

# Second Kenneth

There was some initial testing of all enlistee's. I scored higher on the entrance testing than any of the other enlistees so I was put in charge of the group while we were enroute to Parks Air Force Base near Pleasanton, California. I was a slim five-foot nine inches and weighed only 121 pounds when I enlisted and did not look the part of a serviceman. The orders were printed without the officer who signed them ever seeing me, and when my name was called out he gave visible indications that he felt that he had made a mistake.

I took Johnny with me when I joined the Air Force. The word spread like fire on the bus to the base where we were to take our basic training that there was some guy on the bus that had a doll. They must have thought that I was a misfit. The rumors were rampant. But, as is usual with rumors, the doll was not what they thought it was.

During basic training a series of tests were given to all the airmen in my flight. The test results were to help determine career path and follow-on schooling that would be given each man. The scoring was on a scale of zero to nine with nine being the highest score possible. Of the eight different test groups I scored five nines, two eights, and a six. The highest grades were in engineering or technical subjects and the lowest was in food services. That suited me well because I had no interest in making a career in cooking. Because of my very high scores the Air Force told me that I didn't need to go to any more schools and asked me what I wanted to do. I had the opportunity if I desired of attending Officer's Training School, but I turned it

down because it meant that I would have had to serve additional time in the military. I decided that I wanted to be in communications and was assigned to the communications center at Parks Air Force Base as permanent party.

I corresponded with Annette infrequently. She had found other interests. Marianne wrote more frequently.

The first time that I had some time off from work I decided to go to Sacramento to visit my relatives: Aunt Virda and cousins John Leland and Sarajane.. Other daughters of Aunt Virda, and cousins to me by marriage, Barbara Blim and Utahna Wedge also lived nearby in Sacramento.

I had absolutely no idea where they lived in Sacramento or how I would be welcomed, but I hitchhiked the ninety miles arriving there one fall evening. After locating where they lived I went to their home. I could see through the door that they were eating dinner when I arrived and they could see someone outside approaching in a military uniform. Thinking that it might be one of her friends, Sarajane came to the door. I said, "Hi Sarajane, remember me?" There was a look of surprise on her face to see me in a uniform, and she replied, "Ken!" That started my home-away-from-home at Aunt Virda's.

Many good times were had during the next year. I spent as much time as I could at Aunt Virda's. I went there every time I had some time off from work. Aunt Virda had remarried Charles Shepherd and was active in her ward. Sarajane's friend, Nancie Newell, became my steady date when I went to Sacramento. Leland must have been influenced by me somewhat as he joined the Air Force a couple of months after I arrived. He took his basic training at Parks. My close association with Aunt Virda lasted until her death in

1976.

I managed to get to Salt Lake about every three months for a few days visit at home. I always tried to date Annette, who still held a very special place in my heart, on these trips. I also dated Marianne when I went home, but I was to be gone for four years and she also found other interests.

The next spring the Air Force assigned a new mission to Parks and I was given orders to go to Japan. Before the trip overseas I spent thirty days at home on leave not knowing exactly where I would be sent. Mom had some anxiety about the Korean War, but I was assured that I would only be sent to Japan. I visited my relatives in Price, and while there I had a chance to see Glenda Prettyman. I had met her on an earlier trip. She had watched me perform with Johnny before I enlisted in the service. We went to a movie once and I asked her if she would write to me. The next day I went to church with her and then went back to Salt Lake with my family. The leave was soon over and I left home for Camp Stoneman, little suspecting that I would never see my parents alive again.

In June of 1953 I was at Camp Stoneman waiting for the ship that would carry me overseas. Camp Stoneman, near Pittsburg, California, was the staging area for troops being shipped overseas. I stayed there for about one month before sailing. On the day we sailed, we got up at four in the morning and went by barge to San Francisco harbor. It was evening before we all got aboard the USS General J. C. Breckinridge, a two-stack vessel that could accommodate 4,500 men. I was in one of the forward holds about three levels below decks. It took nine days to cross the Pacific Ocean and reach Japan. We left California on June twenty-eighth in 1953 and the International date line

claimed my Fourth of July Holiday. After a day at Tokyo being processed in, a small group of us left by train for southern Japan and Itazuke Air Force Base.

