 unveiling Stichting Heemkunde announced its intention to create a memorial for Wolder's own wartime victims. Subsequent archival investigation and interviews with relatives led to a second commemorative project, and a memorial to twelve Wolder war dead was unveiled in the church on 14 March 2008. The Sugas investigation had therefore helped produce a broader local programme of wartime remembrance.¹²⁷

A second and quite separate phase of physical investigation followed after the memorial had already been established. The aviation recovery website LostPlanes.net published a multi page feature devoted specifically to the Republic P-47C-5-RE 41-6372 / UN-S and its Wolder crash site. Its introduction states that investigators located an American P-47 site near Wolder and recovered mainly small fragments together with a substantial quantity of .50-calibre ammunition. The site's adjoining aircraft and mission pages explicitly associate that recovery location with Sugas and 41-6372. The supplied photographs can be matched to the recovered parts imagery in that LostPlanes feature, providing a direct connection between the surviving JPEGs and the published investigation.¹²⁸ The photographic evidence adds detail that the surviving web text does not. One image shows recovered material mixed with soil and stones in a sieve or perforated container, demonstrating that at least some of the material underwent screening. The original JPEG metadata dates that photograph to 29 September 2012 at 17:52:46. Three photographs of cleaned or selected components were taken on 14 October 2012, at 13:38:25, 13:56:32 and 14:17:10. The safest conclusion is not that the entire excavation certainly occurred on 29 September, but that material associated with the recovery was being photographed on that date and that cleaned finds were being recorded approximately two weeks later. The presently available photographs do not establish excavation depth, trench dimensions, the use of mechanical equipment, the identities of every participant or the exact legal authorisation under which the investigation was conducted.¹²⁹

Historically, the significance of the recovery lies less in any single fragment than in the relationship between memory and material evidence. LostPlanes describes a small, concentrated

The memory of Arthur Sugas in Wolder. The village where his final flight ended on 17 August 1943 kept his memory alive for decades. The composition brings together Wolder and the Church of St. Petrus en Paulus with the unveiling ceremony of the memorial erected in his honor and the commemorative plaque, prominently bearing the Purple Heart. In the foreground, the young Arthur Sugas himself symbolically connects the man with the place of his sacrifice and with the community that has continued to preserve and honor his memory across the generations.





debris field, with predominantly aircraft skin fragments and traces of green paint on some pieces; the recovered material and .50-calibre ammunition are consistent with a P-47 crash site. The recovery therefore strongly reinforced the identification of the traditional Wolder crash area and demonstrated that aircraft material still survived underground. It did not prove every detail preserved in village memory, nor did it resolve the provenance of the dog tag or the postwar execution tradition. The most recent phase of the story has again connected material evidence with family memory. In May 2021, Lex Theunissen first contacted the researcher, explaining that his father had left Second World War souvenirs and that he suspected an interesting connection with Wolder. The investigation resumed in detail in August 2026, when the surviving fragments were re-examined, the cousin was identified as Leo Theunissen, Märy was consulted, and the transparent material was compared with P-47 canopy specifications. In this way an object preserved for more than seventy years without the name “Arthur Sugas” attached to it acquired a plausible historical identity only through modern cross-referencing of place, family recollection and aircraft technology.¹³⁰

Public remembrance has likewise continued beyond the 2005 unveiling. Stichting Heemkunde’s archive records recurring church services for both the Wolder war dead and Arthur Sugas, including services in 2011 and an annual Mass on 16 September 2018. As of August 2026, the foundation continues to describe this as an annual practice and has announced another service for 26 September 2026 in the Sint Petrus en Paulus church; that date still lies in the future and therefore represents continuing commemorative intent rather than a completed ceremony. The Sugas plaque itself remains officially recorded on the church exterior. What survived at Wolder therefore did not survive in one form. Human memory preserved a field, a border, a church and the story of an American aircraft. A boy named Leo retained enough of the event for it to be repeated within his family, while fragments apparently gathered from the site were transformed into small personal keepsakes. Other postwar stories acquired details whose historical reliability cannot now be demonstrated. The ground itself continued to hold aircraft material until modern recovery work brought it back to the surface. Historians reconstructed the pilot’s identity, a village installed his name permanently on its church wall, and later generations continued to commemorate him. The enduring history of Arthur Sugas at Wolder lies precisely in the distinction between those forms of survival: what people remembered, what the earth preserved, and what later research was able to prove.

EPILOGUE

While Wolder preserved the place where Arthur Sugas disappeared from the war, Kalamazoo preserved something different: the papers, photographs, possessions and personal

Parts and components recovered from the crash site of Arthur Sugas’s P-47 at Wolder. Among the finds are fragments of metal skin, fittings, and mechanical components, many of which still retain traces of their original paint, corrosion, and manufacturing markings. These surviving remains constitute tangible evidence of Sugas’s final flight and contributed to the later investigation, identification, and documentation of the crash site.

memories through which the young pilot remained part of the lives of those who had known him. Remarkably, the documentary history of that preservation begins not decades later, but little more than a year after his death. On 22 August 1944, Arthur's father, Constantine Z. Sugas, wrote to the Army asking that his unmarried son's personal property be sent to him. The Army Effects Bureau authorized shipment on 1 September, dispatched the effects to Kalamazoo on 7 September, and on 19 September Constantine signed a formal receipt acknowledging their arrival.¹³¹ The contents of that shipment are unusually important because they establish what once existed in family custody. Among Arthur's clothing and ordinary personal possessions were a lot of photographs, a package of papers, notebooks, a package of letters, cards and snapshots, his pilot's log, two address books, a book of maps, an aircraft recognition book, his Air Medal, twelve service ribbons and three sets of wings, together with other personal items and \$88.48 in cash.¹³² The list therefore proves that a substantial personal archive of Arthur Sugas survived the war and was physically returned to Kalamazoo. It does not prove that every one of those objects survives today, nor that all photographs and letters subsequently published came from that particular shipment. But it provides the essential starting point for understanding how so much personal material could still be available to relatives and historians many decades later. The Army itself cautioned that delivery did not determine final legal title; Constantine is thus most accurately described as the first documented posthumous family recipient and custodian of the effects.

That first custody arrangement was short lived. By 1947, Stella Sugas had emerged in the surviving official correspondence as the person handling the family's affairs concerning her brother. In April she was already corresponding directly with the Quartermaster General, and on 26 May she explained the changed family circumstances in unusually explicit terms. Her father had died; her mother, Mary Sugas, had suffered a stroke on 18 April and was unable to manage or sign the necessary correspondence. Stella had therefore obtained power of attorney. She also recorded that she had married Nicholas Koukas on 20 April 1947 and now signed herself Stella Koukas, describing herself as “the only remaining child in the family.” She expected to move with her husband to Astoria, New York, with Mary accompanying them.¹³³ The documents establish Stella as the principal surviving family correspondent during this period. They do not, however, establish that every photograph, letter, medal or other object originally received by Constantine automatically passed into her possession. Mary's role in the later preservation of Arthur's material is consequently more difficult to define. She remained his mother and next of kin within the family's official correspondence, but the surviving record shows Stella increasingly acting on her behalf. No document yet located identifies Mary as the organizer or long term custodian of Arthur's papers. What can be demonstrated is that by the late 1940s Stella had assumed the practical responsibility of dealing with the institutions that continued to communicate with the family about Arthur. In that sense, she became an important link between the generation that had lost him and the later family memory that survived him.

There is also evidence that at least some of Arthur's wartime correspondence to his sister remained accessible long enough to enter the historical record. Gerard Pahl later reported that Arthur had written to his sister that he "loved his plane as if it were a part of him," and that another letter written only days before his death mentioned his Air Medal and Oak Leaf Cluster.¹³⁴ The original letters themselves have not yet been located within the presently available corpus, so Pahl's published wording cannot be treated as a substitute for examining them. Nevertheless, his access to their contents is significant. Together with the 1944 Army inventory, it indicates that the later Arthur Sugas story was not built solely from military records; fragments of Arthur's own voice had also survived within the family record. The material that ultimately reached historians was, however, no longer a single intact "Sugas archive." Its surviving provenance shows a much more dispersed pattern. Myrsine Vangelakos Petrie became one of the important custodians of memory outside Arthur's immediate family. Pahl identified her as the niece of Keith Vassell, one of Nicholas Stampolis's friends, and recorded that she had been only about five years old when Arthur died. Her value as a witness therefore lies principally in the childhood impressions and community memory she retained, not in retrospective knowledge of Arthur's military operations.¹³⁵ More materially, one surviving photograph of Arthur smiling while holding his service pistol was credited to Myrsine Petrie via Air Classics, demonstrating that she also contributed documentary imagery to the reconstruction of his life.

Another particularly important voice was Helen Georgiou, whom Pahl identified as Arthur's cousin. Interviewed late in life, she retained detailed memories of the Sugas family's social world and of the closely connected Greek-American families of Kalamazoo.¹³⁶ Her recollections preserved the atmosphere in which Arthur had been known before the war—his circle of friends, the Greek community, local attitudes toward America and aviation, and elements of his personality. Much of this material belongs chronologically to Arthur's youth and has already served that portion of his biography; its significance here is different. Georgiou demonstrates that knowledge of Arthur had survived for more than half a century in living community memory and could still be recovered when researchers finally began asking systematic questions. The same distinction applies to William Nikitas and Aristos Spougios. Their later accounts concerning Arthur's fate belong to a different evidentiary problem and need not be repeated here. For the history of remembrance, however, both men retained other links to Arthur. Nikitas, described by Pahl as a teenage acquaintance from Kalamazoo, was credited with supplying an official portrait of Arthur that later appeared through Air Classics.¹³⁷ Spougios, several years younger than Arthur, preserved a modest but personal recollection of Arthur and Nicholas Stampolis helping him with the model aircraft he built as a boy.¹³⁸ Such memories prove little about wartime events, but they are valuable in a different way: they preserve Arthur as a recognizable person within the generation that had actually known him rather than merely as a name on a casualty record. The modern research network also included Zick Paul Sugas, thanked by Pahl among the people who made Fall of Hermes possible. The relationship is worth clarifying because

older versions of the biography referred loosely to "Paul Sugas" as Arthur's nephew. Zick Paul Sugas's 2002 obituary identifies Arthur explicitly as his cousin, while naming Zick as a son of Christos and Eleni Sugas.¹³⁹ This makes Zick Paul Sugas another bridge between family memory and the historians who reconstructed Arthur's life at the turn of the twenty first century. Unless evidence emerges for a different relative named Paul, the description of Pahl's Zick Paul Sugas as Arthur's nephew should not be retained. One more connection with Arthur's wartime unit survived in Kalamazoo memory, although in an unresolved form. Aristos Spougios later recalled that a former member of Arthur's squadron had come to Kalamazoo "to pay his respects" and had attempted to learn more about what had happened to his missing comrade.¹⁴⁰ The dramatic story subsequently attributed to that visitor has already been treated separately and cannot be used as proof of Arthur's fate. For present purposes, the important point is the alleged visit itself: it suggests that the bond between Arthur's wartime comrades and his family may not have ended in 1943. Yet the visitor remains unidentified, and no surviving letter, diary entry, travel record or independent family account presently verifies either his name or the precise date of the visit. It therefore remains an intriguing element of postwar memory rather than a securely reconstructed veteran contact.

