



Personal info

Full name

JEFFERIS, Edward Forrest Jr

Date of birth

9 December 1916

Age

26

Place of birth

Palestine, Darke County, Ohio

Hometown

Darke County, Ohio

Military service

Service number

O-791596

Rank

First Lieutenant

Unit

**450th Bombardment Squadron,
322nd Bombardment Group, Medium**

Awards

Purple Heart

Death & Grave

Status

Killed in Action

Date of death

17 May 1943

Cemetery

American War Cemetery Ardennes

Plot	Row	Grave
C	34	1

Immediate family

Members

Edward F. Jefferis (father)

Laura Jefferis (mother)

Leah Jefferis (sister)

Milton Jefferis (brother)

Marguerite Jefferis (sister)

Geraldine Jefferis (sister)

Jocelyn Jefferis (sister)

Julia (Gutman) Jefferis (wife)

Edward F. Jefferis III (son)

Plane data

Serial number

41-17979

Data

Type: B-26B-4-MA

Destination: IJmuiden, the Netherlands

Mission: Bombing of the power plant

More information

1st Lt Edward F. Jefferis, Jr graduated from Greenville High School in 1934 and from Ohio State University.

He enlisted at Fort Thomas, Kentucky on 16 July 1941.

The field order for the mission called for 12 aircraft, off which six would break off the formation and bomb the generation station and gas works at Haarlem, when they would reach the coast and the other six would continue their route to bomb the power plant of IJmuiden. However, only eleven planes were serviceable, because many were still under flak damage repair from the mission the day before. Every crew knew this mission would be one they would not survive. After taking off, they soon nosed over to 50 feet to get under the German radar. A little later, approximately 30 miles from the Dutch coast, one of the aircraft experienced electrical problems and headed back to England. When they turned, they climbed to 1,000 feet what would be considered common sense with a lame aircraft. However, by climbing, the aircraft placed itself within German radar coverage thus alerting German defenses. As the remaining aircraft approached the coast, several sea vessels appeared ahead in the flight path. The formation changed course to avoid surface fire from these vessels, with the result they reached the coast at a point with one of the most heavily defended areas in the Netherlands. In very little time, five aircraft were shot down. The remaining aircraft believed they were close to their targets but they were still miles away. After 10 minutes without recognizing any landmarks, they thought they saw the Haarlem works, but it was a gas holder on the west side of Amsterdam. They dropped their bombs but all bombs fell short and caused no damage. Unknown to the crews, the heading taken from this target headed them directly for the heavily defended port area near IJmuiden. Also all remaining aircraft were shot down.

Only the third element of the leading flight remained but they had no idea where they were. Forty five miles into the Netherlands the pilot of B-26 #41-17979, Col Purington, decided to turn for home and his navigator, Lt Jefferis, gave him a course of 2700. Almost simultaneously Jefferis reported that he had sighted the target. Bombs were dropped on what they thought it would be the Haarlem works, but it was in fact a gas holder in the suburbs of Amsterdam. Having climbed to bombing altitude several Marauders failed to reduce height as they headed for the coast. Unknown to the crews they were heading directly towards IJmuiden and its murderous flak barrage. Purington's bomber was hit, but he managed to ditch offshore near a fishing boat, manned by Germans. Jefferis was killed in the crash, but the rest of the crew were rescued to become prisoners of war.

Edward Jefferis washed ashore near Castricum and was initially buried there.

The bottom picture was taken in high school in 1934.

Photos



Source of information: Terry Hirsch, Raf Dyckmans, www.wwiimemorial.com, www.fold3.com, WWII Draft Card, 1920 US Census, <http://home.fuse.net/vaughan/aircraft.htm>
Photo source: FOHF, www.findagrave.com, Greenville, High School 1934