

Lt Tonnis Boukamp O-026182

668BS Pilot - 64 missions

Tonnis Boukamp was born December 28, 1920 in Muskegon County, Michigan to Mr. and Mrs. William Boukamp.

Tonnis graduated high school in Port Huron, Michigan in 1939 with high scores and the President of his class. His boyhood dream was to attend West point and become a pilot.

After one year at Port Huron Junior Class, he entered The United States Military Academy. In June of 1943, he received his commission in the Army Air Force at West Point with a Bachelor of Science Degree. He spent the summer of '43 taking classes and training in the twin engine A-20.

By September, 1943, Lt. Boukamp had finished classes and joined the 416th Bomb Group. Hard work had paid off and finally his dream of becoming a pilot was fulfilled.

March 26, 1944

Lt. Tonnis Boukamp commented on the lack of flak on the March 26, 1944 no ball mission to Vacqueriette, Germany. Thirty-six planes lifted into the sky. "We just sat there on our bomb run, which lasted about a minute, and not a shot came up." The bombs were released from around 1200 feet and according to SSgt Earnest Kelly, a transplanted Oklahoman turned gunner, "Every bomb hit in the target area. All planes returned safely."

Lt. Boukamp was not to miss the D-Day Invasion. He flew the morning bombing mission in 43-9840 for the attack on a road junction in Argentan. Sgt Constantine Vafiadis and Sgt Ralph C. Hoffman were on board in the gunner positions.

Lt. Boukamp flew 35 more missions between D-Day and his last mission. During that time his daughter Linda Annette had been born on July 31, 1944. After 65 missions he could return to the states to an office job and finally be with his wife and daughter.

His 64th mission was on the 29th of September 1944, the target was a warehouse and marshalling yard at Bitburg, Germany. Several planes dropped their eggs, results were excellent. Flak was dense.

Lt. Boukamp's plane was hit by flying cannon debris that defended the target. Both engines were hit and were on fire. The plane broke away from the formation in a gentle glide, but the plane was still under control, heading southwest, 8 miles southwest of the target. No chutes were seen, but his gunners Staff Sergeants Russell J. Colosimo and Jeong S. Wing were able to get out of the ship. Lt. Boukamp was killed. The gunners were taken POW. All three had almost completed their tours of duty.

The brave pilot held The Air Medal with many Oak Clusters.

Lt. Boukamp was married to Doris L. Boman. He left behind the infant daughter that he had fought so hard to hold.

A few years later, Mrs. Boukamp married Vincent Castello in St Clair, Michigan. Linda Annette married Thomas Edward Gosens, March 1967.

Lt. Boukamp is laid to rest under a white cross at Luxembourg American Cemetery. The graves are mowed and loved by local volunteers who carry beautiful flowers to their heroes. Rest In Peace Lt. Boukamp and thank you for your courage and devotion to your country!