For decades, these different strands—family papers, photographs, memories of relatives, childhood acquaintances and recollections associated with former servicemen—remained largely disconnected from the place in Europe where Arthur's aircraft had come down. The decisive modern bridge appears around 2000. A later Wolder account records that Dutch researchers Gerard Seuren of Hoensbroek and Ton Clermont of Maastricht, working through the Limburgs Dagbladcolumn Spoorloos, succeeded in locating members of Arthur's family and a childhood friend in the United States.¹⁴¹ That contact was more than a biographical footnote. It connected two independent bodies of memory: the Dutch knowledge of the locality and the American memory of the man. That transatlantic exchange fed directly into the most substantial early modern synthesis of Arthur's story presently identified: Gerard Pahl's "Fall of Hermes," published in Air Classics in July 2004. Pahl's acknowledgements are themselves a useful map of the research network that had formed around Sugas. They include Seuren and Clermont, Zick Paul Sugas, William Nikitas, Helen Georgiou, Myrsine Petrie and Aristos Spougios, but also Peter Randall, Paul Patist, Ron Putz, Jack Cook, Bill Painter, Stew Bailey and a number of additional contributors.¹⁴² Not every person's precise role can now be reconstructed from the surviving article, and it would be unsafe to classify all of them automatically as veterans, historians or family members. What the list proves is that the article was the product of a remarkably broad collaboration linking family,

Η πορεία του Arthur Sugas μέσα από τον Τύπο του Κalamazoo. Τα αποκόμματα παρακολουθούν διαδοχικά σημαντικούς σταθμούς της ζωής και της στρατιωτικής του σταδιοδρομίας: την αποφοίτησή του από το Randolph Field και την απόκτηση των πτερύγων του, την προαγωγή του σε Υπολοχαγό, την είδηση του θανάτου του σε πολεμική αποστολή στις 17 Αυγούστου 1943 και, τέλος, την απονομή των διακρίσεών του στην οικογένειά του. Μαζί αποτελούν πολύτιμη σύγχρονη μαρτυρία για τον τρόπο με τον οποίο η τοπική κοινωνία του Κalamazoo παρακολουθούσε την πορεία του και διατήρησε τη μνήμη του μετά τον θάνατό του.

Randolph Field Graduates Two Kalamazoo Men

Eight More Fliers from This Area Included in Class of 61.

Sixty-one fighter-fliers from the state of Michigan, two of whom were from Kalamazoo and eight more from nearby Southwestern Michigan towns, Wednesday received their war-wings when they were graduated from the Gulf Coast Air Corps Training Center at Randolph Field, Texas.

The two Kalamazoo graduates were Lt. Arthur Sugas, 541 Pine street, and Lt. John L. Vanderberg, 820 Stockbridge avenue.

Lt. Sugas received his final training at Foster Field. Lt. Vanderberg wound up his tests at Kelly Field.

Benton Harbor was represented by Lt. Elmer A. Sommerfeld, Lt. LeRoy A. Stech comes from Lawrence, and Wayland had two graduates in the class, Lt. Fred D. Deardorff and Lt. Blesch Malmstone.

Also included in the class of graduates were Lt. Gilman L. Weber, Route 2 Hartford, Lt. Carl R. Edmonds and Lt. Charles O. Struble, both of Hastings, and Lt. Charles D. Mattson, Jonesville.

Seven flying fields in the Southwest co-operated in training Wednesday's graduating class known officially as "Class 42-E," the last to wear the traditional cadet blue garb.

The schools were held at Foster Field, Victoria, Texas, Lubbock, Texas, Ellington Field, near Houston, all of which were advanced multi-engineled bases. Advanced schools for single-engine training are located at Kelly Field and Brooks Field, near San Antonio, Foster Field, More Field, at Mission Texas, and Lake Charles, La., which produced its first class of pursuit pilots.

Six District Men Randolph Field Graduates



Lt. Arthur Sugas, Kalamazoo.

Lt. John L. Vanderberg, Kalamazoo.

Lt. Leroy A. Stech, Lawrence.



Lt. Elmer A. Sommerfeld, Benton Harbor.

Lt. Fred D. Deardorff, Wayland.

Lt. Blesch Malmstone, Wayland.

Six Southwestern Michigan flying cadets of "Class 42-E" Wednesday received their war wings and commissions as lieutenants at Randolph Field Air Corps Training Center graduations.

Sugas Promoted In Air Forces

Becomes First Lieutenant in Fighter Unit

Arthur Sugas, son of Mr. and Mrs. Constantine Sugas, 541 Pine street, has been promoted from the rank of second to first lieutenant in the United States Army Air Forces. Lt. Sugas is stationed with the 63rd Fighter Squadron, Bridgeport, Conn. He won his wings and commission as a second lieutenant at Randolph Field, Tex., last May.

Lt. Sugas was graduated from Central high school, attended Western Michigan College, and was employed at the Kalamazoo Vegetable Parchment Company at the time of his enlistment in the air corps Oct. 29, 1941.

Westnedge Post Will Be Host to Army Group Here

Joeshp B. Westnedge post, American Legion, will hold a Christmas

Has Silver Wings



Arthur Sugas, son of Mr. and Mrs. Constantine Sugas, 541 Pine street, has been promoted from the rank of second to first lieutenant in the army air forces. He is stationed in Bridgeport, Conn.

Killed in Raid



Lt. Arthur Sugas

Lt. Arthur Sugas Dies in Action

The war department today notified Mr. and Mrs. Constantine Z. Sugas, 1203 Egleston avenue, that their son, Lt. Arthur Sugas, was killed in action on a raid over Eupen, Belgium, Aug. 17. He was previously reported as missing.

Lt. Sugas enlisted in the air corps Oct. 29, 1941 and won his wings and commission as a second lieutenant at Randolph Field, Tex., in May, 1942. He was promoted to first lieutenant while stationed with the 63rd Fighter Squadron at Bridgeport, Conn.

He was graduated from Central high school, attended Western Michigan College, and was a former employee of the Kalamazoo Vegetable Parchment Company.

In a letter, written Aug. 13, 1943, Lt. Sugas revealed he had been the recipient of the air medal and the oak leaf cluster. He was a fighter pilot and had been on combat in England since January, 1943.

Kalamazoo Man to Get Decorations

Awarded Pilot Son Lost in Action

Among the relatives of 17 army air forces heroes who will receive decorations on behalf of the air men at 2 tomorrow afternoon at Selfridge Field will be Constantine Z. Sugas, 1203 Egleston avenue. Sugas will make the trip to Selfridge Field to be presented with the air medal with two oak leaf clusters, awarded posthumously to his son, the late First Lieutenant Arthur Sugas, who was killed on a raid over Eupen, Belgium, last Aug. 17.

The medal and clusters were awarded to Lt. Sugas for meritorious achievement in aerial flight in the completion of 30 operational sorties over enemy-occupied Continental Europe.

Official announcement of his

CLOSED SUNDAYS



Kalamazoo community memory, Dutch research and the wider 56th Fighter Group historical network.

Fall of Hermes consequently occupies an unusual position in the historiography of Arthur Sugas. It is neither merely a secondary retelling nor a primary record. Pahl preserved information that may otherwise have disappeared: interviews with elderly acquaintances, family recollections, photographs from private hands, fragments of letters, and the names of people who had participated in the search. At the same time, the article combined material of very different evidentiary quality and occasionally allowed later memory, assumption and documentary fact to run together. Its value is therefore greatest when its components are separated and returned, wherever possible, to their underlying sources. The surviving archival transcription also lacks the original article's page 2, a limitation that must be remembered when assessing the completeness of the copy now available.¹⁴³ The provenance of the surviving photographic record illustrates the same process. Some images came through Myrsine Petrie and William Nikitas; another photograph of Arthur is credited to Paul Patist, while a 63rd Fighter Squadron group portrait in which Arthur appears derives from the James C. Stewart Collection through The Museum of Flight.¹⁴⁴ The result is significant. The visual record by which Arthur can now be reconstructed did not survive in one location or through one custodian. It survived in pieces, distributed among family friends, acquaintances, aviation collectors, veterans' circles and institutional collections. Modern biography reunited material that postwar life had dispersed.

By 2004 Arthur's memory was also being placed within Kalamazoo's broader public aviation culture. Pahl connected his story with the Air Zoo in Kalamazoo/Portage and described the museum's new Eighth Air Force environment, including a 56th Fighter Group P-47. His wording was careful enough to matter: the museum experience was presented as a means of honoring "men like Arthur Sugas," rather than as a dedicated Sugas memorial.¹⁴⁵ This distinction should be preserved. The evidence demonstrates that Arthur's story was being interpreted within a local institution devoted to the wider American air war, but it does not establish a permanent museum exhibit devoted exclusively to him. The same caution is necessary when considering the Greek-American community. The surviving testimony of Georgiou, Petrie, Nikitas and Spougios shows that Arthur's name and personality remained within a tightly interconnected group of Kalamazoo families long after 1943.¹⁴⁶ What has not yet been found is comparably strong documentation for a continuous formal postwar program of remembrance by the Greek Orthodox parish, AHEPA, the Sons of Pericles, Western Michigan University or the city of Kalamazoo. The evidence presently supports social and family continuity of memory much more strongly than an uninterrupted institutional cult of commemoration. That is not an absence of remembrance; it is a distinction between

Ο Arthur Sugas και το P-47 του σε μια συμβολική, αποχαιρετιστήρια σύνθεση. Η μορφή του αεροσκάφους αποδόθηκε ως ψηφιακός πίνακας με τη βοήθεια της τεχνητής νοημοσύνης, ειδικά για τις ανάγκες της ερευνητικής ομάδας, ως εικονογραφική ανασύνθεση που συνοδεύει και υποστηρίζει την ιστορική έρευνα γύρω από τη ζωή, τη δράση και τη μνήμη του.

what can be documented and what might otherwise only be assumed.