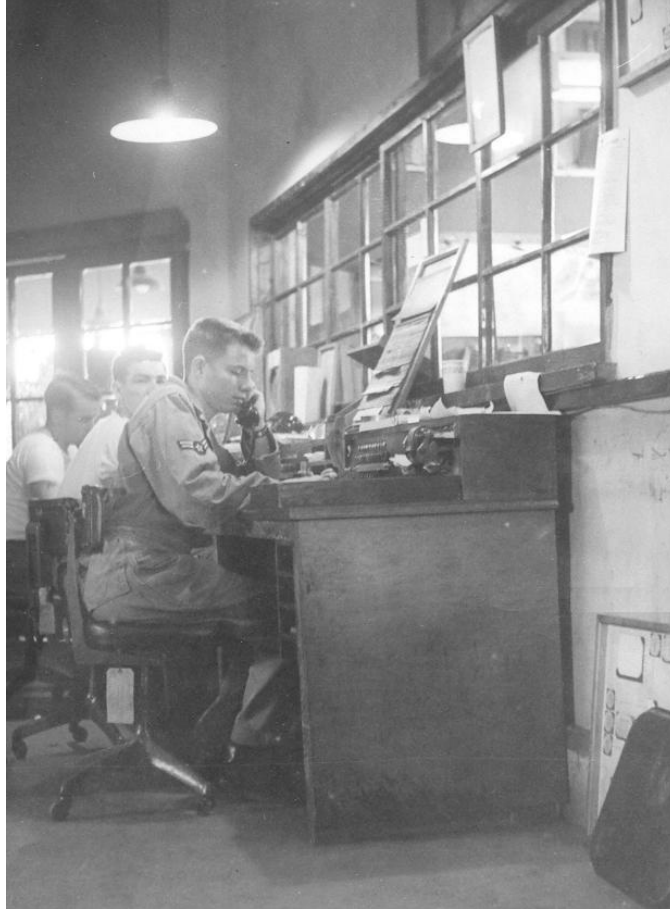
Itazuke Air Force Base was located on the southern island of Kyushu near the city of Fukuoka. It consisted of an airfield where I worked and living facilities approximately seven miles away at Shirakibaru. There were four stops for the tram between Fukuoka and Shirakibaru. For the next two years it was common place to hear the conductor of the tram announce the next stop, our new home, when we returned from a day off at Fukuoka with his "Tsugi wa Shirakibaru de gozaimasu."

I worked at the communications center. Sometimes sending flight plans or weather reports to Tokyo or Korea on teletype equipment, sometimes in the base weather station sending weather maps on facsimile machines, and sometimes I worked the the small telephone switchboard called baker-stand to the control towers and base operations.

"Don't call me for fifteen minutes," I told all the bases that I was responsible for, "I'm going out and see Marilyn Monroe."

I was working baker-stand that evening when Marilyn Monroe, the movie star symbol of the era, and Joe DiMaggio, the former New York Yankee baseball hero, were enroute from Tokyo to Fukuoka on their honeymoon in the far east.

Baker stand was a small telephone switchboard which was connected to the air bases in the southern Japan air jurisdiction. The air bases included Iwakuni and Miho on the island of Honshu as well as Ashiya, Brady and Itazuke on the island of Kyushu. Flight plans were documented and sent to destinations on the teletype and radio equipment in the



Working Baker Stand

communications center as well as passed through the windows to the air traffic control center.

Marilyn Monroe was in the cabin of the Japan Air Lines plane that had left Tokyo's Haneda Air Base. She was talking to the servicemen in the control towers while en route. The air traffic control center heard several of the radio conversations. When they were closer to Itazuke the officer of the day recorded in the log, "Marilyn Monroe making unauthorized transmissions," and scrambled an interceptor. The interceptor used the code name Ernie Blue during his

radio communications with the air traffic control center and with the Japan Air Lines pilot and this name became fixed in her mind.

I followed the progress of the flight by listening to the radio messages through the open window to the air traffic control center. When the plane landed I walked the two hundred or so feet from the communications center to the place where Japan Air Lines always stopped and waited for the plane to taxi into position. There were a few Japanese people with flowers, but I was the only American.

She was a very lovely person, much prettier than her pictures, and I was only a half dozen feet away at the bottom of the stairs. Joe DiMaggio was busy making arrangements with some people near the plane. The interceptor sped by over the runway and she followed it carefully with her eyes. She was looking for Ernie Blue and didn't notice one overawed serviceman. Then I had to return to my work station at baker stand.

The work routine consisted of six hours on duty with twelve hours off duty between shifts. The cycle started with dinner at five p.m. and then travel by squadron bus to the communications center for a shift of six hours. The bus brought our relief at midnight, returned us to the main base for either breakfast at half past midnight or bed, at our option. The next morning it was lunch at eleven a.m. and the bus to work for our next shift ending with the bus at six p.m. to dinner. The next shift was breakfast at five a.m. and the bus to work ending with our relief at noon and the bus to lunch. Then it was breakfast at eleven p.m. and the bus to work with our relief bus to another, breakfast at six a.m. Following this shift, ending at six a.m. we didn't have to work till six p.m. the following day. That



Robert Widerberg, Scott Jarvie  
James A. Evans, Kenneth G. Hqales  
JL Dunn, Robert Hodgin

was my schedule for the two years I was assigned at Itazuke Air Force Base.

