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My Notes from 6th Weather Squadron ~ January to December 1958

6th Weather Squadron History for 1958

6th Weather Squadron History for 1958, written by Gerry Guay, 6WSAA Webmaster and Newsletter Publisher obtained from archives of 6th Weather Squadron history of 1978. The history I found was for the July to December '58, the historian was SSgt Don Adams but none for January to June. But there was a complete write-up of the history of the Weather Reporting Element, Provisional for participation in Operation Hardtack 1958, Volumes 1 & 2, all 852 pages of it and classified SECRET at the time, later declassified in 1967. Too much information.

1958 was a busy year to say the least, with the manning and support of Operation Hardtack atomic tests in the Pacific. Lt Col Bernard Pusin resumed command of 6th Wx on 8 Sep 58 upon his return from Operation Hardtack, and Lt Col Eugene Early who commanded the squadron during Pusin's absence, resumed duties as Operations Officer. In July there were 8 Officers, 4 Warrant Officers 305 Airmen and 1 Civilian for a total of 318 personnel. By December that dropped to 190 total personnel. Without the history for the first half of the year, it is hard to determine the total number of projects and locations they were deployed to. But with what I have, I believe there were not too many projects in the first half of the year because there were so many personnel deployed on Operation Hardtack at that time. Projects I have information on showed teams deployed to 9 Pacific Islands and to the states of SD, NE, AR, KS, OK, IA, UT, and an unknown location/s because the photomapping support project was classified and not recorded.



Lt Col Barney Pusin

1958 Operations Projects included: I will save the two largest projects for last, so here we are. **Project at Dugway, UT** in August where TSgt Philip Downey performed training in the use of rawinsonde equipment to Army Signal Corps Meteorological personnel. Training consisted of theory, maintenance, alignment, operation, repair, orientation and supply of rawinsonde equipment. **Project APCS OPLAN 514-16** (Classified) where an unknown number of personnel in an unknown locations provided upper air observation support for Air Photographic and Charting Service required for photomapping operations. **British Christmas Island Nuclear Tests in 1957**, it is unknown why this is mentioned in this year's history files but it was just a mention. For those who want more information, 6th Wx was to have 2 teams, weather and support, one team of 22 personnel at Palmyra Island, and one team of 18 personnel at Penryhn Island. The team at Penryhn was cancelled because the British would man that one. **Project Tornado Alley 1958 (Phase II)** (No history for Phase I) with 8 rawinsonde upper air sounding teams located at Huron SD, Scotts Bluff NE, Fort Chaffee AR, Goodland KS, Schilling AFB KS, Tinker AFB OK, Waverly AFS IA, and Fort Riley KS. With no stats on the Tinker site, there were 2,585 upper air rawinsonde soundings with an average height of 88,300+ feet. Schilling AFB KS had the most Sferics observations with 2,900 readings. All teams ceased operation on 15 October, 1958. Some notable notes from this project were: Ft Riley KS facilities were unsuitable for rawinsonde operations The building was a one room, worn out, discarded building moved from another location with inadequate lighting, heating, storage and table space for convenient operation. It also had unsafe hydrogen generation facilities and the Army personnel were unable to rectify the problems. Goodland KS was an ideal site, Huron SD was an excellent site, Ft Chaffee AR was troubled with inadequate billeting facilities, open bay with Army and short meal hours and was corrected. Waverly AFS IA had equipment and site location and interference problems. **Operation Hardtack – JTF-7** was a series of 35 nuclear tests conducted from April to August at the Pacific Proving Grounds. *(Continued on Page 3)*



B-57 Canberra above detonation

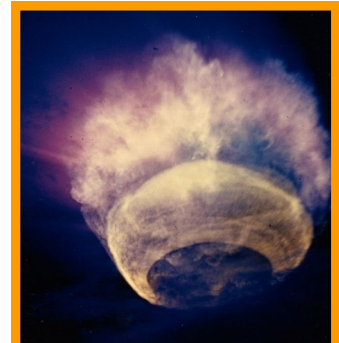


My Notes from 6th Weather Squadron ~ January to December 1958 (Continued from Page 2)



