

George Henry Dickas

Fighter Pilot, 325th Fighter Group

Flight Officer George Henry Dickas, born on Christmas eve 1919, was the only child of Henry Christian Dickas and Clara S. (Snyder) Dickas of Wapakoneta, Auglaize County, Ohio. Wapakoneta is in northwestern Ohio 92 miles south southwest of Toledo and 84 miles northwest of Columbus.

In the 1930 census 10-year-old George is living with his parents at 507 East Benton Street in Wapakoneta. He graduated from Blume High School in 1937. His father is a blacksmith for a chain company.

In the 1940 census 20-year-old George is still living with his parents at 507 East Benton Street in Wapakoneta. His father is the station operator for the local light and water works. George is a laborer in a machine shop.

George enlisted in the Army Air Corps 31 October 1940 as a Private at Fort Hayes in Columbus, Ohio. His service number was 15014665. He had 4 years of high school and was single without dependents. His occupation was listed as machinist. The Flight Officer rank is equivalent to officer junior grade which today refers to the position Warrant Officer.

He was 67" tall, weighing 135 lbs. He graduated from Ground Mechanics school 7 November 1941 at Chanute Field, IL. He later entered Flight Training, becoming part of Class 42-I. Primary was at Thompson-Bobbins Airfield in Helena, Alabama from 23 March to 1 June 1942. He flew a PT-17 for a total of 60:00 hours, 31:43 hours dual and 28:17 hours solo. Next Aviation Cadet Dickas was assigned to Bush Field for Basic Flight in Augusta, GA. Here he flew BT-15 and BT-13 planes for a total of 70:10 time, 30:25 hours dual and 39:47 hours solo, and 12 hours in a Link trainer. Next training base was Spencer Field in Moultrie, Georgia for Advance flight. Here he flew an AT-6, 82:15 total, 28:25 hours dual and 53:50 hours solo. He received his wings 9 October 1942, and became a Staff Sergeant Pilot. At this time had 212:40 hours training flight time. On 5 December, all the Staff Sergeant Pilots were promoted to Flight Officers, with pay equal to a 2nd Lt.

The 317th Fighter Squadron was activated on 1 July 1942 at Theodore Green Airport, Providence, Rhode Island, as part of the 325th Fighter Group, the "Checker Tails". After six months of intensive training in the P-40 Warhawk, the 317th



embarked for North Africa aboard the USS Ranger, in consort with its sister squadrons, the 318th and 319th. The 317th flew its first combat mission in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations (MTO) under Twelfth Air Force on 17 April 1943. Flying P-40 Warhawks, P-47 Thunderbolts and P-51 Mustangs, the 317th fought in 13 separate campaigns where it earned two Distinguished Unit Citations in action over Italy and Sardinia.

The NARA WWII casualty listings by state and county show Dickas, George H, Flight Officer, from Auglaize County, Ohio as FOD (Finding of Death) on 21 July 1944. A finding of death was determined not less than one year and one day after a soldier or airman went missing in action. Consistent with news releases at the time, Flight Officer Dickas would have gone missing on 20 July 1943 for an FOD on 21 July 1944.

The Rutherford B Hayes Presidential Center Obituary Index lists him as lost over Sardinia. The island of Sardinia is due north of Tunisia and due south of Corsica off the west coast of Italy.

Missing Air Crew Report #00450 shows Pilot George Dickas in P-40 41-19973 missing with last contact over Decimomannu, Sardinia on 20 Jul 1943. Decimomannu is near the south coast of Sardinia.

A cenotaph marker in memory of Flight Officer Dickas was placed at the Greenlawn Cemetery in Wapakoneta.

The Dayton Herald, 22 Sep 1943, Wed - Page 9 – Flight Officer George Dickas, son of H. C. Dickas of Wapakoneta, is missing in the North African area.

FO Dickas was one of the original 72 pilots who flew their Army P-40s off the carrier USS Ranger.

