

AN AMERICAN SON OF SUFFOLK

My uncle, **Richard Daines**, was born 23 August 1919 in Hyde Park, Utah, USA to **Joseph Benjamin Daines** and **Martha Elenora Hansen**. The family later moved a few miles away to Logan, Utah.

Richard was my mother's brother and the 13th of 16 children - he often joked that he was the unlucky one! My Mom was a bit of a tom-boy and she and Richard were pals when they were growing up.



*Robert Daines b. South Elham 1829
(above) and (below)
Jemima Seamons b. S.Elham 1838*



His paternal grandparents were both born in Suffolk, England: **Robert Daines** in 1829 at South Elmham and **Jemima Seamons** in 1838, also in South Elmham. These grandparents had been great examples of faith, loyalty, unselfishness, service and hard work - and Richard made these qualities his own.

Having chosen to serve a two-year mission to Missouri, USA for his church, Richard returned home to Utah on 7th December 1941 - the day of the Japanese attack on the American base at Pearl Harbour. He was soon in the military.

Richard was sent to several army bases with various assignments before later being transferred to the U.S. Army Air Corps and trained as a pilot.

After his flying training, Richard sailed on the *Queen Elizabeth* to England where he was assigned to the 495th Fighter Training Group at RAF Atcham, near Shrewsbury and flew P-47 Republic Thunderbolt fighter-bomber aircraft.

Richard was very aware of his Suffolk roots when, just weeks later, he was posted to the 352nd Fighter Squadron that was part of the 353rd fighter group based in Suffolk.

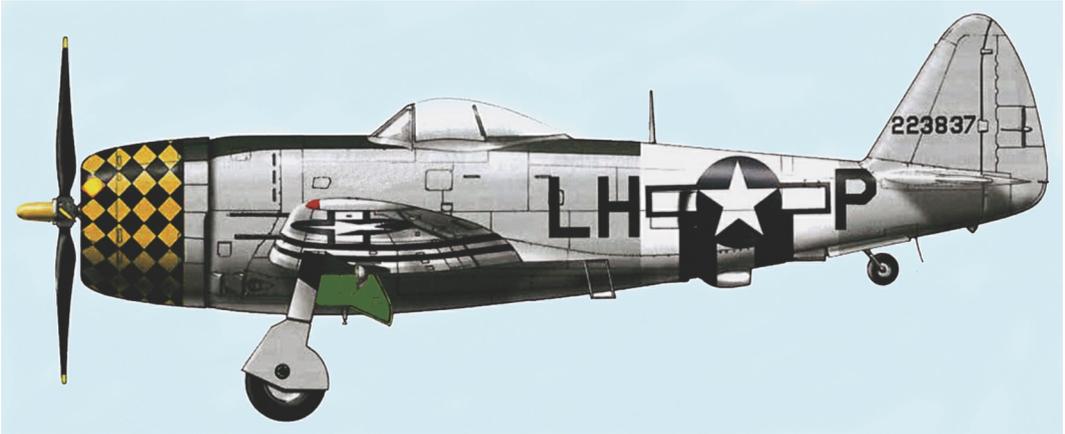
The Group had moved from RAF Metfield - co-incidentally just a couple of miles from South Elmham - to RAF Raydon, south-west of Ipswich, on 12th April 1944 and Richard joined the squadron at Raydon in July that year. He didn't, however, get a chance to visit the villages of his ancestral home as his time in Suffolk was very short.

On 7th August 1944 Richard prepared for a bombing raid to France, flying in an eight-plane formation. Their mission was to take out a railroad. The most vulnerable aircraft on those raids were the rearmost ones as the enemy had more time to align their guns. Richard was assigned to the second aircraft of his group but, being single, felt that he should take one of these more dangerous positions, rather than an airman who had a wife and children.

For this reason, he traded with another man and flew the tail spot that day.

As they were returning from their mission, an anti-aircraft gun connected with his plane which burst into flames and plummeted to the ground in France. His body was recovered by a French farmer and hidden from the German soldiers who came looking for it. He was buried in a hasty grave and later moved to a War Cemetery.

After the conflict, it was decided to make that particular cemetery a resting place only for German soldiers, so his body had to be moved. Richard's parents were contacted and given the option to have his remains buried in another soldiers' cemetery in France or shipped home. They chose to have him brought home and he was buried in the Hyde Park cemetery, next to other family members.



Republic P-47 Thunderbolt

During his training, Richard wrote the following to his family: *"These Thunderbolt fighters, like most others, are single man ships... You are pilot, bombardier, gunner, radioman, navigator, engineer and mechanic. Sorta keeps one busy to say the least . . . I retract one part of the above statement - you see, on each flight I have a co-pilot who is so much better than I, that to compare would seem to be doing wrong. He has brought me thru so many tight spots too, so if I live right perhaps he'll bring me through many more."*



Lt. Richard Daines

A letter that was posted on the day of his death, but which had been written the day before, told of another incident: *"Today he [Lt. Greenwood] and I were together deep into enemy territory. After the rest of our planes had withdrawn, we picked up a 'big friend' that was badly crippled and stayed with him. He finally made it home and what a happy, thankful crew aboard that ship."*

Having faith and serving his fellow man – attributes that even war could not dim in Richard Daines. He has been greatly missed.

Lucy Peterson