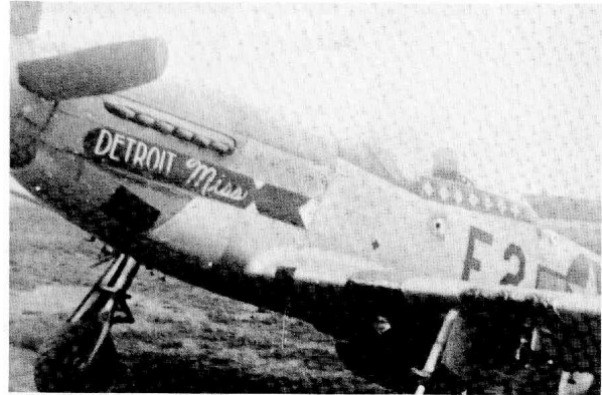


**P-51D-10-NA, DETROIT MISS (E2\*D), 361<sup>st</sup> FG, 375 FS**  
**Pilot: 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Urban L. Drew**

**A Brief History of Plane and Pilot by: lilduckfoot and Martin Baker 5**

Based at Bottisham, England, with the 375th FS, 361st FG, Detroit Miss (E2\*D) was the personal mount of Lt. Urban L. (Ben) Drew. Drew and Lt. Bill Kemp were later to become known to squadron mates as the *Katzenjammer Kids* as they reminded 375th CO, Major Roswell Freedman, of the two mischievous German immigrant kids of the comic strip who were always in the thick of trouble. First published in 1897, the *Katzenjammer Kids* is the second oldest comic strip running.



***DETROIT MISS* at Little Walden, Nov. 1944**



Ben Drew, born in 1924 in Detroit, Michigan, began his career in the USAAF in October 1942 and graduated flight school with class 43-I at Marion, Florida in 1943. After flight school he was immediately assigned to the 54<sup>th</sup> FG P-51 pilot replacement group at Bartow Field, Florida.

Upon his completion of P-51 pilot replacement school, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Drew was retained as an instructor with the 54<sup>th</sup> FG. Drew accumulated over 700 hours in P-51s as an instructor, and in May 1944, after “accidentally” buzzing a parade ground full of soldiers passing in review for the final time before shipping out, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Drew was reassigned as a P-51 replacement pilot to the ETO.

Drew, along with 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Bill Kemp who was also reassigned under less than ideal conditions (he was charged with striking a superior officer in a bar fight), arrived in England in June 1944 on the Queen Elizabeth. Drew and Kemp were both assigned to the 361<sup>st</sup> FG. The 361<sup>st</sup> was based at Bottisham, Cambridgeshire and would later relocate to Little Walden. Group CO, Colonel Thomas Christian, assigned them immediately to the 375<sup>th</sup> FS because of heavy losses to that squadron on the day they reported. The Squadron CO, Ops Officer and a Flight Commander had all been lost in action. As coincidence would have it, Lt. Drew had trained many of the pilots serving at that time with the 375th FS. Many of these pilots were already aces and had been promoted to captain and major, and although he was only a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt., most still referred to Drew as “sir.”



On Drew's first mission he was credited with destroying a Ju-52 on the ground. Shortly after that and due to the need for experienced pilots in leadership positions, Lt. Drew was assigned command of "A" Flight. He received a factory fresh, Inglewood California built P-51D-10-NA, Serial Number **44-14164**, squadron code **E2**, plane in squadron code **D**. He named it ***Detroit Miss*** in honor of his hometown.

In September 1944 Drew was credited with his first aerial victory over a Bf109, which Drew considered a "piece of cake" because his adversary held it straight and level while Drew lined up at six o'clock and destroy it. Lt. Drew was fast becoming recognized as a skilled fighter pilot who knew his business.

In his account of the antics of the *Katzenjammer Kids* [in Lucas, *Thanks for the Memory*] Drew describes the sort of behavior that justified the name:

...Kemp and I were assigned to the same flight on a mission. I ended up flying Kemp's wing. As it was rather a dull operation, Kemp asked for, and received, permission to go after "targets of opportunity" - a simple ruse to get us down to the deck to look for trouble. After shooting up all the vehicles we could find in a 30-mile radius, Kemp called out that there were some 50 to 60 'Bogies' dead ahead, down on the deck. We had run into two squadrons of Me.109s taking off from their aerodrome.

