



Personal info

Full name

HEATON, William McNeal

Date of birth

15 April 1920

Age

24

Place of birth

Pelzer, Anderson County, South Carolina

Hometown

Hendersonville, Henderson County, North Carolina

Military service

Service number

O-814686

Rank

First Lieutenant

Unit

**61st Fighter Squadron,
56th Fighter Group**

Awards

**Distinguished Flying Cross,
Purple Heart,
Air Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters**

Death & Grave

Status

Killed in Action

Date of death

5 September 1944

Cemetery

American War Cemetery Margraten

Plot	Row	Grave
B	4	23

Immediate family

Members

William E. Heaton (father)

Hattie (Neal) Heaton (mother)

Dollie Heaton (sister)

Emma Heaton (sister)

George Heaton (brother)

Haskel Heaton (brother)

Diana (Gibbs) Heaton (wife)

Plane data

Serial number

42-26468

Data

Type: P47D

Destination: Merzhausen/Kuneburg, Germany

Mission: Rodeo

MACR: 9805

More information

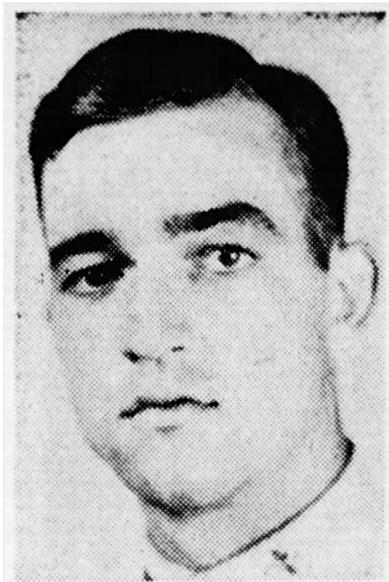
William Heaton worked for the Ecusta Paper Corp. in Pisgah Forest.

He was credited by Col Francis S. Gobreshie, top American ace in the European theatre, with saving his life in an encounter with German ME 109s.

1st Lt Gordon J. Blake states in the Missing Aircrew Report:

"I was flying Whippet Red Three in Lt Heaton's flight. We were in the area northeast of Coblenz when an airdrome was sighted. White Flight made a pass to strafe, but discovered they were dummy airplanes. Shortly after this Lt Heaton sighted a train south of this airdrome, and about fifteen miles away. The flight dropped down to strafe and received heavy and accurate light flak. I called Red One and told him about the flak, as he missed the train on his first pass and was pulling up to make a second. Red One severely damaged the locomotive on his second pass and turned right, coming over the edge of the airdrome. We had pulled up and was climbing with about a thousand to fifteen hundred feet of altitude, with the flak very heavy. I looked at Red One and observed a large flash that appeared to be directly in the canopy. The plane continued to fly normally for 15 or 20 seconds and then rolled over, dived into the ground, and exploded. No contact with Lt Heaton was made after he was hit, and no chutes was seen."

Photos



Source of information: Michel Beckers, Terry Hirsch, www.wwiimemorial.com, www.fold3.com, www.ancestry.com - 1920 census / Headstone and Interment Record, <http://hendersonheritage.com> /world-war-ii-heroes/, www.findagrave.com - William Wayne Metcalf, www.newspapers.com - The Greenville News

Photo source: Peter Schouteten, Michel Beckers, Nigel Julian, www.fold3.com, Asheville Citizen Times 18 March 1945