

AVIATION WALL OF HONOR



Lieutenant John Hascall Killed in Action

John Hascall was born in Calumet, Michigan on January 1, 1918 but moved shortly afterward with his family to Marquette. After graduating from Marquette High School, he attended Michigan Tech receiving two degrees, a B.S. in geology and also mining engineering. Prior to enlistment in the Army, he was employed by the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company at Pueblo, Colorado. He received his Army wings and commission in May, 1942 at Williams Field, Chandler, Arizona. In August, he joined the 77th Fighter Group, 20th Fighter Group based at Kings Cliffe Airfield, Northamptonshire, England, flying Lockheed's P-38 Lightning.

On November 29, 1943 their mission was to escort a Bomber Group to a target area, the harbor in Bremen, Germany. They were intercepted by 40 Messerschmitt BF 109 Fighters. Hascall was shot down by a German BF 109 over Meppel, Netherlands.

His tragic death was witnessed by a Dutch villager who was cycling down a rural road in the neighborhood of Wanneperveen. He described the weather as very stormy with heavy rain. He heard the sound of a plane and then spotted it coming straight down out of the clouds and then into a small lake. Suddenly a parachute appeared and a man hanging from it. He appeared

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to be alright for in preparation of landing in the lake. He pulled off his heavy boots and was then holding an airbag or cushion, which would help him stay afloat. Unfortunately because of the wind he had difficulty in freeing himself from his parachute. A police rescue boat was launched but because of the heavy wind and waves, great difficulty was encountered in trying to reach the airman. He was ultimately pulled aboard the boat and rowed ashore. Artificial respiration was applied by the police and later a doctor tried for three hours to revive him, but to no avail.

Local people made a coffin and on December 3, 1943 the clergyman performed the service before he was buried in the village churchyard.

In summary, Mr. J. Van Der Luur, the villager who witnessed the tragedy, wrote this to the Hascall family:

“This is the sad story of John Hascall who gave his life for the liberation of Europe. I do hope very much you will understand how proud we in Holland are of any Allied soldier fighting far from home and family for our liberation. When I saw John lying there in an unknown village to him and also to you, I stood thinking the great difference between his and my fighting. I fought in my own country and for my own country, but he was fighting outside his country for another county, so that everybody might live there in peace and freedom as in America.”

TJ Mudge, April 2004