



**Kenneth
Hassler**

Army Air Corps

Kenneth Hassler

Jun 9, 1920 - Nov 9, 1977

BIRTHPLACE: Chapman, Kansas

SOLDIER DETAILS

HIGHEST RANK: Master Sargeant

DIVISION: Army Air Corps, 303rd Bomb Group

THEATER OF OPERATION: European

SERVED: Jul 16, 1941 - Sep 6, 1945

HONORED BY: Elaine Hassler

BIOGRAPHY

M/Sgt. Kenneth Hassler. Kenneth Clarence Hassler, after 2 years at Baker University, joined the Army in July of 1941. His hope was to become a pilot but his hearing did not pass the physical. So he was trained as an airplane mechanic. He received his mechanic training at Moses Lake, Washington and Chanute, Illinois Airfields. After 15 months Stateside, he was sent with the 303rd Bomb Group to a base in England. From there he flew in the first bombing raids over Germany by United States planes. Since they flew without fighter escorts, the fatality rate in his group was large. The basic tour then was to fly 25 raids and then return to the States. Sgt. Hassler completed his 25 missions as the chief engineer on the 'Yardbird' B-17. He was never injured although his plane was hit on several missions. But they always made it back to their base. On the 'Yardbird's first mission after Hassler's 25th flight, the plane was seriously damaged and 'downed' over Germany. Following 10 months in England, Sgt. Hassler was stationed at Drew Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida where he was the engineer instructor for crews preparing to go overseas. He was discharged from active military duty in September of 1945. He received the following medals - Distinguished Flying Cross, European/Africa/Mideastern Theater of Operation medal, and the American Defense Service medal.