

= Howard Knox Ramey =

Howard Knox Ramey (28 June 1896 ? 26 March 1943) was a United States Army Air Forces general during World War II . Ramey learned to fly in 1918 during World War I and served as an instructor at the Air Corps Advanced Flying School and as a staff officer with the 1st Bombardment Wing between the wars . He was commander of the IV Bomber Command from 12 August 1942 to 8 November 1942 , and was promoted to brigadier general on 17 September 1942 . In November 1942 , he became deputy commander of the Seventh Air Force in Hawaii . In January 1943 he became the commander of the V Bomber Command in Australia and Papua , which he led during the Battle of the Bismarck Sea . In March 1943 he disappeared on a reconnaissance flight over the Torres Strait . Neither his aircraft nor his body has ever been found .

= = Early life = =

Howard Knox Ramey was born in Waynesboro , Mississippi on 28 June 1896 . He attended Mississippi Agricultural and Mechanical College from 1915 to 1917 . In December 1917 he enlisted as a private first class in the Aviation Section , U.S. Signal Corps , in which he was commissioned as a second lieutenant on 20 April 1918 .

= = Between the wars = =

In July 1920 , Ramey received a permanent commission as a first lieutenant in the United States Army Air Service . He attended the Air Service Photography School in 1921 , and became commander of the 6th Photo Section at Camp Nichols in the Philippines from January to October 1925 . He then served as intelligence officer there until he returned to the United States in February 1927 . He commanded the 22nd Photo Section at Kelly Field , San Antonio , Texas from 1927 to 1928 , and was an instructor at the Air Corps Advanced Flying School there from 1928 to 1931 .

After more than ten years as a first lieutenant , Ramey was finally promoted to captain on 1 March 1932 . On 26 March 1934 , Ramey was one of 35 American World War I military pilots who founded the Order of the Daedalians , a fraternal order of military pilots .

He attended the Air Corps Tactical School at Maxwell Field , Alabama , graduating in 1934 , and then the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth , Kansas , graduating in 1936 . Shortly afterwards , he was promoted to major on 16 June 1936 . Ramey served as operations officer and assistant chief of staff for intelligence of the 1st Bombardment Wing at March Field , California from 1936 to 1941 . He was promoted to lieutenant colonel on 30 December 1940 .

= = World War II = =

Ramey was deputy chief of staff for operations (G @-@ 3) of the Fourth Air Force from January to August 1942 , with the rank of colonel from 5 January 1942 . He was commander of the IV Bomber Command from 12 August 1942 to 8 November 1942 , and was promoted to brigadier general on 17 September 1942 . In November 1942 , he became deputy commander of the Seventh Air Force .

Following the death of the commander of the V Bomber Command , Brigadier General Kenneth Walker , in an air raid over Rabaul in January 1943 , the commander of the Fifth Air Force , Lieutenant General George Kenney asked Lieutenant General Henry H. Arnold , the chief of Army Air Forces to send Ramey to Australia as a replacement . The two men had known each other for years and Ramey had recently been on Kenney 's staff when Kenney was commander of the Fourth Air Force . " I had a lot of confidence in him , " Kenney later wrote , " and believed he would do a real job for me . Arnold replied the next day that I could have him . " Ramey assumed command of V Bomber Command in January 1943 . After the arguments over bombing tactics with Walker , Kenney was pleased that Ramey liked the skip bombing tactics the Fifth Air Force was developing . These tactics were put in practice with devastating effect at the Battle of the Bismarck Sea in March 1943 .

= = Death and legacy = =

On 26 March 1943 , Ramey took off from Port Moresby in the B 24-17 Flying Fortress # 41 24384 , " Pluto " , to carry out a scheduled seven hour reconnaissance flight to Merauke and Horn Island . A message from the radio operator twenty minutes after take off was the last that was ever heard from the aircraft . An extensive air search was conducted but no sign was found of the aircraft or the twelve men on board . Ramey was declared dead on 19 November 1945 . He left behind a wife and two daughters . Ramey Air Force Base in Puerto Rico was named in his honour .

In February 2007 , diver Ben Cropp reported that he had found the wreckage of the plane . However , the plane turned out to have been a misidentified C 47 . The location of the wreck of " Pluto " remains unknown .