The historical rediscovery of Arthur Sugas was therefore not a single event. It was a gradual convergence. The Army first returned a remarkably rich body of personal material to his father in 1944. Stella became the principal surviving family correspondent as the original household changed. Relatives and acquaintances retained photographs and memories. Some material passed into other private or aviation collections. Dutch researchers then re-established contact with the American side of the story around 2000, and Pahl's 2004 article brought many of those voices and sources together for the first time in a widely accessible narrative.¹⁴⁷ Later research could then go back behind that narrative—to official records, original photographs, family testimony and surviving documents—and distinguish what Arthur himself had left behind from what others had remembered about him.

That distinction is ultimately the key to Arthur's personal legacy in Kalamazoo. Memory did not survive because one perfect archive was deliberately created and preserved intact. It survived because many people preserved different pieces of the same life: Constantine received his son's belongings; Stella kept the family connected with the official record; relatives and friends remembered the young man they had known; photographs remained in several hands; aviation researchers preserved squadron imagery; and decades later historians connected those fragments with records and memories from Europe.¹⁴⁸ The result is not merely a story that escaped oblivion. It is a documented example of how a wartime death passed first into private family memory and then, slowly and imperfectly, into history.

ARTHUR SUGAS

MISSION RECORD • 63rd FIGHTER SQUADRON / 56th FIGHTER GROUP

39 ENTRIES • MAY–AUGUST 1943 • DATE FORMAT: YYMMDD

DATE	FO #	S&P	NAME	FORENAMES	SERIAL #	TYPE	CODE	REMARKS
430507	12	WHITE 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430514	18	BLUE 4	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430515	19	RED 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430516	20	SP 1	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6230	P-47C- 2-RE	UN-E	DNTO
430516	21	RED 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]			UN-	
430519	24	RED 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430525	28	BLUE 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	42- 7885	P-47D- 1-RE	UN-N	
430526	29	RED 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430527	30	SP 1	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430528	32	RED 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430529	33	BLUE 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6203	P-47C- 2-RE	UN-J	
430531	34	YELLOW 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430607	38	BLUE 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430610	40	SP 1	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430611	37	YELLOW 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430611	41	YELLOW 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6320	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-Y	
430612	43	SP 2	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430617	47	SP 1	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430620	50	BLUE 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430622	52	BLUE 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430624	54	YELLOW 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	42- 8693	P-47D- 5-RE	UN-I	
430625	56	YELLOW 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430626	57	BLUE 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430628	58	YELLOW 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430629	59	YELLOW 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430702	62	WHITE 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430706	65	YELLOW 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430709	67	RED 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430710	68	RED 1	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430716	73	RED 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430717	74	RED 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430725	78	YELLOW 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430725	79	SP 2	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430726	81	BLUE 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6259	P-47C- 2-RE	UN-Z	
430812			Sugas	Arthur [NMI]			UN-	
430814	102	YELLOW 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430815	104	YELLOW 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430817	106	YELLOW 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	
430817	106/4	WHITE 3	Sugas	Arthur [NMI]	41- 6372	P-47C- 5-RE	UN-S	KIA

FOOTNOTES

1. U.S. Department of Labor, Immigration Service, List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States, S.S. Edison, sailing from Piraeus, 23 August 1928; War Department, Classification Questionnaire of Reserve Officers, Arthur Sugas. The immigration document records him as SUGAS, ATHANASIOS, age eight, born at “TRIKKALA,” Greece, while the later military form gives his birth date as 27 December 1919 and the locality in the form “Trikkoli/Trikkola, Greece.” Gerard Pahl likewise gives the birthplace simply as “Trikkala, Greece.” The locality has been identified as Trikala, Corinthia, Peloponnese. The surviving American primary records themselves do not state the prefecture, and an original Greek civil birth registration has not yet been recovered; consequently, the geographic identification should be distinguished from the wording of the surviving primary American records.

2. U.S. Department of Labor passenger manifest, S.S. Edison, 23 August 1928, recording Maria, Athanasios and Stella Sugas as born at Trikkala and giving Trikkala as their last permanent residence. Michigan Department of Health, Certificate of Death for Constantine Z. Sugas, Arthur Sugas IDPF, PDF p. 51: born 21 May 1877 at “Trikkala, Greece”; father Zissis Sugas, born Greece; Mother Mary, maiden surname unknown, born Greece.

3. Gerard Pahl, “Fall of Hermes,” Air Classics, July 2004, archived article, pp. 5–6. Drawing principally upon the recollections of Arthur's cousin Helen Georgiou, Pahl states that Constantine had travelled to the United States twice, worked as a papermaker in southwestern Michigan and labored for approximately eight years before being able to bring his family to America; he gives Constantine's naturalization date as 14 September 1927. Constantine's Michigan death certificate independently confirms his connection with the paper industry, listing him as a laborer employed by the Bryant Paper Company. The precise duration of the separation and the naturalization date presently rely upon Pahl's research and the family testimony he preserved.

4. U.S. Department of Labor, Immigration Service, List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States, S.S. Edison, Piraeus, 23 August 1928. The manifest lists Maria Sugas with Stella, age ten, and Athanasios, age eight; all three were Greek nationals, the children were recorded as scholars, and Trikkala appears as birthplace and last permanent residence.

5. U.S. Department of Labor, Immigration Service, Record of Detained Aliens, S.S. Edison. The heading records the ship as having arrived 10 September 1928, and the entry for Maria, Athanasios and Stella identify their destination as Maria's husband, Constantine, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. This primary document supersedes the 9 September 1928 date printed in the earlier published Sugas biography. The precise administrative reason for the family's appearance on the detained aliens sheet cannot presently be established with confidence from the surviving annotations and has therefore not been interpreted.

6. The 1928 passenger manifest already gives the surname as SUGAS, while the given name remains ATHANASIOS; subsequent American military records use Arthur Sugas. Pahl

likewise uses the Americanized form Arthur Sugas but provides no evidence establishing when or by what legal procedure the change of given name occurred.

7. Pahl, “Fall of Hermes,” pp. 5–6, preserving Helen Georgiou's recollections of the close Greek community in Kalamazoo and of the immigrant generation's strong appreciation for the opportunities represented by the United States. The testimony is used specifically as Georgiou's recollection rather than as a general characterization of all Greek American immigrants.

8. Ibid., p. 6. Pahl records Arthur's close friendship with Nicholas Stampolis and their attendance, for a period, at McKinley Elementary School.

9. Ibid. Helen Georgiou remembered outdoor summer film screenings against a wall of McKinley Elementary School, including a film concerning Charles Lindbergh. No surviving statement by Arthur establishes that this screening inspired his later decision to fly.

10. Ibid. Georgiou recalled fifty cent passenger rides offered by visiting aircraft at Lindbergh Field and strongly believed that Arthur and Nick had taken one or more such flights; this remains family recollection. She also remembered the boys keeping balsa and tissue model aircraft hanging from their bedroom ceilings. Aristos Spugios independently remembered Arthur and Nick helping him “fly” his own model airplanes.

11. Ibid., pp. 6–7. Pahl records high-school tennis, basketball, hunting, YMCA membership, ice skating and fishing among Arthur's activities.

12. Ibid., p. 6. According to the recollections preserved by Pahl, Arthur wanted to earn money with which to purchase his own clothing and worked shining shoes and carrying the local newspaper.

13. Ibid. Pahl records Arthur and Nicholas as active in their Greek Orthodox church and in the Sons of Pericles, whose activities combined Greek cultural affiliation with social and sporting life for younger members of the community.

14. Ibid., pp. 6–7. Arthur played the violin and learned the mandolin from his father.

15. War Department, Classification Questionnaire of Reserve Officers. The education section records four years at Kalamazoo Central High, mathematics as his major field, graduation marked “Yes,” and 1939 as the year. See also “Sugas Promoted in Air Forces,” Kalamazoo Gazette, 17 December 1942, p. 5.

16. Mildred Conkey, Arthur Sugas's former high-school adviser, quoted in Gerard Pahl, “Fall of Hermes,” p. 9: “His bright shining eyes, his kindly smile, his courteous manner is something no teacher would forget.”

17. War Department, Classification Questionnaire of Reserve Officers, W.D., A.G.O. Form No. 178, Arthur Sugas, O-660213, education section, recording four years at Kalamazoo

Central High School, graduation in 1939, and two years of college without graduation; Gerard Pahl, “Fall of Hermes,” Air Classics (July 2004), archived article p. 7, diplomatic research transcription p. 9, for the later account of Sugas and Nicholas Stampolis attending Western Michigan College of Education in 1939 and associated personal recollections. Pahl records Helen Georgiou’s recollection that Arthur possessed “the keenest and sharpest mind” of the three young men she was discussing; this remains attributable family/community testimony rather than a contemporary academic evaluation.

18. Arthur Sugas, “Statement with Reference to C.A.A. Training Accompany Flying Cadet Application,” 24 April 1941, signed at Kalamazoo, Michigan. Sugas identified Western State Teachers College, Kalamazoo, entered the period Feb. 41–May 41, answered “yes” to current C.A.A. flight training, and answered “no” to having graduated from either the C.A.A. Preliminary or Secondary Flight Training Course. Primary document preserved in the Sugas personnel material.

19. Arthur Sugas, Application for Appointment as Flying Cadet, A.G.O. Form No. 60, Kalamazoo, Michigan, April 1941, addressed to the Commanding General, Sixth Corps Area, Chicago; “Affidavit to Accompany Application for Appointment as Flying Cadet,” subscribed and sworn 18 April 1941, Kalamazoo County, Michigan. The printed application specified heavier than air flying training in the Army Air Corps and appointment as Second Lieutenant, Air Corps Reserve, upon successful completion. Primary documents.

20. Gerard Pahl, “Fall of Hermes,” Air Classics (July 2004), archived article p. 7, research transcription p. 9. Pahl records Helen Georgiou’s recollection that patriotism strongly influenced the young men of Kalamazoo’s Greek-American community. His suggestions concerning the possible influence of the European war and the invasion of Greece are later interpretation rather than demonstrable contemporary statements by Sugas.

21. U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, World War II Draft Registration Card, Arthur Sugas, registration at Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1 July 1941, occupation: Hammond Machinery Builders; Kalamazoo Gazette, 17 December 1942, p. 5, contemporary retrospective report identifying the Kalamazoo Vegetable Parchment Company as his employer at the time of enlistment. The draft registration is an official federal record.

22. “Sugas Promoted in Air Forces—Becomes First Lieutenant in Fighter Unit,” Kalamazoo Gazette, 17 December 1942, p. 5. The article gives 29 October 1941 as Sugas’s Air Corps enlistment date. This contemporary report is presently preferred to the later/indexed 3 November 1941 variant. Pahl also gives 29 October 1941, though his account additionally associates that date with departure for Pine Bluff, a detail not treated as independently established here.

