MUSTANG DESIGNER: Edgar Schmued and the P-51

Ray Wagner
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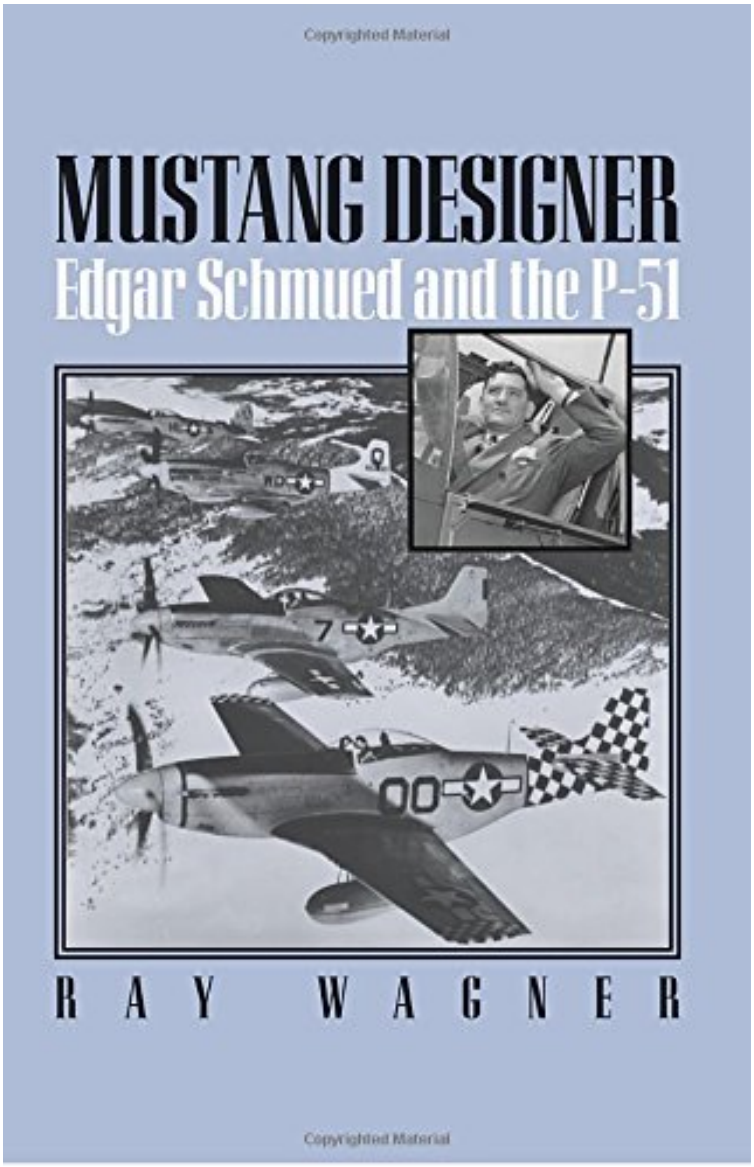

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Ray Wagner : MUSTANG DESIGNER: Edgar Schmued and the P-51 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised MUSTANG DESIGNER: Edgar Schmued and the P-51:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. 5 Stars for Content. 1 for production quality control.By Ted5 stars for quality of writing and content. 1 star for production values. How can an institution such as Smithsonian Press allow such a poorly printed publication? Others have noted the grainy old newspaper style photos. The copy I got even had

