

AVIATION WALL OF HONOR

1st Lieutenant Henry William Tikkanen Pilot, U.S. Army Air Corps Killed in Action



Henry Tikkanen, son of Paul and Hilma Tikkanen, was born August 23, 1918 in Marquette, Michigan. He enjoyed sports and the outdoors, but even as a boy, aspired to have an aviation career. He attended John D. Pierce after the sixth grade and graduated in 1936. In his senior year he was president of the Hi-Y Club, a member of the Junior Kaleva and served as assistant Scout Master in Boy Scouts. Following high school he went to Detroit to take private flying lessons and to study transport pilot texts, but made his first solo flight under the tutelage of Sig Wilson at the Marquette County Airport.

After a year at Northern Michigan College of Education, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps on November 6, 1939 and received most of his early training at Selfridge Field, Michigan. During that time he advanced steadily from private to corporal, sergeant and then technical sergeant. On August 15, 1941 he was given the rating of air mechanic, first class. Then, after an eight-month

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correspondence course, he received an aviation mechanics degree on January 13, 1942 from the Air Corps Institute at Scott Field, Illinois.

His next advancement was the appointment as an aviation cadet April 4, 1942 assigned to Santa Ana, California. This was followed by officer candidate school at Miami Beach, Florida and after commissioned as a second lieutenant duty at General Mitchell Field in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. His next assignment was Fort Bragg, North Carolina followed by duty at Fort Benning, Georgia and on February 4, 1943 he received his commission of first lieutenant.

On May 4, 1943 while piloting an army transport plane it crashed into Mobile Bay shortly after take off from Brookley Field, Alabama. Henry was killed; the co-pilot and one other crewman were injured but survived the accident.

Besides his parents, he left a brother Paul (Private, Army Air Corps) and a sister Ingrid. His body was brought back to Marquette under the personal military escort of Lt. Joe B. Taylor one of his closest friends in the squadron. Military funeral services were conducted by the Rev. A. J. Maki of the Finnish Lutheran Church before burial in the family plot in Park Cemetery.

In a letter to Henry's parents, Major Charles S. Marshall, Commander of the 5th Troop Carrier Squadron, Army Air Corps, Ft. Benning, Georgia eulogized their son with these words: "His excellent character, moral qualities, and superior devotion to duty not only bespoke his commendable fitness as a soldier and officer, but also the lofty esteem as a person and friend in which he was looked up to by those of our squadron and others who were in his contact."

TJ Mudge, Dec. 2006