



Personal info

Full name

MASSA, Attilio

Date of birth

4 December 1920

Age

24

Place of birth

New York, New York County, New York

Hometown

The Bronx, Bronx County, New York

Military service

Service number

32871894

Rank

Technical Sergeant

Unit

**614th Bombardment Squadron,
401st Bombardment Group, Heavy**

Awards

**Air Medal with 4 Oak Leaf Clusters,
Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster**

Death & Grave

Status

Killed in Action

Date of death

20 April 1945

Cemetery

American War Cemetery Margraten

Walls of the Missing

Immediate family

Members

Anthony Massa (father)

Rose Massa (mother)

Mary Massa (sister)

Emily Massa (sister)

William G. Massa (brother)

Plane data

Serial number

43-39125

Data

Type: B-17G

Nickname: Der Grossarchvogel

Destination: Brandenburg, Germany

Mission: Bombing of marshalling yards

MACR: 14174

More information

T/Sgt Attilio Massa enlisted in New York City, New York, on 23 April 1943.

The 401st put up three squadrons comprising the 94th Combat Wing "B" Group on this mission to Brandenburg, near Berlin. The weather was clear, and bombing patterns were believed to have covered the aiming points, but smoke and ground haze made it difficult to assess the damage. There was considerable flak over the target area, and B-17 No. 43-39125 ("Der Grossarchvogel"), piloted by Lt Aubrey J. Bradley, Jr., was hit in the right wing, causing a fire in the No. 4 engine. The aircraft then pulled out of the formation and salvoed its bombs, but the wing quickly burned off, and the aircraft rolled into a spin. Five of the crew were killed in the crash. The pilot, Lt. Bradley, parachuted to safety but was nearly beaten to death by German civilians. The waist gunner, S/Sgt F. C. Nachtigal, on the other hand, escaped with the help of his German guard, who had been ordered to shoot him. Sgt Willis T. Vaughan, the ball turret gunner, was thrown from the aircraft when it blew up and parachuted safely. However, he was injured in the blast and, after landing, was roughed up by civilians before being saved by German Air Force personnel. While a number of other missions were briefed, all were scrubbed, and this turned out to be the last mission flown by the 401st.

Photos



Photo source: www.findagrave.com - Fred Munckhof, www.wwiimemorial.com - William G. Massa (brother)