

Mark Pomeroy Boone, Jr.

31 March 1919 - 21 July 1943

World War II Pilot, 325th Fighter Group

Mark Pomeroy Boone, Jr. was born 31 March 1919 in Peru, Indiana to Mark Sr. and Hortense Helen (Perry) Boone. He joined older brother Byron, who was 19 then. The 1920 Census shows the family in Peru, Indiana with father Mark working as a manufacturer at Gas Stove Yards. He owns his home and looks like mortgage is paid off. The 1930 Census shows the family has moved to Monticello, Indiana with them living in a rented home, \$40.00 a month, with a radio set. Father Mark works at a Ford automotive dealer. Big brother Byron has moved to Evanston, Illinois and is working as an Interior Designer. 10 April 1934 is a sad day, Mark, Sr. dies of suicide. Soon after this Hortense and Mark, Jr. move back to Peru, Indiana, where Mark attends Peru High School, and graduated with the class of 1937. Per his yearbook, Mark was in the Stamp Club, Radio Club and ran track. No 1940 census information was found.



Enlistment records showed Mark enlisted on 6 September 1942 at Spencer Field, Georgia. However, after reading John Rauth's book "Seven Hours a Prisoner" I believe this is when Mark received his wings and became a Staff Sergeant Pilot. Looks like he joined the Army in late 1941, and soon after Pearl Harbor was attacked qualified as an Aviation Cadet. A Medical Record showed he visited a Dentist on 16 December 1941 and again on 3 January 1942, but no details were given. It showed he was with the 86th Company, possibly Basic Training at Mitchel Field, NY. His Service number was #15020032. He was assigned to Class 42-H. In February 1942 he started Primary Flight at Camden, South Carolina. This is where Cadets first learn to fly. Mark flies a PT-17 for a total of 60:05 time, 29:21 dual, and 30:44 solo. He finished Primary 30 April. Next was Basic Flight at Bush Field, Augusta, Georgia. Here he flies BT-13 and BT-15 planes for 70:15 time, 25:16 dual and 44:19 solo. After finishing Basic on 2 July, he next went to Advance Flight training at Spence Field in Moultrie, Georgia. Here he flew AT-6 for 75:05 time, 19:00 dual and 56:05 solo. He was awarded his Wings on 6 September 1942. Staff Sergeant Pilot Boone traveled to Boston, and within a few weeks was assigned to

the 318th Fighter Squadron, 325th Fighter Group. He soloed in a P-40 on 29 September at Bedford, Massachusetts. In October the 318th moved to Grenier Field



in Manchester, New Hampshire. The last 3 months of 1942 were busy getting ready for overseas deployment. He flew about 60 training flights for about 80 hours of flight time. Flying Sergeants were promoted to Flight Officers at the end of 1942. F/O Boone was given a new service number, T-186031. At the end of 1942, F/O Boone had 83:35 time in fighters, 205:25 training time, 2:30 navigation and 4:35 in a

Link trainer. Early January 1943 the 325th traveled by train to Norfolk, Virginia. The 318th Squadron boarded the train first and quickly took over the plush Parlor Car. When they arrived, they were issued brand new Merlin powered P-40Fs. The next few days the Navy taught Army pilots how to fly off an aircraft carrier. 8 January saw 72 P-40s loaded onto the USS Ranger for delivery to North



Africa. The Navy, in a good will gesture to the Army, gave Army pilots 425 feet of deck to fly off while the Navy only uses 390 feet. 19 January they flew off the Ranger to an airbase close to Casablanca. Due to combat losses, many planes from the 325th were given to the 33rd Fighter Group in heavy combat. But this gave them extra time for more training. F/O Boone flew 35 times in February and March for almost 67 hours. Mid-April 2 of 3 squadrons were moved up into combat. The 318th and 319th flew their first combat mission on 17 April. However, his flight records did not indicate which of his flights were Combat or training. About a month later the entire Group was in combat.

Ernest McDowell's book "Checkertail Clan" mentions F/O Boone a few times. "All squadrons were up to escort bombers to Decimomannu on 27 May, and when their charges were jumped by the enemy, they waded in and shot down 6 of the attacking force. Major Bob Baseler and Capt. E. B. Howe each bagged a Macchi M. C202, Lt. Spot Collins got an ME-109 as did F/Os John Smallsreed, Dick Catlin and Boone". He also took part in the 1 June 43 surprise attack on the Stagnone Seaplane Base on Sicily. 12 seaplanes were destroyed, 6 probable, and 4

boats were strafed. F/O Boone was credited with another 109 destroyed on 24 June and 12 July over Sardinia.

F/O Mark P. Boone was lost 21 July 1943 during a Fighter Sweep over Sardinia. He was 1 of 2 pilots lost that day. However, the enemy lost 17 planes. The 318th Squadron did fly a search for the lost pilots over the Gulf of Cagliari after the mission but did not find them. Since he was never found, the Air Force declared him dead on 23 July 1944. Flight Officer Mark P. Boone is Memorialized on the Tablet of the Missing at North Africa American Cemetery in Tunisia. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross after he was lost.

In 1986, Dr. Robert G. Ruetz, nephew of pilot Hubert M. Miller, who was lost during the same mission, requested F/O Boone's IDPF, along with records of Lt. Miller.