



Personal info

Full name

HALEY, Daniel Mungen

Date of birth

11 November 1923

Age

20

Place of birth

Fort Wayne, Allen County, Indiana

Hometown

Chicago, Cook County, Illinois

Military service

Service number

O-824483

Rank

Second Lieutenant

Unit

**49th Fighter Squadron,
14th Fighter Group**

Awards

**Purple Heart,
Air Medal**

Death & Grave

Status

Killed in Action

Date of death

17 August 1944

Cemetery

American War Cemetery Ardennes

Plot	Row	Grave
C	4	29

Immediate family

Members

Daniel R. Haley (father)**Grace Haley (mother)****Mary Haley (sister)**

Plane data

Serial number

44-23205

Data

Type: P-38J

Destination: Montpellier-Toulouse, France

Mission: Reconnaissance

MACR: 12392

More information

2nd Lt Daniel M. Haley attended Northwestern University with the Class of 1946. He joined the Air Corps of the U.S. Army Reserve in Chicago, Illinois, on 21 October 1942.

Statement from 2nd Lt. Roger D. Weatherbee, who participated in the same mission:

"Three airplanes from 49th Fighter Squadron and three from 48th Fighter Squadron went on a reconnaissance mission to Toulouse, France. We were also to strafe the airdrome northwest of the town. Lt Haley's plane was hit over the field, and the right engine caught fire. I saw his plane pull up and roll over on its back. It was flaming all over then and crashed in the town. Something fell out of the plane when it rolled over, which could have been the pilot. The plane was approximately at 300 feet, and I never saw a chute open. The time was 1730 hours."

Story written by Karen S. Scheider, 8 September 1997:

"After 53 Years, a French town Learns the Identity of the unknown American Pilot who died there - and a sister learns the fate of the brother she lost. - In a narrow backstreet on the outskirts of Toulouse, France, a crowd of a thousand listens in silence to the American national anthem. Most do not know one another; few knew the man they have gathered to honor. But almost every one of them has harbored a haunting memory for more than half a century: On 17 August 1944, an American P-38 Lightning fighter plane was raked with machine-gun fire over the German-occupied city, sending its pilot to his death. Three days later, Toulouse was liberated. The pilot, whose body had been taken away by German soldiers, was never again heard of - but he was not forgotten. 'To me, in a way, it was through his death that we were liberated,' says Georges Merolli, 70, who was a young electrician's assistant when he saw the pilot eject from the plane and hit a factory wall before his parachute could open. 'After the war, we talked about this man. Who was he? We never knew.'

"They know now. Thanks to the relentless work of a handful of strangers both in France and America—aided by the powerful search capabilities of the Internet—the anonymous aviator who 'died for our liberty,' as Toulouse Mayor Dominique Baubis puts it, now has an identity: Daniel Haley, of Chicago, age 20 on his last flight. And the residents of Toulouse are not the only ones on this August afternoon eager to replace the plaque that has long honored their Unknown American with one recognizing 2nd Lt Daniel Haley. Standing in their midst, Mary Haley Poole, 72, a retired medical administrator from Charlotte, N.C., wipes away tears. Until a few months ago, she knew only that her big brother had been killed in action somewhere in France. 'We never knew the details of his death,' Poole says as her daughter Mindy Chebaut embraces her. 'She still can't talk about it without crying,' says Chebaut, 43. 'But it's a good sadness, closure after so many years.'

"The path to that closure began three years ago, during the 50th anniversary celebrations of D Day. That was when Valérie Sitnikow, now 32, a reporter for Toulouse's daily *La Dépêche du Midi*, received a phone call from a Toulouse resident who wanted to know why the Unknown American was still unknown. Intrigued, Sitnikow wrote an article that cited a few details—"Eyewitnesses had seen the body rolled into its parachute by Germans," she says—but no real leads. So she continued digging through the city's medical records, and in 1996 found the name of an American soldier declared dead in a Toulouse hospital three days after witnesses dated the crash: 2nd Lt. Daniel Haley.

"Jacques Laroux, a retired pilot and author specializing in World War II military aircraft activity in France, had read Sitnikow's article on Haley and encouraged her to take the next step—across the Atlantic. With the blessings of her editor, she and Laroux hit the archives at the Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama, in August 1996, and turned up a missing aircraft report with Haley's name. Listed in related documents among the others in his squadron was a Roger D. Weatherbee. On 12 September 1996, Sitnikow reached Weatherbee, 72, a retired business executive, on the phone at his home in Windsor Locks, Conn. Revisiting his past was not easy for Weatherbee. 'Roger talked very little about the war,' says his wife, Lorraine. 'So when the need came to talk about Dan Haley, well, there were a lot of sleepless nights.' Still,

Weatherbee's account of Haley's last mission allowed Sitnikow to confirm Haley as Toulouse's Unknown American and to fill in some of the missing details: On his third combat mission, 23 days after arriving in Europe, Haley was returning to his base on Corsica from bombing an enemy airfield when his plane was hit.

"But Sitnikow's story almost ended right there. A search of War Department records in Washington had yielded the 53-year-old address of Haley's parents, but she could not track down any kin—until Weatherbee took over. First, he contacted Chicago Mayor Richard Daley's office, which sent him voting registration records from the '40s, identifying residents in the building where the Haleys had lived. Then Weatherbee hit the Internet phone directories, calling people across the country whose names matched those on the voter list. After months of dead-end inquiries, he reached an 80-year-old man in Florida who recalled the family from Chicago, says Weatherbee, and said they had a daughter and that she may have been married in [a local] church. After contacting a handful of churches, Weatherbee learned that a Mary Haley had indeed married a James Poole in 1946 at St. Timothy's Catholic Church. But tracking them down proved daunting. 'There are 69 James Pooles and 256 Mary Pooles listed [in the country], to be exact,' says Weatherbee with a laugh. Dozens of calls turned up nothing. And then, on impulse, Lorraine suggested he try Mary's maiden name. Three calls later, on March 3, he reached a Mary H. Poole. Yes, she told him, she had been married in Chicago, and yes, she had a brother named Daniel. What she heard next left her speechless: 'I was with your brother the day he was shot down over France.' Says Poole: 'That's when the waterworks started. I cry easily.'

"But in Toulouse, where Poole and Weatherbee joined returning residents in celebrating Haley's heroics, tears give way to smiles. 'We're finally at peace with the story,' says Monique Leusson, who was 16 when she witnessed the pilot's death. 'We're happy to know who our Unknown American is, to know he has a sister. We can finally say 'Thank you' in person."

Lt Haley is remembered with a mural and plaque on the wall of the Airbus St.-Eloi factory.

Photos



