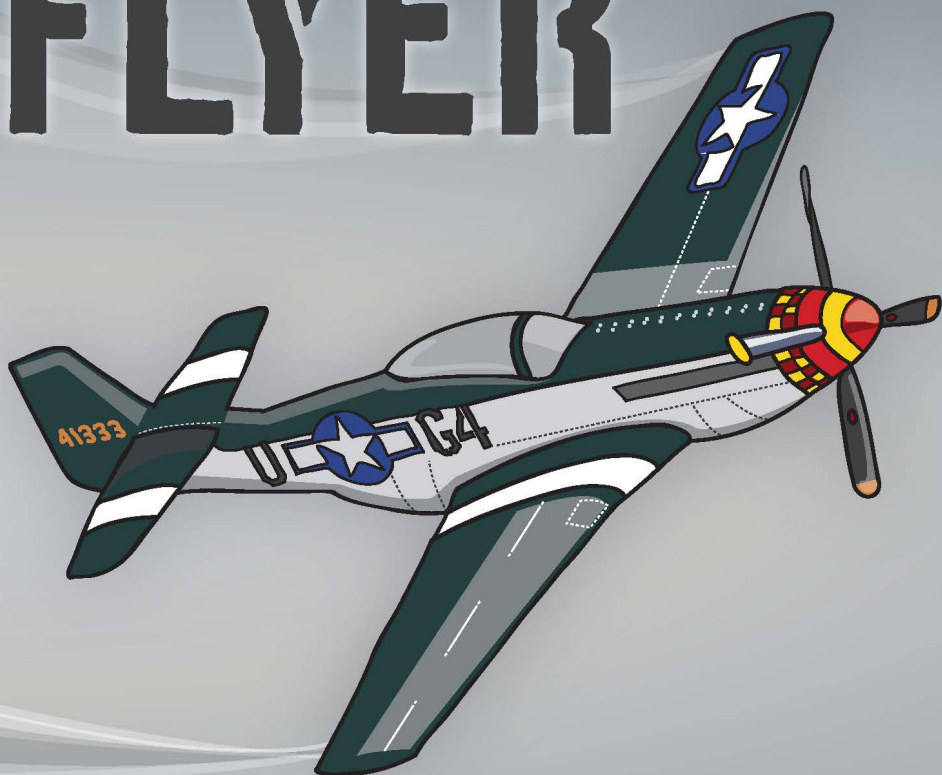
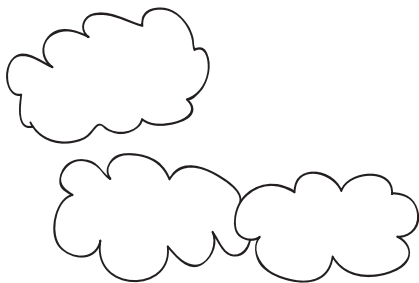


# FLYER



M.G. HIGGINS





# MEET THE



*Eric*

**Age:** 12

**Personality:** quiet and kind of a loner

**Family:** just his dad and him

**Favorite Meal:** rare roast beef with garlic  
mashed potatoes and buttered green beans

**Best Quality:** determination

# CHARACTERS



## LEO

**Age:** mid-90s

**Army Air Forces Nickname:** Eagle Eye

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

**Occupation:** grocery store manager  
for 52 years

**Best Quality:** bravery

# 1 HAWK

There is a hawk outside the classroom window. It floats in the sky. Rises in a circle. Up. Out. Away. Weightless. Free.

Flying.

I want to know what that feels like.

“Eric,” Mrs. Lund says. “Focus, please.”

*Head in the clouds...*



I sigh. Look back at my history book. There are so many words on the page. Boring. I like the pictures, though. Soldiers in helmets. They're on small boats. They're running onto a beach. The chapter is about World War II. My great-grandfather fought in that war. I didn't know him. He died before I was born.

Mrs. Lund asks a question. The smart kids raise their hands. Not me. I turn to the next page. Look for more pictures. Planes. Oh, wow. Fighters! My heart speeds up. They're so cool. I read a caption: *P-51 Mustang*.



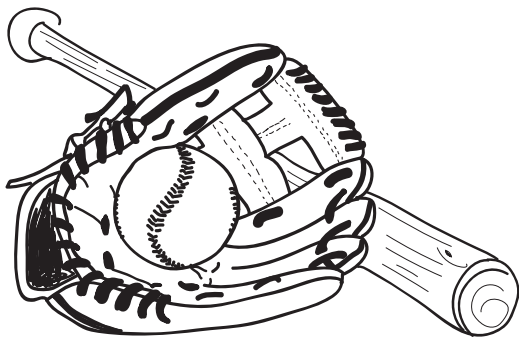
“A five-page report,” Mrs. Lund is saying.  
“Due in three weeks. Any topic from the two world wars or Korea.”

I hate writing reports. But not this time.

“Fighter planes,” I tell my friend Todd after school. We’re walking to the baseball field. “What are you going to write about?”

“U-Boats,” he says.

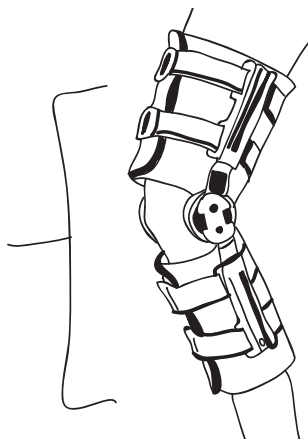
We’ve reached the field. Dad is already there. He’s unloading bats, balls, and helmets from the van. “Hi, Todd,” he says with a smile. “Big game today. Ready?”



“Sure,” Todd says.

“Hi, Eric,” Dad says to me. He hands me a few bats. I carry them to the dugout. Dad coaches our baseball team. I’m his assistant. I wear a leg brace. So I can’t play. Todd is first baseman. He’s also our best hitter.

The reason  
I don't play  
baseball



The game starts. I collect balls. Pick up bats. Cheer for our guys. It kills me that I can’t play. It also kills me when Dad slaps players on the back. Grins at them. “Good throw!” he shouts. “Way to hit!” “Great eye!”



Dad thinks I like baseball. That I like being his assistant. I'm afraid to tell him I don't.

Our team wins. Dad is happy. I carry equipment back to the van. We drive home. We're both quiet. Finally he says, "How was school?"

I think about my report. About the cool planes I saw in my history book. But we're already pulling into the driveway. He doesn't care about planes anyway. So I just say, "Fine."

"Mac and cheese for dinner?" he asks.



“Okay.”

I head to my room. Sit at my computer. Type P-51 Mustang. *Click*. I go to link after link. Then I find an old newspaper article. It’s about a guy. Leo Foster. He fought in World War II. And he *owns* a P-51. What’s really great? He lives in our town. In a nursing home.

I want to see that plane.



Jackpot!  
I have to  
find this guy...