



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on December 10, 2020

Black Fighter Pilot: Yeager Protected Me, Saved My Career. So Why the Smear?

When American hero Chuck Yeager died on Tuesday, a lynch mob quickly assembled on Twitter to wreck the storied aviator's reputation.

Immediately came the cries that Yeager was a "racist" who blocked Ed Dwight, a black pilot, from becoming the country's first black astronaut.

As with so much of what the Left tweets, as [The New American reported](#), the claim was false. It was a scurrilous lie and a smear, and an easily provable scurrilous lie and smear at that.



Photo: U.S. Air Force

Yeager didn't stop Dwight from becoming an astronaut. The Kennedy administration's NASA did.

The truth about the man who broke the sound barrier and knocked down five enemy aircraft in one day during World War II: Yeager protected the black men under his command.

No matter, Yeager was white and from West Virginia, and from an Air Force less concerned about "diversity" than winning America's wars. And so he had to be smeared.

Emmett Hatch: Yeager the "highlight of my life."

The ranting lunatics who attacked Yeager could easily have found out the truth had they looked for it. Though Dwight was unqualified for the test-pilot school at Edwards Air Force Base, Yeager recalled in his autobiography, [Yeager pushed him through](#) with special tutoring and awarded him a diploma.

Yeager's forbearance "qualif[ied] him to be the nation's first black astronaut."

But NASA, as two news accounts and Yeager explained, did not choose Dwight to join the 15 men who became Astronaut Group 3.

Beyond ignoring that simple fact, the hate-Yeager mob could easily have learned how Yeager treated blacks under his command.

Yeager's widow, Victoria, [posted excerpts](#) of the aviator's autobiography at her website, including the account of black fighter pilot Emmett Hatch.

If Hatch thought anyone hung the Moon, it was Yeager, who like Hatch was a mustang, an officer who began his career as enlisted man:

The Air Force had only been integrated seven or eight years by the time I became a fighter pilot. I came up through the ranks as an enlisted man, the same as Chuck Yeager, but it wasn't easy for me as a black man. There were racial incidents along the way with no



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shortage of rednecks eager to shoot me down. Only a handful of black pilots were scattered around the world in those days, and I knew I couldn't afford to make any serious mistakes, but I was young, full of piss and vinegar, and when Chuck Yeager became my squadron commander in Germany, he stood between me and guys ready to jump me. Chuck just wouldn't tolerate that kind of crap. It is true he grew up in West Virginia where there are some definite racial attitudes, but there is also a camaraderie among those who know what it's like to be down and out. Without a doubt, he saved my neck on several occasions. Serving with him became a highlight of my life."

The excerpt recounts many of Hatch's adventures. But the most important for the purpose of refuting the claim that Yeager was a "racist," or even worse, [a "racist POS."](#) details the fib Yeager told to protect Hatch's career when he crashed a jet.

Hatch was rolling the aircraft on an approach to Paris, France, when his controls stuck and he couldn't stop. He ejected and landed in a tree. When the wing commander blew up at Yeager and asked why Hatch was rolling the jet, Yeager told him it was a safety precaution:

"Hell, Colonel, he was doing exactly what he was supposed to be doing. He was doing a clearing roll."

"A what?"

Chuck said, "That's right. Anytime we are descending, we do a roll to make sure we aren't letting down on top of another airplane. It's a safety precaution. All my people do it."

Chuck saved my precious a**. I had no business doing those rolls, and I could've been court-martialed, my career ruined.

Hatch's praise for Yeager was unqualified.

And Yeager thought highly of Hatch. He "was a very very good pilot & had the right attitude which is why he succeeded. I was glad to have him in my outfit."

The Smear

Victoria Yeager posted that account on July 12 last year. Yeager's story of pushing Dwight through test-pilot school appeared two days later.

So Yeager "wouldn't tolerate" racial bigotry, protected a black pilot who crashed a jet when he did something he shouldn't have done, then graduated an unqualified black pilot from the test-pilot school.

The hate-Yeager claim about Dwight was obviously false. That doesn't matter when the times demand smearing a storied American aviator and patriot because he's white.



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