

= Louis J. Seville =

Louis Joseph " Lou " Seville ( November 21 , 1915 ? August 5 , 1950 ) was a fighter pilot in the United States Army Air Forces during World War II and later the United States Air Force during the Korean War . He rose to the rank of major and posthumously received the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions on August 5 , 1950 in South Korea during the Battle of Pusan Perimeter .

Born in Michigan , Seville worked as an MC in Chicago , Illinois before joining the U.S. Army Air Corps shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7 , 1941 . Seville flew B @-@ 26 Marauder bombers over Europe from 1943 to 1945 . He flew 68 combat missions and accrued more than 3 @,@ 000 hours of flying time . Seville briefly became a commercial airline pilot after the war before he was offered a commission as a first lieutenant and reentered the service in July 1946 .

Seville commanded the 67th Fighter @-@ Bomber Squadron at the outbreak of the Korean War , flying F @-@ 51 Mustangs in close air support and air strike missions . On August 5 , 1950 , he attacked a North Korean armored column advancing on United Nations military units . Though his aircraft was heavily damaged and he was wounded during the first pass on the column , he turned his plane around and deliberately crashed into the convoy at the cost of his life .

= = Biography = =

Louis J. Seville was born on November 21 , 1915 in Harbor Beach , Michigan . He attended Wayne State University in Detroit , Michigan . After his graduation from the university in the 1930s he moved to Chicago , Illinois where he worked as a Master of Ceremonies in several Chicago nightclubs under the nickname " Lou Reynolds . " He was described as " a handsome glib master of ceremonies who used to wow the customers with his own parody of My Blue Heaven " . Seville married and his wife gave birth to a son in December 1949 .

= = = World War II = = =

Seville enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps two weeks after the attack on Pearl Harbor by the Empire of Japan . He began flight training in January 1942 , in spite of being two months older than the cutoff age of 26 , as the desperate need for pilots combined with Seville 's skills as a pilot allowed him to waive the age restriction . During that time he was described as an outstanding pilot and leader , and his maturity was helpful for the younger flight trainees . After completing flight training , Seville was commissioned as a second lieutenant and assigned to the 450th Bombardment Squadron , 322nd Bombardment Group 3rd Bombardment Wing at MacDill Field , Florida . Seville flew B @-@ 26 Marauder aircraft .

Deployed to England in January 1943 , Seville flew bombing missions in the European theatre . The 322nd Bombardment Group , the first unit to fly the B @-@ 26 Marauder , was sent on its first mission on May 14 , a low @-@ altitude attack on an electrical power plant in the Netherlands under the control of Nazi Germany . The mission was Seville 's first sortie , and the group suffered one plane lost and 10 damaged . Three days later a second attack was assigned on the same target , however , Seville was not on the mission list . Of the planes that flew the mission , one aborted and the rest did not return . Seville advanced to flight leader and then was promoted to squadron operations officer with a temporary rank of major . By the end of the war , Seville had flown 68 combat missions with 245 combat hours . In the war he had been awarded two Distinguished Flying Crosses and twelve Air Medals . His unit returned to the United States in March , 1945 .

After the end of the war , Seville left active duty with the Air Force and began work as a commercial airline pilot . However he returned to the Air Force in July 1946 after he was offered a commission as a First Lieutenant . He held several positions , first as a staff officer with the Ninth United States Air Force headquarters at Biggs Army Airfield at Fort Bliss , Texas . Shortly thereafter , Seville was assigned as an F @-@ 51 Mustang and F @-@ 80 Shooting Star instructor pilot , teaching other pilots how to transition from conventional fighter aircraft to newer jet engine powered models . Seville then attended Air Tactical School at Tyndall Field , Florida . He was then assigned to Clark

Air Base in the Philippines in 1948 . During this time , he flew an F @-@ 51D named Nancy III ( tail number 44 @-@ 74112 ) . In November 1948 , Seville was once again promoted to major and made the commanding officer of the 67th Fighter @-@ Bomber Squadron , 18th Fighter @-@ Bomber Wing , a component of the Fifth United States Air Force stationed in Japan for post @-@ World War II occupation duties . In November 1949 , the squadron began receiving new F @-@ 80 's but continued to fly a mix of F @-@ 80 and F @-@ 51 aircraft . Eventually , the squadron transitioned entirely to F @-@ 80s , then back to F @-@ 51s . During this time , Seville was known to spend time in his squadron 's Quonset hut . He frequently discussed fighting and death , including sentiments supporting suicide attack , at one point saying " If you have to die , then take some of the enemy with you . " During this time Seville worked mostly administrative duty as the squadron absorbed new aircraft and pilots in Japan .

= = = Korean War = = =

With the outbreak of the Korean War on June 25 , 1950 , the United Nations voted to send troops into South Korea to aid it against the North Korean Army to prevent the country from collapsing . Seville 's unit was among those send to assist the UN ground forces operating in Korea . By the end of July , the US had shipped a large number of aircraft of all types to Korea . On July 30 , the Far East Air Forces had 890 planes ; 626 F @-@ 80 's and 264 F @-@ 51 's , but only 525 of them were in units and available and ready for combat .

