

12-1-2011

A Swedish Flying Ace from WWII

Elisabeth Thorsell

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag>



Part of the [Genealogy Commons](#), and the [Scandinavian Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Thorsell, Elisabeth (2011) "A Swedish Flying Ace from WWII," *Swedish American Genealogist*: Vol. 31 : No. 4 , Article 10.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag/vol31/iss4/10>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Augustana Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Swedish American Genealogist by an authorized editor of Augustana Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@augustana.edu.

A Swedish flying ace from WW II

William Y. Anderson has passed away

BY ELISABETH THORSELL

On 9 May 2011 an unusual life ended. On that day *William Y. Anderson* died at his home in Crystal Lake, McHenry County, Illinois.

He had been born in 1921 in Sweden, but immigrated in 1922 with his parents, and grew up in Chicago. In the fall of 1941 he joined the Army Air Corps, and became a highly decorated veteran of World War II. He received over 30 medals including the Silver Star and the French Croix de Guerre. General Eisenhower personally pinned on his Silver Star.

“Willie” Anderson flew on 126 combat missions, and was of course a Flying Ace, which title you won after having shot down five enemy aircraft. This is shown on the picture (below) of his plane which is decorated with 7 swastikas.

On 17 June 1944 “Willie” Anderson shot down at least one of the German V-1 rockets, which he was the first one to do. By then he was almost 23 years old, and still a young, daring pilot; he is said to have flown through the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

After having returned to the U.S. he was an instructor for cadets at West Point Military Academy.

After leaving the military in 1945 he became a pilot for United Airlines, and finally retired as a captain of a Boeing-747 aircraft.

On 26 November 1944 he married Lois Anderson, also of Swedish origin, and they had three children, William Jr, Nancy, and Gina, and six grandchildren; Duffy, Chad, Teresa, Shiloh, Rhain, and Graham.

“Willie” Y. Anderson is honored in the *Aviation Hall of Fame* (Dayton, OH), *Fighter Aces Hall of Fame*, and in *Who's Who in Aviation History*.

The Swedish background

William Yngve Anderson was actually born and baptized as *Yngve Helmer Andersson* in Gudmundrå parish in Ångermanland province. His parents were *Johan Helmer Andersson* and his wife *Ester Kristina Andersson*, and they lived with Helmer's parents at a place called Storhågn on the lands of Helgum 2, in Gudmundrå.

The little family decided to immigrate to the U.S. in 1922, and left Gudmundrå on 14 July 1922. According to the *Emihamn* database, they left for America from Stockholm on 8 August, and probably took the train to Oslo (then called Kristiania), where they on 11 August went on board the *S/S Bergensfjord* of the Norwegian-America Line.

On 21 August, after 10 days at sea, they finally arrived at Ellis Island.

The passenger manifest tells that the intention of the Andersson family was to travel to Helmer's older brother Carl Fredrik Anderson, who then lived at 5449 Greenwood Avenue in Chicago.

Carl Fredrik had been born on 18 July 1891 in Ytterlännäs, and had immigrated to Chicago already on 21 July 1911, so he was now well established there. He became an U.S. citizen on 21 January 1930 and lived then at 7455 Merril Avenue in Chicago.

The Helmer (sometimes Elmer) Andersons in 1930 lived at 7532 Champlain Avenue, where they rented an apartment for \$55/month and also had a radio. Elmer was employed as a building carpenter. The son was still listed as Yngve, so the name William was added later.

On 17 December 1930 Johan Helmer Anderson became an U.S. citizen, still living at Champlain Avenue.



“Willie” Anderson with his Swede's Stead.



The Swede's Steed, a P-51 Mustang, which "Willie" Anderson flew on his missions.

Ancestors of "Willie" Anderson

1) *Yngve Helmer (William) Anderson*, b. 28 Jun 1921 in Helgum, Gudmundrå, Y, d. 9 May 2011 in Crystal Lake, McHenry Co, IL, USA.

Moved 14 Jul 1922 from Helgum, Gudmundrå, Y, with his parents to USA.

Generation I

2) *f Johan Helmer Andersson*, b. 17 Sep 1893 in Gudmundrå, Y, Sweden, died 1 Feb 1990 in Chicago, IL, USA.

Moved 14 Jul 1922 from Helgum, Gudmundrå, Y to the U.S. In Chicago he was a building carpenter. Married 23 Jun 1920 in Gudmundrå, Y, to the following ancestor.

3) *m Ester Kristina Andersson*, b. 30 Jul 1899 in Kramfors, Gudmundrå, Y.

Generation II

4) *ff Karl Johan Andersson*, b. 12 Feb 1860 in Viken on Älrvik lands, Gillberga, S, d. 5 Sep 1936. Lived with his family on the lands of Helgum #2 in Gudmundrå. He worked in a sawmill.

Married 20 Aug 1892 to the following ancestor.

5) *fm Anna Erika Dahlberg*, b. 18 May 1869 in Stensätter, Ytterlänäs, Y, d. 24 Feb 1952 in Helgum, Gudmundrå, Y.

6) *mf Karl August Andersson*, b. 12 Oct 1873 in Backa, Långserud, S, d. 15 Dec 1946 in Kramfors Sågverk, Gudmundrå, Y. Lived in Kramfors with his family. He worked first in a sawmill, but later as an oiler in a steam sawmill in Kramfors.

Married 22 Aug 1897 to the following ancestor.

7) *mm Hilda Amalia Domeij*, b. 18 Jun 1878 in Kramfors, Gudmundrå, Y, d. 13 Dec 1950 in Kramfors Sågverk, Gudmundrå, Y.

Generation III

8) *ff f Anders Persson*, b. 25 May 1823 in Gillberga, S. Sharecropper at Viken on Älrvik lands i Gillberga.

Married to the following ancestor.

9) *ff m Stina Jansdotter*, b. 26 Nov 1821 in Gillberga, S.

10) *fm f Nils Dahlberg*, b. 4 Aug 1841 in Högsjö, Y. Sharecropper at Stensätter in Ytterlänäs, Y.

Married to the following ancestor.

11) *fm m Anna Dorothea Dahlgren*, b. 5 Dec 1847 in Ytterlänäs, Y.

12) *mf f Erik Jan Andreasson*, b. 17 Jan 1842 in Svanskog, S. Moved 4 Nov 1874 from Gillberga, S to Backa, Långserud, S. Lived as a lodger at Backa in Långserud.

Moved with his family 22 Oct 1875 from Backa, Långserud, S, to Gudmundrå, Y.

Married to the following ancestor.

13) *mf m Stina Andersdotter*, b. 20 Jul 1842 in Långserud, S.

14) *mm f Johan Domej*, b. 6 Dec 1851 in Gudmundrå, Y. Workman in Kramfors, Gudmundrå.

Married 14 Sep 1873 to the following ancestor.

15) *mm m Anna Elisabeth Öberg*, b. 16 Sep 1853 in Gudmundrå, Y.

--oo0oo--

S is the code letter for Värmland's *län*.

Y is the code letter for Väster-norrland *län*.

f = father. **m** = mother

mf m = mother's father's mother

--oo0oo--

It is interesting that both grandfathers were born in Värmland province. During the second half of the 1800s there was great unemployment there, due to the fact that the population had grown, and the iron works were going bankrupt. In Väster-norrland there was at the same time a great expansion of the logging and sawmill industry, which lured people to move there.