By this time I was starting to feel insecure. It had been a long time since I had dated anyone, mail from girl friends had started to diminish, and I wondered if I would ever marry and have a family of my own. I became engaged to Glenda Prettyman through the mail. Mom and Bishop Luker selected an engagement ring and mom gave it to Glenda for me. I felt a little more secure now. I felt that someone was home waiting for me.

During my time off from work I often visited the missionaries at their home. There were some college students that also visited with them primarily to practice their conversational English. Soon I was

giving English lessons to Tatsue Eshima, Chieko Moroe, Yoko Tominaga, Akira Takaki and Yoshihisha Fujishima. That helped out the missionaries and it also gave me something to do.



Our Church Group – 1954

At first our church group at the air base was rather small. Soon a few more arrived and we had a good group. We were very close and enjoyed each other's company in preference to the other people in the military who did not share our views.

We held our meetings at two in the afternoon on Sundays because that was the only time that we could schedule the interdenominational chapel on the base. I led the music for the meetings and taught the Book of Mormon class.

Later others joined our group. By this time Robert Widerberg, our group leader, had left and was replaced by Clyde Farr. Brother Farr, a country wise Arizona



boy, taught me many lessons. The group this afternoon consisted of, from left to right: Robert Widerberg, Eula Collins, Dale Brunken, Audene Lewis, James A. Evans, Elder Anderson, James Craner, Elder Conway Barker, Kenneth Glyn Hales, JL Dunn and Robert Hodgkin.

I'll always remember going with Brother Farr to look up a staff sergeant that had just been assigned to the base. After we visited with him and invited him to church with us I remarked to Brother Farr, "Did you see those nicotine stains all over his hands?" He responded, "You know, I'd rather have him smoke and come to church than smoke and stay home." The next Sunday he was there. He said that this was the first church meeting he had been to in fifteen years. Later his wife joined him in Japan and became a member of our group. The nicotine stains disappeared. He became our group clerk and his wife became our group Relief Society President.

Others joined our church group as replacements for those who went home. We grew from a handful of members to a group of over twenty.

There were also five special people that I associated with in the communications squadron that I was assigned to. When not with the church group I could be found with one of them. They were Randall Eugene Hill from Fries, Virginia; Donald Russell from Parkersburg, West Virginia; John Francis Broderick, III from Brooklyn, New York; Roger Halstead from Newark, New Jersey; and Franklin Delano Boles from southern California. Over the years I have lost track of them and often wonder how and where they are.

As a Mormon I was different than the others in the squadron. I didn't go out with the guys when they visited the bars at night. I didn't date the girls. Most of the girls seen with servicemen had bad reputations,

and I was advised by the church that, even if they were good, my reputation would suffer if I were seen with any of them. None of the Mormon servicemen dated Japanese girls that I knew of. Everyone noticed the lives of the Mormon servicemen. Everyone on the base seemed to know who we were and what we represented. We had a lot to live up to.



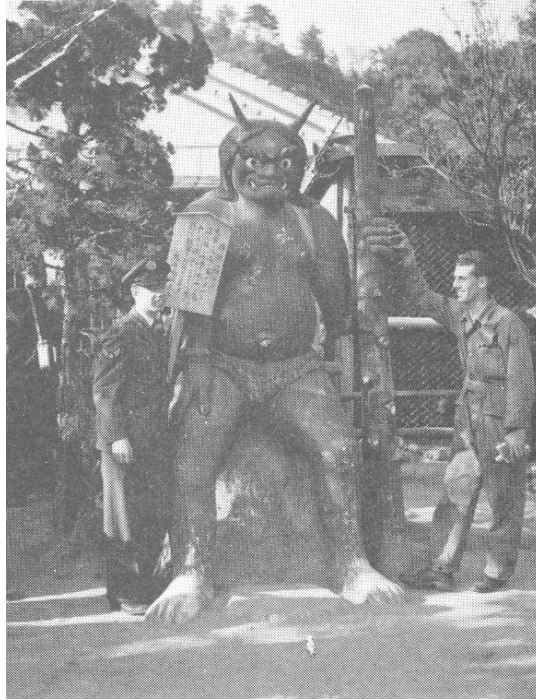
Itazuke Teletype Center

By the middle of my stay in Japan I reached the status of Trick Chief (shift supervisor) and moved into one of the rooms at the end of the open-bay barracks. The others in the squadron had bunks in the open area. There were about thirty men in each open-bay end of the barracks. The doorway to the barracks was in the

middle with a turn right or left into one of the open-bays.

