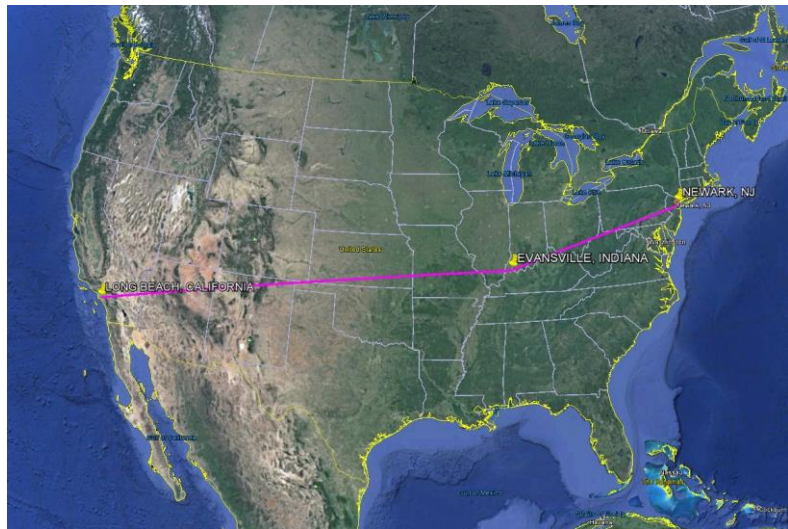


Ferry Command – January 1944

As his fighter training came to a close 2nd Lt. James Harrison would eventually be assigned to the 48th Fighter/Bomber Group 492nd Fighter Squadron. His combat deployment was put on hold, however, when he was assigned to temporary duty in the Ferry Command.

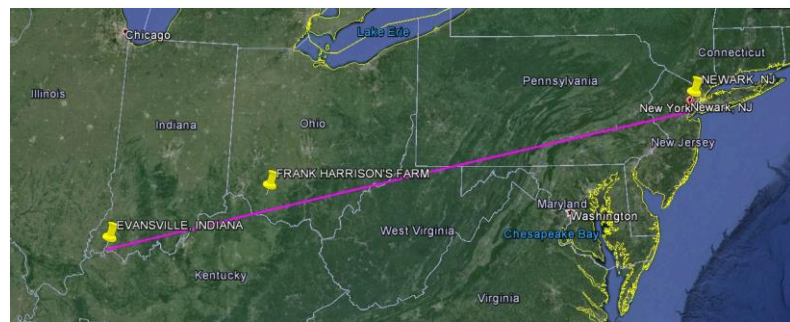


Most of the early production of P-47 Thunderbolts was coming from a large Republic Aviation factory in Farmingdale, Long Island, New York. Republic could not produce Thunderbolts fast enough at its Farmingdale plant, so a new plant was built at Evansville, Indiana. Being in the mid-west, the aircraft produced at this facility needed pilots to fly them to ports of call on the west and east coasts for shipment overseas. Over a several week period 2nd Lt. Harrison would fly one new P-47 to Long Beach, California and two to Newark, New Jersey where they would be put on ships and sent overseas.



The flights were uneventful and probably downright boring for newly minted fighter pilots who were expecting to be knee deep in combat sorties by this time. But when there is no excitement to be had, if you are James Harrison, Jr., you make some.

On one of the flights from Evansville, Indiana to Newark, New Jersey, James realized he would be flying almost directly over his brother's home on the family farm in Mount Orab, Ohio. Might as well stop by and say hello!



As James described it,

“On one of the trips from Evansville to Newark New Jersey took me right over Frank’s farm. Of course I knew where it was and I told him I’d be flying somewhere over the middle of Ohio. He said, “oh, ok just be careful.”

So I knew exactly where I was going and so on the first pass I made over his house I was doing about 500 miles per hour – and that will rattle the windows. Then I pulled up and circled around cause that got them all awake. So I came back and I was pretty close to the house. Frank told me he could see the expression on my face and when I asked him what it was he just laughed. He could see the expression!

I was in there tight”.

When Frank tells the story he describes gathering the family at the farm with everyone being outside until James came by the first time and then they were all on the porch. Then when he came by the second time they were all in the kitchen.