23. War Department, Physical Examination for Flying, W.D., A.G.O. Form No. 64, Arthur Sugas, O-660213, Foster Field, Victoria, Texas, 19 March 1942. The form records 130 hours total flying time as pilot, 130 hours during the preceding six months, and finds him physically qualified for flying duty, Class

I. Primary military medical record preserved in the Arthur Sugas personnel/IDPF material.

24. Headquarters Army Air Forces, Personnel Orders No. 120, Washington, D.C., 20 May 1942, para. 71, formally rating Second Lieutenant Arthur Sugas as a “PILOT”; Headquarters 63rd Fighter Squadron, “Promotion of Officer,” September 1942, citing 19 May 1942 as the date of the special order for his present grade; “Randolph Field Graduates Two Kalamazoo Men,” Kalamazoo Gazette, 21 May 1942, p. 10, identifying Sugas with Class 42-E, reporting his wings and commission through the Randolph Field Air Corps Training Center and stating specifically that his final training was received at Foster Field. Personnel Orders No. 120 lists Arthur Sugas among the officers rated pilots.

25. Headquarters 63rd Fighter Squadron, Office of the Squadron Commander, Bridgeport Municipal Airport, Stratford, Connecticut, “Promotion of Officer,” September 1942, Arthur Sugas, O-660213: “Lt. Sugas was assigned to this organization June 5, 1942.” Primary squadron personnel record. The same document identifies his then current duties as C Flight Element Leader and C Flight Operations Officer.

26. U.S. Army Air Forces, official aircraft accident documentation, P-40F 41-13758, Bradley Field, Connecticut, 9 June 1942. Arthur Sugas’s signed “Pilot’s Statement” is reproduced verbatim in the English narrative above: “I was approaching runway No. One for a landing...” The same file contains the Accident Classification Committee’s finding, the eyewitness statement of Capt. David C. Schilling, and the Bradley Field Control Tower account. The committee concluded that the occurrence was due largely to poor technique, followed by an error of judgment when the pilot attempted to continue after the initial mishap, noting that the latter action could easily have resulted in a fatal accident. Primary accident record.

27. Headquarters 63rd Fighter Squadron, “Promotion of Officer,” September 1942. The recommendation states that Sugas had served as a pilot since joining the squadron; that he was C Flight Engineering Officer from 13 July to 11 September 1942 and thereafter C Flight Operations Officer; that he was C Flight Element Leader; and that “His performance of duties in all capacities has been superior.” Primary contemporary personnel evaluation.

28. “Sugas Promoted in Air Forces—Becomes First Lieutenant in Fighter Unit,” Kalamazoo Gazette, 17 December 1942, p. 5, reporting his promotion to First Lieutenant and his service with the 63rd Fighter Squadron at Bridgeport, Connecticut. Contemporary press.

29. Department of the Air Force, 56th Fighter Wing, “63d Fighter Squadron,” official lineage and history sheet, Stations and Narrative sections. The official record lists Bridgeport Municipal Airport, Connecticut, 2 September–27 December 1942, and states that on 27 December the squadron “left the field for the war in Europe.” It records Wittering from 12 January 1943 and Horsham St Faith from 5 April 1943.

30. Peter Randall, “A Brief History of the 56th Fighter Group,” entries for December 1942 and 6–12 January 1943.

The chronology records the Group’s preparation at Camp Kilmer, embarkation aboard the Cunard liner Queen Elizabeth on 6 January, and arrival at Gourrock on 12 January after six days at sea. This is a specialist Group chronology drawing on 56th Fighter Group records rather than an individual Sugas passenger manifest.

31. Department of the Air Force, “63d Fighter Squadron,” official station record, Wittering, England, from 12 January 1943; Randall, “A Brief History of the 56th Fighter Group,” 13 January 1943 entry, recording the Group’s arrival at RAF King’s Cliffe and explaining that insufficient accommodation resulted in the 63rd Fighter Squadron receiving barrack space at nearby RAF Wittering.

32. Randall, “A Brief History of the 56th Fighter Group,” entries for 25 January and February 1943: first P-47Cs received at King’s Cliffe on 25 January, further deliveries during February, and gunnery training arranged on RAF ranges. The official 63rd Fighter Squadron history establishes separately that the squadron had already converted to the P-47 in the United States during June 1942; the British period must therefore not be described as Sugas’s original Thunderbolt conversion.

33. Randall, “A Brief History of the 56th Fighter Group,” late March 1943 entry, recording the allocation of squadron code letters HV, LM, and UN to the 61st, 62nd, and 63rd Fighter Squadrons respectively. The specialist 63rd Fighter Squadron page independently identifies UN as the squadron’s aircraft code.

34. Department of the Air Force, “63d Fighter Squadron,” official station record and narrative, recording the move from Wittering to Horsham St Faith on 5 April 1943; Randall’s Group chronology notes that the move reunited all three squadrons on the same airfield.

35. Department of the Air Force, “63d Fighter Squadron,” narrative, stating that the squadron flew its first combat mission in the ETO just over a week after the move to Horsham St Faith; Randall’s chronology records the 56th Fighter Group’s first operational mission on 13 April 1943. This is Group/squadron level context only and does not establish Sugas as a participant in that mission; his individual combat record belongs to the following section.

36. Headquarters Sixty Third Fighter Squadron, Office of the Intelligence Officer, “History of the Sixty Third Fighter Squadron, May 1943,” 4 June 1943, 1: entry for 7 May 1943, recording twelve aircraft led by Col. Zemke on Rodeo Field Order No. 12 over Walcheren and Gravelines at 30,000 feet, eleven enemy aircraft sighted but no action, with Sugas among the pilots. The individual 63rd FS mission record identifies Sugas specifically as WHITE 3 in P-47C-5-RE 41-6372, UN-S.

37. 63rd Fighter Squadron, “History ... May 1943,” 2, entries for 14–16 May. The morning 16 May Field Order No. 20 pilot list does not include Sugas among the eleven aircraft that took off, whereas the second Rodeo, Field Order No. 21, lists him among the thirteen pilots. The individual mission chronology

records FO 20 as SP 1 in 41-6230, UN-E, marked DNT0, and FO 21 as RED 3. This distinction is essential to the later total of thirty seven assignments but thirty six actual sorties through 15 August.

38. Peter Randall/63rd Fighter Squadron individual mission chronology for Arthur Sugas. The record identifies 41-6372, P-47C-5-RE, UN-S on the great majority of his assignments, but also records 42-7885/UN-N on 25 May, 41-6203/UN-J on 29 May, 41-6320/UN-Y on one of the 11 June assignments, 42-8693/UN-I on 24 June, and 41-6259/UN-Z on 26 July, with some entries lacking aircraft information. Gerard Pahl’s later account strongly associates Sugas with a personally named Thunderbolt, though the surviving transcription renders the name “Elmer’s Time”; later historical treatments use “Elmer’s Tune.” No primary operational source presently available independently proves the exact name to serial or marking relationship.

39. 63rd Fighter Squadron, “History ... May 1943,” 4, entry for 31 May 1943: sixteen aircraft led by Col. Zemke on Rodeo Field Order No. 34 through the Knocke–Courtrai–Dixmude area. The original wording is: “Lt. Compton landed at Hornchurch due to mechanical trouble, Lt. Sugas accompanying him.” The individual mission chronology identifies Sugas as YELLOW 3 in 41-6372, UN-S. The more specific description of Compton’s difficulty as supercharger trouble belongs to the established later reconstruction; the separate original report containing fuller wording has not yet been located digitally.

40. 63rd Fighter Squadron, “History of the 63rd Fighter Squadron,” June 1943, 1–4. Relevant Sugas operations include 7 and 10 June; two operations on 11 June; spare assignments on 12 and 17 June; Rodeo on 20 June; Ramrod on 22 June; and further operations on 24, 26, 28 and 29 June. The 22 June entry states that the Group met the bombers after the target rather than before as planned. The same monthly history records camera and aerial gunnery, high-altitude and formation flying, dinghy drills, flying control and air-sea rescue training.

41. The description of early P-47 range limitations is based on the operational structure visible in the contemporary 63rd FS reports rather than on a reconstructed performance figure. See 63rd FS, June 1943 history, especially the 22 June missed pre-target rendezvous; “History of the Sixty Third Fighter Squadron for the Month of July 1943,” 2, 10 July, when the 63rd escorted the bombers to approximately fifteen miles southeast of Abbeville before turning away; and August 1943 history, 1, 12 August, when belly tanks were discarded near Walcheren before the formation escorted bombers toward Venlo. These entries demonstrate the sector by sector nature of early Thunderbolt escort operations.

42. Randall/63rd FS individual mission chronology. Sugas’s recorded tactical positions move from BLUE 4 on 14 May to repeated RED 3, BLUE 3, YELLOW 3 and WHITE 3 assignments, with RED 1 recorded for 10 July. Gerard Pahl, writing from later veteran and family research, also describes Sugas as having led a two-aircraft element. The contemporary position record is retained here as the firmer basis for describing his developing responsibility.

43. 56th Fighter Group/63rd Fighter Squadron station movement chronology records the squadron movement on 8 July 1943; the official July monthly history states: “This squadron remained at AAF Station F-123 until the 9th of July when it was transferred to AAF Station 365.” The operational pages then record the 9 July mission as up and down at Horsham, while the 10 July Ramrod is recorded as up and down at Halesworth. The two dates therefore represent different aspects of the same transfer rather than a contradiction.

44. Randall/63rd FS individual mission chronology, entries for 16–26 July 1943. On 25 July Sugas appears on two assignments, YELLOW 3 and SP 2, both in 41-6372/UN-S; on 26 July he is BLUE 3 in P-47C-2-RE 41-6259, UN-Z. See also 63rd FS, July 1943 history, operational entries for 16, 17, 25 and 26 July.

45. 63rd Fighter Squadron, June 1943 history, 5–6, “Awards of the Air Medal,” listing “ARTHUR SUGAS, 1st Lt., 63rd Fighter Squadron. Home address: 541 Pine Street, Kalamazoo, Michigan”; the history states that the listed Air Medal awards were pursuant to Headquarters VIII Fighter Command General Orders Nos. 11 through 16. 63rd FS, July 1943 history, 7, lists “ARTHUR SUGAS, O660213, 1st Lt., 63rd Fighter Squadron” under “Oak Leaf Cluster,” with the awards pursuant to General Orders Nos. 16 through 19, July 1943, Headquarters VIII Fighter Command.

46. 63rd Fighter Squadron, July 1943 history, 6: “On July 20 General Hoyt decorated all the pilots of this squadron who had been awarded the Air Medal and the Oak Leaf Cluster cited in the VIII Fighter Command General Orders for the months of May and June.” General Hunter and General Hoyt are separately listed among visitors to the squadron that month. A later published photographic caption gives 19 July and identifies General “Monk” Hunter as the presenting officer. The photograph documents an award scene, but its date and identification depend upon the later caption; the contemporary squadron history is therefore preferred for chronology.

