

Hal Francis Tomey

23 November 1919 - 11 August 1945

Killed 3 months after war in Europe ended

Hal Francis Tomey was born 23 November 1919 in Labette County Kansas to William E. and Cecilia Telfer (Foster) Tomey. Labette is located in Southeast Kansas, about 170 miles south of Kansas City. He is the couple's 4th child, joining Nellie, born 1906, Merle, born 1908, and Lloyd, born 1910. His grandparents were one of the earliest settlers in this area. The 1920 Census showed them living on the family farm in Hackberry Township. They own it, free of a mortgage and do General Farming. It also showed William's family was from Indiana, while Cecilia's family was from Canada. The 3 older children are in school. The 1925 Kansas State Census showed the family on the farm, but it has grown. Little sister Wilma was born 1923. The 1930 Census showed the family on the farm, but Nellie and Merle are not listed, guessing they moved out. Lloyd is an unpaid Farm Worker. Hal and Wilma are both in school. They do not have a radio set. The 1940 Census showed the family still on the farm that they own, valued at only \$900. Lloyd is no longer listed. Hal and Wilma have both finished the 8th grade and are now working on the farm. They have a roomer, Grace Bennett, who is a School Teacher. In 1939 William worked all 52 weeks but showed no income from the Farm. Hal worked 52 weeks and earned \$350 as a Farm Laborer, and Wilma worked 52 weeks, earning \$100 as a House Maid.

Hal's Draft Card, dated 1 July 1941, showed the address of the family farm as RFD #3, Chetopa. He was working on the family farm, 6' tall, weighed 150 lbs., with brown hair and eyes. He joined the Army Air Corp on 14 January 1941 at Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, MO. He was single with no dependents and finished 1 year of high school. His Serial # 17035548. He was selected for Technical Training as an Aviation Mechanic. He

REGISTRATION CARD			
1. SERIAL NUMBER	2. NAME (Print)	3. ORDER NUMBER	
17035548	Hal Francis Tomey	732	
4. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print)			
RFD #3 Chetopa Labette Kansas			
5. PLACE OF BIRTH (Print)			
Hartlett, Mo.			
6. DATE OF BIRTH			
Nov. 23, 1919			
7. OCCUPATION			
Farmer			
8. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS			
W. F. Tomey, RFD #3, Chetopa, Kansas (Father)			
9. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS			
Self & father			
10. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS			
RFD #3 Chetopa Labette Kansas			
11. I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.			
12. SIGNATURE OF REGISTRANT			
Hal Francis Tomey			



attended schools at Sheppard Field, Texas, Chanute Field, Illinois and at the Curtis Wright School in NY, builder of the P-40 Warhawks, and Mitchell Field, NY. When finished with these training schools, the 319th Fighter Squadron, part of the 325th Fighter Group was being formed at Renschler Field, Hartford, Connecticut. During the last 3 months of 1942, the 325th was busy training pilots, mechanics and other support

personnel. On 1 January 1943, the pilots of the 325th were ordered to travel by train to Langley Field, Virginia, where they found 72 brand new P-40 Fs, Packard Merlin powered versions of the famous Warhawk. The Navy gave these pilots some intense training on how to fly off an aircraft carrier using only 425 feet of deck. Navy planes only got 390 feet. Within a few days, these P-40s and pilots were loaded onto the carrier Ranger, and all flew off to Casablanca on 19 January.

As the pilots were riding across the Atlantic on the Ranger, the Air Echelon, being Crew Chiefs and Armorers, traveled by train to West Palm Beach, Florida, then flew across the Atlantic via the Southern Air Route. This route was by Trinidad, Puerto Rico, British Guiana, and Brazil. Then across the Atlantic via Ascension Island to Gold Coast, and up the west coast of Africa to Tafaraoui, Algeria.

Everyone else, the Ground Echelon, traveled by train to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey for final preparation for overseas deployment. In February they moved by train to New York City, boarded the USS Lyon and sailed the next day for Algeria.

Newspaper reports said Hal departed the US in February 1943, so it looks like he deployed with the Ground Echelon. During this time the 325th was ordered to give about half of its planes to the 33rd Fighter Group, then in heavy combat against the Luftwaffe and Rommel's Africa Corp. This gave the 325th some extra time to get everyone overseas and train. In early April, the 319th and 318th squadrons were ordered to move up to Montesquieu, Algeria and prepare for combat. Still short of planes, the 317th stayed behind. On 17 April 1943, the 319th and 318th squadrons flew their first combat mission, escorting B-26s of the 321st Bomber Group. Hal Tomey spent the next 2½ years overseas with the 325th Fighter Group. He rose to the rank of Technical Sergeant (T/Sgt.). The 325th traveled east across N. Africa, then crossed the Mediterranean to Italy and up the boot as Allied Armies moved. Few records are available at this time on his overseas duties. His name did appear on a Hospital Record in May 1944 for a tooth issue. Soon after this he spent 4 months in Russia helping to develop air bases for the Shuttle Missions. When Stalin cancelled these successful missions, T/Sgt. Tomey returned to the 319th in Italy. When the War in Europe ended, the 325th stayed in Italy just in case it was needed in the Pacific. During this time many members who were overseas the longest were rotated home, but T/Sgt. Tomey stayed.

On 11 August 1945, T/Sgt. Hal Francis Tomey was killed when a B-25 he was riding in suffered an engine failure on takeoff. It was piloted by Major Ralph F. Johnson, the 319th Commander. Others on board were 1st Lt. Leo A. Gertin, 1st Lt. Ostor L. Agee, and 2nd Lt. Bland M. Barnes. All 5 were killed, and initially buried at a US Cemetery in Bari, Italy. In 1950, T/Sgt. Toney was brought back to the US

and buried at Santa Fe National Cemetery in New Mexico. The family also has a marker at Lake Creek Union Cemetery in Bartlett, KS.