

## FUNERAL SERVICES FOR MAJOR MERRILL

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came to the University, he passed the examinations to become an Air Corps cadet. He entered training on May 15, 1940, enlisting at Fort Bliss, Texas, and completing his primary course at the Ryan School of Aeronautics in San Diego, Calif. He received his basic training at Randolph Field, Texas, with the class of 40-8, and received his advanced flying training at Kelly Field, Texas. He was assigned as bombardment training pilot to Barksdale Field, Shreveport, La., and served in that capacity for several months. When the Air Corps established a navigation training unit at Mather Field, Sacramento, Calif., he was sent there, and served as Group Commander, responsible for the training of Air Corps navigators. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, he was assigned as Liaison Officer with the Fourth Interceptor Command, in San Francisco. When the navigation training program was moved from the coast, he was sent to help establish the Air Base at San Marco, Texas, and served there for many months, as Group Commander, in the transition training of pilots, and the flight training of navigators. When the training program for B-29 bombers was established he was transferred to the Ft. Worth Army Air Base, where he received transition training of B-24 bombers and B-17 bombers, after which he was sent to York, Neb., where he received training on B-29 bombers, becoming a Ship Commander, in charge of plane and crew. He was then assigned to Wendover, Utah, for further training, following which he was sent to Clovis, N. M., for combat crew training. At Clovis he was assigned his combat crew, and after completion of training there, went with his crew to Kearney, Neb., where he was given the plane in which he and his crew were to participate in the long-range bombing of the Japanese Empire.

He flew with his crew to their base on Saipan, leaving the states on January 20, 1945. His first mission, a bombing raid on Kobe, Japan, was completed on February 4, and between that date and

July 3, he and his crew completed 33 missions, including eight fire and explosive missions over Tokyo. He flew a total of 479 combat hours against the Japanese. He was given the Aid Medal, with clusters signifying 33 missions, and was also awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, for carrying out sustained bombing missions, involving as many as 16 flying hours and as many as four missions within six days, a terrific strain on both men and planes. His missions involved as much as 3,000 miles of flying over the Pacific, from their base on Saipan, to the Japanese home islands and return. He and his crew played their part well in the beating of the Japanese by the sustained B-29 bombardment of their cities and war industries, making up by their increased efforts the lack of planes and crews in the Very Heavy Bombardment units in the Pacific. Working without much relief, making long, hazardous flights over the ocean, meeting all the opposition the Japanese could offer, flying in every kind of weather, it was originally planned to relieve combat crews on B-29 squadrons after 30 missions. In order to keep up the intense bombing of the Japanese Empire, and because of the lack of planes and crews, the number of missions was changed to 35, and Keith and his crewmen went ahead in their efforts to complete 35 missions, to then be relieved and returned to the States for rest. They failed to return from the 34th mission, being listed as missing in action. The raid from which they did not return was a night attack with fire bombs on the Japanese city of Kochi, a seaport on Shikoku Island, carried out in the early morning hours of July 3, 1945.

It is only fitting and proper that the names of the comrades of Keith who were with him on the fateful mission be mentioned here. They were: Lt. Col. John C. Griffith, observer, of Plymouth, Pa.; Lt. Walter Fike, Jr., co-pilot, of Long Beach, Calif.; Lt. Joseph V. LaMoglia, of Oakland, Calif., radar officer; Lt. Buford P. Johnson, of Minneapolis, Minn., navigator; Lt. William D. Wilson, of Memphis, Tenn., bombardier; Lt. Patrick B. Quinn, of Beeville, Texas, flight engineers; Staff Sergeant Harry R. Hill, of Peoria, Illinois, radio operator; Technical Sergeant Edward

F. Gawron, of Amsterdam, N. Y.; Staff Sergeant James E. Keenan, of Quincy, Mass.; Staff Sergeant John L. Powell, of Andalusia, Ala.; Sergeant John T. Jenkins, of Clairton, Pa., all gunners; and Technical Sergeant Kurt J. Hermann, of Babylon, N. Y., tail gunner.

These men, with Keith, fully merit the commendation given thousands of other American boys, that only through such gallant courage, and complete devotion to duty, was the final victory ours.

Keith was married on June 7, 1944, in York, Neb., to Mary Sue Timmons, of Mansfield, La. They have a daughter, Paula, born September 1, 1945.