

Montezuma Man Dies Thursday In Fall From Bridge

A Montezuma man, Andrew Leydens, 50, was killed Thursday in a construction accident near Runnells.

Leydens was working on a railroad pier crossing the Des Moines river when the accident occurred. He fell about 50 feet into a deep pond and sank immediately. Fellow workmen said he was weighted down by a heavy tool belt.

Leydens was one of six workmen on the span at the time, but the others didn't see him fall. They did, however, hear the splash when his body struck the water.

The Runnells fire department was summoned, along with Polk county sheriff's office personnel, and the body. Leydens was pronounced dead at the scene by the Polk county medical examiner.

Leydens had been employed by the Bacus Const. Co. of Kansas City. Feb. 13, 1964

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Full Military Services Honor Andrew Leydens

Funeral services were held Sunday, Feb. 9, for Andrew Leydens, who accidentally fell and was drowned while working on a bridge pier on the Des Moines River in the Red Rock area, Thursday morning.

Andrew, son of Maggie and William Leydens, was born on a farm near Taintor, Oct. 2, 1914, and died Feb. 6, at 49 years of age.

He attended rural school until he moved with his parents to Montezuma where he continued his education. While in school he participated in athletics, playing both baseball and football.

In 1963 he was united in marriage with Gladys Jacobson, and to this union three children were born.

In 1942, he entered the army and was assigned to the air corps. He received his wings in April, 1943, and was a ball-turret gunner on a heavy bomber with the Eighth Air Force. He flew thirty missions, five of which were over Berlin, logging 213 combat flying hours. He was awarded the Air Medal, the Distinguished Flying Cross and five Oak-Leaf Clusters. Staff Sergeant Leydens received his discharge in September, 1945.

In 1950, he was united in marriage with Josephine O'Bannon, and to this union two sons were born. Their home was in Oskaloosa, where he was employed as a mechanic. For the past six months, Andy worked for the Bacus Construction Co.

He is survived by his children, his parents, four sisters, Anna May Swink, Salem, Ore., Viola Casey and Doris Butler, Montezuma, Beverly Burkins, Davenport; three brothers, Willis and Larry at home, and Leland, Des Moines; other relatives and many friends.

Rev. G. R. Dieken officiated at the funeral services, conducted at the Presbyterian church. Bill Rempp sang "No Night There" and "God Will Take Care Of You".

A full military service was rendered at the Jackson Township cemetery by members of the American Legion. Casket bearers were Ernest McFerren, Erwin Jordan, Hugh McMeekin, Foster Pugh, Gerald Lidtka, and Roy Baird. Marcus Shearer, Philo Brown, Don Fahlenkamp, and Don Smith comprised the rifle squad, and color bearers were Adrian Sams, Pete Ellis, Fred Zorn, and Ken Perry. Commander Marcus Shearer was in charge, and Blair Brooks was Officer of the Day.