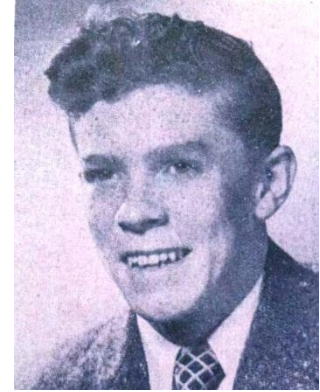


ATAN Phillip Kendall Balch, USN

Korean War

Hometown: Claremont, NH

Phillip Kendall Balch was born to Lowell and Mary (Putney) Balch, June 21, 1929 in Claremont, NH, though the family resided in Woodstock, VT. His dad, Lowell, local people called him Levi, was a Pharmacy Clerk at the local Drug Store and Mary raised their two boys, the oldest by two years, Edward, and Phillip.



Phillip would attend Stevens High School in Claremont during the World War II war years to its end and then Occupying Forces in Europe and the Far East, graduating in the Class of 1947. In high school he had the nickname “Chimp”. He was a one of the smallest guys in the class who had flaming red hair. Phillip was in the Drama Club his junior and senior years and was the Secretary of his Senior Class Student Council.

Soon after high school Phillip joined the U.S Navy following his brother Edward, who had joined the U.S. Navy in 1945. He attended Aviation Electronics School, in Memphis, TN. A friend of Phillip’s at the Navy school remembered him fondly and that he was given another nickname in the Navy, “Peeb”. Phillip completed his training and became an Aviation Electronics Technician Airman Apprentice (E-2).

Phillip Balch would eventually be stationed on the USS Essex aircraft carrier, assigned to Composite Squadron VC-35, stationed off the coast of the Korean peninsula in 1951, during the Korean War. He became a flight crewmember of a Douglas AD-4Q Skyraider, which had a crew of two, a pilot and an enlisted Aviation Electronics Technician Airman (E-3). This type of aircraft was a dive-bomber and Squadron VC-35’s mission was to perform night bombing missions in North Korea off the deck of the aircraft carrier. They usually flew in pairs, taking shifts so the entire night time hours were covered to hinder North Korean forces to move men and supplies by night.

On Sunday, August 26, 1951, Pilot Lt.(jg) Loren D. Smith of Minco, OK, and ATAN Phillip Kendall Balch, age 22, took off from the deck of the USS Essex. In flight for five minutes their aircraft suddenly burst into flames and crashed into the sea. Their bodies were never recovered. They were the second and third member that Squadron VC-35 lost of 15 total members the squadron would lose while fighting in Korea from June 26, 1951 – March 25, 1952.

ATAN Phillip Kendal Balch was awarded the Purple Heart, Combat Action Ribbon, Korean Service Medal, United Nations Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and the Korean War Service Medal. His name has been inscribed on the “Courts of the Missing” at the Honolulu Memorial, Hawaii.

Phillip’s father, Lowell Balch, would pass away in 1978 at the age of 73, in Windsor, Vermont. It appears his mother Mary lived to be 95 and died in 2000, in Claremont, NH. His brother Edward died in Manchester, NH in 1996 at the age of 69.