UCF Veterans Legacy Program

John Manuel Carves (1921-1943)

https://vlp.cah.ucf.edu/biographies/sanc/BD-0-124-F.html

John Manuel Carves was born in Jacksonville, FL on July 29, 1921 to Manuel and Demitra Carves. John was the third child in his family, with an older brother and an older sister. Both of his parents were born in Greece and they came to the US around 1910. After arriving in Florida, Manuel worked in the restaurant industry. By 1930, Manuel owned a restaurant, and he and his wife had become naturalized US citizens.

John attended Palm Beach High School where he played basketball and football. As a senior, he played in an All-Star Game in Chicago. Before graduating in 1940, he gained leadership skills managing the football and baseball teams.

He attended college at the University of Florida (UF) where he joined the Sigma Chi Fraternity. On February 16, 1942, while home from UF and after the US joined World War II in December 1941, John Carves registered for the draft in West Palm Beach, FL. He enlisted in the US Army Air Force on May 6, 1942. Following his initial phase training at the classification center in Nashville, TN, he reported to Maxwell Field in Montgomery, AL for pre-flight school in November 1942.

Through much hard work and dedication, John became a pilot for a B-25 Mitchell, a twin-engine bomber, with the 71st Bombardment Squadron, 38th Bombardment Group, 5th Air Force. They were sent to the Pacific Theater of Operations, which was the large area involving the Pacific Ocean and East and Southeast Asia where the Allied forces led aerial and naval operations against the Empire of Japan. John's group attacked Japanese targets, transported Allied troops, and supplied ground forces in the Territory of New Guinea.

On December 20,1943, John participated in a coordinated bombing attack on one of the airstrips of Alexishafen Airfield, located near the north coast of New Guinea, a location the Japanese Air Force controlled at the time. During the mission, the lead plane, which John was co-piloting, encountered machine gunfire from below, which hit John in the hip and stomach. Although the navigator and radio operator on the plane attempted to provide first aid while in the air, the wounds proved fatal. John died before the plane landed. He was 22 years old.

Initially, John was interred in the British New Guinea Cemetery near where he died. In 1949, his father chose to bring his son's remains back to Florida to be reinterred nearer to his family and in the state where he lived and studied. John Manuel Carves rests in St. Augustine National Cemetery in Section D, Site 124.

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