MUSTANG TECH

THESE MASSIVE TANKS WERE BUILT IN BOTH WOOD AND METAL AND COULD ACCOMMODATE 150-GALLONS EACH

LONG-RANGE FERRY TANKS

Hands in pocket, a NAA pilot awaits the filling of P-51D-5-NA USAAF 44-13471 along with final installation of fairings. This aircraft is fitted with the fuselage fuel tank (see red filler cap directly below canopy frame) so with all tanks filled, the Mustang would hold a whopping 569-gal of avgas. This aircraft was destined for Newark, New Jersey, where it would be partially disassembled and preserved for sea shipment to Britain. It appears that the aircraft's spinner is in a zinc chromate finish.

In response to requests from the field for information on the P-51B and P-51C fuel system, *Weekly Service News* (EDITOR'S NOTE: This was issued on 2 October 1943) presents the following article.

The Merlin engine on the P-51B/P-51C is supplied with fuel from two main self-sealing tanks in the wings, and from combat tanks and ferrying tanks when required. Each main fuel tank is provided with a booster pump, which is controllable from a switch located in the pilot's compartment.

The booster pumps may be used individually to select the tank from which fuel is desired. A slide-type check valve prevents cross-flow from one tank to the other. Fuel is supplied from the main system in the booster pump to a check valve. The two systems are joined at the check valve, and a line extends from the check valve to a selector valve.

From the selector valve a line extends through a fuel strainer to an engine-driven Type G-9 fuel pump mounted directly on the engine. This selector valve selects from either combat tank or from the main tanks collectively.

Provisions have been made on the P-51B/P-51C series for installation of droppable ferrying tanks or combat tanks; one mounted on each wing bomb rack (EDITOR'S NOTE: This was before the installation of the fuselage fuel tank). These provisions do not alter the basic fuel system, as the additional tanks are attached to fuel lines already provided. The fuel from these tanks passes through the fuel system selector valve and on to the main fuel lines.

Once the aircraft arrived in Britain, it would be reassembled, flight-tested and then placed in a pool for squadron assignment. USAAF 44-13471 went to the 505th Fighter Squadron, 339th Fighter Group, based at Fowlmere near Cambridge. The Group flew its first combat mission on 30 April 1944 and its last on 21 April 1945. Once arriving at Fowlmere, the aircraft was assigned to Capt. Evan "Johnny" Johnson who was flying P-51B 43-106946 *Pistol Packin' Mama,* which was assigned to another pilot. Johnson is seen with his ground crew and 44-13471, which had been named *The Comet* and carried the code 6N*J.

Lots of publicity photos were taken with *The Comet* and in this one Johnson poses with Capt. Pat Bova, the unit's engineering officer.

The auxiliary tanks are not interconnected and it is necessary to switch from one tank to the other.

Because of several reported failures caused by a lack of understanding on the part of the pilots, the operating instructions for P-51B/P-51C series with long-range equipment is given. During engine warm-up, the functioning of all the tanks should be tested by switching the fuel valve to each tank for a period sufficient to ensure that the fuel from the tanks has an opportunity to flow to the engine.

Proper performance of the engine during this test will indicate that the fuel system is free from water and dirt and is functioning properly in all fuel valve locations. The fuel selector valve position must