Once I went to the base exchange on payday. While I was gone the other guys pushed the bunks back against the walls and the gambling games began. When I returned I walked into the middle of a dice game. One of the guys was rattling the dice around in his hand with his back to me and he was talking to the dice. His choice of gutter-words left a lot to be desired. It was not the kind of language that I used and everyone there knew it. Silence fell on the others as they saw me enter. The one with the dice turned around and saw me, then apologized for his language. They waited till I got to my room at the end of the barracks before the game began again. I was amazed that they stopped their game for me. I felt honored that the example the church taught me to practice was respected so much by those in my squadron. This incident taught me that you can never predict the influence that you have on others. It taught me that you should never underestimate the value of a good example.

One of the men in my squadron looked to me for his example. Frank Boles and I spent a lot of time together. I had a chance to explain to him the worthwhile things of life and he seemed to like what he heard. He had good intentions but could not endure the temptations. He would listen to me and then go to town with the guys to visit the bars. Then he felt penitent, returned to the base, and, wanting to talk, looked for me. He told me that he was going to ask to be baptized a member of the church, but that he was just too weak. I wonder if he has become more firm in his convictions and is ready now for the promise of salvation.



At Beppu  
Ken Hales and Scott Jarvie

On our days off from work we tried to see as much of Japan as we could within our limited resources. Once we checked a bus out of the motor pool, picked up the Mormon servicemen at Itazuke, Brady and Ashiya Air Force Bases, and traveled across the island to the servicemen's conference at Beppu. That was the most extensive trip that I made while in Japan. At Beppu, a great Buddhist Shrine, we learned about the fear that the Japanese have in their religion. What a joy it is to learn hope and not fear.

Scott Jarvie drove the bus. We used roads that were so narrow that the bus scraped the eaves of the roofs on the buildings on each side of the road. It was a 200 mile trip that took all day each way.

It was during my stay in Japan that I had to leave

to attend the funeral services for my family. I collected most of the Salt Lake City newspaper accounts of the accident, some of which I have included here.

Salt Lake Tribune  
August 7, 1954

THREE UTAHNS KILLED IN FLAMING NEVADA  
CRASH Michigan Motorist Dies, Three on 'Critical' List  
Special to the Tribune



Don Loel Hales



Irvin Que Hales

LOVELOCK, NEVADA. Three members of a Salt Lake family and a Michigan man were killed instantly in a flaming head-on crash fourteen miles east of Lovelock Friday night.

Killed were:

Mrs. Eugenie Hales, 44, 1138 Simondi Avenue (339 North Street), and two of her sons, Don Loel Hales, 19,

and Que Hales, 16, same address; Edward Albert Richards, 26, Earl Hotel, Jackson, Michigan.

In "very critical" condition are Frank Hales, 49, husband of the dead woman, and two daughters, Nikki, 9, and Julie, 7. The three injured are in Pershing General Hospital at Lovelock. According to Nevada Highway Trooper Chester C. Frost, the car driven by Mr. Richards apparently was traveling west at a high rate of speed. The Richards car apparently veered out of control and swerved to the wrong side of the road, colliding head-on with the Utah automobile.

The Hales vehicle almost immediately burst into flames.

Two California motorists who arrived at the scene moments after the wreck, pulled the bodies and survivors from the flaming wreckage. The Californians are Burl March, Sacramento, and Kenneth Madeiras, Modesto.

Another son and daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Hales reside in Salt Lake City. They are Monte Frank Hales and Mrs. Glen H. (Elva) Norman.

Trooper Frost said both automobiles were total losses. Personal possessions of the victims were scattered for several hundred yards along the highway, and many of the Hales family's belongings were burned in the inferno.

The trooper said the quick action of Mr. March and Mr. Madeiras possibly prevented more deaths in the tragedy.

He said bodies of those killed were badly mangled in the wreck. Mr. Richards was alone in his car.

The area in which the crash occurred long has been known as a "speedway" to western motorists. As part of the transcontinental U. S. Highway 40, it handles the major burden of California-bound tourists and trucking

traffic.

## Deseret News

August 7, 1954

### FOUR OF S.L. FAMILY DIE IN NEVADA CRASH

Michigan Man Killed Also, Two Others Hurt

Special to the News

LOVELOCK, NEVADA. Five persons, four of them members of a Salt Lake City family homeward bound from a California vacation, died in a flaming head-on crash fourteen miles east of here Friday about eight p.m.

The other two persons involved in the mishap, also members of the Salt Lake City family, were in, "critical" condition Saturday in Pershing General Hospital here.

#### KILLED:

Mrs. Eugenie Hales, 44, of 1138 Simondi Avenue, Salt Lake City.

Don Loel Hales, 19, a son.

Irvin Que Hales, 16, another son.

Julie Rae Hales, 7, a daughter.

