

Remember Them Forever

Name: Frank Eugene Rgnonti

Birth: 9 July 1951
Roswell, Chaves County, New Mexico

Death: 1 October 1979
Gainesville, Cooke County, Texas

Cemetery: Oaklawn Cemetery
Decatur, Wise County, Texas

GPS of grave:

Family:

Father: Frank Rgnonti (1929-1990)
Mother: Mary Nell *Maloney* Rgnonti (1926-1988); Clara Rgnonti (stepmother)
Spouse: No spouse shown
Children: Kerston Lisa Rgnonti

Military:

Sgt. U.S. Air Force: enlisted 11 January 1971; discharged on 16 December 1974.
Served in Vietnam.

Occupation and any other brief personal or family comments.

"Frank died in a plane crash early Monday morning, October 1st, 5 miles south of Gainesville. He was a native of Roswell, New Mexico and was an aviation mechanic. Survivors are his father and stepmother, Frank W. and Clara Rgnonti; daughter Kerston Lisa Rgnonti; sisters, Mary Boegeman, Donna May Rgnonti; Cheryl Rgnonti and Patricia Ann Shaffer."-Gainesville *Daily Register* 3 October 1979.

"Two Killed in Crash-Gainesville-Two men died Monday in the crash of a single-engine airplane near this North Texas city, authorities said. The Cessna 150-11 apparently went down before dawn in a hayfield one-half mile west of I-35 about 8 miles south of here. However, the plane did not explode or burn, and the wreckage was not discovered until after 12:00 p.m.

Peace Justice Bill Freeman identified the men as pilot Frank Rgnonti, 28, and Ronald Ray Brazell, 20, both of Gainesville.

It is believed the plane hit the ground, bounced, crumpled into a ball and crashed again."-newspaper clipping from Newspaper.com

"There was no apparent mechanical malfunctions with a Cessna 152 aircraft that crashed here early Monday killing two Gainesville men, a National Transportation Safety Board investigation said Tuesday.

"The indications are that the aircraft hit the ground at a very high rate of speed," NTSB investigator J.O. Johnson of Ft. Worth said Tuesday after inspecting the crash scene just off Interstate 35 and Spring Creek Road.

“The altitude of the airplane was wings level and in a steep nose down, 45 degrees or more to the ground” Johnson said of the crash.

“I could find no reason for a loss of control on the aircraft, there were no indications of any mechanical malfunctions of any kind,” he said.

Rgnonti, a student pilot, was an aviation mechanic and Brazell was an oilfield worker. The plane was owned by Rgnonti’s father, who owns an aircraft service company.

Johnson said that Rgnonti’s father had not given his son permission to fly the plane.

Rgnonti was not qualified to fly at night without a flight instructor. In addition, Johnson said, Rgnonti was licensed only as a student pilot and federal regulations prohibit student pilots from carrying passengers with them unless there is a flight instructor accompanying them.

He said Brazell didn’t have a Federal Aviation Administration issued pilot’s license.

The NTSB has ordered toxicology tests on blood and tissue samples taken from both bodies. Johnston said the exact time of the crash is still unknown, although it did occur sometime between 12:15 a.m. and 7 a.m. Monday. He said Rgnonti telephoned a tavern about 12:15 a.m. in Lindsay where he worked as a bartender and told his supervisor he was quitting.

The wreckage was spotted shortly after 7 a.m. by a farmer who thought it was a hay trailer. About noon the farmer went to the wreckage and determined otherwise.

Funeral for Rgnonti will be at 2 p.m. Wednesday at St. Mary’s Catholic Church.”-*Ft. Worth Star Telegram* 2 October 1979.

Sources: FamilySearch ID K8WZ-1BK, Find a Grave Memorial 44010126, Gainesville Daily Register 3 October 1979; Ft. Worth Star Telegram 3 October 1979; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs BIRLS Death File, Application for Military Headstone. Fairview Cemetery Sexton states that Frank Rgnonti was moved from Fairview Cemetery, Cooke County, to Oaklawn Cemetery, Decatur on 16 Nov 1990.

Author Information: 2025

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Organization Represented: Cross Timbers Genealogical Society

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