47. Barry L. Spink, Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal Criteria in the Army Air Forces in World War II, Air Force Historical Research Agency/Department of the Air Force history study. The Eighth Air Force criteria reproduced in the study specify an Air Medal for ten fighter sorties and an Oak Leaf Cluster for each succeeding equivalent qualification; the same chronology explicitly lists twenty fighter sorties for an Oak Leaf Cluster. Accordingly, thirty qualifying fighter sorties represent the award progression Air Medal + first OLC + second OLC, not Sugas’s complete combat sortie total. The exact surviving general order citation for Sugas’s second OLC has not yet been recovered from the monthly award summaries presently available.

48. 63rd Fighter Squadron, August 1943 history, 1–2. On 12 August Sugas appears among the pilots of the seventeen aircraft Ramrod under 65th Fighter Wing Field Order No. 31, general support to bombers penetrating toward Beverloo; the report records belly tanks dropped near Walcheren, rendezvous northwest of Antwerp and escort toward Venlo. On 14 August he appears in the Circus formation escorting returning B-17 boxes from west of The Hague. On 15 August he is listed on

the second mission, Field Order No. 36/104. The individual chronology identifies his 14 and 15 August assignments as YELLOW 3 in 41-6372/UN-S.

49. Randall/63rd FS individual mission chronology. Through 15 August 1943 it contains thirty-seven Sugas assignments beginning on 7 May; only the 16 May FO 20 entry is marked DNTD. Thus the record yields thirty-six actual sorties through 15 August. The last pre-boundary entries are 12 August, 14 August FO 102 and 15 August FO 104; there is no 16 August Sugas entry. The old “35th mission” formulation preserved in later family based accounts is therefore superseded by the reconstructed individual operational record. Pahl preserves that older recollection.

50. 63rd Fighter Squadron, August 1943 history, 2, entry for 16 August, Field Order No. 37/105. The contemporary pilot roster names Major Loren G. McCollom, O’Connor, Van Abel, Compton, Goodfleisch, Batdorf, Schiltz, Petty, Major Tukey, Whitley, Egan, Hall, Mahurin, Wilson, Vogt and Ludwig; Sugas is not listed. This agrees with the absence of any 16 August entry in his individual mission chronology. No combat sortie can therefore be attributed to Sugas on that date.

51. Headquarters, Sixty Third Fighter Squadron, “63rd History—August,” August 1943, operational entries for 17 August 1943, especially the two Ramrod entries for that date; 56th Fighter Group operational documentation for 17 August 1943. The broader Regensburg–Schweinfurt framework is included here only to explain why the 56th flew two distinct support operations. Gerard Pahl’s later account correctly describes the basic division between the Regensburg shuttle force and the Schweinfurt force but is used only as secondary corroboration.

52. Headquarters, Sixty Third Fighter Squadron, “63rd History—August,” entry for 17 August 1943: Field Order No. 38/106, Major Philip E. Tukey Jr., sixteen 63rd Fighter Squadron aircraft, Ramrod, general support to B-17s. Peter Randall, 63rd Fighter Squadron mission chronology for Arthur Sugas, 17 August 1943, morning entry: Field Order 106, YELLOW 3, P-47C-5-RE serial 41-6372, UN-S. The squadron narrative renders the order as “38/106,” whereas the individual chronology abbreviates the same morning assignment to “106”; no separate Sugas mission is implied by the difference in notation.

53. Headquarters, Sixty Third Fighter Squadron, “63rd History—August,” 17 August 1943 morning operation: landfall Haamstede, 1010 hours at 21,000 feet; belly tanks released near Woensdrecht at 1014; rendezvous with B-17s ten miles north of Antwerp at 1018; escort into the Maastricht–Aachen area until 1032. The same entry records the two B-17 losses observed during this period.

54. Ibid. At 1030 hours near Hasselt, between 20,000 and 26,000 feet, Lieutenants Sugas and Whitley fired sharp-deflection shots at two Fw 190s from approximately 700 to 300 yards and made no claims. The same record notes Lieutenant Brown’s subsequent firing at a Bf 109 near Eupen without an immediate claim.

55. Ibid. The squadron made landfall outward north of Flushing at 1058 hours at 25,000 feet and landed at Halesworth at 1140 hours. The morning take-off time of 0922 that appears in later published narratives has not been used in the text as a fixed primary source time because the original group level document from which that figure was apparently derived has not yet been re-identified in the surviving source set used for this final audit.

56. Headquarters, Sixty Third Fighter Squadron, “63rd History—August,” 17 August 1943 afternoon operation: Field Order No. 38/106, Amendment No. 4; Major Tukey leading sixteen aircraft on a Ramrod as “general support (withdrawal)” to returning B-17s; departure Halesworth 1520 hours. 56th Fighter Group operational report, 17 August 1943, for the group strength of fifty-one P-47s. Peter Randall, 63rd Fighter Squadron mission chronology for Arthur Sugas, afternoon entry “106/4”: WHITE 3, 41-6372, P-47C-5-RE, UN-S.

57. 63rd Fighter Squadron formation and aircraft records for the afternoon operation of 17 August 1943; Peter Randall, 63rd Fighter Squadron mission and aircraft chronology; Missing Air Crew Report No. 265. The reconstructed White Flight is: White 1, Maj. Philip E. Tukey Jr., 41-6375, UN-T; White 2, Lt. Edgar D. Whitley, 42-7885, UN-N; White 3, 1st Lt. Arthur Sugas, 41-6372, UN-S; White 4, Lt. George A. Compton, 41-6326, UN-Q. MACR 265 independently fixes Sugas as “Postgate White 3” and Compton as “Postgate White 4.” The No. 3/No. 4 pairing is therefore correctly described as the second two-aircraft element of White Flight rather than as the entire flight. MACR 265 is preserved in National Archives microfilm publication M1380, Record Group 92; the surviving copy identifies Ans as the loss area and AAF Station F-365 as the point of departure.

58. 63rd Fighter Squadron formation record, 17 August 1943. Harold “Bunny” Comstock occupied Blue 3 in the afternoon formation and is distinct from Lt. George A. Compton, White 4. Later accounts sometimes place the two names close together because both men supplied evidence concerning the subsequent action; that circumstance must not alter the operational formation assignment.

59. Headquarters, Sixty Third Fighter Squadron, “63rd History—August,” afternoon entry for 17 August 1943: departure Halesworth 1520; landfall Haamstede 1555 at 20,000 feet; belly tanks released approximately five miles north of Antwerp at 1605; climb to 27,000 feet; penetration to approximately fifteen miles east of Eupen. Group level geographical wording places the coastal crossing somewhat more broadly in the northern Walcheren–Haamstede sector; the squadron record itself gives Haamstede.

60. Ibid. Rendezvous with the B-17s was made near Eupen at 1621 hours, after which the formation turned left and the 63rd covered the lead bomber box. The squadron estimated approximately fifty to sixty enemy aircraft, mostly Fw 190s and Bf 109s with about six Me 110s and described the single-engined fighters as maneuvering approximately at bomber level and ahead of the formation before making head-on approaches.

61. Headquarters, Sixty Third Fighter Squadron, “63rd History—August,” 17 August 1943; Missing Air Crew Report No. 265, NARA, RG 92, M1380, including the contemporary statement of Lt. George A. Compton and the report metadata identifying Ans as the relevant locality. The squadron history explicitly records the climb to 27,000 feet; individual accounts associated with the ensuing action place the White element in the same general high twenty thousand foot altitude band. The narrative therefore avoids assigning Sugas a more exact altitude at Ans than the documents permit. No part of Compton’s description beginning with the approach of the two Fw 190s has been carried into this section.

62. 63rd Fighter Squadron operational records, 17 August 1943, afternoon operation; Missing Air Crew Report (MACR) No. 265, P-47 41-6372, Arthur Sugas, 17 August 1943, National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 92, Publication M1380; Peter Randall, 63rd Fighter Squadron aircraft/mission record, entry for 17 August 1943, Field Order 106/4, recording Sugas as WHITE 3 in P-47C-5-RE 41-6372, UN-S. The surviving mission record confirms the afternoon assignment independently of later narrative accounts.

63. George A. Compton, statement, 19 August 1943, in MACR No. 265, P-47 41-6372, NARA RG 92, M1380. The original document identifies Compton as POSTGATE WHITE 4 and Sugas as POSTGATE WHITE 3 and places the pair at approximately 28,000 feet when the two FW 190s opened fire. The MACR metadata records the loss locality as Ans and the point of departure as AAF Station F-365.

64. Compton, statement, 19 August 1943, MACR No. 265. Compton’s original statement records his unsuccessful R/T attempt, his break into the enemy aircraft and subsequent dive, and states that this was the last time he saw Sugas and that he did not believe Sugas followed him down. Later retellings should not be used to enlarge this statement into an observation of Sugas actually being struck or entering a spin.

65. Ibid. The absence of a recorded radio reply establishes only that Compton received no response; it does not establish whether Sugas saw the attackers, attempted to transmit, suffered radio failure, had already been hit, or initiated an evasive manoeuvre. No surviving statement examined resolves those alternatives.

66. 63rd Fighter Squadron operational/combat record, 17 August 1943, entry for Lt. Harold “Bunny” Comstock. The contemporary record places Comstock elsewhere in the formation as BLUE 3, at approximately 26,000 feet in the Ans sector. This distinction is essential: George A. Compton, not Comstock, was Sugas’s paired WHITE 4.

67. Gerard Pahl, “Fall of Hermes,” Air Classics, July 2004, archived article p. 5; 63rd Fighter Squadron operational records, 17 August 1943; George A. Compton statement, 19 August 1943, MACR No. 265. Pahl attributes to Comstock the statement that the two P-47s were “directly below us.” This cannot be reconciled literally with the known altitude entries if they are assumed to describe the same instant: Comstock is recorded at approximately 26,000 feet, while Compton places

WHITE 3/WHITE 4 at approximately 28,000 feet when the FW 190s opened fire. The discrepancy may reflect different moments in a rapidly changing engagement, approximate altitude reporting, or a problem in the secondary transmission of Comstock's account. Until the underlying original Comstock statement is located, the discrepancy must remain unresolved.

68. Ibid. Pahl's published account attributes to Comstock the observation that the first FW 190 fired upon one P-47, after which pieces of metal came away and the Thunderbolt entered an "uncontrolled spin." This wording is retained only to the limited extent necessary to reconstruct the reported observation and is not embellished.