Edward Albert Richards, 26, Earl Hotel, Jackson, Michigan.

#### INJURED:

Frank Hales, 49, husband of Mrs. Hales, listed in "critical" condition in Pershing General Hospital.

Nikki Mae Hales, 9, another daughter of the couple, also listed in "critical" condition.

Hospital officials said both were suffering multiple injuries and probable internal injuries.

All of the dead except Julie Rae Hales were killed

instantly in the crash. She died Saturday morning about five in a Lovelock hospital.

Police quoted witnesses as saying Richards was "doing more than 100 miles an hour when he passed another car and, failing to return to the right-hand lane, crashed head-on into the car driven by Mrs. Hales."

Rudolph Reinerstson, Burns, Oregon, said, "Richards passed me like I was standing still – and I was doing 70."

Kenneth Madeiras, Modesto, California, was driving behind the Hales car when the collision occurred. He said Mrs. Hales was driving about 60 miles per hour.

Madeiras, Reinerstson and another motorist, Burl March, of Sacramento, California, stopped to pull the victims from the flaming wreckage.

Trooper Chester C. Frost of the Nevada Highway Patrol said Mr. Richards was alone in his car when the mishap occurred.

Both autos were total losses. Personal possessions were scattered along the highway for several hundred yards.

The Hales family were active members of the Twenty-ninth Ward, Riverside Stake, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, reported Bishop Irvin K. Luker.

Mrs. Hales was president of the Twenty-ninth Ward Relief Society at the time of her death.



Julie Rae Hales



Eugenie Pettersson Hales was born November 10, 1909, in Salt Lake City, a daughter of Nicholas Pettersson and Emma Preston Pettersson. She was married to Frank Hales in the Salt Lake Temple.

Don Loel Hales was born April 14, 1935, in Salt Lake City, a son of Eugenie Pettersson and Frank Hales. He was graduated from West High School last June. He was a priest in the Twenty-ninth Ward.

Irvin Que Hales was born April 23, 1938, in Salt Lake City, a son of Eugenie Pettersson and Frank Hales. He attended Jackson Junior High School last year and was to have entered West High School this September. He was an ordained teacher in the Twenty-ninth Ward.

Julie Rae Hales was born January 14, 1947, in Salt Lake City, a daughter of Eugenie Pettersson and Frank Hales. She completed the first grade at Onequa School last June.

Survivors include two older brothers and a sister. They are Monte F. Hales, 116 N. West Temple; Mrs. Glen H. (Elva) Norman, 1749 White Avenue, and Airman Second Class Kenneth Hales, serving in the Air Force in Japan.

Also surviving Mrs. Eugenie Hales are the following brothers and sisters: Charles E. Pettersson and Thomas Pettersson and Mrs. Emma Jacques, Salt Lake City; Mrs. Max (Vesta) Curtis and Mrs. Don (Lorraine) Coleman, Price.

## FIFTH CRASH VICTIM IN S .L .FAMILY DIES IN NEVADA

RENO, NEVADA. Frank Hales, 49, Salt Lake City, died here Monday about 10:30 p.m. to become the sixth victim of a tragic head-on collision near Lovelock, Nevada, last Friday evening.

Mr. Hales became the fifth member of his family to die as the result of the crash.

His nine year old daughter Nikki, lone survivor of the grinding crash, remained in "critical" condition at the Washoe Medical Center here where she was transferred from Lovelock Monday. Additional blood transfusions were being administered in an attempt to save her life.

She had not regained consciousness since the smashup.

The other victim of the crash was Edward A. Richards, 26, of Jackson, Michigan, whom highway troopers said was responsible for the flaming wreck.

Funeral services still are pending for the other four members of the family killed in the crash. They are Mrs. Eugenie Hales, 44; sons Don Loel, 19, and Irvin Que, 16, and a daughter, Julie Rae, 7. Their bodies were taken to Salt Lake City Sunday.

Frank Hales was born March 22, 1905, at Winter Quarters, Utah, a son of Charles and Eva M. Burgess Hales. He was married to Eugenie Pettersson in the Salt Lake Temple, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

At the time of his death he was a stake missionary in the Riverside Stake and a member of the 188th Quorum of Seventy.

By trade he was a building contractor and

carpenter.

## FUNERAL SERVICES HELD FOR FIVE KILLED IN CRASH

Five members of the Frank Hales family were buried Friday as more than a thousand friends and relatives gathered to pay their last respects.

It was the end to a vacation trip for the five Salt Lakers, who died tragically in a flaming two-car automobile collision near Lovelock, Nevada, just one week ago.

