

Veteran Marries Widow Of Pal Killed in Battle

Fate has thrown a girl and two boys, one a native of Pittsburgh, together in as poignant and human a drama as the war has produced.

For William Donald Thompson, of 1407 Westfield Street, Beechview, has married the widow of his best friend, also named Thompson, who was shot down and killed during a bombing of the oil fields of Ploesti, Romania, the summer of 1944.

COLLEGE ROMANCE

The story really began in September, 1941, when Royal Winfred Thompson, of McColl, S. C., and Claire Cox, of Hendersonville, N. C., met while students at Mars Hill College, North Carolina.

In December, 1942, Clair and Win (he preferred his middle name) were married. The following June Win went to Selman Field, La., as an aviation cadet. Claire joined him.

At the same time, Don Thompson (he, too, preferred his middle name) was sent to Selman Field as an aviation cadet. The two Thompsons met and before long became friends. Naturally, Don met Claire and the three soon formed a close, friendly trio.

WIN, DON BUDDIES

Both Win and Don went through training together and both were graduated as navigators at the same time. Together they continued their advanced training and together they left for overseas service in March 1944.

They were separated when they arrived in Italy because Win was delayed at Boriquen Field, Puerto Rico, one of the stops. Don joined a B-17 outfit and Win was assigned to a B-24 group.

Don finished his tour first and was returned to the States. Late in August he received a wire from Claire which told him that Win had been shot down and killed.

MORE THAN FRIENDS

Military orders prevented Don from seeing Claire then, but they corresponded and Don spent last year's Thanksgiving with Claire and her family.

In June Don and Claire realized that they were more than close friends and they decided to marry. The ceremony took place in Claire's home a few days ago.



Sun-Telegraph Photo.

WAR STORY—Lt. W. Donald Thompson of 1407 Westfield Street, Beechview, and his bride, Claire, looking at a picture of Claire's first husband and Don's closest friend, whose name also was Thompson. The trio became fast friends during training days when Claire was Mrs. Winfred Thompson. Then "Win" lost his life on an air raid on Romania, and before long Don's old friendship with Claire ripened into marriage.

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