

AVIATION WALL OF HONOR

S Sgt Rudolph O. Ketola

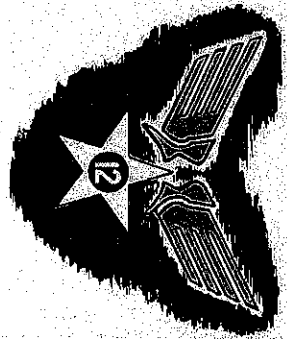
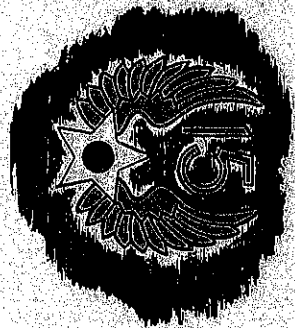
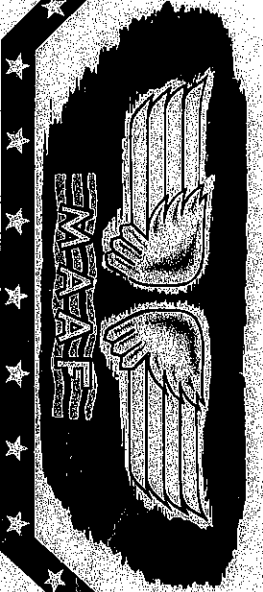


Rudolph ("Rudy") A. Ketola was born on November 19, 1921 in Princeton, Michigan. He graduated from Gwinn High School in June 1941. In September 1941 he moved to Detroit where he worked as a sheet metal and machinist technician apprentice until he enlisted in the Army Air Force in October 1942. He was shipped to Perin Field, Texas for basic training. From there he went to Chaniete Field, Rantoul, Illinois to attend machinist and sheet metal school. In May 1943 he was shipped to San Francisco and in September 1943 he was sent overseas to Africa via Virginia and across the Atlantic on a Liberty troop ship. He and 50 other GIs spent 25 days at sea in a convoy. When the convoy entered the Mediterranean Sea, it was attacked by German aircraft and several ships were sunk.

Ketola was transferred to Italy where he was assigned to a B-25 bomber unit as a tail gunner after having completed a course on aerial gunnery. He flew his first mission out of Foggia. Late in September 1943 the bomb group was sent to a new base near Naples. An eruption of Mount Vesuvius severely damaged their aircraft, and his unit moved to the island of Corsica where they received new aircraft. During his tour of duty at Corsica the bomb group lost over 50 aircraft to German air attacks and bombing missions.

After flying 56 combat missions, Rudy was sent back to the United States in October 1944 and spent 6 months in a convalescent home in Kentucky before being assigned to Dover Air Base, Delaware. He received his discharge from the service in September 1945.

S Sgt Ketola's awards and decorations include: Air Medal (5) with a Silver Oak Leaf cluster; Distinguished Unit Badge; European-African-Middle East Theater of Operations ribbon/medal with four bronze battle stars. Battles and campaigns include: Naples - Foggia; Rome - ARNO; Southern France; air offensives; and two overseas service bars.



For Valor

FROM THE
ARMY AIR FORCES
MEDITERRANEAN THEATRE OF OPERATIONS

*It is with great personal pride that I present this certificate to
Sgt. Rudolph O. Ketola 18146587 Gunner
who, having been engaged in 56 combat missions in the
Mediterranean theatre in air battles of great intensity, has
gallantly and repeatedly carried the offensive against heavy
opposition to the heart of the enemy and has, by his unflinching
courage, earned the gratitude and praise of his fellow —
countrymen, as well as his Commander:*

John A. Egan
Lieutenant General U.S. Army
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS

TWELFTH



AIR FORCE

The Air Medal

is awarded

Rudolph O. Ketola, Staff Sergeant, Air Corps

340th Bombardment Group (M)

by direction of the President, under the provisions of Army Regulation 600-45 as amended, and pursuant to authority vested in me by the Commanding General, Mediterranean Theater of Operations.

Citation

For meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight as tail gunner of a B-25 type aircraft during an attack upon enemy communication lines near Arezzano, Italy on 23 January 1944. Staff Sergeant Ketola's proficiency in combat reflects great credit upon himself and the Military Service of the United States.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John K. Cannon', is written over the typed name.

JOHN K. CANNON
Major General, USA
Commanding

G. O. No. 133, 19 August 1944