Kemp barreled in and shot down one, immediately forcing a second to force land and fly into a row of trees. He then ran out of ammunition. I pulled up within 20 feet behind a 109 and thought here is a very easy one, but when I pulled the trigger I sadly discovered I, too, was out of ammunition. The rest of the story gets more 'hairy'. It wasn't long before the Germans realized that the three Mustangs flying among them had no ammunition left; the 'dance' then became very exciting.

Kemp led the three Mustangs in some of the finest display flying I have ever witnessed and managed to extricate all three of us safely from the melee. We stayed down on the deck and barely had enough fuel to make it to Manston. This episode made the Yank, the US service paper in Europe, and served further to publicize the existence of the Katzenjammer Kids.

In early October Drew saw his first jet fighter, a Me262 at altitude. He gave chase but was no match for the faster jet in a tail chase. Shortly after this sighting he downed a Bf109 while on escort duty. In celebration of his victory Drew performed a slow roll over the field prior to landing. He joined his fellow *Katzenjammer Kid*, Bill Kemp, who was already grounded and confined to quarters for an unrelated matter. However, before they could wipe the dust off the Scotch bottle, the CO order them back to duty for a special project. The following is taken from Ben Drew's account as recorded by John Crump and reported in *Urban Drew Story* at WWII ACE STORIES, [www.acepilots.com](http://www.acepilots.com)

October 7th. Drew was flying with wingman McCandless when he spotted the German airbase at Achmer and went down for a look. Two Schwalbe's were just taking off when Drew dived on them, McCandless keeping right with him. The first Me 262 exploded when hit by the .50s of "Detroit Miss". Drew says he was surprised when the second Me 262 tried to climb away, allowing him to turn inside and shoot away the jet's control surfaces. When Drew returned to base, he found that not only had his wingman failed to return after being hit by flak following Drew's victories, but the gun camera also failed. Only after the war did Drew learn his wingman had survived.

More than 40 years later, an Air Force clerk noticed Drew's claim for two Me-262 victories on the same mission. She contacted a custodian of German war records, who knew former Luftwaffe pilots who might be able to shed light on the claim. Georg-Peter Eder had been set to lead the Me-262s of JG 7 that day, but when his aircraft had problems taking off the two-ill-fated pilots took off to lead JG 7. Eder says he saw a yellow-nosed P-51 dive on the Me 262s and shoot them down. Eder couldn't read "Detroit Miss" on the nose of the Mustang, but his account was sufficient to confirm Drew's two Me-262 victories.



**Drew indicating his 2 jet victories to fellow *Katzenjammer Kid*, Bill Kemp.**

Drew says two of his three victories over Bf-109 pilots came relatively easily. "It's who's in the cockpit that counts." The third proved his toughest challenge. Flying at about 23,000 feet, he saw a flight of P-38s fall prey to Bf-109s. The Germans dived past Drew and his wingman, and Drew pulled a hammerhead stall to come around behind one Messerschmitt. The German pilot saw him, went into a Lufbery, and Drew followed, the two aircraft in a tight corkscrew down to 10,000 feet. That's when Drew asked himself, "Is this guy better than you? I had to put it out of my mind immediately, because if you don't, the wrong mother's son is going to come home that night."

Spiraling closer to the ground, Drew kept some altitude on the Messerschmitt, until the German pulled out. The G forces in the Lufbery (about 7Gs) had jammed five of his six guns, but the one gun proved enough to down the Bf-109. Drew says this was the one time in his combat career he felt remorse over a victory. "I felt very bad, because I said, Drew, there was one of the great fighter pilots of all time. Who ever was flying that 109, he almost got you. And I was the best, as far as I was concerned. Maybe he was a big ace and maybe he wasn't, but by God he could fly that Messerschmitt."

In November 1944, Drew left the 361<sup>st</sup> and the ETO. After a leave at home he volunteered for duty in the Pacific and flew P-47Ns from Iwo Jima in support of ground troops until the end of the war.

Drew finished the war with the rank of Major. He was credited with 6 aerial victories and one ground victory. One of his “shared” victories included the destruction of the only prototype of the giant BV-232, a flying boat with a range of over 3,000 miles. It has been said that Hitler’s planned use was as a long-range bomber to take the war to the United States homeland.

After Drew departed the 361<sup>st</sup> and the ETO, Detroit Miss was assigned to Maj. Charles N “Chuck” Keppler. Keppler renamed her “Phyll” and the plane in squadron code was changed from “D bar” to “bar over D”.

Reference sheet attached.