

Gerald Laverne Isom, Class of 1947.



DROWNED

Sgt Gerald Isom of Memphis drowned yesterday, neither swimming skill nor his 22-year vigor being protection against the treacherous current of the Tombigbee River at Columbus MS.

Early yesterday he left his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Isom of 667

Springdale, for a day of fun with a friend stationed at Columbus Air Force Base.

About 2 p.m. Sergeant Isom struck out across the Tombigbee – a distance no greater than a city block – near the bridge inside Columbus city limits. With him was a friend, Aviation Cadet Albert Green, and on the shore, a group of five other cadets. Halfway across the sergeant sank. Cadet Green dived for him without success. The cadet was taken from the scene in an ambulance, shouting hysterically.

The sergeant's body was brought up at 2:30. The Columbus Fire Department had administered artificial respiration 80 minutes when a physician said further efforts were useless.

After an Air Force investigation of the drowning, the body will be sent here for services and burial.

Mr. Isom said his son arrived in Memphis Friday on leave from Omaha Air Force Base and had planned to return to the Nebraska station by automobile this afternoon.

The sergeant played on both football and baseball teams at Tech High and was an expert swimmer and avid fisherman. Born at Centralia IL, he came here with his family 12 years ago. He entered the Air Force in September 1950. He also leaves two brothers, Donald Isom, with the Air Force and Jimmy Isom of Memphis, a student at Tech. Information from The Commercial Appeal, Monday, August 4, 1952.