Underwater test - Umbrella

This test series included more nuclear detonations than all prior nuclear explosions in the Pacific Ocean combined. The tests were conducted by the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) in collaboration with the USDOD. The tests were a study of nuclear effects, 2 underwater detonations, 4 surface tests, 26 barge tests and 3 high-altitude tests, contributing to scientific knowledge and military strategies during the Cold War. There was also an Operation Roundup where the native population of the Marshall Islands needed to be instructed on procedures to prevent flash blindness from the high altitude detonations of Teak and Orange tests, and others. Personnel selected had to get along exceptionally well and be diplomatic with the natives. Two operators from each team had to be selected in addition to WREP selected persons: MSgt Jones, MSgt Eldringhoff, TSgt Rule, TSgt Schlittler, and TSgt Patin. Everything pertaining to the "Weather Reporting and Forecasting Element, Provisional (WREP)" is provided in the Final History comprising of 881 pages and marked SECRET at the time and has been declassified in 1963. (Unfortunately, all the pictures in this report were removed) The information is overwhelming and I had to review and decide what to write about, which comes down to operations mainly. It was well documented and written by 6th Wx Sq (MOB). Lt Col Bernard Pusin assumed command of WREP while still maintaining command of 6th Wx Sq (MOB) with CWO Robert Ridenour as WREP project officer. The eight 6th Weather teams operated on 8 islands: Kusaie, Kapingamarangi, Tarawa, Rongelap, Wotho, Utirik, Ujelang, Nauru and some 6th personnel operated on Eniwetok and Bikini. WREP Headquarters operated on Eniwetok Island and the Wx Forecasting Station was manned by 1st Wx Wg from Wheeler AFB augmented with help from 6th Wx for rawinsonde operations. In July the Nauru Island Wx Team was transferred to the Bikini Atoll on Nan Island. So the 6th operated on 10 islands altogether. The weather operations started in March and I will outline the operations and staffing by island. Team 1 was at **Wotho Atoll** headed by SSgt Butler and 3 other weather observers tasked with 2 to 4 pibal and 4 to 8 surface obs daily with microbarograph readings. And as on many islands, other personnel monitored radiation safety and H&N (Holmes & Narver) housekeeping, billeting, messing and utilities, with communications by a small comm crew from AACS. Team 2 was on **Ujelang Island** headed by SSgt Savage and 3 other weather observers tasked with 2 to 4 pibal and 4 to 8 surface obs daily with microbarograph readings. Other functions same as on Wotho. An empty conex container was used as an inflation shelter, and a release area was selected 250 yards west of the camp with field telephones for communications. The departure of one airman to another island left Team 2 with 3 observers. Team 3 on **Rongelap Island** headed by SSgt Polentz and 3 other weather observers with the same requirements and support as on Wotho. The microbarograph malfunctioned on 27 April and a notification TWX was sent. With the "Cactus" detonation on 6 May the team reported "things were all fouled up" and no times had been given for the detonation and the microbarograph was still malfunctioning with no maintenance support for the equipment. This caused some problems and was eventually resolved. Team 18 on **Nauru Island** headed by Capt Bowles with 2 wx equipment technicians and 8 wx observers as a completely self-sufficient weather facility was tasked with 2 to 5 rawinsonde and 8 surface obs per day. The team was joined by a Mr Thompson, a meteorologist from Australia as an observer in the operation of the weather station. TSgt Patin repaired the GMD's timing unit, (Continued on Page 4)



High altitude test - Orange



Barge test - Oak

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Surface test - Cactus - Eniwetok

(Continued on Page 4)



My Notes from 6th Weather Squadron ~ January to December 1958 (Continued from Page 3)