69. Pahl, "Fall of Hermes," archived article p. 5; 63rd Fighter Squadron combat records, 17 August 1943. Source qualification: the original Comstock statement or report underlying Pahl's account has not been located among the primary documentation examined for this biography and therefore could not be independently verified. The known contemporary Comstock combat account for 17 August records him as BLUE 3 and concerns a separate engagement with two Messerschmitt fighters; it does not contain the Pahl passage concerning the two P-47s, fragments, or uncontrolled spin. Pahl's account is nevertheless retained, explicitly qualified, because of its direct relevance and detailed description of an event consistent with the circumstances of Sugas's disappearance.

70. Compton, statement, 19 August 1943, MACR No. 265; Pahl, "Fall of Hermes," archived article p. 5. The accounts agree broadly on two FW 190s engaging a pair of P-47s but describe the encounter from different relative positions. Their geometry can plausibly represent successive phases of the same attack, but the evidence does not support a second-by-second synchronization.

71. MACR No. 265, P-47 41-6372; Compton statement, 19 August 1943; Pahl, "Fall of Hermes," archived article p. 5. MACR 265 identifies the missing aircraft as 41-6372 and the locality as Ans. No surviving airborne statement examined provides reliable evidence that Sugas was seen leaving the aircraft or that a parachute was observed. The absence of such a report is not evidence that no attempt to abandon the aircraft occurred.

72. Edgar D. Whitley, 63rd Fighter Squadron combat/operational report, 17 August 1943. Whitley was WHITE 2. His report concerns combat around the bomber formation, including Me 110s and a P-47 observed during the wider engagement, but the surviving evidence does not securely identify that P-47 as 41-6372. His evidence is therefore used as tactical context, not as independent confirmation of the moment Sugas was hit.

73. German fighter victory-claim records, 17 August 1943, Johannes Naumann; see also Pahl, "Fall of Hermes," archived article p. 5, which identifies Naumann with the loss of 41-6372. Contemporary/later unit material identifies Naumann as having led 6./JG 26 before subsequently leading 7./JG 26; the latter designation should therefore not be projected backward automatically onto the August engagement. The local Wolder historical account likewise identifies Naumann as belonging to

6. Staffel, JG 26.

74. Compton, statement, MACR No. 265; German victory-claim evidence for Naumann, 17 August 1943; Pahl, "Fall of Hermes," archived article p. 5. The Naumann attribution is treated as the best supported match, not as a proven one-to-one identification, because the American witnesses did not identify the attacking pilot and numerous simultaneous engagements occurred in the area.

75. Later aircraft loss compilation reproduced in the surviving Sugas documentation, entry for Republic P-47C-5-RE 41-6372, attributing the loss to Uffz. Heinz Papendick, 9./JG 3, in a Bf 109G-6, 17 August 1943. This is a later attribution rather than the controlling American eyewitness evidence.

76. Compton, statement, MACR No. 265; Pahl, "Fall of Hermes," archived article p. 5; later Papendick attribution cited above. Compton specifically identified the immediate attackers as FW 190s. The account attributed to Comstock independently describes FW 190s. Consequently, a Bf 109 claim is a materially weaker match for the particular attack on White 3/White 4, even though the intensity of the wider battle prevents using aircraft type alone to identify every American loss.

77. MACR No. 265; Compton, statement, 19 August 1943; 63rd Fighter Squadron operational records, 17 August 1943; Peter Randall mission/aircraft record, FO 106/4; Pahl, "Fall of Hermes," archived article p. 5; German victory claim evidence for Johannes Naumann. Together these sources establish the final defensible airborne sequence: Sugas remained WHITE 3 in 41-6372; two FW 190s attacked the element; Compton broke and lost contact; the additional Comstock account published by Pahl describes one of the two P-47s being struck and departing controlled flight, subject to the source qualification in note 69; and Sugas failed to return.

78. U.S. Army Air Forces, Missing Air Crew Report No. 265, Republic P-47C-5-RE, serial 41-6372, 17 August 1943; the surviving mission record identifies Sugas on the afternoon operation as WHITE 3 in 41-6372, UN-S. The MACR's "Ans" is a broad aerial loss location and should not be substituted for the ground crash locality. German derived burial information in the Arthur Sugas Individual Deceased Personnel File gives the place of death more specifically as "Wilre, near Maastricht, Netherlands." See also the final 17 August entry in the Sugas mission record.

79. Stichting Heemkunde Van Wilre tot Wolder, material prepared in connection with the Arthur Sugas commemoration, 2005. The local account describes a P-47 descending over Wolder in the late afternoon of Tuesday, 17 August 1943; one version states that the aircraft came down circling, while the school presentation records that the approaching Thunderbolt made an unusual sound. These are retrospective local recollections, not contemporary 1943 statements.

80. Stichting Heemkunde Van Wilre tot Wolder, local Sugas material, 2005. The aircraft was placed in farmland near the Vroenhovenweg close to the Belgian frontier; another Foundation notice describes the crash as behind the Leonidas

sports fields.

81. The 2005 local press account states that the damaged aircraft passed very close to the Wolder church tower. The same source explicitly records competing interpretations—some believed the pilot had deliberately spared the church and village, while others believed he was already dead. Neither proposition is established by a contemporary eyewitness statement in the material presently available; the defensible fact is the recalled proximity of the aircraft to the tower.

82. Stichting Heemkunde Van Wilre tot Wolder publicly identified Servatius Aarts, Reng Bastiaans, Johan Groeneweg and Theo Hogenboom as surviving Wolder eyewitnesses in 2005. The available material, however, does not preserve a separate, fully attributed narrative from each man sufficient to establish complete independence of every remembered detail.

83. The Wolder school/local history account states that German soldiers reached the crash scene quickly, immediately closed the area, prevented civilians from approaching and that an army vehicle later came to remove the aircraft or wreckage. No unit is identified in the surviving account.

84. Gerard Pahl, "Fall of Hermes," Air Classics, July 2004, archived article p. 9. Pahl records the later account attributed to William Nikitas that Sugas parachuted and was executed, and the related recollection attributed to Aristos Spugios concerning an unidentified squadron mate, a Dutch farmer and two German policemen; Pahl also notes that Tom Kostakis had heard the perpetrators described as Gestapo. This evidence is retrospective and derivative: no named witness in the account is presented as having personally witnessed the shooting.

85. Individual Deceased Personnel File, 1st Lt. Arthur Sugas, O-660213, Graves Registration investigation, memorandum/endorsement of 29 September 1945, reproduced in the uploaded IDPF, p. 30. The investigator reported that the Maastricht cemetery records were examined and the caretaker questioned. The caretaker stated that Sugas's body had been brought to the cemetery by a German patrol, that there were no identification tags or other identifying means on the body, and that identifying information supplied by the Germans on a slip of paper was entered in the cemetery records.

86. Individual Deceased Personnel File, Sugas, Report of Burial, 11 July 1945, uploaded IDPF, p. 75. The report identifies the casualty as Arthur Sugas and records the cause in the burial file as "Plane Crash"; identification was supported by the civilian Catholic cemetery record at Maastricht. This administrative description is significant but should not be treated as a forensic determination of the exact moment of death.

87. The absence of a verified parachute observation in the airborne evidence must be distinguished from the much later Nikitas/Spugios tradition. Taken together, the German casualty documentation, the cemetery record and the caretaker's account of German delivery of the body provide a substantially stronger documentary chain than the later execution narrative. This does not establish the exact instant at which Sugas died, but the surviving contemporary evidence does not support a

successful bailout followed by execution. Compare Pahl, "Fall of Hermes," archived p. 9, with the IDPF Graves Registration investigation.

88. A surviving identification tag bearing Sugas's name and service information is reproduced in later Sugas material and was traditionally said to have reached the family through another American pilot. Its chain of custody is not documented contemporaneously. The 1945 cemetery investigation specifically states that no identification tags were on the body when it was delivered to the cemetery. The physical tag therefore cannot be used as proof of the later bailout/execution account.

89. Individual Deceased Personnel File, Sugas, captured German casualty/burial material, uploaded IDPF, pp. 14, 65–69. The German record identifies "Sugas Arthur," service number O-660213, gives 17 August 1943 as the date of death, "Wilre b. Maastricht" as the place of death, and records burial at Maastricht. The subsequent Graves Registration investigation recovered the cemetery entry identifying Sugas by name and home address and placing him in grave 163.

90. IDPF, Graves Registration investigation, 29 September 1945, p. 30: the cemetery information was recorded as "Sugas, Arthur; buried on 17/8/43; Grave #163; Home address 541 Pine Street, Kalamazoo, Mich." The later Stichting Heemkunde account states that he was buried "the next day." Because the former derives from the wartime cemetery record, 17 August 1943 is preferred. Compare the IDPF with the retrospective Wolder account.

91. IDPF, German burial information and U.S. translation, uploaded IDPF, pp. 68–69. The American annotation accompanying the German entry explains that the letter "E" indicated a single grave; it should therefore not be rendered as "Section E" or "Grave E-163." Later American paperwork also contains the form "CC-163," but that later administrative notation does not alter the underlying cemetery grave number. The correct narrative form is individual grave no. 163.

92. The captured German material describes the burial location broadly as the cemetery at Maastricht, Province of Limburg; the later local Wolder material identifies it more specifically as the Algemene Begraafplaats aan de Tongerseweg—the General Cemetery on the Tongerseweg. The descriptions are not mutually exclusive. The surviving cemetery derived record establishes Arthur Sugas in individual grave no. 163.

93. Individual Deceased Personnel File, 1st Lt. Arthur Sugas, O-660213, German burial card and Burial Information Reported by German Government, including the wartime burial at Maastricht, Grave No. 163, and the American explanatory notation concerning German einzeln ("single" or "individual"); see also later Burial Information sheet rendering the location administratively as "CC-163," IDPF, pp. 14, 65–69.

94. Check List for Unknowns, Register No. 955 (Holland), "UNKNOWN X — Sugas, Arthur," recording arrival at Margraten at 1530, 10 July 1945, from the 3060 QM Graves Registration

Company and recovery by the same organization, IDPF, p. 17. Compare Check List for Disinterments, 11 July 1945, which gives the anomalous dates 14 August 1943 for death and 20 August 1943 for burial; these conflict with the stronger German and Maastricht evidence and are treated here as administrative errors, IDPF, p. 15.

95. Report of Burial, Arthur Sugas, O-660213, 11 July 1945, recording burial at 0930, 11 July 1945, U.S. Military Cemetery Margraten, Holland, Plot KK, Row 10, Grave 247; previous isolated burial at the Catholic Cemetery, Maastricht; no original identification tag recorded; identification then based upon the civilian cemetery record, IDPF, pp. 75–76.

