

# Watkins Mayo

13 March 1923 13 October 1942

Watkins Mayo was born 13 March 1923 in Hale County, Texas to DeWitt T. and Ida I. Mayo. Hale County is in western Texas, just north of Lubbock close to the New Mexico border. He joined big siblings Gayle, 6, and Ruth 2. The 1930 Census showed the family living on a farm in Swisher County, TX. It mentioned that the family rents their home, but DeWitt is the employer of the farm. The family does own a radio set. All 3 children are attending school. The 1940 Census showed the family still on the farm in Swisher County, TX, and Gayle and Ruth no longer living at home. Watkins graduated from Tulia High School in 1940. Tulia is the County Seat of Swisher County. He was the captain of the football team, and active in many sports.



Watkins joined the Army Air Force on 13 March 1941, his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. His training included Technical Training at Chanute Field in Rantoul, Illinois. He qualified for flight training on 20 January 1942, becoming part of Flight Class 42-H. His Service #18036438. Primary Flight was in Decatur, Alabama from 22 February to 29 April 1942. Primary is where Cadets first learn to fly. He first flew PT-17s for 60:01 hours, 28:34 dual and 31:27 solo. Next was Basic Flight at Bush Field in Augusta, Georgia. This training was through 2 July, and he flew BT- 15s and 13s. He had a total of 70:11 hours, 27:30 dual and 42:41 solo. Advance Flight was at Spence Field in Moultrie Georgia. He flew AT-6s for 83:55 hours, 21:05 dual and 62:50 solo. He was awarded his Pilot's Wings 6 September 1942 at Spence Field, Georgia, becoming a Staff Sergeant pilot. He had a total of 214:07 hours flight time when he was awarded his wings. Upon graduation S/Sgt. Mayo was sent to the Boston Air Defense District, and soon assigned to the 317<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, 325<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group at Hillgrove Field, Providence, RI. He made his first P-40 flight on 22 September. He had 4 more flights that month for 5:40 hours, plus 2 hours in a Link trainer. Training was intense, usually flying 6 days a week and pulling intercept duty at East Boston Airport. October was very busy, with 16 flights in the first 13 days for 20:30 hours. When the Boston Air Defense Command could not identify an aircraft, these fighters were scrambled to intercept and identify them.

S/Sgt. Pilot Watkins Mayo was killed on 13 October 1942 when his P-40 crashed near Canton, Massachusetts. He was flying a P-40 F, a Merlin powered version, serial #41-14099. The Army simply said the crash was due to Ground Collision. He was escorted home by S/Sgt. Mumberger. He is buried at Rose Hill Cemetery in Tulia, TX. His Squadron Commander, Capt. Jack C. West, wrote a letter to his family expressing what a great pilot and friend Watkins was. In the letter was Watkins' pilot wings.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY The Adjutant General's Office Washington, D.C.			Form 100-2711 11-7-42
REPORT OF DEATH			
Full Name WATKINS, MAYO		Army Serial No. 18096438	
Grade Sgt.	Arm or Service Air Corps	Date of Birth MARCH 13, 1923	
Home Address Tulia, Texas			
Date of Death 10-13-42	Place of Death 3 miles north of Danton Metropolitan Airport, Harwood, Texas, near Canton, Texas.	Cause of Death Airplane accident	
Emergency Addressee (Name, Relationship, & Address) Mr. Dewitt T. Mayo, Father, Tulia, Texas			
Beneficiary (Name, Relationship, & Address) Eda Watkins Mayo, Mother, Tulia, Texas, Dewitt T. Mayo, Father, same address.			
By order of the Secretary of War: A. Marshall			

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