

# FLYER



**M.G. HIGGINS**

MEET THE



*Eric*

**Age:** 12

**Personality:** quiet but adventurous

**Career Goal:** to be a flight instructor

**Biggest Secret:** hopes his dad and Mae become friends

**Best Quality:** dedicated

# CHARACTERS



## LEO

**Age:** mid-90s

**Army Air Forces Nickname:** Eagle Eye

**Family:** married for 56 years, no children

**Biggest Wish:** that Eric will become a pilot and fly the Mustang

**Best Quality:** bravery

# 1 PLANES

I see a hawk outside my classroom window. The bird soars through the sky then rises higher. Watching this fuels my longing to fly. I'd love to feel free like that, gliding above the clouds.

“Eric,” Mrs. Lund says. My teacher notices that I’m distracted. “Please focus.”

Head in the clouds...



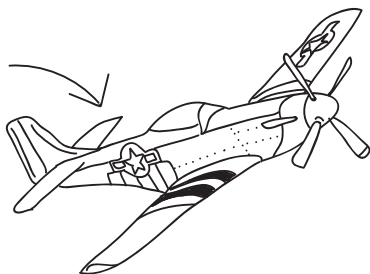
“Sorry.” I look down at my history book. There are many words on the page. But I love the pictures. Soldiers are everywhere. Some are on boats. Others run onto a beach.

The chapter is about World War II. My great-grandfather fought in that war. I never met him. He died before I was born.

Mrs. Lund asks a question. Some students raise their hands. I’m not listening. Instead, I turn to the next page in my book. Then I see planes.

My heartbeat speeds up. There are pictures of fighter planes. They’re so cool. I read a caption for one of them. It says the plane is a P-51 Mustang.

The Mustang



I hear Mrs. Lund say something.

“Your report must be five pages,” she says. “It’s due in three weeks. You can write about any topic. But it must connect to either of the two world wars or the Korean War.”

I do not like writing reports. But maybe this one won’t be so bad. Planes were used in all the wars Mrs. Lund mentioned.

It’s after school. My friend Todd and I are walking to the baseball field.

“What’s your report going to be about?” Todd asks.

“Fighter planes. How about yours?”

“U-boats for sure,” he says.

Soon we reach the field. My dad is already there. He’s unloading bats, balls, and helmets from his SUV.

“Hey, boys,” he says with a smile. “Big game today, Todd. You ready?”

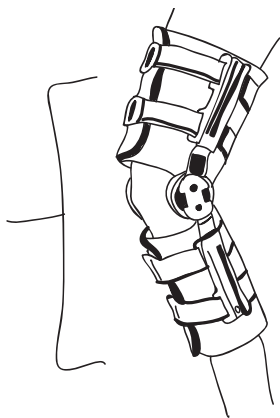
“I sure am,” Todd says.

“Eric, how was your day?” My dad hands me a few bats.

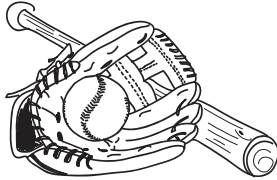
“It was fine.” I start carrying the bats to the dugout.

My dad coaches a baseball team. But I can't play. It's because of my leg brace. I was born with a condition. It affects my right leg. There's a lot I can do. But I'll never be able to run. I help out as my dad's assistant.

Here's the  
reason I  
don't play  
baseball.



The game starts. Todd is up to bat. He's our team's best hitter.



“Let’s go, Todd! You’ve got this!” my dad cheers.

“Yeah, Todd! Get us a homer!” I cheer too. But it can be hard. Todd is great at baseball. My dad really likes that. Sometimes it makes me feel bad. I wish I could do something like Todd. Then maybe my dad would cheer for me.

*Crack!*

Todd’s bat hits hard. The ball flies out of the park. It’s a home run. I’m happy for him. But part of me wishes I could fly away with the ball.



Our team wins. My dad is beaming. I help carry equipment back to his SUV.

On our way home, my dad and I are quiet for a while. Then he finally breaks the silence.

“So, you said your day was fine. How was class?” he asks.

I think about my report. Then I picture the cool planes I saw in my history book. Maybe I should tell him. But we’re already pulling into the driveway. He probably doesn’t care about planes anyway.

“It was fine too,” I say.

“That’s good. I’m thinking mac and cheese for dinner. Is that okay?” he asks.



“Sure.”

After helping unload everything, I head to my room. There, I pull out my phone. I search online for P-51 Mustangs. Soon I’m clicking on link after link. Then I find an old newspaper article.

It’s about a man who fought in World War II. His name is Leo Foster. He owns a P-51. The article says he lives in our town’s nursing home.

I’ve got to see his plane.



Whoa! I have to find this guy...

# FLYER

Who knew that an unexpected friend would lead to my biggest dream coming true?



  
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