



Personal info

Full name

BEERBOWER, Don Merrill "Buzz"

Date of birth

26 August 1921

Age

22

Place of birth

Davidson, Saskatchewan, Canada

Hometown

Hill City, Aitkin County, Minnesota

Military service

Service number

O-730341

Rank

Major

Unit

**353rd Fighter Squadron,
354th Fighter Group**

Awards

**Distinguished Service Cross,
Silver Star,
Distinguished Flying Cross**

Death & Grave

Status

Killed in Action

Date of death

9 August 1944

Cemetery

American War Cemetery Epinal

Plot	Row	Grave
A	30	42

Immediate family

Members

Clarence W. Beerbower (father)
Josephine F. (Carson) Beerbower (mother)
Lavaun Beerbower (sister)
Darrel W. Beerbower (brother)
Elayne A. (Kutcher) Beerbower (wife)
Bonita L. Beerbower (daughter)
Dawn M. Beerbower (daughter)

Plane data

Serial number

43-12375

Data

Type: P-51B
Nickname: Bonnie B
Destination: Reims, France
Mission: Bombing of the airfield
MACR: 8150

More information

Don Beerbower attended Iowa State College.

Statement from 2nd Lt Frederick B. Deeds:

"I was flying No. 2 man on wing of Maj Don M. Beerbower, who was leading 353rd Fighter Squadron on an armed reconnaissance mission. We went down to strafe an airfield North of Reims. Our first pass was from north to south, firing at twin-engine E/A in revetments. I noticed Maj Beerbower got hits on an E/A. We came off the field, circled to the right, and made a pass from east to west to knock out gun emplacements as Blue and Green flights made a pass at planes in revetments. As we came in range, in line-abreast formation, the guns opened fire on us, and we returned the fire. Maj Beerbower silenced one gun and pulled up straight as we left. I saw hits on his wing, and the canopy was gone. The plane was climbing, and it appeared that the Major was hit. The plane climbed until it partially stalled, half-rolled and nosed straight down in a dive, exploding when it hit the ground. The pilot fell free while it was in the vertical dive, but no apparent attempt was made to open his chute."

He was awarded the Silver Star Medal posthumously for his actions on action on 8 April 1944, when he destroyed three German planes and damaged two others out of a numerically superior force which attacked the bomber formation he was escorting.

Maj Don M. Beerbower was first buried at the Temporary American Military Cemetery, Champigneul, France.

Photos



Source of information: Peter Schouteten, www.abmc.gov, www.findagrave.com - Peggy Cassady Harris, www.wwiimemorial.com, www.ancestry.com - Headstone and Interment Record / Jacob & Catherine Replogle Beerbower, www.fold3.com
Photo source: www.findagrave.com - Andy / Have Paws will Travel, www.newspapers.com - Star Tribune, Iowa State University Gold Star Directory