

## Story from World War II

### US Army Sgt. Floyd J. Cota

*As told by nephew, Bob Cota member #36*

## Weddings Mark

### Miss Leona Riley, Becomes Bride of Floyd Cota Today

Miss Leona Margaret Riley, daughter of Mrs. Rose Riley of 229 Elmwood Avenue will become the bride of Floyd J. Cota, son of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Cota of South Burlington in a quiet ceremony at 5 this afternoon in St. Joseph's Church. The Rev. Joseph E. Pariseau will officiate.

The bride who will be given in marriage by her mother, will wear a redingote of timber green wool. Her coat will be decorated with braid and her accessories will be in rust. She will wear a corsage of orchids and will carry a rosary, gift of the groom.

Mrs. John L. Patneau of Clairmont, N. H., will attend her sister as matron of honor. She will wear a redingote in a cocoa brown shade with accessories of Kelly green. Her corsage will be of yellow chrysanthemums and she will also carry a rosary.

The bride's mother will be gowned in a black alpaca jacket dress trimmed in white with black and white accessories. Her corsage will be of pink roses.

John Patneau of Clairmont, N. H., brother-in-law of the bride, will serve as best man. Ushers will be Eugene L. Fagga, also a brother-in-law of the bride and William H. Patneau. Mrs. Charles Nichols will be organist.

The bride presented her matron of honor with an alligator handbag and her mother with a ring. The groom presented his best man with a tie clasp. Ushers also received tie clasps.

The couple will leave immediately on a trip through New Hampshire and Massachusetts. Upon their return here September 2, they will make their home at 229 Elmwood Avenue.

The bride was graduated from Burlington High School and is employed at the Royal.

The bridegroom also attended Burlington High School and is employed as shipping clerk at the Whiting Company.

Out-of-town guests will include Mrs. Howard Riley and Miss Ruth Faith of Saranac Lake, N. Y., Mr. and Mrs. John L. Patneau of Claremont, N. H.

## Gunner C



Floyd Cota

Floyd served as a Sergeant, 396th Bomber Squadron, 41st Bomber Group, Medium, U.S. Army Air Forces during World War II.

He resided in Chittenden County, Vermont prior to the war.

He enlisted in the Army Air Corps on January 31, 1942 in Rutland, Vermont. He was noted as being employed as a Filling Station Attendant and also as Married.

Floyd was declared "**Missing In Action**" near Taroa Island during the war and was awarded the Air Medal and the Purple Heart with one Oak Leaf Cluster.



Like so many other brave young men, Floyd Cota enlisted in the US Army in 1942.



## Summary of Mission Based upon Information received from the War Department on my Uncle Floyd Cota

**Mission:** Nine B-25 bombers left Mullinix Field, Bonriki Island at 1021 10z to attack shipping, aircraft, warehouse, storage and other facilities on Taroa Island.

**Results:** Airfield and support building bombed. Light to moderate anti-aircraft fire received.

**Losses:** Two planes (A/P 277 & A/P616 observed to crash on return flight after initial attack. No survivors spotted from either plane. Casualties included 6 officers

### Military Honors Are Accorded at Service For Sgt. Floyd Cota

Memorial services for Sgt. Floyd J. Cota (shown here) were held in St. Joseph's Church yesterday morning at 8.

A solemn high mass was sung by Rev. William Laliberte, with Rev. James Petty, president of St. Michael's College, as deacon and Rev. J. E. Pariseau, sub-deacon. Rev. Bernard Spears of St. John Vianney parish, South Burlington, was in the sanctuary.



Full military honors were accorded by American Legion Post No. 2, and Mrs. Leona Riley Cota, wife of Sgt. Cota, was presented with the flag by Samuel Dobbins, first vice-commander.

Sgt. Cota, who has been missing since Feb. 11, 1944, was recently proclaimed dead by the war department. He enlisted Jan. 30, 1942, receiving his preliminary training at Columbia Air Base, S. C., and was graduated as an aerial gunner at Myrtle Beach, S. C., ranking second in his class. He was awarded the good conduct medal and in Oct., 1943, he was sent to the Pacific area. In Jan., 1944, he was wounded in combat over the Marshall Islands and awarded the purple heart.

The services were largely attended by relatives and friends.

12-B

### Sgt. F. J. Cota Declared Dead By U. S. Army

Sgt. Floyd James Cota, of the Army Air Corps, who has been missing in the Pacific since Feb. 11, 1944, was officially proclaimed dead Jan. 18, according to word received by his wife, Mrs. Leona Riley Cota of 229 Elmwood Avenue.

