

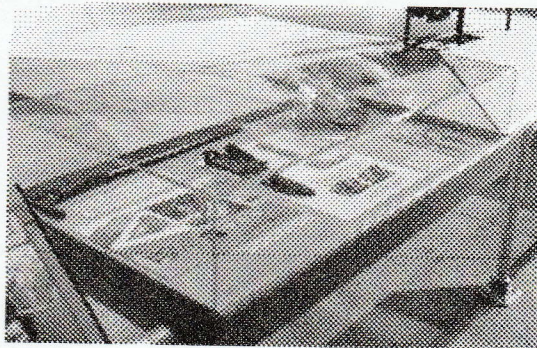


FACT SHEET

U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet

COL. JOSEPH LAUGHLIN

Col. Joseph Laughlin excelled both as a fighter-bomber pilot and as a commander, leading the 362nd Fighter Group from August 1944 until the end of the war. Although the hazardous nature of their missions caused heavy losses -- it was nicknamed the "362nd Suicide Outfit" -- they provided timely and effective support for Patton's 3rd Army. Laughlin's combat leadership and genuine concern for the welfare of his men helped keep up morale in such difficult circumstances.



Laughlin's service with the 362nd was filled with notable events. He scored the group's first aerial victory when he shot down a Bf 109 in February 1944. In August 1944, Laughlin was credited with sinking a German light cruiser in Brest harbor (and the 362nd received a Distinguished Unit Citation for their efforts there). In October 1944, the 362nd was tasked with a critically important mission to bomb the sluice gate at the Dieuze Dam on the Seille River. Leading the group, Laughlin dropped his bombs closest to the target. Afterwards, Lt. Gen. Patton personally called to extend his congratulations on the successful mission. The 362nd received a second Distinguished Unit Citation in March 1945.

After the war, Laughlin held several high-level staff positions until he retired after 30 years of decorated service.

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