

Donald Eugene Pipes

by Lois Lindley

Donald Eugene Pipes, born June 19, 1912, was the third son of Mr. and Mrs. John Pipes, Whitestown, Indiana.

Donald attended Whitestown schools grade 1 through 12. He's reported to have been a good



Donald E. Pipes - 1944

student and athlete, serving as captain of both the baseball and basketball teams.

After graduation in 1941, Donald worked for Allisons in Speedway. In October 1943, he married Stella Medford from Lebanon, Indiana.

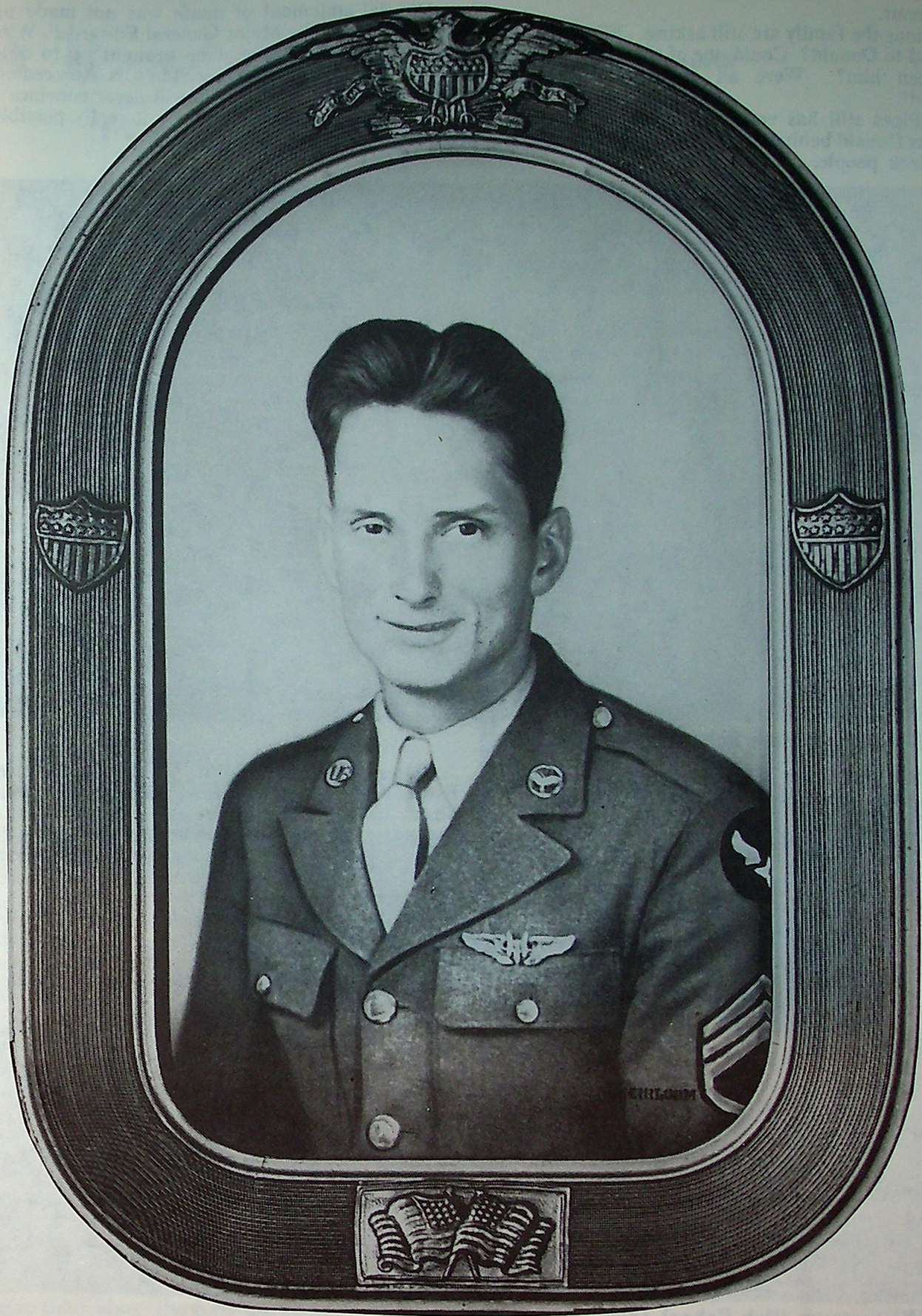
After receiving his greetings from Uncle Sam, January 1943, Donald was inducted into service with the 431st Bomb Squadron, 7th Air Forces. Soon he was promoted to Staff Sgt. and received his flying wings. He was assigned to a B-24 bomber as tail-gunner.

Donald flew many missions from his base station on the Marshal Islands, and was the recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross air medal.

There are conflicting stories surrounding Donald's death. One letter from the Adjutant General's office said his plane was returning from a mission, and caught fire from flack. Another letter says the aircraft failed to return from a strike mission to Truk Island on July 28th, 1944. After leaving their target the plane was severely damaged in an encounter with enemy aircraft, exploded and crashed in flames 12 miles northeast of Truk Island. An eyewitness states that two parachutes emerged from the burning plane just prior to the explosion. Another letter from the Adjutant General states that nine minutes after leaving their target, the plane was attacked by enemy fighter planes and crashed almost immediately into the Pacific Ocean leaving only two columns of black smoke. According to reports, there were eleven men aboard including the Captain.

The week of November 10th, 1945, radio news flashes told of finding 24 American Airmen on the Marshal Islands, believed to be of the 7th Air Forces, all suffering from malnutrition and amnesia, with no identification.

Mrs. Pipes sent a letter to the Adjutant General seeking permission to visit the men and possibly identify Donald. Request was denied by the U.S.



Donald Eugene Pipes

(Official Military Frame)

Government.

Questions the family are still asking: What really happened to Donald? Could one of the parachutists have been him? Were all of the 24 Airmen identified?

Mrs. Pipes still has very realistic dreams. She often sees Donald behind a high fence surrounded by many black people.

Official statement of death was not made until December 1949 by Major General Edward F. Witsell so that his records could be brought up to date.

A headstone has been placed in Mts. Run cemetery in Donald's honor. But you will never convince the Pipes family that he's dead. Is it really possible? Stranger things have happened!



Whitestown High School Basketball Team

Top Row from left to right: Stephen Harney, Donald Pipes, Roy Staton, Lloyd Smith, and Clyde Neese.

Bottom row, left to right: Mark Spaugh, Eugene Essex, William Biddle, Marvin Stantz, and Donald Shaw.



Whitestown High School Team

Top row, left to right: H.W. Williams, Buddy Lee Dodson, Harve Biddle, Roy Staton, Donald Pipes, Clyde E. Neese, and Marvin Stantz.

Bottom row, left to right: Charles Quick, Donald Shaw, Eugene Essex, Mark Spaugh, Raymond Kincaid, Robert Golladay.

