

FUNERAL SERVICES FOR MAJOR KEITH N. MERRILL IN ST. LOUIS

Funeral services and burial for Major Keith N. Merrill will be held at the Jefferson Barracks Cemetery, St. Louis, Mo., Tuesday, May 17, at 1:30 p. m. He will be buried with 12 of his crewmen who lost their lives when their B 29 Mis Hap crashed and burned while taking part in a 500 plane raid over Japan on July 3, 1945.

Major Merrill was squadron commander and was making his 34th, and next to last flight in the round the clock bombing of Japan when his plane was apparently forced down due to the turbulence set up by the heavy bombing of Kochi. No message was sent by the plane and the entire crew was reported as missing in action.

Several months ago an army search team found a common grave near Kochi. It was learned from the witnesses that the plane had crashed and burned and the crew had been buried in a common grave. The remains were later transferred to Yokohama Cemetery. First proof that the crew was that of Major Merrill's was through finding of an identification card bearing the name of T/Sgt. Kurt J. Hermann, tail gunner on the Mis-Hap. Hermann was on his 108th mission of World War II on the ill-fated trip. He had completed missions in the European Theatre of war and asked to be transferred to the South Pacific Theatre of war to fight.

On January 14, 1949, Major Merrill's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Merrill, of Safford, received word from the War Department that separate identification of the bodies would be impossible and that group funeral and burial would be made at a point equidistant from all the parents of the crew members, which was St. Louis.

Mr. and Mrs. Merrill, Major Merrill's young daughter, Paula, and Mrs. Max Brenner, sister of Mrs. Merrill, left Wednesday for St. Louis to attend the services.

Memorial services were held at the Layton Ward L. D. S. Church on July 14, 1946, for Major Merrill.

Keith Nelson Merrill was born on February 1st, 1920, at Pima, the first son of Paul Merrill and Thurza Drew Merrill. He is the grandson of Philemon C. Merrill and Pearl Geneva Weech Merrill, and the great-great grandson of Philemon C. Merrill, who was a member of the Mormon Battalion, and a personal friend of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Keith grew to young manhood in Pima, attended the schools there, and graduated from high school in Phoenix, with the class of 1936. He attended and graduated from Gila Junior College in Thatcher, and attended the University of Arizona for his junior college year. He studied engineering, and was a member of the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity at the University, and was also an active member of the LDS fraternity there. In February, 1940, when an examining board seeking candidates for the Army Air Corps

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MAJOR KEITH N. MERRILL.