pages of type that looked like it was done on a copy machine that needs maintenance. This great book deserves better.Mustang Designer is a goldmine for the aviation enthusiast who is interested in a deeper understanding of the aviation industry, the design and production, the people involved. The section on the 1930s pre-Mustang aviation scene was very interesting because it gave me the context of what led up to the Mustang.Edgar Schmeud is brought back to life. This genius did not have an engineering degree, was not a pilot, and didn't even get a ride in a Mustang until 1981! Besides his brilliance, the author portrays him as a genuinely decent person. That he was not respected, was pushed out by the organization he worked for is a common phenomenon. I just read a book about the Battle of Britain that showed how Air Marshal Hugh Dowding was fired shortly after saving western civilization. And another about Captain Joseph Rochefort, the man who cracked the Japanese code that made the difference in the Battle of Midway. His reward was being put in charge of a dry dock. Alan Turing's work saved ship loads of lives: the current movie shows his reward."No good deed goes unpunished" is a saying with much basis in human experience.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The man behind the famous P-51 Mustang World War II American fighter planeBy Tom AchesonI've been a P-51 freak since early 1970. I have +20 books on this plane. The name Edgar Schmued surfaces quite often in these books. This book finally gives us the story on Edgar. We learn that no only was he an excellent airplane designer but a very good manager and utilizer of all of the people working under him. North American Aviation was one of the cornerstones of our "arsenal of freedom" during World War II and beyond. The AT-6 Texan 2-place trainer and the B-25 Mitchell bomber came from North American. Were it not for the introduction of the P-51 Mustang in the fall of 1943, the war would have been drawn out much longer. This fighter was able to escort the B-17 bombers from bases in England to Berlin and back, a feat other American fighters could not pull off. The Mustang's ability to due this was the result of the unique design that Edgar developed. The North American F-86 Sabre (jet) was a key player in the Korean War and the North American F-100 Super Saber was a contributor to our efforts in the Vietnam War. Edgar's fingerprints and influence are seen in all of these aviation products.I was surprised to learn that it wasn't until late in his life that he finally had a ride in a 2-place version of the plane that he had made so many contributions to, he P-51 Mustang!23 of 23 people found the following review helpful. Terrific book, gives great insights into the P-51, F-82, F-100, F-5, North American, and Edgar SchmuedBy DarthRadThis is an excellent book, and serves as both a biography about Edgar Schmued and a history of the engineering work behind the P-51 and several other aircraft. Schmued led the design team that created the P-51. It does not cover all of the details behind the development of the P-51, leaving out the politics of how the USAAF finally adopted this half British aircraft. The best part of this book is that it is possible to see how closely the North American engineers worked with the test pilots and field reports; it was this tightly coupled engineering culture which responded quickly to every input, every flaw, that enabled the P-51 Mustang to reach perfection first and beat out its rivals.Another book "P-51 Mustang: Development of the Long Range Escort Fighter" covers the bigger picture of the USAAF's overall search for a better fighter plane. This book very much complements "Mustang Designer" and should be read to get the full flavor of what happened with the P-51's development. For example, "P-51 Mustang" talks about the role of Colonel Thomas Hitchcock in championing the P-51 with the Roosevelt administration at a time when some in the USAAF brass were trying to kill it (an upper crust polo player, he had direct connections to the Roosevelt administration), but fails to mention Hitchcock's ultimate fate. "Mustang Designer" mentions almost in passing that Hitchcock was killed while test flying a P-51D on April 18, 1944, but does not go into the details of how crucial he was to the adoption of the P-51 by the USAAF.One reviewer complained about the lack of information about Schmued's use of conical sections in designing the curves of the airplane. There is a half-page description of Schmued's use of conical sections on the P-51 - page 57, which does explain the principles, if not the details of what Schmued did."Mustang Designer" does clear up some urban legends about the P-51. It was the British who started the myth that the P-51 was designed by a German who had worked for Messerschmitt.Schmued was indeed a German-Austrian, with an Austrian citizenship until he immigrated to the U.S. by way of Brazil. He was sponsored to come to the United States through his excellent work for General Motors in Brazil (immigration rules were extremely strict at that time - he was one of 794 people with Austrian citizenships admitted in the 1929 quota) and went straight to work for Fokker Aircraft Corporation of America, which was an aircraft company that was owned by General Motors and based in New Jersey. He joined North American Aviation when it was reorganized as an aircraft manufacturer. Schmued never worked for Messerschmitt; he did work for Fokker, but, despite its name, this was a wholly American owned company that happened to have Dutchman Anthony Fokker as its head.The book goes on with details about the later problems with the F-82 (the USAF forced North American to use a two-stage supercharger Allison V-1710, which was an engineering flop, instead of the Packard-Merlin engine). Schmued also had a hand in the designs of the F-86 and F-100, but the exact details of what he did are not spelled out in this book. Schmued left North American in 1952, after Dutch Kindelberger became ill and started to devolve power to Lee Atwood, with whom Schmued disagreed intensely (the intensity of this disagreement is seen by the fact that Schmued was just three years shy of being fully invested in a pension from North American when he left - as a result, he received no pension from North American).This book does not talk about the post-Schmued, post-Kindelberger years at North American, but they were mostly filled with a series of aircraft designs that never made it into production. The F-100 would be the last fighter plane that North American

