



**Joseph  
Kennedy**

*Navy*

## **Joseph Kennedy**

**Jul 25, 1915 - Aug 12, 1944**

**BIRTHPLACE: Brookline, MA**

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### **SOLDIER DETAILS**

**HIGHEST RANK: Lgt,**

**DIVISION: Navy, Patrol Squardon 203**

**THEATER OF OPERATION: European**

**SERVED: May 5, 1942 - Aug 12, 1944**

**HONORED BY: The Eisenhower Foundation**

**KILLED IN ACTION**

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### **BIOGRAPHY**

Joseph Kennedy was the eldest son of Joseph and Rose Kennedy. After completed High School, he attended Harvard and graduated in 1938, after a year of training at London School of Economics, Kennedy enter Harvard Law College. He and his father were determined he would become President one day and he was being groomed for it through out his life. Kennedy was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1940. Joe planned to run for Massachusetts's 11th congressional district in 1946. Kennedy left before his final year of law school to begin officer training and flight training in the U.S. Navy. He earned his wings as a Naval Aviator in May 1942 and was sent to Britain in September 1943. He piloted land-based PB4Y Liberator patrol bombers on anti-submarine details during two tours of duty in the winter of 1943–1944. Kennedy had completed 25 combat missions and was eligible to return home. He instead volunteered for an Operation Aphrodite mission. Operation Aphrodite made use of unmanned, explosive-laden Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress and B-24 Liberator bombers, that were deliberately crashed into their targets under radio control. These aircraft could not take off safely on their own, so a crew of two would take off and fly to 2,000 feet (610 m) before activating the remote control system, arming the detonators and parachuting from the aircraft. After U.S. Army Air Forces operation missions were drawn up on July 23, 1944, Kennedy and Lieutenant Wilford John Willy were designated as the first Navy flight crew. Willy had "pulled rank" over Ensign James Simpson (who was Kennedy's regular co-pilot) to be on the mission. They flew a BQ-8 "robot" aircraft (a converted B-24 Liberator) for the U.S. Navy's first Aphrodite mission. Two Lockheed Ventura mother planes and a Boeing B-17 navigation plane took off from RAF Fersfield at 1800 on 12 August 1944. Then the BQ-8 aircraft, loaded with 21,170 lb (9,600 kg) of Torpex, took off. It was to be used against the Fortress of Mimoyecques and its V-3 cannons in northern France. Following behind them in a USAAF F-8 Mosquito to film the mission were pilot Lt. Robert A. Tunnel and combat camera man Lt. David J. McCarthy, who filmed the event . As planned, Kennedy and Willy remained aboard

as the BQ-8 completed its first remote-controlled turn at 2,000 feet near the North Sea coast. Kennedy and Willy removed the safety pin arming the explosive package and Kennedy radioed the agreed code Spade Flush, his last words. Two minutes later (and well before the planned crew bailout, near RAF Manston), the Torpex explosive detonated prematurely and destroyed the Liberator, killing Kennedy and Willy instantly. Wreckage landed near the village of Blythburgh in Suffolk. Courtesy of Military-History.Fantom.com.