Funeral services for Frank Hales, 49, his wife, Eugenie, 44, two sons, Don Loel, 19, and Irvin Que, 16, and a daughter, Julie Rae, 7, were held in the Riverside Stake Hall, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Another daughter, Nikki, 9, was taken off the critical list and was "showing steady improvement" Saturday at Washoe Medical Center in Reno, but could not attend the services. She was badly injured when the Hales automobile burst into flame after the crash.

Three other children, Airman Second Class Kenneth G. Hales, home on leave from Japan, Mrs. Elva E. Norman, and Monte F. Hales, were not in the accident.

Bishop Irvin K. Luker of the Twenty-ninth Ward conducted an impressive funeral in the stake hall which was banked solid on sides with floral pieces.

President Glen S. Burt of Riverside Stake, and Patriarch Jesse M. Drury of Temple View Stake, former bishop of the Fifth Ward where the Hales family used to go, paid special tributes along with Bishop Luker.

Musical numbers were furnished by the Singing Mothers, which were directed by Mrs. Hales before her

death.

Five hearses waited at the site of the services to bear the victims to the Salt Lake Cemetery. The cortege to the burial places was about eight blocks long.

Deseret News  
ORPHANED NIKKI HALES LIES IN HOSPITAL  
UNAWARE OF PARENT'S FATE  
By Clark Bigler, Special to the News

RENO. A nine year old "pretty little blonde" from Salt Lake City lies in her hospital bed Thursday unaware that a fiery head-on collision caused the death of her parents, two brothers and a sister.

In fact, attendants at Washoe Medical Center don't think Nikki Hales even remembered the auto accident which almost took her own life. She has never asked about it and all she has been told is that she was hurt in a fall.

This was true enough since the child apparently was thrown clear of the wreckage of the Hales family car when it was rammed head-on by a convertible speeding more than 100 miles an hour on August 6, near Lovelock on Highway 40.

Nikki was riding home with her family after a vacation in California when the crash occurred.

Her mother, Eugenie Hales, 44, two older brothers, Don Loel, 19, and Irvin Que, 16, were killed outright as was the driver of the other car.

Her seven year old sister, Julie Rae, died less than twelve hours later in a Lovelock hospital.

Three days later, her father, Frank Hales, a forty-nine year old carpenter, died a few hours after he and Nikki were brought to Washoe Medical Center

where more adequate medical facilities were available.

Nikki, however, has been told of none of this.

She frequently says, "Maybe mommy and daddy will visit me today" and has never given any indication whatever that she even suspects anything has happened to them.

When Mrs. Jennie Chedsey, a member of the Mount Rose Ward of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, brought Nikki a pair of pajamas, the child thanked her but she said she had a pair just like them at home.

"I think I'll give them to my little sister," she said. She was talking about Julie Rae, who died in the Lovelock Hospital the morning after the crash.

For nearly a week following the accident, Nikki lay near death. On the day joint funeral services were conducted for the five members of her family she regained consciousness and since then has shown what her physician, Dr. Kenneth McLean, regards as "remarkable improvement."

She will be transferred this week-end to the LDS Children's Hospital in Salt Lake City. She is tentatively scheduled to leave Reno by train Saturday night.

Her complete recovery will take a long time. She suffered a fractured skull, severe concussion, broken facial bones, facial lacerations and broken teeth in the accident.

An older brother, Monte F. Hales, 25, and an older sister, Mrs. Elva Norman, 23, both of Salt Lake City, accompanied Nikki in the ambulance which brought her from Lovelock to Reno.

They remained close to her bedside for several days and then returned to Salt Lake City.

Last week-end they returned with another brother, Kenneth, 20, whom Nikki hadn't seen for many months

since he was serving in the Air Force in Japan. He was flown home on emergency leave to attend the funeral of his parents.

The three of them visited with Nikki and made arrangements for her transfer to the Salt Lake City hospital before returning home again on Sunday.

Nikki is permitted few other visitors.

One of these, however, has taken almost personal charge of Nikki's spiritual recovery. He is Nathan T. Hurst, an insurance executive who is also bishop of the Mount Rose Ward in Reno. He looked in on the child every two or three hours during the critical stage and since she regained consciousness six days after the accident has visited her twice daily.

A close personal bond has developed between the two. Hurst has been in constant contact with Nikki's surviving brothers and sister and with Doctor McLean. He has been the liaison between the family and the doctor and has done everything in his power to see that the child doesn't get too lonely.

"She's a lovely child," Bishop Hurst said. "Anyone would be proud and privileged to rear her."

Both Burst and the child's nurses have been amazed at the lack of complaints from the child, despite her serious and numerous injuries.

And when Mr. Hurst asked her about her exposed tooth nerves, her chin quivered and she replied, "It hurts quite bad." But she didn't cry.

Mrs. Marion Brown, a special child's nurse who has cared for Nikki twelve hours a day since she was admitted to the hospital, said Nikki was rather tall, thin and a "very pretty little blonde."

