

Bland (Buddy) Massie Barnes, Jr.

23 November 1923 – 11 August 1945

Lost 3 months after war in Europe ended in plane crash

Bland (Buddy) Massie Barnes, Jr. was born 23 November 1923 to Bland M. Barnes, Sr., and Sally Metzula (Stephens) Barnes in Galveston County Texas. He is the couple's 2nd child, joining 1 year old sister Salie. The 1920 Census, taken a few years before Bland was born, showed his parents living in Virginia with his grandparents. Sally was from Texas, so looks like the family moved back to be close to her family. The 1930 Census showed the family living at 2307 32nd in Galveston. They are renting for \$50 a month and do not have a radio set. Bland Sr. is working as a Clerk in the Cotton Industry and was a World War I Veteran. Sally is a stay-at-home mother and both kids are in school. The 1940 Census showed the family moved to 4901 Houston Dr. in Galveston. They own the house, valued at \$5500. Sally's little sister Jane is living with the family. She is a Teacher in a Public School. Bland Sr. is still a Clerk in the Cotton Industry. In 1939 he worked 52 weeks and earned \$1560. Sally worked as a Fitter in a Retail Clothing Store. She also worked 52 weeks in 1939 and earned \$1560. Salie has finished 4 years of High School while Bland Jr. had finished 3 years. He graduated from Ball High School in Galveston in the spring of 1942. His Draft Card, dated 30 June 1942, showed he was still living in the family home in Galveston and his father was the person who always knew where he was. He was 5' 11" tall, weighed 150 lbs., with blue eyes and red hair. He was unemployed at that time. Looked like he entered Texas A&M in the fall of 1942. He was in ROTC, 2nd Headquarter Battery, Field Artillery.

Bland was drafted into the Army during his Sophomore year. His Service # 38420666. Later he qualified for flight training, becoming part of Class 44-E. In the fall of 1943, he started with Pre-Flight. Later he did his Primary flight at Santa Anna California. He flew PT-22s. Next was Basic at Lemoore, California. Here he flew BT-15s. During these

REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after January 1, 1922 and on or before June 30, 1942)

1. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)
M 522 Bland Massie Barnes, Jr.

2. PLACE OF BIRTH (Street, City, State)
4901 Houston Drive, Galveston, Texas

3. DATE OF BIRTH (Month, Day, Year)
11 23 1923

4. PLACE OF BIRTH (City, State)
Galveston, Texas

5. PLACE OF ENROLLMENT IN SCHOOL
Unemployed

6. SIGNATURE (Last, First, Middle Initial)
Bland Barnes, Jr.

4 months of flight training, he flew a total of 137:40, 56:25 dual and 81:15 solo. On 14 March 1944 Cadet Barnes started Advance flight at Luke Field in Arizona. He flew mostly AT-6s, but also spent 10 hours in a P-40. This was 32:20 dual, 69:10 solo, for a total of 101:30. On 23 May he was awarded his wings and promoted to Flight Officer, with a new Service # T-4017. Next F/O Barnes was sent to Patterson Field, Colorado Springs, Colorado. Over the next 3 months he flew about 80 times, mostly in P-40s, for about 150 hours. On 15 July F/O Barnes crashed a P-40 at Buckley Field in Denver. It was a P-40 N, Serial # 43-23880, and it suffered an engine failure. The plane was heavily damaged, requiring a major overhaul, but F/O Barnes was unhurt. In October he went to Harding Field in Baton Rouge, Louisiana for final preparation before being deployed overseas as a replacement pilot to the Fifteenth Air Force in Italy. He was assigned to the 319th Fighter Squadron, 325th Fighter Group. He flew a P-51 for the first time on 5 December and had 7 more flights to learn the new plane and area. He flew his first combat mission on 8 January 1945. He was credited with 1 victory on 1 March 1945 during an escort mission of B-24s to Moosbierbaum, Austria. After the bombers dropped their loads, the 325th saw a group of enemy fighters below, and attacked. 5 were shot down, with 1 probable. F/O Barnes got a FW-190. A few weeks later, on 26 March, F/O Barnes got another 190 during a strafing attack over Czechoslovakia and Austria. On that same mission he wrote a 'witness statement' for Lt. Kahl's MACR. He flew 29 combat missions before the war in Europe



ended. Also in May, he was promoted to a Commissioned Officer, getting a new Service # O-2039374. 2nd Lt. Barnes and the 325th stayed in Italy just in case they were needed in the Pacific. He and the other pilots kept flying training missions through the summer. On 11 August, he was flying in an old B-25 C, 41-13085, piloted by his squadron Commander, Major Johnson. Also onboard was Lt. Agee, a flight school classmate, Lt. Gertin, and T/Sgt. Tomey. As this plane was taking off, one of its engines failed and it crashed. All 5 onboard were lost. In 1949, Lt. Bland 'Buddy' Barnes was brought home and is buried at Forest Park Cemetery in Houston, TX next to his buddy Lt. Agee.