

Robert M. Graham Dies at 51

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Robert M. Graham, 51, of 337 Broadway Ave. W., local building contractor and an Army Air Force veteran of World War II, was pronounced dead of a heart condition upon arrival at the House of the Good Samaritan by Guilfoyle's Ambulance at 6:30 Thursday night.

Mr. Graham, who had not been in good health, was stricken suddenly ill at home about 6 p.m. and apparently died before the arrival of the ambulance.

With his father, Marl S. Graham, Mr. Graham had been engaged in the building construction business under the name of M.S. Graham & Son.

Surviving him are his widow, Mrs. Polly S. Empsall Graham; a daughter, Miss Patricia A. Graham, a student at Cazenovia Collège; his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Marl S. Graham, 724 Gotham St., and a sister, Mrs. Robert W. (Alice) Cerow, 509 S. Hamilton St.

The family has requested that in lieu of tributes, contributions be made to the heart fund in Mr. Graham's name.

Mr. Graham was born in Watertown Aug. 12, 1920, a son of Marl S. and Anna Oswell Graham. He was educated in the local public schools and was graduated from the Watertown High School in June 1938, after which he became associated with his father as a partner in the contracting business. They specialized in residential construction.

Mr. Graham served as a bomber pilot in the European Theater during the war. He entered the Air Corps in February, 1943, after having trained as an aviation cadet from Aug. 4, 1942, and was commissioned a pilot with the rank of second lieutenant in November, 1943, in Arkansas. He was then sent to Tucson, Ariz., where he received further training aboard a B-24 Liberator bomber.

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Sent to England in March, 1944, he completed 30 missions over German-occupied territory in Europe and upon the German homeland itself by the latter part of the following August. Stationed with the Eighth Air Force in England, he flew his first mission over enemy installations in France in May, 1944, and later took part in other missions over Belgium and Holland, as well as Germany.

While on a bombing mission over France in August, 1944, he and his crew escaped death when their plane collided with another B-24 Liberator, which had exploded to bits after being hit by enemy flak. His ship managed to make its way back to home base. For meritorious service in action, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, and Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters; the European theater ribbon with two battle stars and other citations.

He returned to this country from overseas in January, 1945, and was released from active duty with the rank of first lieutenant in 1946.

Mr. Graham married Miss Polly S. Empsall, daughter of the late Mrs. Howard M. Hall and the late Frank A. Empsall, on Oct. 14, 1950 at the chapel of Trinity Episcopal Church.

Mr and Mrs. Graham lived at 340 Brainard St. before moving to Broadway Avenue West.

He was a member of the First Presbyterian Church.

The funeral will be Saturday morning at 11 at the Cleveland-Spink Funeral Home. Rev. Elliot F. Metcalf, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church, will officiate.

The body will be cremated and the ashes buried in Brookside Cemetery.

Friends may call at the funeral home tonight from 7 to 9.