



Maxwell S. Kattf

AUG 18, 1924 - DEC 4, 2017



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David Schmitt posted:

Private Maxwell S. Kattef enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps on 30 October 1942 in New York City, New York. At some point after this date, he was selected for higher level training and wound up being trained as a heavy bomber navigator. My records show that 2nd LT Maxwell S. Kattef reported to the 493rd Bomb Group, at Debach, England, on 24 August 1944, as the Navigator on the crew of 2nd LT James P. Kittleson and was assigned to the 863rd BS. Maxwell's first combat mission was on 9 September 1944 with the target being an anti-aircraft shell plant in Dusseldorf, Germany. His second combat mission was on 11 September 1944 with the target being a synthetic oil refinery in Brux, Czechoslovakia. On 12 September 1944, LT Kittleson and his crew, were flying B-17G 43-38098, with the target being an ordnance factory in Magdeburg, Germany. On this day, the crew included: 2nd LT James P. Kittleson (Pilot); F/O Homer P. Duncan (Co-Pilot); 2nd LT Maxwell S. Kattef (Navigator); 2nd LT Albert A. Christensen (Bombardier); Sgt Calvin T. Bladen (Radio Operator); Sgt Alex E. Alford (Flight Engineer); Sgt William M. Lamkin (Ball Turret Gunner); Sgt Eugene Bosnavits, Jr. (Tail Gunner) and Sgt Joseph G. Eifried (Waist Gunner). Their bomber was attacked by German fighters - FW190s being escorted by Me109s. They were attacking six fighters to each bomber in the formation. LT Kittleson was trying to keep his plane in formation when a fighter set it on fire. Number 3 engine was hit and on fire. The aircraft was under control and kept formation for two minutes. The flames increased and spread until the whole wing was a mass of flames. The bomber rolled over on its back and went into a dive. He gave out the bail out order. Maxwell, along with the ball turret gunner and co-pilot, bailed out at about 26,000 feet, as the pilot tried to hold the plane level for the rest of the crew to get out. Only LT Kittleson, F/O Duncan, LT Kattef and Sgt Lamkin survived and they were taken prisoner by the Germans. LT Kittleson and LT Kattef were sent to Stalag Luft 1 at Barth, Germany. They lived through the winter of 1944-45, the coldest in 40 years huddled around the stove in the crowded barracks, chilled by frigid winds off the Baltic Sea. They endured the twice daily outdoor roll call parades, but suffered no permanent damage. Drunken Russian soldiers liberated Stalag Luft 1 on 26 May 1945. They were sent to France, to Camp Lucky Strike near Dieppe. From there, they flew back to England in a B-17 from their Bomb Group which, luckily, just happened to land there. This memorial story is to honor Maxwell S. Kattef and his service to his country during World War II. Maxwell is truly a hero and a member of the "Greatest Generation." On behalf of the Fighting 493rd Bombardment Group Association, I would like to pass on our most sincere condolences to the family and friends of Maxwell S. Kattef. David Schmitt Director, Fighting 493rd Bombardment Group Association Historian, 493rd Bomb Group

December 11 at 9:52 AM



493Rd Bg Museum Debach England posted:

Sincerest condolences from all of the volunteers at the 493rd BG Museum, Debach England. Maxwell served as a Navigator in the 863rd BS, 493rd BG before being shot down and taken prisoner during WWII

December 9 at 1:52 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Maxwell by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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