control recorder and the TMQ-5 recorder and equipment operated satisfactorily afterward. CWO Stricker flew to Nauru from WREP to relieve Capt Bowles as OIC on 24 June. Team 18 was completely moved from Nauru to the Bikini Atoll on Nan Island in July for further operations. The move of all 6,200 pounds of equipment and personnel was by the trusty C-54 but needed to rent a truck and crane to load the equipment. The TMQ-5 recorder was damaged with several broken tubes during movement to the airstrip. The move was completed on 6 July. Now at **Nan Island** of the **Bikini Atoll**, Team 18 was back in operation 5 hours after arrival, 4 hours ahead of Col Pusin's request for 9 hours. Half the team was taken off the island and put on board ship on 11 July for the detonation on the 12th after 3 day delay. The team left on Nan went 30 hours with no rest or hot meals. Most of the Atomic testing was concluded by end of July and teams soon returned to Tinker. Team 19 on **Tarawa Island** was headed by WO Gann, OIC with 2 wx equipment technicians and 8 wx observers was tasked with 2 to 5 rawinsonde and 8 surface obs per day and operate a completely self-sufficient weather operation consisting of weather personnel, with a complement of cooks, supply, maintenance and medical personnel. The unit was later headed by Capt Bowles. Arriving on 18 March with operational date of 25 March. On 20 March, CWO Ridenour arrived by C-54 and required they be operational ASAP. Two days later on 22 March they were operational and except for a GMD antenna reflector slightly bent, everything was satisfactory. The facilities left by the previous unit were in excellent shape except for the rooftop anemometer which was returned to operation. Some confusion was observed during the first three releases was soon overcome. Problems were encountered trying to achieve and maintain proper heights with the balloons on the rawinsonde run, as this was a crucial requirement. Many different methods were used in treating the balloons including no treatment but nothing seemed to work. Some balloons even returned to surface with heavy rains. Because of the constant high humidity, fungus growth hampered the equipment operation and it required constant attention. In April, the GMD's elevation drive motor became inoperative and the antenna had to be manually operated for 4 days. After repairs, the azimuth drive motor then became inop for 5 days until repaired. What else could go wrong? Well... 3 weeks later the azimuth drive motor became inop again and a new motor flown in the day after. No reason for the failure was obvious. Equipment was also plagued with oscillations, with no immediate cause or repair. Capt Bowles assumed duty as OIC on 4 July, WO Gann's TDY was expiring. On July 26 the azimuth drive motor was again inoperative and Rabals were taken and Tarawa missed its last run on July 28. Team 20 on **Kusaie Island** was headed by MSgt Brantley with 2 wx equipment technicians and 12 wx observers was tasked with 4 to

8 rawinsonde and 8 surface obs per day and operate a completely self-sufficient weather operation consisting of weather personnel, with a complement of cooks, supply, maintenance and medical personnel. A crew of communications personnel provided communications and nav aids at the camp. The camp also had to provide logistical support to personnel of Program 6, Task Group 7.1 during the operation. Equipment operated well except for a GMD pylon malfunction in May which had to be replaced and was provided by the Materiel Section. It is noted that Kusaie



D'Alfonso & ? w/helium tanks

had one problem that no other camp had, hundreds of native children. They swarmed over the camp and weather site and even caused a little sabotage to balloons being readied for runs by placing thorns under a blanket in a balloon cradle in the inflation shelter to keep them off of rough ground. It seems the practice of giving the children the balloon rejects or surface bursts incentivized them to help the ground bursts when there were none. Rejected balloons were then destroyed and use of thorns stopped when they learned they would not get the rejected balloons. Another problem caused by the ever present children was missing items from the barracks and weather instruments were viewed as playthings. Personnel were instructed to keep the



Kusaie sunset

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My Notes from 6th Weather Squadron ~ January to December 1958 (Continued from Page 4)

children away while working. Team 21 at **Kapingamarangi Atoll** on Fumatahachi Island headed by MSgt Eldringhoff with 2 wx equipment technicians and 8 wx observers as a completely self-sufficient weather operation consisting of weather personnel, with a complement of cooks, supply, maintenance and medical personnel with a crew of communications personnel was tasked with 2 to 5 rawinsonde and 8 surface obs daily. The team departed Eniwetok by the USS Comstock (LSD-19) and reached Kapingamarangi 4 days later. During the unloading, 2 of the Conex containers, which are durable steel boxes used for storage and shipping were dropped, one of them containing the weather equipment. The weather equipment was set up and checked for damage with little damage done but required a complete alignment and was completely checked. The



