



Press On!: Further Adventures in the Good Life

Chuck Yeager, Charles Leerhsen

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From Wikipedia: Charles Elwood "Chuck" Yeager (born February 13, 1923) is a retired major general in the United States Air Force and noted test pilot. He was the first pilot to travel faster than sound (1947). Originally retiring in 1975 as a brigadier general, Yeager was promoted to major general on the Air Force's retired list in 2005 for his military achievements. ~~~ Yeager's career began in World War II as a private in the United States Army Air Forces. After serving as an aircraft mechanic, in September 1942 he entered enlisted pilot training and upon graduation was promoted to the rank of flight officer (the World War II USAAF equivalent to warrant officer) and became a North American P-51 Mustang fighter pilot. ~~~ After the war, Yeager became a test pilot of many types of aircraft including experimental rocket-powered aircraft. As the first human to break the sound barrier on October 14, 1947, he flew the experimental Bell X-1 at Mach 1 at an altitude of 45,000 ft (13,700 m). Although Scott Crossfield was the first to fly faster than Mach 2 in 1953, Yeager shortly thereafter, set a new record of Mach 2.44. ~~~ Yeager later commanded fighter squadrons and wings in Germany and in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War, and in recognition of the outstanding performance ratings of those units he then was promoted to brigadier general. Yeager's flying career spans more than 60 years and has taken him to every corner of the globe, including the Soviet Union during the height of the Cold War. ~~~ Yeager's popularity soared in the 1980s, when he was prominently featured in Tom Wolfe's book *The Right Stuff* and in its 1983 movie adaptation, in which he was portrayed by Sam Shepard. ~~~ Yeager made a cameo appearance in the movie *The Right Stuff* (1983). He played "Fred," a bartender at "Pancho's Place", which was most appropriate, as Yeager said, "if all the hours were ever totaled, I reckon I spent more time at her place than in a cockpit over those years."...



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