

SGT. HOWARD EICHER KILLED IN CRASH Son of Ray Eicher Victim in Bomber Crash in Kansas

Staff Sergeant Howard R. Eicher, 22, was killed Wednesday in a bomber crash near Waldo, Kansas, according to word received by his wife at Piqua, Ohio, who forwarded meagre information of the tragedy to Eicher's mother, Mrs. Dwight Bower at Bluffton. The ill-fated young airman was a son of Raymond Eicher, who is living with his father Chris Eicher at Geneva.

The bomber is said to have been on a routine test flight when it crashed but nothing has been learned as to the fate of the other members of the crew. S. Sgt. Eicher was a flight engineer with the army air corps.

Sgt. Eicher was born in Hartford township on August 7, 1921 a son of Raymond and Mable Swagart-Eicher. He attended elementary school in that township and graduated from Bluffton high school in 1939. On August 23, 1942 he was united in marriage to Miss Mildred Waltz, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe Waltz who have since moved to Piqua. On the day following his marriage he entered service from Wells county in the air corps and had recently been stationed at Blyth, California.

He is survived by his wife, mother, father, and a grandmother, Mrs. Jessie Swagart Of Bluffton, a brother Pfc, Carl Eicher, serving in heavy artillery at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. It has not been learned if the body will be shipped to Piqua or to Bluffton for burial. An uncle, Solomon Eicher, died in the nation's service at a Kansas hospital last Spring on he Saturday before Easter.

Berne Witness, Adams County, IN; September 24, 1943 Transcribed by Gabriella Brouillette Smith

ADAMS COUNTY NATIVE DIES IN AIR CRASH Howard Ray Eicher Is Bomber Victim

Funeral arrangements may be made late today for Staff Sgt. Howard Ray Eicher, 22, of Bluffton, and a native of Adams county, who died Wednesday in a bomber crash near Waldo, Kan.

No details concerning the crash were given in the message received by the victim's mother, Mrs. Dwight Bower at Bluffton, from his widow, now residing at Piqua, Ohio. Sgt. Eicher was born in Hartford township August 7, 1921, a son of Ray and Mabel Swagart-Eicher. He attended elementary schools in Adams county and was graduated from the Bluffton high school.

On August 23, 1942 he was married to Mildred Waltz of Bluffton. The following day he entered the army air forces. The widow, parents, a brother, Pfc. Carl Eicher of Fort Sill, Okla., and the grandmother, Mrs. Jessie Swagart of Bluffton, survive. The body is to be returned to Bluffton for funeral services and burial.

Decatur Daily Democrat, Adams County, Indiana; Sept. 25, 1943 Contributed by Karin King

Burial: Stahl Cemetery, Petroleum, Wells County, Indiana, USA

SGT. EICHER'S BODY HAS NOT YET ARRIVED

The body of Staff Sergeant Howard Ray Eicher, 22, who was killed in a bomber crash last Wednesday near Waldo, Kansas, had not arrived at Bluffton this afternoon, to which place it is being shipped. No funeral arrangements have therefore been made. The ill-fated youth was a son of Raymond Eicher and Mrs. Dwight Bower. He was also a nephew of Mrs. Reuben Liechty of Montpelier.

Berne Witness, Adams County, IN; September 27, 1943 Transcribed by Gabriella Brouillette Smith

BODY STILL HELD IN Kansas

Word was received a Bluffton Thursday that the body of Staff Sergt. Howard R. Eicher, 2, who was killed Wednesday, September 22, in a crash of an army bomber near Waldo, Kans. still was held at Victoria base, near the scene of the tragedy, with the information from the Red Cross field director at that point that the army, would not release the body until all victims of the crash had been identified. It was added that it was expected that another day or two would elapse before the body was shipped and that the family would be notified at the time the body left Kansas and its arrival here. The informant stated that the family of Sergeant Eicher might be informed that his body had been identified. Funeral arrangements are delayed pending further word.

Berne Witness, October 1, 1943

Transcribed by Gabriella Brouillette Smith

1943 Osbourne County (KS) B-24 Bomber Crash Memorial



The Memorial Reads

ON 12 SEPTEMBER 1943 A B-24-D "LIBERATOR" BOMBER CRASHED INTO APPROXIMATELY 400 YARDS WEST OF THIS SITE AMID INCLEMENT WEATHER. THAT NIGHT ELEVEN ARMY AIR FORCE MEN LOST THEIR LIVES WHILE IN THE SERVICE OF THIS COUNTRY. LET THIS MEMORIAL STAND IN TESTAMENT TO THEIR BRAVERY AND SACRIFICE THAT SHALL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN:

FIRST LT. JOSEPH H. BEVES
SECOND LT. ARTHUR H. LAMKER
STAFF SERGEANT MARLIN G. CHAMBERLAIN
FIRST LT. LARUE B. LEE
SECOND LT. CLEATUS CHRISTOPHER
SERGEANT BOBBY S. SANFORD
SERGEANT HOWARD R. EICHER
FLIGHT OFFICER J. SINGLETON WALDROP
SECOND LT. FRANK C. FISCHER
SERGEANT CHESTER J. URBANOWICZ
FLIGHT OFFICER DONALD L. KIDDER
DEDICATED 4 APRIL 2004