

Alma Dale Clark

Compiled by Judy Hansen
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Alma Dale Clark was born the 9th of June 1914 in Alpine, Utah County, Utah to Alma Grover and Fannie Estella Strong Clark. His brother was Vurl LaVon Clark. His brother served with the U.S. Army in Italy during WWII. Dale graduated High School in American Fork, Utah and then spent one year attending Brigham Young University and also Henager Business College.

On Monday the 1st of May 1939 he married Ida Laree (Teddy) Pierce in Salt Lake City, Utah. Dale and Teddy lived in Salt Lake City and he worked for Geysler Marion Mining Company. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy Reserve September 23, 1942 in Salt Lake City, Utah. He was described as a 5'10" 140 pound male with blue eyes, blonde hair, and light complexion. His serial number was 660 48 88.



After enlisting in the U.S. Navy Reserve he moved his wife with him while he was stationed for almost a year at Naval Air Station (NAS) Alameda which was located in the City of Alameda, California. He lived in Berkeley, California with his wife which is approximately ten miles away from the Air Base. Dale and Teddy were the proud parents of twin boys Ronald Dale and Roger Dee born the 27th of April 1944 in Oakland, Alameda County, California.

Dale was an A.O.M. (Aviation Ordnance Man) 2nd Class in Air Craft Service Unit 6 (CASU 6). An Aviation Ordnance Man handles and cares for all aviation weapons.

It was June 16th 1944 at 2:28 pm Lieutenant E.K.M. McWha took off on a routine training flight from Alameda NAS in the Martin PBM-3R Mariner Bureau No. 6497 plane. On board were three other officers and six enlisted men. Mark Higgins Wilson reported he was walking between hangers 39 and 40 when he saw the aircraft traveling in a straight and level flight with a stream of smoke trailing behind it. Wilson was the only witness that saw the smoke but several others witnessed an explosion described as "a great ball of fire enveloping the plane" at 3:09 pm. The plane disintegrated and its burning hull and floating wings fell into the San Francisco Bay six and a half miles from the Alameda NAS tower.

A puff of smoke after the explosion created a huge smoke ring that "hung suspended as some evil omen over the area for several minutes." Crash boats were immediately dispatched to the scene where various parts of the airplane were found strewn over a two by one-half mile area in the San Francisco Bay. They were able to find the bodies of Lieutenant William F Hess USNR and Robert Edward Bookser, USNR floating near the hull wreckage. It was determined that the accident occurred so suddenly that it was impossible for the personnel on-board to execute an escape. It is believed that the area between the fuel tank and the galley may have been the point of explosion.

June 25th 1944 Alma Dale Clark was recovered near the scene of the crash at 4:15 pm.

June 26th 1944 Lieut. John Lewis Roberts, USNR was found afloat at 4:00 pm near the wreckage scene and Paul William Poticha was found afloat near the foot of Third Street in Alameda at 4:00 pm.

June 27th 1944 John Sterling Rhodes was found in Russell City Swamps, San Francisco Bay at 9:00 am. Lieut. Kelley M. McWha USNR and Rolland Merle Blanchard was found afloat near the scene of the accident at 2:00 pm. George Frank Rehrer USNR was also found at a later date as the last victim of this accident.

A telegraph was sent to the families in Utah informing them of the accident. Dale's mother Mrs. Grover Clark and his mother-in-law Mrs. Pierce went to California and brought Dale's widow and his two six-week old twin boys back to Utah on Wednesday night June 28th with his remains. His funeral was held at 2:00 Sunday July 2nd 1944 in the Alpine Ward Chapel. He was buried in the American Fork City Cemetery. His name is honored on the Veteran's Memorial Wall also located at the American Fork City Cemetery.

Alma Dale Clark Died June 16, 1944 in a non-battle from an airplane accident over the San Francisco Bay.

This story is a combined effort of the Lehi Historical Society and part of the Stories Behind the Stars project (see www.storiesbehindthestars.org). This is a national effort of volunteers to write the stories of all 400,000+ of the US WWII fallen here on Fold3. Can you help write these stories? Related to this, there will be a smart phone app that will allow people to visit any war memorial or cemetery, scan the fallen's name and read his/her story.

U.S. WWII Draft Cards https://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&dbid=2238&h=10900035&tid=&pid=&queryId=bef70ae428d7da3b7d44821152822821&usePUB=true&_phsrc=Pzw58&_phstart=successSource

Utah Military Records

https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2228/images/31805_00025203-00708?treeid=&personid=&hintid=&queryId=bef70ae428d7da3b7d44821152822821&usePUB=true&_phsrc=Pzw59&_phstart=successSource&usePUBJs=true&pId=92630

Air Transport Squadron Two Historical Chronology 1 April 1944 to 1 July 1944 pg 5, 6, 7
<https://www.fold3.com/image/302080638>

WWII War Diaries <https://www.fold3.com/image/277131978>

<https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/KWJC-Y1V>

<https://www.baaa-acro.com/crash/crash-martin-pbm-3r-mariner-flying-boat-alameda-nas-9-killed>

Bureau of Aircraft Accidents Archives

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/81991265/alma-dale-clark>

American Fork Citizen Fri May 5, 1939

American Fork Citizen Fri Jun 23, 1944

Lehi Sun Thu Jun 29, 1944

Salt Lake Tribune Sun Jul 2, 1944

American Fork Citizen Fri Jul 7, 1944

Lehi Sun Thu Jul 13, 1944