

Anthony Stinis, 83, Skywriting Pioneer, Decorated Navy Pilot

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A military [service](#) will be held today for skywriting pioneer Anthony Stinis.

Mr. Stinis, 83, of Fort Lauderdale, was killed May 11 while trying to walk across a [street](#) in Wilton Manors.

“We think he was on his way to see (Kathryn, his wife of 60 years, who was hospitalized) when he was hit by a car,” said his [son](#) Ted Stinis, of Palos Verdes, Calif.

“Andy” Stinis and his parents moved to the United States from their native Crete when he was 6. He grew up in New York City and started flying in 1927. The barnstormer’s first plane was a Jenny.

Mr. Stinis early on realized the commercial importance of the airplane and in 1932 became Pepsi-Cola’s official skywriter. For the next two years, he and the 17 other planes he gathered flew across the country filling the skies with ads that let people know there was an alternative soft drink.

In the late ‘30s, when the politicians and residents of New York City were trying to decide what to name their new airport, he again launched an airborne blitz that filled the skies with one word: “LaGuardia.” The airport was later named after the late New York City mayor, Fiorello LaGuardia.

In the year before World War II erupted, Mr. Stinis flew large flying boats for Pan American World Airways. The experience grew into a love for the amphibian aircraft, said his son Greg Stinis, of Cypress, Calif.

During the war, he served in the Pacific flying the Navy’s huge MARS flying boats and the smaller PB2Ys. He also served as a military instructor and was involved in experiments with airborne radar.

Once, on a flight from Honolulu to San Francisco, Ted Stinis said, his father had to crash-land midway in the sea during a violent storm. He and his military passengers were rescued by a Navy ship minutes before the plane flipped over and sank.