A gunner on a B-25, Sgt. Cota was on a bombing mission to Taroa Island when his plane was seen going down at a location about one mile south of that island, and the War Department reports. No report concerning him or members of his crew has been received since.

Sergeant Cota entered the Army Jan. 30, 1942 and went overseas in October 1943. He had received the purple heart award for wounds received over enemy territory in January 1944.

Besides his widow, he leaves his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Cota, Lime Kiln Road, South Burlington; three sisters, Mrs. George Myers of White Street, South Burlington, and Mrs. Fay Bruce, Williston; three brothers, Leonard Archie and Armand Cota, all of South Burlington.

A memorial mass will take place in St. Joseph's Church, Tuesday morning, Feb. 5 at 8.

### Sgt. Floyd Cota Missing a Year, Proclaimed Dead

War Dept. Has Sent Wire to His Wife, Mrs. Leona R. Cota

Mrs. Leona Riley Cota, 229 Elmwood ave., has received word from the war department that her husband, Sgt. Floyd James Cota, AAC was officially proclaimed dead Jan. 18. He has been missing in the Pacific since Feb. 11, 1944.

The war department stated that its information indicates Sgt. Cota who was a gunner on a B-25, took part in a bombing mission to Taroa Island. His plane was seen to go down at a location about one mile south of that island. No report concerning him or members of his crew has been received since.

Sgt. Cota entered the service Jan. 30, 1942, and went overseas in Oct. 1943. He was wounded over enemy territory in Jan., 1944, and received the purple heart award.

Besides his widow, he leaves his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Cota, Lime Kiln rd., South Burlington; three sisters, Mrs. George Myers of White st., South Burlington, Miss Hilda Cota, South Burlington, and Mrs. Fay Bruce, Williston; three brothers, Leonard, Archie and Armand Cota, all of South Burlington.

A memorial mass will take place in St. Joseph's Church, Tuesday morning, Feb. 5 at 8.

### Sgt. Floyd Cota, Aerial Gunner, Missing in Action

Telegram Received Here by His Wife, Leona Riley Cota

Sgt. Floyd James Cota, aerial gunner, has been reported missing in action since Feb. 11 in the Central Pacific region, according to a telegram received last night by his wife, Mrs. Leona Riley Cota, 229 Elmwood ave.

#### Received Purple Heart

Sgt. Cota was awarded the purple heart Jan. 31 for injuries received over enemy territory. He entered the service Jan. 30, 1942 and received training at Myrtle Beach, S. C., and Columbia army air base, Columbia, S. C. He has been overseas since the last of Oct., 1943. Sgt. Cota is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Cota, 11 South Burlington.



## Individual Report for Floyd James Cota

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**Individual Summary:**      **Floyd James Cota**

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Sex: Male

Father: Edward Charles Cota

Mother: Della Bella Amoor

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**Individual Facts:**

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Birth: 20 Nov 1919 in Lime Kilm Road So. Burlington, Vermont (At Home)

Baptism: 23 Nov 1919 in St. Joseph Catholic Church Burlington, Vermont

Godparents: 23 Nov 1919 in James Mathieu & Josephine Marchand.

Fact 2: 11 Feb 1944 in Missing in Action (Shot Down)

Death: 11 Feb 1944 in Taroa Island, Marshall Island, South Pacific

Fact 1: 18 Jan 1946 in Grave Marker Mt. Calvary Cemetery, Burlington, Vermont

Religion: Roman Catholic

Military Service: U. S. Army Air Forces

Medals: Air Medal

Graduation: Attended Burlington High School Burlington, Vermont

Cause Of Death: B25 aircraft shot down during WW II

Age At Time Of Death: 24 years, 2 months, 22 days

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**Shared Facts:**      **Leona M. Riley**

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Marriage: 30 Aug 1941 in St. Joseph Catholic Church, Burlington, Vermont

Children: [no children with Leona M. Riley]

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**Notes:**

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Person Notes: No children.

Grave marker at Mt Calvary Cemetery, Burlington, Vermont has a death year of 1946. This is the year that the War Department formally declared him as deceased. I elected to use the date he was shot down as the eye witness to the crash stated that no survivors were seen and the aircraft hit the water at a 30% angle. Floyd was a member of the 396th Bombardment Squadron (M). The 396th arrived in Oahu October 20, 1943, Departed Oahu December 16, 1943 and arrived Tarawa December 24, 1943.

