World War II Casualties

3-13-1945

Leon L. Hendren

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Leon Hendren, only son of Kenneth and Dorothy Hendren, was born on a farm near Pleasanton, Nebr., Nov. 20, 1920 and was killed in the crash of a plane March 13, 1945, at the age of 24 years, three months and 21 days.

He was graduated from the Pleasanton High School in 1938 and the Kearney State Teachers college in 1942. On July 12, 1942, he was united in marriage to Irene Thesing, and to this union was born a daughter, Judith Ann.

Early in 1941 sensing the importance of aviation in the present world conflict, he entered the flying with the announced intention of becoming a flight instructor. This goal being reached he served in this capacity first at Hastings, Neb. After a course at Central Instructors School at Brooks and Randolph Fields, Texas, he served as civilian instructor at Thunderbird Field, Arizona.

He completed his officers training course at Deming, N. M., receiving his appointment as Flight Officer June 22, 1944, after which he served as a ferry and air line pilot at Long Beach, Calif. Sept. 1 he was ordered to Brownsville Texas where he served again as a flight instructor, later being transferred to Greenwood, Miss., in the same capacity.

On March 12th, with five other crew members he left Greenwood on a routine flight to Brownsville, Texas. His plane passed over San Antonio on schedule but failed to arrive at the Brownsville destination. After an intensive search lasting until March 24 the crashed plane, and the six broken bodies were found sixty five miles south of San Antonio.

KSTC Grad Killed In Airplane Crash

A C-47 type airplane, which had been missing from this base since the 13th of March, has been found 35 miles west southwest of West George, Texas, about 65 miles south of San Antonio. All six men aboard the plane were dead when the craft was discovered by Mr. Ben Lissen, a Clegg, Texas farmer at 1:00 p.m. Saturday. Among the dead was Flight Officer Leon L. Hendren of Pleasanton.

Flying to Brownsville, Texas, on a routine mission, the plane had been the object of an intensive search by over a dozen military and naval installations ever since it had been reported missing at 4:00 a.m. on March 13th.

The plane, which had apparently crashed and the thunderstorm, hit the ground at an acute angle. A Board of competent officers will be appointed to determine the exact cause of the accident.

The six men aboard the plane were: Flight Officer Walter J. Mullen, 30, of Elizabeth, New Jersey, pilot; Flight Officer Leon L. Hendren, 23, of Pleasanton, Nebraska, co-pilot; Flight Officer James D. Mitchell, 24, of Ironwood, Michigan, co-pilot; Staff Sergeant Milton L. Grams, 23, of Westbrook, Minnesota, engineer; Corporal Morton N. Sax, 20, of Los Angeles, California, Assistant Engineer; and Staff Sergeant Paul Mason, 33, of Los Angeles, California.

Flight Officer Hendren was the son of Mr. and Mrs. J. K. Hendren of Pleasanton, and the husband of the former Irene Thesing.

A pilot with more than 2000 flying hours to his credit, Flight Officer Hendren was a graduate of the Pleasanton High School and held a B. S. in Education from Kearney State Teachers College. Prior to entering the service last June, Flight Officer Hendren was with Southwest Airways at Phoenix.

Tuesday, April 10, 1945

Obituar
Leon LeRoy Hendren, only son of Kenneth and Dorothy Hendren, was born on a farm near Pleasanton, Nebr., Nov. 20, 1920 and was killed in the crash of a plane March 13, 1945, at the age of 24 years, three months and 21 days.

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Flying had meant to Leon an outreach toward God and growth in the spirit life. He felt the Divine hand over his own as he held the controls.

His life of beauty, integrity, joyous acceptance of privilege and duty, his honesty and fidelity have been a happy inspiration to those about him through the brief years of his expanding life.

Flying gave Leon the uplift of high idealism which guided his life. It was only a bit higher to rise on wings, the way he wished to go to reach the broad horizons which have no boundaries of earth or sea or air. With a cheery smile and a wave of his hand Leon flew from this world to the heavenly land.

Military funeral services were held April 2 from the United Brethren Church at Pleasanton with the Rev. Hendren of San Diego, California, uncle of the deceased, officiating. Burial was in the Pleasanton cemetery.

Card of Thanks
We wish to thank our many kind friends and neighbors for their many acts of kindness shown us during our anxious days of waiting, and after the plane was found. And to all those who assisted at the last rites of our dear one.

Mrs. Irene Hendren and Judith Ann
Mr. and Mrs. J. K. Hendren