

# FORMER LOCAL GUARDSMAN IS CRASH VICTIM

Staff Sergeant Willard Frost Rath, 22, of the U. S. army air corps and former member of the Wisconsin Rapids National Guard battery, was killed Thursday in California in the crash of his pursuit ship with another plane.

## Planes Collide in Air

Rath died when his plane collided with a pursuit ship piloted by Victor E. Thacker, of Lancaster, Calif., while on a routine training flight, according to an Associated Press dispatch from Riverside, Calif. No other details were given out. Thacker also was killed.

The young pilot, who joined the air corps in August, 1941, left Wisconsin Rapids with the National Guards in October, 1940, and served with the local unit until transferring to the air corps. He held the rank of corporal in the battery.

## Funeral at Almond

Rath's home was at Almond where his foster parents today said they had received only word that he had been killed in the flying accident and that the body would be shipped to Almond for burial. He has a brother, Second Lt. Leland Rath, who is stationed in California with the air corps.

Sergeant Rath was graduated from Almond high school in 1937, and in September of that year came to Wisconsin Rapids where he was employed at Consolidated Water Power & Paper company in the finishing room. He remained an employe of the company until going to Louisiana with the Guards.

## Won Wings in March

After basic flight training in Illinois and at Randolph field, Texas, he was awarded his wings as an air corps staff sergeant at Kelly field, Texas, in March this year. He had been stationed at a base at Tallahassee, Fla., recently, and as far as the family knew had not been in California long.

His death was the second among the original roster of the local National Guard unit. Pvt. Donald K. Henry of Wisconsin Rapids was killed in a motorcycle accident while the battery was en route south following its induction into federal service.

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