

Grisly War Business Brought to Las Vegas

Two Army Fliers Killed in Action During Blackout

The grisly business of war was brought home to Clark county last night in one tragic moment when two army air corps officers—Second Lieutenant John G. Kelso and Second Lieutenant George E. Turner, Jr.—were killed in an airplane crash while patrolling the Boulder dam area to inspect the efficiency of a coastwide blackout called by the war officers on the west coast.

Kelso and Turner died in the line of duty—an important defense mission—and their deaths marked the first casualties in this section. Occurring during the height of the "real McCoy" blackout of last night, their deaths stunned officials and citizens who had been working with the air corps officers in mapping the blackout.

Cause Not Known

While the definite cause of the crash has not been determined, as yet, it is believed that Kelso, who was piloting the plane, was unable to pull the machine out of a dive, and crashed headlong to earth, killing both men instantly and reducing the ship to a mass of tangled wreckage. The craft did not catch fire or explode.

Lieutenant Kelso, who was operations officer at the gunnery school, had been earnestly cooperating with Clark county defense council members in planning the blackouts for this area, and was especially concerned of the precautions taken to guard huge Boulder dam, electrical heart of the airplane industry in the Los Angeles area. It was this concern which brought death to himself and Turner.

Observed Dam

Kelso had been over the big Colorado river barrier to determine if suggestions he had made earlier in the day had proved efficacious. He was returning for a last look at Las Vegas before returning to the field when the crash occurred. His report to his home station was never made.

Turner, who had flown with Kelso the night before, and had picked up valuable information for the defense workers on the ground, also was playing an important role in the scheme of defending Boulder dam. It was he who was taking mental note of the weaknesses in the blackout, and it was he to whom the commanding officers at the gunnery school were looking for additional information regarding the blackout.

Lieutenant John G. Kelso was a native of Smith county, Kansas, born April 29, 1909. He had been stationed here for several months and was considered by his superior officers as one of the most promising pilots on the field. He recently had been promoted to operations officer and was acting in that capacity at the time of his death.

Active Career

He had a very active career in civil aviation before he was called into service. He came to the gunnery school from the Ryan School of Aeronautics where he had spent several years

as a flight instructor. He was with the North American Aviation company for some time and also had operated his own repair agency in Los Angeles from 1936 to 1938.

He was graduated from the Chicago Technical college and had 1,800 hours experience as a flight instructor. He served five years in the navy aboard the USS Idaho, USS Tennessee and fighter squadron number four of the USS Maryland.

He wore the conduct medal of the United States navy, and was considered by officers at the Las Vegas school as "one of our best officers."

He is survived, in Las Vegas, by his widow, Renee, who resides at 404 North Sixth street, Las Vegas. His family resides in San Diego.

Native of Texas

Second Lieutenant George E. Turner, Jr., was a native of Clarksville, Texas, and his family home is in Honey Grove, Texas. He is not married.

Turner was graduated from Stockton Field on August 16, 1941, and reported to Las Vegas on August 30.

He was riding as an observer at the time of the crash.

The remains of the two fliers, which are at the Garrison Mortuary, will be taken to San Bernardino for cremation and will be returned to Las Vegas. From here an officer will be detailed to escort the remains home for burial.