Taken from the US Army Air Corp official report of the mission shown below. He was wounded on Mission No. 90, when returning from a bombing mission to WOTJE ISLAND. The squadron was attacked by F6F's aircraft from US Naval Task Force. Extract from mission report: "Approximately 2 minutes after 1st pass, 2 other Hellcats made a pass at A/P 825 and A/P 616 which was flying on right wing of A/P 825. Pass came from 3 o'clock, both Hellcats opening fire at 800 yds and continuing until pass was broken off to their left. All during pass, Pilot was sending "H's" with Aldis lamp pointed directly at attacking Hellcats. A 3rd pass was made at 7 o'clock position and broken off level at 400 yds. No fire directed at any Hellcat at anytime." " Sgt Cota, Floyd J. 11055713, armorer-gunner on 616, right lens of glasses shattered in eye during jar received in plane." On 31 January 1944, Colonel Bywater presented the Purple Heart to Sgt. Floyd J. Cota.

US Army Air Corps official report of the mission Floyd was listed as Missing in Action is given below.

HEADQUARTERS 41ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP

(M)

APO 240

MISSION REPORT

Person Notes: Name  
Floyd J Cota  
From  
Vermont  
Service Number  
11055713  
Rank  
Sergeant  
Service  
U.S. Army Air Forces  
Regiment  
396th Bomber Squadron, 41st Bomber Group, Medium  
War  
World War II  
Date Death  
01-18-1946  
Awards  
Air Medal, Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster  
Burial  
Missing in Action or Buried at Sea, Tablets of the Missing at Honolulu  
Memorial, Honolulu, Hawaii

No children.

Grave marker at Mt Calvary Cemetery, Burlington, Vermont has a death year of 1946. This is the year that the War Department formally declared him as deceased. I elected to use the date he was shot down as the eye witness to the crash stated that no survivors were seen and the aircraft hit the water at a 30% angle. Floyd was a member of the 396th Bombardment Squadron (M). The 396th arrived in Oahu October 20, 1943, Departed Oahu December 16, 1943 and arrived Tarawa December 24, 1943.

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below. He was wounded on Mission No. 90, when returning from a bombing mission to WOTJE ISLAND. The squadron was attacked by F6F's aircraft from US Naval Task Force. Extract from mission report: "Approximately 2 minutes after 1st pass, 2 other Hellcats made a pass at A/P 825 and A/P 616 which was flying on right wing of A/P 825. Pass came from 3 o'clock, both Hellcats opening fire at 800 yds and continuing until pass was broken off to their left. All during pass, Pilot was sending "H's" with Aldis lamp pointed directly at attacking Hellcats. A 3rd pass was made at 7 o'clock position and broken off level at 400 yds. No fire directed at any Hellcat at anytime." " Sgt Cota, Floyd J. 11055713, armorer-gunner on 616, right lens of glasses shattered in eye during jar received in plane." On 31 January 1944, Colonel Bywater presented the Purple Heart to Sgt. Floyd J. Cota.

US Army Air Corps official report of the mission Floyd was listed as Missing in Action is given below.

#### HEADQUARTERS 41ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP

(M)

APO 240

#### MISSION REPORT

Mission No. 106B

1. MISSION: Shipping, aircraft, airfields, warehouse and storage, radio and radar, barracks and other buildings on TAROA ISLAND.

2. TARGETS ATTACKED: Nine B-25D A/Ps over TAROA ISLAND 110119z. Target bombed and strafed.

3. TAKE OFF: Nine B-25D A/Ps took off from MULLINIX FIELD from 102110z to 102118z.

#### 4. AIRCRAFT ASSIGNED:

A/P 809	Capt Seemann
327	Lt Casey
367	Lt Eyer
614	Lt Shaw
825	Lt McDonald
778	Lt Sanislo
276	Lt Turner
777	Capt Bullock
616	Lt Milard

5. AIRCRAFT ABORTIVE: None

6. BOMB LOAD: Each A/P carried 4 x 500 GP, 8-11 fuse.

7. ROUTE OUT: From MULLINIX FIELD on course 55 deg true to 2 deg North 174 deg East, IAS 154, thence to 345 deg true to 9 deg 30 min North, 171 deg 50 min East. Thence to 250 deg true to 9 deg 15 min North. Thence to 171 deg 14 min East to TARO, IAS 154, altitude 50 ft, formation V of Vs.



very near revetment (apparently gun position) NE of SE turning circle. Heavy columns of brownish black smoke from area N and S of intersection of runway visible 15 miles at 100 ft. High column of thin black smoke, dust like in appearance from South barracks area visible from 200 ft altitude at 2 miles. Three VFs observed in revetment, 2 appeared in-operational. 1 damaged bomber, probably a BETTY painted tan and green, observed just W of NE turning circle. Two trucks observed S of SW turning circle. 1 Jap shot while running toward truck SW corner of island. Friendly task force observed E of TAROA at approximately 8 deg and 50 minutes N, 171 deg 31 minutes East. Radio towers observed on island 3 miles NW of target make excellent landmark. Tower 30 ft high observed in center of REUTER ISLAND. Sunken hull observed in water W of SW turning circle. Barracks area appeared practically demolished as a result of previous bombardment.