Beautiful Kapingamarangi

first rawinsonde obs attained 2mbs for a very successful run with average heights above 100,000 feet. A week later, the pylon assembly developed problems and was soon replaced. Equipment worked well until April 11 when heavy rain and moisture in the equipment caused malfunctioning units which were replaced with dry units. Equipment troubles continued to plague the site with frustration to find a solution with much time troubleshooting the unit. The island's power plant producing variable voltage and frequency is suspect. A separate power unit PE-95 was put in operation for the weather equipment only and that solved most of the maintenance problems. Things ran much smoother after that change. Team 22 at **Utirik Island** headed by MSgt Jones with 2 wx equipment technicians and 12 wx observers was tasked with 4 to 8 rawinsonde and 8 surface obs per day with microbarograph readings for Project 34.4, Task Group 7.1. This team also provided supply, mechanic and a medical technician. Holmes & Narver was responsible by camp housekeeping, messing, billeting and utilities. Communications was provided by a small comm crew. Because of palm trees hindering the rawinsonde signal, the decision to install a tower was made. The first rawinsonde run attained a height of 123,153 feet (4mbs) and 2 days later attained a height of 154,121 feet (1mb). Equipment problems with a cable started on 3 April and TMQ-5 recorder on the 4th. Operations back to normal on 5 April. The USS Raccoon River (LSM-520) reached Utirik on 10 April with the new tower with difficulty floating it



Helium tanks & outhouse



USS Raccoon River (LSM-520)

ashore in an assembled unit. Two days later the GMD was disassembled and reassembled on top of the new tower with the first run made at 1100 hrs. Weather operations following the initial equipment problems and tower installation became routine. Except for one incident when the H&N power generators were switched during a run and it was unable to continue the run because the radiosonde signal was lost. The workload for June was extremely heavy with many special Rawins. Running good. WREP had operational control over Detachment 25, 15th Wx Sq at **Eniwetok** Island. The weather station was commanded by Major Kane. MSgt Atkins headed the rawinsonde section and the wx equipment maintenance including the CPS-9 weather radar. By 10 April, manning included: 1 commander/forecaster, 3 officer forecasters, 1 airman forecaster, 2 briefing officers, 10 wx observers, 10 rawinsonde operators, 2 wx equipment technicians, 1 supply specialist and 1 clerk. Tasking was for hourly surface obs and 4 with up to 12 rawinsonde runs per day. Personnel augmentation of the weather station and rawinsonde unit was slow and WREP had to provide assistance during March to meet the workload. The rawinsonde section manning was so low that the WREP Commander immediately had Team 18, not deploying to Nauru until late March assigned to provide assistance. In

(Continued on Page 7)



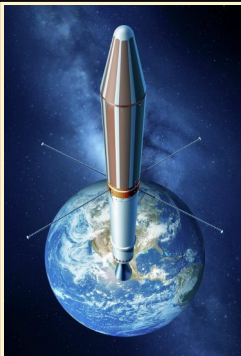
Changes: To keep our costs low: Please keep us informed of any e-mail or address changes by e-mailing us at weatherman@6thweathermobile.org or USPS mail us 6WSAA c/o Buck Bucklin, 8 Sherwood Lane, East Hampton, NY 11937



THE 6TH DIMENSION

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Cost of Living in 1958: Inflation: 2.73%; Average Cost of new house: \$12,750; Average Income per year: \$4,650; Average Monthly Rent: \$92; Gallon of gas: 30 cents; Average price of a new car \$3,650; US Postal stamp: 4 cents; Ground Hamburger 43 cents/lb; Milk \$1.01/gal; Bread 19 cents; Eggs 32 cents/doz; United States population: 175 Million. Life expectancy: 69.8 years; Top movie: South Pacific



The U.S. launches the Explorer 1 satellite during January . Explorer 1 was first the satellite to be launched by the United States. The Soviet Union had already launched the world's first satellite with Sputnik 1 in October of the previous year. The Explorer 1 was launched on a Jupiter

C rocket and was used to measure the radiation in Earth's orbit. The satellite successfully orbited Earth over 58,000 times before it re-entered the atmosphere in 1970. The success of the Explorer 1 satellite was an important milestone in the earliest years of the space race between the United States and Soviet Union.

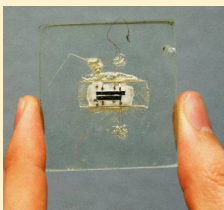
President Eisenhower signed the National Aeronautics and Space Act "to provide for research into problems of flight within and outside the Earth's atmosphere." NASA officially opened for business in October to oversee the United States' nonmilitary space activities.



The 1958 Brussels World's Fair, also known as Expo 58 took place on the Heysel Plateau in Brussels, Belgium, from April to October. The fair saw over 41 million visitors over 490 acres. The theme of Expo 58 was "Evaluation of the world for a more humane world", a motto inspired by faith in technical and scientific progress.



