

LIFE



MRS. CLARK GABLE
AND SON,
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20 CENTS

PILOT'S STRANGE LEGACY

A U.S. flier inherits souvenirs
from man who shot him down

A brief, long-forgotten battle between two fighter pilots 18 years ago recently received one of the most surprising commemorations of World War II. With it goes a strange legacy to a U.S. Air Force major. The dogfight took place above Tunis on Dec. 18, 1942. A German Me 109 surprised an American P-38 and shot it down. The pilot parachuted. As he drifted toward the German-held airfield, the Me 109 circled him. Moments later conqueror and victim met on the ground.

The American pilot, Lieut. Norman L. Widen of Onalaska, Wis., shook hands with Sgt. Anton Hafner, 24, a German ace with 81 kills to his credit. He gave Hafner his pilot's wings and the plane's serial identification. They spoke briefly and suggested a visit after the war. Widen then was led away to internment as a prisoner. Hafner fought on until he was killed on the Russian front in 1944. Before he died he had flown 795 missions, had downed 204 planes and left his brother, Alfons, a request to find someday the American P-38 pilot and give him one of his decorations. With the help of the U.S. Air Force and some vivid pictures of the incident (next page), Hafner finally located Widen, now stationed at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Montana. Major Widen expects to fly to Germany to receive his novel remembrance of respect—and friendship—from an enemy of 18 years ago.



AMERICAN VICTIM, Lieut. Norman Widen was 24-year-old pilot in 1942.



GERMAN ACE, Lieut. Anton Hafner was one of most decorated fliers of war.

MAJOR WIDEN, NOW ON DUTY WITH THE AIR DEFENSE COMMAND, EXPLAINS MODEL F-101 JET TO SON PETER, 8, AS ELIZABETH, 6, AND HIS WIFE WATCH



CONTINUED

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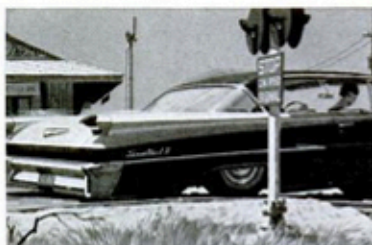
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P-38 BURNS near an airfield in Tunis after Hafner shot it down. This and the picture below first appeared in the war-time Nazi propaganda magazine *Signal*.



DOWNED PILOT Widen approaches Germans with his hands up and parachute dragging. He had been afraid he would be shot while descending in chute.

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FRIENDLY ENCOUNTER between Hafner (left) and Widen occurs near the wreckage. Hafner gave Widen a cigarette; Widen clowned in German helmet.



HAFNER'S SOUVENIRS of the dogfight, still kept by his brother, include Widen's pilot's wings and the serial number from Lockheed-built P-38 plane.



WIDEN'S LEGACY, displayed by brother Alfons in Ahrweiler, Germany, includes Anton's pilot's wings, *Deutsches Kreuz* in gold and oil portrait on wall.