19. ROUTE BACK: From TAROA on course 140 deg true to 7 deg N 172 deg 25 minutes E, thence 174 deg true to MAKIN, on course 168 deg true to TAROA at 161 knots, altitude 50 feet, formation V of Vs.

20. LANDING: All A/Ps except 777 and 616 landed at MULLINIX FIELD from 110415 to 110430z.

21. WEATHER: To target: 0.8 coverage, squally  
At target: CAVU  
Route back: 0.8 coverage, squally

22. PHOTOS: 73 with x-21 camera, estimated coverage 65 %.

23. MALFUNCTIONS:

A/P 614 left turret gun out. VHF 522 out. Radio compass SCR poor.

A/P 327 bomb release failed to function, 2 left package guns jammed, after 50-70 rounds of ammunition, lower package gun out after 1st short burst.

A/P 809 inter phone and inter plane out. Command set did not work.

A/P 825 bomb release failed to function.

A/P 367 ammunition belt in waist gun caught, and other waist gun jammed.

A/P 276 short in electrical system, bombs would not release. All fixed guns ran away. Inter phone very poor.

A/P 778 inter phone out before reaching target, and come back on about 100 miles South of target.

24. DISTANCE FLOWN: 1205 Statute miles.

Signed  
EUGENE R. HAWKINS  
Major, Air Corps  
Intelligence Officer

Killed Or

Missing In Action

Central/Western Pacific

Dedicated to the memory of these young men of the 396th

Bombardment Squadron who gave their lives in defense of their country.

January 19, 1944

2nd Lt. Joseph P. Callopy,

2nd Lt. David W. Kimmey,

2nd Lt. Frank Castillo,

1st Lt. Peter Duval,

F/O John A. Johnston,

S/Sgt. James L. Quinn,

S/Sgt. James G. Walter,

S/Sgt. James A. Wages, Jr.,

Bombardier/Navigator

Co-Pilot

Bombardier/Navigator

Observer

Pilot

Engineer/Gunner

Radio Operator/Gunner

Gunner

January 25, 1944

2nd Lt. Malcolm M. Knickerbocker,

Co-Pilot

January 29, 1944

2nd Lt. Daniel Kritz,

Bombardier/Navigator

February 10, 1944

Capt. Charles R. Bullock,

2nd Lt. John H. Selsted,

2nd Lt. Maurice L. Ptacek,

2nd Lt. Archibald G. Miller,

2nd Lt. Bernard H. Kimmel,

2nd Lt. Melvin M. Miller,

T/Sgt. Reng L. Horvey,

S/Sgt. Edward C. Peloski,

S/Sgt. Henry English,

S/Sgt. Glenn R. Fairbanks,

S/Sgt. Henry T. Lanier,

Sgt. Floyd J. Cota,

Pilot

Co-Pilot

Bombardier/Navigator

Pilot



Co-Pilot  
Bombardier/Navigator  
Radio Operator/Gunner  
Engineer/Gunner  
Engineer/Gunner  
Radio Operator/Gunner  
Engineer/Gunner  
Engineer/Gunner

May 1, 1944

1st Lt. Donald N. Trucker,  
2nd Lt. Joseph R. Patton,  
2nd Lt. Andrew A. Doyle,  
S/Sgt. Conrad W. Repp,  
S/Sgt. James E. Drake,  
S/Sgt. James H. Shiglos, Jr.,  
Pilot  
Co-Pilot  
Bombardier/Navigator  
Engineer/Gunner  
Radio Operator/Gunner  
Engineer/Gunner

January 5, 1945 1st Lt. Charles M. Flammer,  
2nd Lt. Keith H. Robbins,  
S/Sgt. Raymond A. Schultz,  
Sgt. Joseph H. Pitts Jr.,  
Pilot  
Co-Pilot  
Radio Operator/Gunner  
Engineer/Gunner

August 7, 1945 1st Lt. Frank A. Mavri,  
2nd Lt. Vernon Lancaster, Jr.,  
2nd Lt. Theodore A. Kurkjian,  
S/Sgt. George T. Lane,  
S/Sgt. Phillip S. Beck,  
Cpl. Frederick G. Lawrence,  
Pilot  
Co-Pilot  
Bombardier/Navigator  
Radio Operator/Gunner  
Engineer/Gunner  
Armorer/Gunner