96. Headquarters, U.S. Theater Graves Registration Service, Theater Service Forces, European Theater, to Graves Registration Officer, Chanor Base Section, 12 September 1945, subject “Identification of Deceased Personnel, SUGAS, Arthur, 1st Lt. O-660213,” stating that the Maastricht cemetery record was not conclusive identity in itself and directing further investigation, IDPF, p. 31.

97. Headquarters, 3059th QM Graves Registration Company, 29 September 1945, investigation of the Maastricht cemetery records and caretaker. The report states that the body was brought by Germans for burial, that no identification tags or other means of identification were on the body, and that the cemetery copied the identifying information from a slip of paper: “Sugas, Arther,” buried 17 August 1943, Grave No. 163, home address 541 Pine Street, Kalamazoo, Michigan, IDPF, p. 30.

98. Thomas B. Larkin, Major General, The Quartermaster General, to Constantine Z. Sugas, 12 November 1946, stating that Arthur was interred at U.S. Military Cemetery Margraten, Plot KK, Row 10, Grave 247, and describing the cemetery as ten miles west of Aachen, IDPF, p. 64; Certificate of Death, Constantine Z. Sugas, Michigan Department of Health, recording death on 24 November 1944 and burial at Riverside Cemetery on 27 November 1944, IDPF, pp. 51–52.

99. Stella Sugas to Major General T. B. Larkin, 3 April 1947, notifying the Quartermaster General that Constantine Sugas had died and identifying Mary Sugas as the next of kin to be consulted regarding final interment, IDPF, pp. 61–63; see also Quartermaster correspondence acknowledging the change, IDPF, p. 57.

100. Stella Koukas to Major Richard B. Coombs, Memorial Division, 26 May 1947, explaining Mary Sugas’s stroke of 18 April, paralysis of her right side, inability to sign except by an “X,” Stella’s power of attorney, her marriage to Nicholas Koukas on 20 April and her status as the only remaining child; marriage certificate and change of address documentation, IDPF, pp. 47–55.

101. Office of the Quartermaster General, Intraoffice Reference Sheet, 15 March 1948, recording that field identification in the Arthur Sugas case had been accepted in accordance with the decision of the Acting Chief, Memorial Division, dated 25 February 1948, IDPF, p. 28; later annotation

on Report of Burial, “Identified by Field Decision Acting Chief Mem. Div. 25 Feb. 1948,” IDPF, p. 75.

102. Thomas B. Larkin, Major General, The Quartermaster General, to Mrs. Mary Sugas, c/o Mrs. Stella Koukas, 29 March 1948, explaining the congressional program for disinterment and final burial and forwarding the Request for Disposition of Remains, IDPF, p. 25.

103. Request for Disposition of Remains, Arthur Sugas, O-660213, selecting Option 2, return to the United States for interment by next of kin in Riverside Cemetery, Kalamazoo, Michigan, with Freda Williams, 115 Hughes Avenue, Kalamazoo, designated as consignee, IDPF, pp. 21–22; Relinquishment of Disposition Authority, Mary Sugas to Stella Koukas, Mary’s mark dated 28 April 1948, with witnesses; Stella Koukas’s declaration notarized 29 April 1948, IDPF, pp. 22–23.

104. Disinterment Directive, Arthur Sugas, O-660213, U.S. Military Cemetery Margraten, Plot KK, Row 10, Grave 247, recording physical disinterment on 25 August 1948 and preparation, placement in casket, sealing, boxing and marking on 26 August 1948; “Other Means of Identification: NONE,” IDPF, p. 7. Compare the separate QMC Form 1194, Directive No. 4650-17795, dated 15 October 1948, containing the completed disposition and consignee information, IDPF, p. 5. The latter date is not substituted for the explicitly recorded date of physical disinterment.

105. Record of Custodial Transfer, Arthur Sugas, tracing the remains from Margraten, Holland, to Antwerp Port Area 140; from AGRC Antwerp, Belgium, to USAT Haiti Victory; thereafter to the New York Port of Embarkation and onward by train through the domestic transportation system, IDPF, p. 6. Because several handwritten intermediate dates are indistinct, they have not been reconstructed beyond what is securely legible.

106. Chicago Quartermaster Depot correspondence concerning delivery of the remains to Freda Williams, 115 Hughes Avenue, Kalamazoo, March 1949; message from Astoria directing the Depot to proceed according to the original delivery instructions, IDPF, pp. 11–13.

107. Western Distribution Center, Chicago Quartermaster Depot, Receipt of Remains, Arthur Sugas, O-660213, recording shipment accompanied by military escort aboard New York Central Railroad Train No. 44 and scheduled arrival at Kalamazoo at 1:36 p.m. CST on Tuesday, 10 May 1949; receipt signed by Freda Williams on 10 May 1949, with the escort signing as witness, IDPF, p. 3.

108. Riverside Cemetery record derived from records acquired from the City of Kalamazoo: “SUGAS, Arthur 1st Lt., Returned veteran,” burial 12 May 1949, Section HH, Lot 19, Grave 9, funeral home Joldersma & Klein. Compare Request for Reimbursement of Interment or Transportation Expenses, dated 12 May 1949, recording \$203.00 paid in connection with interment at Riverside Cemetery, Kalamazoo, Michigan, Arthur Sugas IDPF, pp. 1–2.

109. Stage 5A source framework and locked methodological boundary; the chapter is restricted to Wolder memory, archaeology/recovery, relics and commemoration and must not reopen the closed combat, death and burial reconstruction.

110. Stichting Heemkunde Van Wilre tot Wolder, 2005 school text and local historical material. The school text places the remembered crash in farmland by the Vroenhovenweg near the Belgian frontier and records the later village recollection of rapid German arrival, closure of the site and removal of the aircraft. The foundation’s current history page likewise locates the loss on the Vroenhovenweg side toward the Belgian border.

111. Contemporary Wolder press material identifies Servatius Aarts, Reng Bastiaens, Johan Groeneweg and Theo Hogenboom as eyewitnesses. Stichting Heemkunde’s retrospective account confirms that the four actually unveiled the plaque on 16 September 2005.

112. Lex Theunissen to researcher, Facebook Messenger correspondence, 10–11 August 2026, screenshots supplied in the present research corpus. Theunissen corrected the wartime ages to nineteen for his father and approximately nine and a half for Leo; he reported Leo’s repeated recollection of reaching the site within roughly thirty minutes. Märy, Leo’s daughter, subsequently told Lex that Leo had gone to the crash site with his own father.

113. Ibid. Theunissen reported Leo’s remembered site as the corner of a field only a few metres from the Belgian border. Earlier correspondence of 10 May 2021 described the family provenance more generally as a crash along the Tongerseweg outside Maastricht. The distinction is retained rather than silently reconciled.

114. Ibid. Lex stated that Leo himself collected pieces, later giving some to Lex’s father, while explicitly expressing uncertainty about when that transfer occurred. Märy remembered Leo as an enthusiastic collector but did not specifically remember the transparent pieces or know of their transfer.

115. Lex Theunissen–researcher Messenger correspondence, 10 May 2021 and 10 August 2026; photographs of Theunissen family wartime souvenirs supplied in the conversation. Lex described pieces of transparent aircraft material, one carved into a heart, another marked with a cross and two pieces apparently intended to form a cross.

116. Lex Theunissen to researcher, Messenger, 10 August 2026: “Dad never knew Arthur’s name, I even doubt Leo did.” He explained that the Sugas connection was made only after his own later investigation of where the fragments had originated.

117. Lex Theunissen to researcher, Messenger, 10–11 August 2026. Theunissen supplied approximate thickness and curvature measurements and reported that Ronnie Olsthoorn concluded that the fragment matched the specifications of a P-47 canopy rear window. Public biographical material identifies Olsthoorn as trained in aeronautical engineering and active in aviation illustration. The identification remains

an expert comparison relayed through correspondence rather than an independent laboratory analysis.

118. Gerard Pahl, “Fall of Hermes,” Air Classics, July 2004, archived research transcription, article pp. 8–9. Pahl distinguishes William Nikitas’s parachute/execution recollection from Aristos Spugios’s account of an unidentified squadron mate and unnamed Dutch farmer; the Gestapo attribution is specifically introduced as something Tom Kostakis had heard.

119. Pahl, “Fall of Hermes,” article p. 9, for the farmer/dog-tags oral tradition. The old published biography reproduces the photographed tag and attributes its transfer to an unidentified former 63rd FS pilot. The locked Stage 5A methodology incorporates the IDPF finding that no identification tags were recorded with the remains and therefore treats the surviving artifact as genuine but of incomplete provenance.

120. Contemporary Wolder press material credits Gerard Seuren and Ton Clermont with using the Limburgs Dagblad “Sporloos” feature in 2000 to find Sugas family members and a childhood friend in the United States. Pahl’s acknowledgements include Seuren, Clermont, Sugas family members and numerous researchers and witnesses.

121. Stichting Heemkunde contemporary press release: the foundation came onto Sugas’s story through Stichting Zuid-Limburgs “Hell On Wheels” Monument; the investigation was assisted by Rik Willemse and used the earlier work of Seuren and Clermont.

122. Arthur Sugas Project Group announcement: Theo Brüll, Christina de Jong, Erik Lamkin and Léon Schoenmakers; Schoenmakers named as provisional contact. Contemporary press material separately identifies Christina de Jong as the foundation’s contact.

123. “‘Schoolpraatje’ Arthur Sugas Petrus & Paulus basisschool,” 2 September 2005. The lesson announced the eyewitness unveiling and participation of children and scouts; it also preserved Jos Gielen’s formulation that Arthur had become “een mens van vlees en bloed”—“a man of flesh and blood.”

124. Stichting Heemkunde Van Wilre tot Wolder records the publication as Arthur Sugas: zijn duel voor de vrijheid, Léon Schoenmakers and Hub Schouteten, issued September 2005. Contemporary project material also states that the foundation would publish a memorial booklet in connection with the unveiling.

125. Contemporary press announcement, ceremony of 16 September 2005, 19:00, Monseigneur Vranckenplein; Jean Jacobs, Father Van der Aart, the two local bands and the four named eyewitnesses. Stichting Heemkunde later confirms that all four eyewitnesses actually carried out the unveiling.

126. Contemporary Wolder press material records that the plaque was designed by Arno Lasoe and executed by Maastricht artist Pierre Lumens and was funded in part by Wolder sponsors. The project documents call it a bronze Purple Heart plaque. Direct examination of the supplied plaque photograph

gives the inscription reproduced in the text. The current Dutch national monument inventory confirms its location on the exterior wall of the R.K. Sint Petrus en Pauluskerk, although its online transcription of the inscription contains an apparent unit line error.