She is "very quiet and courteous," Mrs. Brown said, and invariably answers "just fine" whenever she's asked how she feels.

Mrs. Brown reported Nikki frequently asks when her mother and father are going to visit her and seems excited whenever anyone comes to visit her.

"I've never taken care of a youngster quite her type," Mrs. Brown said, "She's almost saintly."

## The Salt Lake Tribune

August 23, 1954

### TINY CRASH SURVIVOR COMES HOME ALONE

Six started out

By Stan Lee Jones, Tribune Staff writer

Little Nikki Mae Hales returned to Salt Lake City Sunday – but not to her empty home at 1138 Simondi Avenue (1100 West 340 North Street).

Only survivor of a Nevada highway crash August sixth which claimed the lives of her parents; two brothers, and a sister, Nikki, seriously injured in the same accident, was placed in the children's ward of Latter-day Saints Hospital.

It was ten days ago that she awoke from a week of unconsciousness and whispered "Kenneth" when she saw her twenty year old airman brother, Kenneth Glyn Hales, at her bedside in a Reno, Nevada hospital.

He had been flown from his station in Itazuke, Japan, to be with his nine-year-old sister.

Late Saturday, Nikki was placed aboard a Reno train by her only remaining sister, Elva Eugenie Hales Norman, and her brother-in-law, Glen H. Norman, Salt Lakers.

Nikki was taken to Ogden where she was greeted at 10:45 a.m. by Kenneth and another brother, Monte Frank Hales, his wife, Hanne, and Charles E.



Monte, Elva, Ken and Nikki  
They remain of family of nine

Pettersson, all of Salt Lake City.

Gently, the brothers placed Nikki in a specially made "bed" in Monte's car.

While being driven to Salt Lake City, Nikki rested comfortably in spite of a basal skull fracture, scalp laceration, a broken rib, facial bruises, crushed gums,



broken sinus bones, and the absence of most of her front teeth.

"Maybe momma and daddy will meet me in Salt Lake City," she had told relatives during the train ride from Reno to Ogden. She has not yet been told that her mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Hales, her brothers, Don Loel, 19, and Irvin Que, 16, and her little sister, Julie Rae, 7, all were killed in the flaming crash which injured Nikki.

"Doctors say it is best not to tell her yet," said Kenneth Hales. Nikki will rest and continue to recuperate in LDS Hospital. Mrs. Norman said Nikki's recovery thus far had been pronounced "miraculous" by Nevada doctors.

A reporter promised the game youngster a gallon of ice cream if she would hurry and get well.

"I will," she said, smiling to show her few remaining teeth. But the brothers are already planning to buy books for their sister to study during the next few months.

### LITTLE NIKKI TOLD OF FAMILY' S DEATH Takes it "Pretty Well"

Little Nikki Hales now knows that she is the only survivor of a head-on collision August sixth that killed her parents, two brothers and a sister.

The tragic news was told to her by her sister, Mrs. Glen H. (Elva) Norman, Sunday evening at her bedside in the children's ward of the LDS Hospital. She arrived at the hospital Sunday from Reno, Nevada, where she has been hospitalized since a few days after the crash.

The nine year old girl took the tragic news "Pretty Well," her sister reported.

"Tears came into her eyes and later she cried," Mrs.

Norman said, "but she took it pretty well and we think she's going to be all right."

"The doctors told us that she may be able to come home in a few days and they thought she ought to know the truth."

When Nikki goes "home" she will make her permanent home with Mrs. Norman. Before she is released from the hospital, doctors want to be certain that the basal skull fracture she suffered is mending properly.

Nikki is the sole survivor of the Nevada highway crash that killed six persons. Killed in the crash were her mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Hales; her brothers, Don Loel, 19, and Irvin Que, 16, and her little sister, Julie Rae, 7.

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When I arrived back in Japan it was not the same. At home it was all so unreal, like a dream. Now as time passed it began to wear on me and the realization of it all began to set in. My home was gone. I had to face the thought that from here on I was totally on my own.

The mail didn't entirely stop. Hanne began writing to me to fill in the void for which I was grateful. A few other letters also arrived. One letter was from Aunt Vesta. She told me that Glenda now had two rings. I wrote to Glenda that I didn't think that it was fair for her to have two rings, so she sent mine back.

I continued to spend my time at work, with the Japanese students I was helping with their conversational English, and continued to associate with the church group.

When there were days off and I had the chance, my students and I found something to do. We could always find something. We went to the park or other

places where they could practice using their English. I was amused trying to get them to say the tongue-twisters that confused me when I was young. My rendition of, "How much wood could a woodchuck chuck, if a woodchuck could chuck wood," turned into, "Ow much 'ood 'ood a 'oodchuck chuck, if a 'oodchuck 'ood chuck 'ood," when they recited it back. We had a good time together and the friendship was strong.

