

Died in Service But Not KIA

In 1987 when this book was first printed, it was researched to provide answers basically for our men who were listed as KIA on the official Roll of Honor in the Memorial Room in the new Central Library in Norwich, England. However, as the years passed and searches for data continued, other deaths were identified which were not caused by enemy action, and so had not been shown on the official listing except in error.

The Jack Ketchum crew was lost while returning to the US (the war had ended in Europe) so the crew and the six passengers were not shown, either. Consequently, it now seems appropriate that we honor their sacrifice, their loss of lives, whatever the cause.

Now, these men who died in incidents other than action against the enemy are being included in this new section. Their names will appear in date of death order.

Lt. Ben Collier, 68th Squadron, 17 January 1943

COLLIER, BEN V. ASN 0-727317	Bombardier Died of pneumonia, 17 January 1943	2nd Lt.
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Lt. Collier was a member of the Robert A. Norsen crew, 68th Squadron that arrived in England in early October 1942. They were one of the 27 original 44th BG crews that flew to England that month.

Lt. Collier was a member of the Norsen crew that flew the second mission of the war on 9 November 1942, were one of the six crews to bomb a target in Europe. Unfortunately, Lt. Collier later became ill, never flew again due to health reasons, and died from pneumonia on 17 January 1943.

Sgt. Earl Hancock, 66th Squadron, 19 April 1943

HANCOCK, EARL W. ASN 32254108	Ground crew Died of cancer on 19 April 1943	Sgt.	Buffalo, New York
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Note: Hancock is buried in the American Cemetery at Cambridge (F-5-48)

Sgt. Hancock was a member of the Ground Echelon that crossed the Atlantic on the HMS Queen Mary in early September 1942. Records do not provide any data as to his job classification.

Lt. George Blumanthaler, 68th Squadron, October 1943

BLUMANTHALER, GEORGE W. ASN 0-801154	Navigator Killed in a collision with truck in October 1943	2nd Lt.
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Lt. Blumanthaler was a member of the 2nd Lt. Robert E. Rose crew, 68th Squadron that had been assigned to the 44th BG but had not yet reported. They were staying at an airfield at Cheddington, England. On the first day there, Lt. Blumanthaler decided to try to ride the bicycle provided him for transportation on that large base. Evidently, he forgot or did not know that traffic travels on the left side, opposite side from the US, was struck by an Army truck and killed.

The Lt. Rose crew finally arrived at Shipdham on 8 December 1943.

44th Bomb Group Roll of Honor and Casualties

Pvt. Floyd Maynard, 66th Squadron, 28 April 1944

MAYNARD, FLOYD H. ASN 13028712	Ground Personnel Killed in fight	Pvt.	Springvale, Pennsylvania
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Sgt. Maynard was with the ground echelon that went overseas to England in early September 1942 on board the HMS Queen Mary. Apparently, he had Air Gunner training so he flew four combat missions between 6 December 1942 to March 13, 1943. Following that assignment, he again was assigned to activities on the ground.

On 28 April 1944, at 2345 hours, Pvt. Maynard lost his life. Investigation as to the cause of his death eventually disclosed that an unidentified 392nd BG man was involved in an argument and attempted to hit another man with a large piece of wood. Unfortunately, his aim was bad and he accidentally hit Sgt. Maynard on the head, fractured his skull, and death was almost immediate.

T/Sgt. Daniel Mattis, 66th/506th Squadrons, 16 July 1944

MATTIS, DANIEL A. ASN 32453451	Radio Operator Died in automobile accident 16 July 1944	T/Sgt.
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Note: Mattis is buried in Mt. Calvary Cemetery, Linden, NJ.

Sgt. Mattis' combat record shows that he flew a total of 14 missions overall. Available records do not show when Sgt. Mattis arrived in the 66th Squadron or with which crew he was assigned but they do show that his first few combat missions flown were with the 66th Squadron. The first mission was flown on 13 August 1943 with the Flaherty crew, apparently as a replacement radio operator. Three days later, he was again a replacement radio operator on Lt. Comey's crew.

The Group returned to Shipdham after the 1 October 1943 mission, and Sgt. Mattis did not fly another mission until 11 December, then again on 30 January 1944. He flew more often in February, but then transferred to the 506th Sq. for reasons unknown. All of his combat missions were with different crews apparently filling in for an absent radio operator. Then, his last mission flown was completed on June 23, 1944. Unfortunately, on the night of 16 July, he was involved in a vehicle accident off the base and was killed.

1st Lt. Robert B. Weatherwax, a 67th Sq. Navigator who had completed his tour had received orders to supervise the transportation of some young women to a dance at a base nearby. Their vehicle was a large canvass covered truck, and they were on a country road when they collided with a "recon" vehicle. The severe collision knocked the recon into a ditch, and Lt. Weatherwax was knocked unconscious. When he recovered, he checked the passengers, two of the women were cut a bit, but not serious.

However, T/Sgt. Daniel Mattis had suffered a broken back, and did not recover. Two of his friends were cut and bruised, but not life-threatening.

S/Sgt. Kenneth James, Finance Section, 30 August 1944

JAMES, KENNETH D.	Gunner Died after collision with truck 30 August 1944	S/Sgt.
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On the evening of 29 August, S/Sgt. James was riding his bicycle near the base. He was involved in an accident with a large truck and was so seriously injured that he died the next day, 30 August 1944.

Sgt. Cecil Stone, 68th Squadron, December 1944

STONE, CECIL F.
ASN 18179190

Gunner Sgt.
Died of cardiac arrest in December 1944

Sgt. Stone joined the 68th Squadron as a gunner on the Robert A. Edmonson crew 18 April 1944. He flew his four missions between 26 April and 1 May 1944. Apparently, he was then removed from combat status, was assigned to groundwork. It is possible that he was transferred to the 464th Sub Depot at Shipdham, but no further details could be located. He died of a cardiac arrest in December of 1944.