would produce. Schmued would leave North American before the F-100 flew (he lost a final dispute over changes to the design of the F-100), and it is clear from the subsequent prolonged teething problems of the F-100 that North American sorely missed Schmued's troubleshooting genius.With Kindelberger and Schmued gone, the excellent engineering culture of North American seemed to wither under the mediocre stewardship of Lee Atwood. North American went into the space business, but this would culminate in the disastrous fire that killed the Apollo 1 astronauts in 1967. The negative backlash from that disaster (North American had built the command module that caught fire) ultimately forced North American to merge with Rockwell, which then buried this once famous name completely. (This later period of North American's history is not covered in this book).Schmued, on the other hand, would go on to work for Northrop, and would help revive the flagging engineering designs of that company by designing the F-5. Ironically, the person who would hire him was Oliver Echols, the general in the USAAF who had played a semi-antagonistic role against the P-51 during its early days (Echols's role against the P-51 is described in the book "P-51 Mustang").Also not mentioned in this book is the fact that Schmued's F-5 design would evolve into Northrop's YF-17, which then became the F-18, the Navy's current all-purpose and ONLY fighter plane (now that the F-14s have all been chopped up to keep Iran from obtaining parts for their remaining F-14s).Overall this is an extremely valuable book for understanding the history of the P-51, F-82, F-100, North American Aviation, the F-5, and the man behind all of those success stories, Edgar Schmued. has four listings for various other printings of this book:0517088207 Random House 1992 (hardcover)0517567938 Crown 1st edition 1990 (hardcover)B000KRITOC Orion Books 1990 (hardcover)B000QRPVEC Orion books 1991 (hardcover)All of these are out of print, and so this paperback reprint by Smithsonian Institute Press is the most readily available.

Mustang Designer tells the story of American wartime fighter development, including engines and armaments, as part of a nationwide program of aircraft builders and fliers, focusing on Edgar Schmued, the designer of the Mustang. The P-51 Mustang is widely regarded as the best propeller-driven fighter that ever flew. What many might not realize is that the plane's developer was a German migrant. This book tells of how Schmued created a weapon that would ultimately prove lethal to the aspirations of those who had seized control over his native land.

“North American’s P-51 Mustang has consistently been regarded by many as the best propeller-driven fighter ever produced. What few people know, however, is that this exceptional plane, which protected Allied bombers and established dominance in the skies over Europe by defeating Germany’s legendary Messerschmitts and Focke-Wulfs, was designed by a self-taught German immigrant. Noted aviation historian Ray Wagner documents the professional life of Edgar Schmued, North American’s star design engineer and Mustang creator. . . Mustang fans will find little to fault in Wagner’s history. [The book] is a successful blend of engineering documentation and personal history, and aviation readers should thoroughly enjoy [it].”—Aviation Heritage“The P-51 Mustang is a legend. Many knowledgeable observers consider it to be the premier long-range fighter of World War II, and those who have flown it call the Mustang one of the finest single-seat aircraft ever built. . . Drawing upon a wide variety of neglected sources, including original procurement and flight-test records, and especially Schmued's personal papers, Wagner has crafted a well-written and beautifully illustrated account that chronicles the Mustang's design history in rich and exacting detail.”—Air Power History“This fascinating, well illustrated book . . . brings alive the struggles and triumphs of all [the] competing aircraft factories and their products in the World War II days. . . . The style is straightforward, livened up with reminiscences from many interviews and Schmued's own notes. . . . Ray Wagner has done a remarkable job.”—WASP News“Mustang Designer is a milestone in aviation historical writing because the author [looks] at aircraft design in the context of its history. . . . A must for serious readers.”—SkywaysAbout the AuthorAviation historian Ray Wagner is the author of American Combat Planes (1960) and North American Sabre (1963), which was the first book-length history of an Air Force fighter. A retired history teacher, he is an archivist for the San Diego Aerospace Museum.