



# Very Long Range P-51 Mustang Units of the Pacific War (Aviation Elite Units)

*Carl Molesworth*

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The pilots called themselves the 'Tokyo Club'. It was a simple task to become a member. All you had to do was strap yourself into a heavily loaded P-51 Mustang, take off from Iwo Jima (a postage-stamp sized volcanic island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean), fly 650 miles north over the sea - often through monsoon storms - in your single-engined aircraft to Japan, attack a heavily defended target in the vicinity of the enemy's capital city and then turn around and fly home while fretting over your shrinking fuel supply and perhaps battle damage as well. If your gas held out and you were not blown off-course on your return trip, you landed back at 'Iwo' after an eight-hour flight. Do it once and you earned membership in the club. Do it 15 times and you earned a trip home. But make one mistake or have one touch of bad luck, and you had a very good chance of ending up dead.

This book will tell the little-known story of these brave men and their efforts to defeat the aerial forces defending Japan during the final five months of World War 2. Used initially to provide fighter escort for B-29s bombing Tokyo and other Japanese cities, the Iwo Jima-based P-51s enjoyed such success that they were soon called on to make low-level attacks against ground targets in preparation for the invasion of Japan. The book will cover the three Mustang-equipped Very Long Range fighter groups of the USAAF's Seventh Fighter Command - the 15th, 21st and 506th FGs - based on Iwo Jima with an action-packed text, many rare photos drawn from private collections and appendices providing statistical information. These units flew some of the most colourful P-51s ever seen in USAAF, and the author has extensive photographic references available to allow Jim Laurier to produce profile illustrations of 30 P-51D/Ks in their finery.

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