

Mission to Kiel

By the end of 1943, Germany's U-boat, or submarine, fleet had ceased to be an existential threat to Great Britain's survival. Nonetheless, the U-boats continued to attack the convoys from North America which carried food, war materiel, and troops to Britain in preparation for the upcoming invasion of France. As such, U-boat installations like the Krupp *Germaniawerft* in the Baltic Sea harbor of Kiel, Germany, remained high priority targets for the heavy bombers of the 8th Air Force. On January 5, 1944, two hundred forty-five 8th Air Force bombers, including one piloted by Graham Glenn Guyton from Sumter, took off from their bases in East Anglia bound for Kiel,



Guyton, a textile chemistry major, was a member of both the Clarendon County and Sumter Clubs, the latter of which he served as vice president. He also participated in ROTC, completing summer training at Fort McClellan, Alabama. He graduated from Clemson with the Class of 1940.

Following graduation, Guyton took a job with the Textile Company of Rock Hill. He soon took a new position with Hercules Powder Company of Radford, Virginia. Following the Pearl

Harbor attack, Guyton reported for active duty as an infantry second lieutenant in February 1942. After a year in the infantry, he transferred to the Army Air Force. Guyton's flight training occurred at several bases in Texas, culminating with the award of pilot's wings in May 1943 at Pampa Field about forty miles northeast of Amarillo.



Guyton was assigned to the 715th Bomb Squadron of the 448th Bomb Group at Sioux City, Iowa. He was assigned to a crew and underwent training in combat procedures. The unit deployed overseas in November 1943 and began flying combat missions the following month.

By January 5, 1944, Guyton had already flown fifteen combat missions. On that day, his was one of nearly two hundred fifty B-17 and B-24 bombers to take off from the bomber bases scattered throughout

8th Air Force bombers attack Kiel.

southeastern England. The formations were bound for Kiel and its U-boat yards.

Of the aircraft that had departed their fields, two hundred twenty-five reached the target area. As the formation approached the navy yards, enemy fighters pounced. At approximately noon, German fighters attacked Guyton's ship. Although two members of the crew—the copilot and the navigator—survived and were eventually evacuated to the United States, details of what happened to Guyton's B-24 are sketchy at best. After suffering damage from the German fighters, it crashed near Horstheide, Germany. One of the surviving crew members saw Guyton on the ground in a field from a distance of about one hundred feet. Guyton appeared dead, but the crewman's German captors would not allow him to get close enough to confirm his pilot's condition. The surviving crewman's diagnosis was confirmed by the Germans. They buried Guyton in Horst two days later.

Lieutenant Guyton's engagement to Miss Mickey Hanks of Galax, Virginia was to have been announced the week he was reported missing. After the war, Guyton's remains were returned to the United States and buried at the Providence Baptist Church cemetery in Sumter.

Graham Glenn Guyton was awarded the Purple Heart. He was survived by his mother and step-father, three sisters and two brothers, one of whom was then serving in the Pacific.



Kiel strike photo:

http://www.8thafhs.com/maps.php?lat=54.3205&lon=10.1533&target_name=KIEL+GERMANY+Naval+U-boat+yards+%28225+aircraft%29&map_type=Target&target_id=5078&target_notes=078&target_notes=