

## KURT ULLMAN

Kurt Ullman was born in Germany in 1921, the only child born to Fritz and Frieda Ullman. The Ullman family immigrated to the United States in 1923 and headed to the Antelope Valley where Kurt's uncle owned a ranch. Kurt grew up in the Del Sur area and graduated from AVJUHS in 1939.

Kurt enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1942, in the cadet program, as he wanted to become a pilot. The laws on enlisting had changed and he was drafted into the Army and instead sent to the infantry. He was angry when they sent him to the infantry when he wanted to be in, and was qualified for the Army Air Corps.

Kurt went through infantry basic training and thought it was interesting and actually enjoyed it except for the fact that he wanted to fly. After training Kurt was sent to Aviation Cadet School where he graduated as a pilot and commissioned a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant.

Kurt was assigned as a C-47 pilot with the 440<sup>th</sup> Troop Squadron in England. On June 7, 1944, D-Day +1, Kurt recalled, "On the morning of June 7, we hit the coast at first light on a re-supply mission. On June 6, about six hours before the Normandy landing the 440<sup>th</sup> troop carrier took the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne in and dropped them behind the lines. As we approached the coast the sky turned red with their greetings. I thought for sure this was it, but I made it through, I believe without a hit. We got to the drop zone and dropped, and made a steep left hand turn. It was in this turn that I got clobbered! My co-pilot said "There's fire coming out of the right engine." I called for the fire extinguisher and he pulled the lever but said the fire wasn't completely out. We hit the coast and at the same time I realized the left engine had lost pressure and was exceeding the red line for RPM. The time interval was very short – only seconds – and both engines were dead. My only option was to ditch into the English Channel. As water landings go,

we made it ok, especially as I was later told my wheels were down as the hydraulic system was apparently hit also.

In a short while a Navy PT boat came over but would not approach closer than about 100 yards. We managed to get our raft and cross to the boat. A few minutes later the airplane sank. After we got on the boat, a sailor asked me about my leg as it had blood all over it. This was the first I knew that I had been hit. As the hours went by, my wound made itself known.

Kurt, along with the 440<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Group, received the Distinguished Unit Badge for his efforts on July 6, and 7, 1944, along with the Purple Heart Medal.

Between March 1944 and October 1945, Kurt would take part in six more crucial battle campaigns, from southern France to Rhineland in Germany and central Europe. Along with the awards just mentioned, Kurt also received the Air Medal with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters; European-African-Middle Eastern Service Medal with 7 bronze service stars.

After the war, Kurt attended Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo and went into several different fields of employment in the Antelope Valley with ranching, banking, real estate and a trust deed business among them.