

# Cleveland is killed in crash of plane headed to Middle East

By LOU MIO  
STAFF WRITER

Air Force Sgt. Randy Hulec telephoned his parents from West Germany with exciting news: He was headed for the Middle East. And he was sky high.

"He called Sunday, and I asked him directly if he thought he would be going," said his father, Ron F. Hulec of Fernshaw Ave., near Kamms Corners. "He said, 'No.' Then he called Monday and said he had his orders. He was going."

"He was up," said his mother, Joanne. "He said, 'I'm only going to be forecasting the weather. Just think, for every one of me, there are six Marines. Thank God for the Marines. If they do their job, I can do mine.'"

Randy Hulec, an Air Force meteorologist stationed at Ramstein Air Base, boarded a Lockheed C-5A cargo jet late Tuesday. It carried a load of cargo and 17 military personnel, most of them reservists who had volunteered for duty in the Persian Gulf and were manning the aircraft. The plane was to land about 90 miles away at Rhein-Main air base in Frankfurt and then head to the Persian Gulf.

The plane, which could lift about 250,000 pounds,

crashed shortly after takeoff early yesterday in a field a quarter-mile from the base, according to an Air Force spokesman. The cause is under investigation.

Officials said 13 were killed, including Hulec, 29. Hulec apparently is the first Ohio casualty in the crisis that began when Iraq overran the tiny oil shiekhdom of Kuwait, triggering a massive buildup of U.S. and other forces in Saudi Arabia.

Ron and Joanne Hulec heard about the crash on radio. The mention of Ramstein commanded their attention.

Hulec immediately called Hannelore Hulec, his German-born daughter-in-law. The couple have a 4-month-old son, Ryan Benjamin.

"She said he was supposed to leave at 7 p.m. (Tuesday)," Ron Hulec said. "He called her at 9:30 p.m. and was still on the ground because they were having trouble with the plane."

Ron Hulec said the plane took off at 12:38 a.m. yesterday (West German time), a fact that bothers him.

"For approximately five hours, they were having trouble with that plane," he said. "They fiddled around with that plane for five hours, and it never made it

**RANDY HULEC:**  
Force meteorologist apparently Ohio's 1 casualty of the Pers Gulf crisis.



## TENSION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

### Crash

FROM/1-A

much past the end of the runway."

Their son's death was confirmed on the phone by Air Force officials about 2:15 a.m. (EDT) yesterday.

"We just got the telegram," Hulec said yesterday, tears clouding his eyes as he sat in his backyard trying to sort out his feelings. "I was doing OK, but when you see it on paper..."

Randy, who is also survived by two older sisters, graduated from Cleveland Heights High School after transferring from there to Cathedral Latin School to play foot-

ball in his junior year. The family used to live in Cleveland Heights.

"He decided he didn't want to play football anymore and went back to Heights High," his father said. "He was a hell of an athlete. He just did a triathlon and was going to do a marathon next month. He was home in November and ran every day when he was here, even on snowy days."

Randy Hulec joined the Air Force when he was 20. He had enrolled briefly at Cleveland State University but didn't like college.

The Air Force "was rougher than any college he would have gone to," said his father, an assistant pathologist at St. Luke's Hospital. Randy Hulec attended two Air Force schools to become a weather forecaster and was on his second tour in Germany.

About five years ago, he married Hannelore and brought her to Cleveland two days after the wedding. His parents loved her. She mastered English, wound up working at Ramstein and for two consecutive years was voted the outstanding German employee.

"She's really a fantastic girl," Joanne Hulec said.

Services are pending. Ron Hulec said his son would be buried in a small cemetery near their home.

"It's so needless," said Joanne Hulec, trying to check her emotions as she talked of her son, an easy-going young man who loved his job and was happy living off the air base with his wife and new baby. "It's so senseless. A weather forecaster — and we're not even into the fracas."

"No one has fired a shot and people are losing their sons."