

# FIGHTER'S FAREWELL

"Tell my family I'm okay . . . broke my nose on landing . . . I got nine . . . it's been a hell of a lot of fun working with you, gang 'be seeing you . . ."

That was the farewell message Lt. Col. Elwyn G. Righetti, commanding officer of the Third Division's 55th Fighter Group, radioed his pilots after flak had forced him to crash-land his crippled Mustang in enemy territory on 17 April—his 30th birthday. He had just torn a German airdrome to pieces.

In reporting to headquarters that "Eager El" was missing in action, an intelligence officer summed up the sentiments of all the men the gallant colonel had commanded:

"We're going to miss you, Colonel, all 29 years of your bursting energy and vitality, your eagerness and courage, your initiative and leadership that moulded us into a deadly fighting machine, whipping the Hun at every turn.

"We're going to miss your cheerfulness, your decisiveness, and your understanding of human nature. You spelled aggressiveness whenever you flew, and made us into one of the egerest gangs of eager beavers.

"Your record speaks for itself . . . 34½ destroyed Jerries to your credit . . . 27 on the ground . . . 7½ in the air . . .

"All of us of ole 'Five and Five' salute you, 'Eager El' . . . a great leader and a fightin' fighter."



*P-51D-10 ser. no 44-14223 "KatyDid"*

***Pilot LtCol Elwyn Righetti ("Eager El")***

*338th Fighter Squadron, 55th Fighter Group, 8th Air Force*

**Missing in action (MIA) 17. April 1945 im Raum**

**Riesa-Canitz / Großenhain**



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*LtCol. - Lieutenant Colonel (Oberstleutnant)*

# Elwyn Guido Righetti

**"Eager El"**

**Geboren am:** 17. Februar 1919 in San Luis Obispo, Californien, USA

**Vermisst seit:** 17. April 1945 im Raum Riesa-Canitz, Sachsen, Deutschland



**8th United Army Air Force (USAAF)**

**55<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group, 338<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron**

**“King of Strafers – König der Tiefflieger“**



**Lt.Col. Elwyn G. "Eager El" Righetti. 338th Fighter Squadron.**

**P-51D 44-14223 CL-M "Katydid".**





**Lt. Col Elwyn G. Righetti and his plane "Katydid". 9 kill signs and art of wife Katie (her nickname was Katydid)**





**Elwyn G. Righetti with wife Katie and daughter Kyle.**

**Randolph Field, San Antonio Texas, circa 1943**



# Die (mögliche) Absturzstelle bei Riesa - Canitz





