



Elwin Merrill

AUG 27, 1924 - OCT 8, 2013

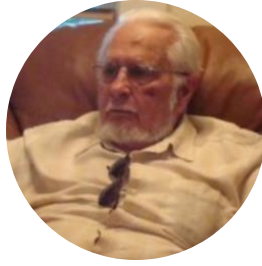


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Major Elwin Merrill, US Army Combat Engineers Retired, passed away at The Sterling House Assisted Living Facility on October 08, 2013. He was 88 years old. He was born in Provo, Utah but moved to Vernal, Utah at a young age. The move was very memorable for a young child as the family accomplished it in an ox-drawn covered wagon. Elwin was the second youngest of eight brothers and four sisters. He is survived by his younger brother Earl Merrell of Naples, Utah. Elwin lived in Vernal until he was 16 when he and his older brother Frank joined the Army. The army would not allow him to join as his factious birthdate was only a couple of months different from his brothers. In order to join he changed the spelling of his last name from Merrell to Merrill. When World War II broke out Elwin was shipped to the South Pacific and he later returned to the States to attend Officers Candidate School. During this time he met Catheryne A. Reed whom he would marry after the war. After completing OCC he was promoted to lieutenant and sent to the island of Tinian. Part of his duties included providing support for the 509 Bomb Group including Col. Paul Tibbets and the crew of the Enola Gay, prior to the bombing of Japan with the Atomic Bomb. After the war Elwin and his bride moved to Vernal, Utah and had the first of two children, Barry R. Merrill and four years later Rebecca Rae Merrill. Elwin was called back to active duty shortly after the birth of his son and sent to Tachakawa, Japan Air Force Base. Elwin was attached to the newly formed Air Force and tasked with finding a solution for combat pilots dying due to improperly filled oxygen tanks. Pilots were being killed from breathing soapy water from oxygen generated by Japanese providers. Elwin tore down the plant being used at the time and rebuilt an oxygen plant of his own design. When completed the plant was deemed Top Secret due to being its being exponentially more efficient than any other plant in the world. Elwin was tasked with building two additional plants on the islands of Guam and Tinian. His efforts resulted in many pilots' lives being saved.



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Elwin was awarded the Bronze Star for his accomplishment. After a four year tour in Japan the Merrill Family was stationed in Fort Belvoir, VA; Lakeland, FL; Darmstadt, Germany; Fort Ord, CA; Wichita, KA; Dexheim, Germany and Denver, CO. Elwin retired from the Army with twenty two and half years' service at the rank of Major. After retiring Elwin was only 48 years old and began a career working in the service portion of the automobile industry. But wanderlust set in soon after both children left home and, with a newly purchased Airstream Trailer, Elwin and Catheryne (Kitty to the family) traveled hundreds of thousands miles across the United States. In the process Elwin served as President of the Wally Byam Travel Club of Denver, Colorado. In 1978 they sold their home in Denver and moved to Fort Myers Beach, Florida. Elwin established Merrill's Carefree Awnings of Fort Myers Beach and sold and installed awnings and accessories for travel trailers. They closed the business in 2003. By this time both children had moved to the Fort Myers Area. Barry (Butch) continued a career in Law Enforcement and Rebecca (Becky) a career in Nursing and Hospital Management. Catheryne passed away in 2010 after 65 years of marriage. Elwin is survived by two children; Barry R. Merrill (wife Ramona) of Tampa Fl and daughter Rebecca R. Watt of Cape Coral, Florida. Eight grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren. Elwin Merrill: Son, Brother, husband, father, grandfather, great grandfather and a real HERO. Your family loves you and will miss you, until we meet in the future, "AT EASE SOLDIER"!! A Memorial Service will be held at Fort Myers Memorial Gardens, 1589 Colonial Boulevard, Fort Myers, and Fl. on Saturday October 12, 2013 at 2:00pm.



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Elwin by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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