



## On The Edge

*Bill L Disbrow*

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In 1920 Bill Disbrow had his first airplane ride with his dad in a Jenny WWI trainer when he was five. This ignited his desire to be an Army Air Corps pilot. He finally applied in 1935 but failed his physical due to high blood pressure from excitement. He tried three more times. After Pearl Harbor, he was turned down because he was married, but the marriage ban was lifted and he was in and getting shot at. He always thought he could fly and sailed through Cadets in 1943, the oldest Cadet at 28. He was finally a pilot! He expected to go to P-38 fighter school but wound up as a B-24 co-pilot. His pilot and Bill flew their B-24 from Hamilton Field to Italy. Bill flew 50 missions for the 15th Air force, 455th Bomb Group, 741st Squadron. 25 of those mission he was first pilot in the B-24, "Organized Confusion." He survived 7 missions to the Ploesti oil fields, the graveyard of the 15th Air Force. He returned to the U.S. in 1944 with the DFC and the Air Medal with 3 OLCs, where he attended Officers Armament School and graduated at the top of his class. He was later assigned to Colorado Springs where, as a recruiting officer, he flew anything they would let him. There he became enamored with "Hot Rod" racing and was nick named "Bullet Bill" In 1948, he was sent to Japan as an I & E officer and later Chief of Flight Test FEMCOM. Later he took an old C-47 to Korea, ferrying supplies to the troops and became stationed there in charge of field maintenance at Pusan. On his return to the states, Bill became the CO of the Air Force recruiting in Los Angeles where he built the Disbrow Special sportcar. Later he brought the car to Tyndal AFB in Florida and raced against General LeMay and others. There he flew F-86s and F-102s. He was sent back to Japan in charge of a fighter squadron and finally sent home to Travis AFB where he retired with 21 years of active duty. On retiring he would become an investigator, a high school teacher, a aircraft owner, a civilian flight instructor a resort owner, a house builder, a world-class snow skier in his age group, and an excellent ballroom dancer. He would sire four beautiful daughters by his wife Fay of 27 years; have 10 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren and still counting. He has had a very varied and exciting life and had enjoyed every minute of it through all the anxiety and adversities he had to contend with. He thanks his Lord Jesus Christ for making this all possible.

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