

Elwood Campbell Kent, T-43

16 June 1925 – 6 December 1953

(aged 28)



MEMPHIAN ONE OF FOUR JET FLIERS WHO DIED

Lt. Elwood C. Kent Plunged to Earth with Others on Georgia Training Hop. Four young F-84 Thunderjet pilots, one a former Memphian plunged to fiery deaths in a tight-flying formation trying to get back to their Georgia base thru blinding rain and fog.



Lt. Elwood C. Kent, 28, an honor student at Tech High School before he joined the Air Force early in World War II, and his three companion fliers apparently hit the earth in follow-the leader fashion after the foremost pilot became confused. Georgia Air National Guard officials told United Press.

His mother, Mrs. Minnie Kent of 816 N, Willett, switchboard operator at Automobile Sales Co. 309 Union, received word of the tragedy as she was getting ready to go to church yesterday,

Mrs. Kent and her daughter and son-in-law immediately left by car for Atlanta, where the lieutenant and his wife made their home the past seven or eight years.

Mrs. Kent last saw her son Thanksgiving Day, when he flew to Memphis to spend several hours with her, according to his aunt, Mrs. T. H. Brannon, also pf the Wollett address.



The multiple crash happened early yesterday in a sparse wood-and-pasture area near Duluth GA, when the single-engine jets roared into a low-altitude landing-approaching turn that should have been made at 11,000 feet, military authorities said. They were about 20 miles from the Marietta Air Force Base.

Officials said the flight leader gave no warning of being in trouble in a radio contact he made with the base moments before the jets plowed into the ground and burned, one after the other.

The jets were returning from a routine training flight to Miami FL.

Lt. Kent was born and reared in Memphis. As an Air Force pilot in World War II, he ferried planes to Europe. After getting his discharged he married an Atlanta girl and went to Georgis Tech, graduating with a degree in civil engineering.

Mrs. Brannon said he joined the Air National Guard "just a few months ago. He always loved flying," Lt. Kent is also survived by a brother, Sgt. Kenneth Kent, with the Air Force in Germany.

He and his wife had no children.

Information from The Memphis Press-Scimitar, Monday, December 7, 1953.