When basketball season began twenty-six teams started league play and eight of them finished it. Our LDS Church group entered a team.

It was a good experience for all of us. My squadron, the 1955th AACS, won the championship, but I played for our church team. The first two games were detailed in Plane Talk, our Itazuke AFB Newspaper.

First	ADCC			LDS	
Game	Lord	14	F	Jarvie	2
	Lanir	8	F	Bickmore	5
	Strod	12	C	Clawson	6
	Weir	0	G	Hales	3
	Barnett	6	G	Widerberg	2
	ADCC	8	14	24	40
	LDS	5	7	16	21

Subs: LDS; O'Brien 1, Evans 2.

Second	43-9th			LDS	
Game	Wall	19	F	Scott	4
	Winstead	14	F	Nilson	9
	Lebel	1	C	Clawson	9
	Cook	3	G	Hales	2
	Kuzmicky	2	G	Dunn	1
	43-9th	8	14	27	40
	LDS	6	12	22	29

Subs: 43-9th; Sodo 1. LDS; Evans 2, O'Brien 2.



Our Team

Back row: Craner, Bickmore, Brunken, Anderson,  
Clawson, Dunn, Jarvie, Hodgin  
Front row: O'Brien, Scott, Evans, Widerberg, and Hales

The teams were organized into the National and American leagues each with thirteen teams. The teams consisted of various squadrons on the base in addition to our church group team. Our team consisted of members from Brady AFB as well as members from Itazuke AFB for enough players to fill out a team. We started slowly winning only one of the first five games. We ended the season with twelve wins and twelve losses. Lieutenant Anderson, one of our players from Brady AFB, who joined our team part way into the season, was selected as a member of the all star team.

The first time our LDS team played my squadron we won the game. I had the most points that I ever scored and I have never matched them since. I had eighteen

points, but it was all in vain. For some reason this game was skipped and not counted and the 1955<sup>th</sup> AACS went on to compile a twenty-three wins and one loss record. Because I chose to play for the church team I was isolated a little from the players from my squadron. They wondered why I played for the church team. They noticed our lives. I had a lot to live up to and the members of my squadron watched my actions and respected the church because of how I lived. They knew that I practiced the precepts of my church.

Our LDS group had Sunday meetings, a mid-week Book of Mormon study class and now a basketball team to keep us close together and strengthen us.

At times we were put on alert. We had to get our weapons and march out into the trenches that surrounded the barracks. I wondered what I was doing there. I resolved in my mind that I was not cut out to be a military man. I looked to the future and wanted to have a family of my own.

In the spring of 1955 I saw a new car being driven on the base. It really attracted my attention. It was different than any I had ever seen. I learned that it was a new Ford Fairlane and began making plans. I wrote to Monte and started making arrangements. I would be leaving Japan in a few months and wanted to have a new car waiting for me when I arrived home.

My two year assignment in Japan came to an end and I processed out of Itazuke AFB in preparation for my return home. At the base dispensary the customary question was asked, when did you last go to town?" I was one of the very few who could answer that question the right way. I didn't go to town for immoral purposes – ever. I didn't have to undergo treatment for disease as so many of the others did.

I was promoted to Airman First Class before I was

relieved of duty at Itazuke. Then I traveled to Tokyo to wait for the ship that would carry me back to the United States. I boarded the same ship that took me to Japan, the USS General J. C. Breckinridge, and began the long trip across the ocean. We made a stop at Okinawa and Taiwan before taking the great circle route home. It took twenty-one days to make the trip counting the stops at Okinawa and Taiwan where we were not allowed to leave the ship. By the time we saw the Golden Gate bridge and crossed under it to San Francisco we were ready to get off and feel the good solid ground under our feet again. It was even better that the ground we felt was our homeland.

I was anxious to get home and flew to Salt Lake by commercial airlines. I arrived about ten p.m. Monte and Hanne were now living in the home I left when I joined the air force, and parked behind the house was the new car that I had Monte pick up for me. I left it there until morning. I was tired, but I could hardly wait to try it out. It was good to be back, but it was different than when I left.

A few letters were waiting for me. One was from Sarajane in Sacramento. She told me that she had a new daughter and wanted me to bless it if I could get there in time. I talked to Aunt Vera and Uncle Alfred and asked them if they would like to go to Sacramento with me. It was the Fourth of July holiday and Uncle Alfred arranged to get off work for the short trip there and back. We arrived in Sacramento the evening of the second. I blessed Pamela Ann Mullins on the third. We decided to go see San Francisco on the fourth. Then we returned to Salt Lake on the fifth.