Early in the war , these aircraft were used primarily to conduct raids and gather intelligence on North Korean ground targets , focused on disrupting North Korean supply to the front lines . However , as soon as UN forces retreated to Pusan Perimeter following the Battle of Taejon , the Naval aircraft were immediately re purposed for close @-@ air support and airstrikes against North Korean ground troops on the front . These missions were significantly more risky and the aircraft suffered much higher losses due to North Korean ground fire . On August 1 , Seville and his squadron moved to Ashiya Air Field and began conducting missions in support of the ground forces in Korea . By August 5 , Seville had accrued over 3 @,@ 000 hours of flying time over the course of his career . During this time , the 67th Fighter @-@ Bomber Squadron operated primarily out of Ashiya but also used airfields at Taegu and Pusan .

= = = Medal of Honor action and death = = =

At the beginning of the Battle of Pusan Perimeter , the night of September 4 , North Korean troops established a beachhead across the Naktong River and were using it to advance across the river and attack Taegu , South Korea , where the UN 's Eighth United States Army was headquartered in defense of the perimeter . On September 5 , a T @-@ 6 Mosquito forward air controller spotted a North Korea column advancing through the village of Hamchang . Seville was ordered to lead a flight of three F @-@ 51 's on an airstrike against the North Korean troops advancing there . Seville flew a P @-@ 51 ( tail number 44 @-@ 74394 ) loaded with two 500 pounds ( 230 kg ) bombs , six rockets , and six M2 Browning .50 caliber machine guns . He and his wingmen , Captain Martin Johnson and Lieutenant Charles Morehouse , approached the village at an altitude of 5 @,@ 000 feet ( 1 @,@ 500 m ) and spotted a North Korean armored column crossing the river in a shallow area . Seville positioned himself for a medium @-@ angle dive bomb run , planning to drop both of his bombs on his first attack . Diving , he held steady until about 2 @,@ 500 feet ( 760 m ) . When he spotted a target column of trucks , artillery guns and armored cars , led by a North Korean Armored Personnel Carrier , he hit the bomb release button on his control stick , and then made a sharp pull @-@ up to the left to stay away from his bomb blast . However , only one of his bombs had released , and the 500 pounds ( 230 kg ) of unbalanced weight under his left wing may have contributed to his near miss on the first run .

North Korean anti aircraft fire struck Seville 's F @-@ 51 as he turned to make a second run , heavily damaging the aircraft and it began trailing smoke and glycol coolant . Seville had intended to release his second bomb , but he radioed Johnson that he had been hit and injured , probably fatally

. Johnson radioed back Seville should try to head for a US emergency landing strip in Taegu a short distance away , but Seville responded with his last known words , " No , I 'll never make it . I 'm going back and get that bastard ( sic ) " . He dove straight toward the APC that was his target . He fired his six rockets in salvo , but instead of pulling up to the regular 2 @, @ 000 feet ( 610 m ) , he deliberately continued to dive his airplane and the remaining bomb straight into the target , firing his six machine guns . His plane sustained even heavier damage , and he crashed into the North Korean convoy destroying a large contingent of North Korean ground troops and vehicles though being killed instantly himself .

He was buried at Forest Home Cemetery in Forest Park , Chicago . Upon hearing reports of Seville 's death , commanders in Korea did not think highly of Seville 's act , likening it to a kamikaze action . In spite of reluctance , Lieutenant Donald Bolt , the squadron 's assistant awards officer , forwarded a citation of the event to Washington D.C. where Seville would be evaluated for the Medal of Honor . Shortly after the incident , both Bolt and Seville 's second @-@ in @-@ command , Captain Robert Howell , were killed in separate combat engagements . A short obituary for Seville appeared in Time Magazine after his death . The United States Air Force Academy also created a memorial to Seville in Harmon Hall , the academy 's administration building .

= = Military awards = =

Seville 's military decorations and awards include :

= = = Medal of Honor citation = = =

Seville was posthumously presented the Medal of Honor in a ceremony at March Air Force Base in Riverside County , California , on August 24 , 1951 . Air Force Chief of Staff General Hoyt Vandenberg presented the medal for him to his widowed wife and their son , who was 19 months old at the time . The ceremony was also attended by his former wingman in Korea , Martin Johnson , who made a speech calling Seville " a remarkable friend , a fine commander and a very brave man . "

Seville was the first person in the U.S. Air Force to be awarded the Medal of Honor since the branch 's beginning in 1947 , and the 31st MOH recipient of the Korea War . The Four U.S. Air Force members including Seville who received the medal in that war were pilots who were killed in action . They were the only USAF members to receive the Army version of the medal ( the Air Force version was first awarded during the Vietnam War ) . His Medal of honor citation reads :

Rank and organization : Major , U.S. Air Force , 67th Fighter @-@ Bomber Squadron , 18th Fighter @-@ Bomber Group , 5th Air Force .

Place and date : Near Hanchang , Korea , August 5 , 1950 .

Entered service at : Chicago , Ill . Born : November 21 , 1915 , Harbor Beach . Mich.Citation :

Maj. Seville , distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty . During an attack on a camouflaged area containing a concentration of enemy troops , artillery , and armored vehicles , Maj. Seville 's F @-@ 51 aircraft was severely damaged by antiaircraft fire . Although fully cognizant of the short period he could remain airborne , he deliberately ignored the possibility of survival by abandoning the aircraft or by crash landing , and continued his attack against the enemy forces threatening the security of friendly ground troops . In his determination to inflict maximum damage upon the enemy , Maj. Seville again exposed himself to the intense fire of enemy gun batteries and dived on the target to his death . The superior leadership , daring , and selfless devotion to duty which he displayed in the execution of an extremely dangerous mission were an inspiration to both his subordinates and superiors and reflect the highest credit upon himself , the U.S. Air Force , and the armed forces of the United Nations .