



JAMES RUSSELL PARSONS, IV

1940

James Parsons came to St. Paul's in 1936 and spent three years there. He played on Old Hundred football and hockey teams and later won his Freshman hockey numerals at Yale. In his Freshman year he also joined Yale's first Army Air Force unit. The day before being called to active duty, in August, 1942, he was married to Pamela Capps.

Commissioned Second Lieutenant in May, 1943, after training in Texas, Missouri and Kansas, he went overseas that September and was stationed at first in North Africa, co-pilot of a B-24 in the 376th Bomb. Group. In November, after he had completed ten missions, including two over Vienna, the group moved to Italy and were stationed near Foggia.

On December 28, 1943, Parsons was flying his twenty-fourth combat mission. A formation of Liberators were assigned to bomb the railway lines at Vicenza. They failed to meet their fighter escort but continued nonetheless to their target. There they were attacked by waves of German fighter planes. In the ensuing battle, eleven of the sixteen bombers and forty of the enemy fighters were shot down. Parsons' plane was one of those destroyed, and he himself was killed after bailing out. His crew mates, in view of their own and other information, are convinced that he was machine-gunned by an enemy fighter pilot before reaching the ground.



CHARLES SPRAGUE SEFTON

1940

Sprague Sefton spent five years at St. Paul's. He entered the Second Form in 1935 and graduated in 1940. In his Sixth Form year, he won his Delphian letter in football and his S.P.S. in hockey and rowing. The Halcyon crew of 1940, in which he was No. 7, won its race by five lengths. He was a quiet, intelligent boy, even-tempered and dependable, a good Supervisor in a younger boys' house, a person whose opinion was known and respected.

In 1942, after his Sophomore year at Williams, he entered the Navy, and was sent to Chapel Hill, N. C., for pre-flight training. He was commissioned Ensign at Pensacola in August, 1943, and after several months of further training in Florida and in California, he went overseas in February, 1944.

In the Pacific, Sefton served ten months on Eniwetok, Saipan and Tinian, as co-pilot of a Navy Liberator in VPB-116, part of Fleet Air Wing One, under general operational command of Admiral Halsey. He had to his credit well over 1,000 hours of flying time in Liberators. He took part in the Philippine campaign and flew many other missions, including several against Truk.

In January, 1945, Sefton returned to the United States. After a thirty-day leave, he was ordered to the Naval Air Station at Hutchinson, Kansas, for training as a Patrol Plane Commander. An Alumnus, stationed at the same field, who frequently flew as co-pilot with him, has written of the great respect and friendship felt for Sefton by the other men at the field, who all recognized his skill and good judgment as a pilot.

*ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL*

On May 28, 1945, his course at Hutchinson nearly completed, Sefton was taking part in a night training flight. Visibility was poor. A dozen planes were already in the traffic pattern, when Sefton's B-24 and another, having just taken off, were making their initial turns at the up-wind end of the field. They failed to establish a proper interval between them and collided in mid air. Every man in both crews was instantly killed.

The fact that Sefton was undoubtedly chosen for the course at Hutchinson on account of his good record on active service in the Pacific, heightens the tragedy of his death at twenty-three.