127. Stichting Heemkunde states that the intention to commemorate Wolder’s own wartime dead was announced at the 2005 Sugas unveiling and that the resulting memorial was unveiled on 14 March 2008.

128. LostPlanes.net, “Introduction Thunderbolt,” identifies a recovered American P-47 crash site near Wolder and describes mainly small fragments and numerous .50-calibre rounds. The surrounding LostPlanes feature identifies the aircraft as 41-6372 / UN-S and Arthur Sugas as its pilot. The research audit matched the recovered parts photographs to the LostPlanes Sugas feature.

129. Visual and metadata audit of the supplied JPEGs recovery thunderbolt-zeef...jpg, thunderbolt-parts1.jpg, Thunderbolt parts4.jpgand thunderbolt parts 5.jpg. The recovery photograph has EXIF DateTimeOriginal 29 September 2012, 17:52:46; the three parts images date to 14 October 2012 at 13:38:25, 13:56:32 and 14:17:10. The two “zeef” files are alternate versions of the same photograph.

130. Lex Theunissen—researcher Messenger correspondence, 10 May 2021 and 10–11 August 2026, including the initial approach regarding inherited Wolder aircraft fragments, the later identification of Leo Theunissen, consultation with Märy and the technical comparison of the transparent material. For subsequent public remembrance, Stichting Heemkunde records recurring Sugas memorial Masses, including 2011 and 2018, and currently announces another annual service for 26 September 2026.

131. Arthur Sugas Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF), Army Effects Bureau papers: Constantine Z. Sugas to Capt. S. N. Greenstein, 22 August 1944, requesting that the personal property of his unmarried son be sent to him; Army Effects Bureau, “Order for Shipment,” 1 September 1944, case no. 81859, effects of 1st Lt. Arthur Sugas, O-660213, shipped 7 September 1944; “Receipt for Effects Delivered to Claimant,” signed Constantine Z. Sugas, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 19 September 1944, IDPF pp. 80, 82, 84–85.

132. Arthur Sugas IDPF, “Receipt for Effects Delivered to Claimant,” 19 September 1944, p. 80. The inventory includes “1 lot Photos,” “1 pkg Papers,” “Notebooks,” “Cards & snap shots,” “1 pkg Letters,” “1 Pilots log,” “Book of maps,” two address books, an Air Medal, twelve service ribbons, three pairs of wings and numerous other effects. The accompanying Army letter of 1 September 1944 states that the Air Medal was forwarded separately by registered mail and enclosed a check for \$88.48.

133. Stella Sugas to the Office of the Quartermaster General, 3 April 1947, Arthur Sugas IDPF, pp. 61–62; Stella Koukas to Richard B. Coombs, 26 May 1947, IDPF, p. 47. In the latter letter Stella recorded her mother's stroke on 18 April,

her own marriage to Nicholas Koukas on 20 April, her power of attorney for Mary, her status as “the only remaining child in the family,” and the planned move from Kalamazoo to Astoria, New York. These documents establish Stella's role in family correspondence; they do not document the later chain of custody of Arthur's 1944 effects.

134. Gerard Pahl, “Fall of Hermes,” Air Classics (July 2004), archived article p. 8. Pahl reports both Arthur's statement to his sister concerning his aircraft and a letter to her mentioning his decoration four days before his death. The underlying original letters have not yet been independently located in the present source corpus.

135. Pahl, “Fall of Hermes,” archived article p. 6, describing Myrsine Vangelakos Petrie as the niece of Keith Vassell and approximately five years old when Arthur died. See also the Sugas Binder caption crediting the photograph of Arthur holding his personal pistol to “Myrsine Petrie via Air Classics Magazine.”

136. Pahl, “Fall of Hermes,” archived article pp. 5–7. Pahl identifies Helen Georgiou as Arthur's cousin and records her late-life recollections of the Kalamazoo Greek-American community and Arthur's prewar social world.

137. Sugas Binder, photograph caption identifying Arthur in an official commissioned officer portrait and crediting the image to “William Nikitas via Air Classics Magazine.” The credit establishes Nikitas as one of the channels through which Arthur's photographic record reached later publication.

138. Pahl, “Fall of Hermes,” archived article p. 6. Aristos Spugios recalled that, as a younger boy who also built model aircraft, Arthur Sugas and Nicholas Stampolis helped him “fly” them. The recollection is used here solely as evidence of personal/community memory.

139. Pahl's acknowledgements name “Zick Paul Sugas” among the contributors to Fall of Hermes. The obituary of Zick Paul Sugas, published in the Kalamazoo Gazette in September 2002, identifies him as a son of Christos and Eleni Sugas and lists “cousin Arthur Sugas” among relatives who predeceased him. This supports cousin, rather than nephew, as the relationship between Arthur and the Zick Paul Sugas thanked by Pahl.

140. Pahl, “Fall of Hermes,” archived article pp. 8–9. Pahl records Aristos Spugios's recollection that, after the D-Day landings, an unidentified member of Arthur's squadron stopped in Kalamazoo “to pay his respects.” No independent evidence presently identifies the visitor or securely dates the visit. The additional account attributed to him concerning Arthur's death is not used here.

141. Stichting Heemkunde Van Wilre tot Wolder material preserved in the Sugas Binder states that Gerard Seuren of Hoensbroek and Ton Clermont of Maastricht used an appeal in the Limburgs Dagblad column Spoorloos in 2000 to locate Arthur's family and a childhood friend in the United States.

142. Pahl, “Fall of Hermes,” acknowledgements. The full surviving list includes Gerard Seuren, Ton Clermont, Ron Putz, Zick Paul Sugas, William Nikitas, Jan Vanden Hombergh, H. S. Heersma, Reina Steketee, Sally Wells, Jim Sterling, Peter Randall, Paul Patist, Jack Cook, Helen Georgiou, Myrsine Petrie, Lydia Hines, Aristos Spugios, Bill Painter and Stew Bailey. The article does not establish the precise role or status of every contributor.

143. Gerard Pahl, “Fall of Hermes,” Air Classics (July 2004), diplomatic research transcription. The supplied archived capture contains article pages 1 and 3–11; original article page 2 is absent and has not been reconstructed.

144. Sugas Binder photographic credits. One photograph of Arthur smiling at an unidentified location is credited to Paul Patist; another group image of 63rd Fighter Squadron pilots is credited to the James C. Stewart Collection via The Museum of Flight. Together with the separate Petrie and Nikitas credits, these demonstrate the dispersed provenance of Arthur's surviving image record.

145. Pahl, “Fall of Hermes,” archived article p. 10. Pahl describes the Air Zoo's developing Eighth Air Force environment and a 56th Fighter Group P-47, placing the discussion within the museum's broader purpose of honoring wartime airmen and explicitly referring to honoring “men like Arthur Sugas.” This source does not establish a permanent exhibit devoted solely to Sugas.

146. Pahl's recorded interviews and acknowledgements preserve contributions from Helen Georgiou, Myrsine Petrie, William Nikitas and Aristos Spugios, providing substantial evidence for the survival of Arthur's memory among interconnected Kalamazoo relatives and acquaintances. The currently audited corpus has not produced comparable documentation for a continuous postwar institutional commemorative program by a Kalamazoo Greek Orthodox parish, AHEPA, Western Michigan University or the municipal authorities; no such continuity is therefore asserted here.

147. The transition from private memory to historical reconstruction is documented by the 2000 Seuren–Clermont contact with American relatives and acquaintances, followed by Pahl's 2004 synthesis and its extensive acknowledgements. Pahl remains especially valuable as a repository of otherwise difficult to recover testimony and photographic provenance, but individual factual claims require comparison with the underlying primary record.

148. For the preservation chain, compare the 1944 Army Effects Bureau inventory and family receipt in the Arthur Sugas IDPF with Pahl's surviving references to family correspondence and his network of American and Dutch contributors, and with the later photographic provenance preserved in the Sugas Binder. The evidence supports a dispersed rather than a single continuous archival chain.

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17. SUPPLEMENTARY DIGITAL DATABASES AND RESEARCH TOOLS

- Fold3. Digital access platform for U.S. military records, including Missing Air Crew Report No. 265 and Arthur Sugas related material.
- National Archives and Records Administration. Catalog and research guidance for Missing Air Crew Reports, passenger arrival records and U.S. Army records.
- Ancestry. Genealogical and civil record indexes concerning the Sugas family. Used as a finding aid where applicable.
- FamilySearch. New York passenger list collections and genealogical research guides. Used as a finding aid.
- Kalamazoo County Naturalization Index. Entries concerning Constantine, Mary and other members of the Sugas family.
- Find a Grave. Arthur Sugas memorial entry. Used only as a supplementary memorial/genealogical resource.
- TracesOfWar. Arthur Sugas biographical entry. Used for comparison with later secondary historiography.
- Greeks in Foreign Cockpits website. Earlier Arthur Sugas profile and associated research material.
- Stichting Heemkunde Van Wilre tot Wolder website. Arthur Sugas memorial and local history material.
- Lostplanes.net. Arthur Sugas / P-47C-5-RE 41-6372 crash-site investigation.

18. SPECIAL NOTE ON “FALL OF HERMES”

- Gerard Pahl’s publication constitutes an important part of the historiography of Arthur Sugas, particularly with regard to family and community memory in Kalamazoo and the narrative of his final aerial combat. It was not, however, used as a substitute for primary military documentation where such records were available. In particular, the account attributed by Pahl to Harold “Bunny” Comstock was used only as testimony conveyed through Pahl, because the original Comstock document on which the publication was based has not been independently located. It should therefore not be characterized as an independently verified primary-source statement.

I. SPECIAL NOTE ON THE PLACE OF BIRTH

- he strongest available primary documents record Arthur Sugas’s place of birth as Trikala/Trikkala, Greece, without specifying either Thessaly or Corinthia. Later digital databases that specifically identify Corinthia have, to date, not been supported by any located primary Greek or American document establishing that regional attribution.For this reason, the final research retains the following as the safest formulation: Trikala, Greece — exact locality unresolved.

NOTE ON THE HIERARCHY OF SOURCES

n preparing the final biography, the following general hierarchy of sources was applied:

- 1. Contemporary official military, administrative, and civil records;
- 2. Operational reports and contemporary eyewitness statements;
- 3. Official Graves Registration and casualty records;
- 4. Documented physical or photographic evidence;
- 5. Contemporary or reliably attributed personal testimony;
- 6. Later family and local memory;
- 7. Systematic historical and archaeological research;
- 8. Published secondary studies;
- 9. Supplementary digital and genealogical databases.

Sources belonging to lower categories were not used to override primary documentary evidence. Where a later account could not be independently corroborated, it was presented as such rather than as an established fact.