Jack Kilby's demonstration of the first working microchip in 1958 revolutionized the field of microelectronics. Kilby's IC design integrated a transistor, a capacitor, and the equivalent of three resistors on the same chip.



The United Arab Republic (UAR) was created when Egypt and Syria became politically unified. The UAR was the first step in an attempt to create a Pan-Arab state in the Middle East. Egyptian President Nasser and Syrian President al-Quwatli worked together to create the merger,



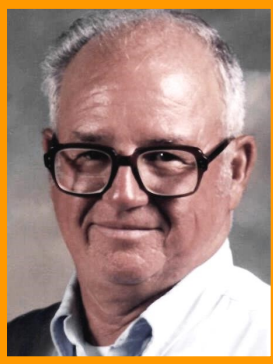
The USS Nautilus, the first nuclear submarine, successfully crossed under the North Pole during August in the first undersea journey to the geographic North Pole. The submarine carried 4 civilian scientists and 111 officers and crew. The submarine began its journey at Point Barrow, Alaska and traveled under the Arctic ice cap at a depth of about 500 feet for over 1,000 miles.





Final Launch

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Charles "Charlie" Schlittler, 1927 – 2023 Charles Herbert Schlittler 96, of Rantoul, Illinois passed away Thursday morning Oct. 19, 2023 at Carle Regional Health Center, Hoopston. He was born Sept. 8, 1927, in Breckenridge, Texas, a son of Herb and Sybil (Stephens) Schlittler. He married Joanna Kemp on March 31, 1950, in Nashville, Tenn. She preceded him in death on March 23, 2015. He is survived by a son, Mike (Vicki) Schlittler of Rantoul; daughter, Bobbie (Buck) Isaacs of Rantoul; son, John Schlittler of Rantoul; six grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by a sister, Polly, and a son, Scott. Charlie graduated from Odessa High School in Texas. He joined the U.S. Air Force and served for 23 years. He served in 6th Weather Squadron Mobile at Tinker AFB, OK from 1946 to 1949 and 1952 to 1958 and was a member of 6WSAA. He then worked at the Rantoul post office for another 20 years. He mowed at the Brookhill Golf Course in Rantoul for an additional 20 years. He enjoyed woodworking and watching sports, especially the Cubs, Cowboys and Illini. He was a member of Immanuel Southern Baptist Church in Rantoul for many years before joining First Baptist Church of Rantoul.



My Notes from 6th Weather Squadron ~ January to December 1967 (Continued from Page 5)

April, a maximum effort with a large number of special obs was required of the unit. Some communications problems were encountered with weather transmissions and were resolved by sending personnel to Kwajalein to coordinate and resolve problems. The location of the "R" section near the end of the runway on Eniwetok was not in an ideal position for aircraft operations, and even with balloons at 10,000 feet were being reported as unidentified objects by pilot unaware of the balloon releases. Close coordination and notification of pending releases were then required to the control tower and Aircraft Ground Control because of the hazard to all aircraft. A regulation was established for all communications and releases from that time forward. The last test was detonated on 15 August.

The stats for the rawinsonde operation sites during Operation Hardtack are: 830 operational days; 2,936 rawinsonde runs; average height of 94,685 feet; overall number of observations 3,438. Rejects were: 160 Modulators; 153 transmitters; 105 batteries; 189 balloons. Needless to say the roll-out and roll-up of all operating stations was a huge endeavor with a successful result.

-End of 6th Weather Squadron (Mobile) 1958 History-



Runit Island, located in the Pacific Ocean as part of the Eniwetok Atoll holds a somber secret. The Runit Dome is also known as the Cactus Dome or locally referred to as The Tomb. Between 1946 and 1958, the United States conducted over 40 nuclear weapons tests on or near the Eniwetok Atoll. One of these tests took place on Runit Island. The aftermath left behind a significant amount of radioactive material.

The Runit Dome: The Runit Dome is a concrete structure that encapsulates an estimated 95,000 cubic yards of radioactive debris, including plutonium-239. This dome, was constructed in 1977 as a temporary measure to contain the hazardous remnants from the bomb explosions. Some of these blasts were a thousand times more powerful than the ones that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The Construction: The dome has a diameter of 377 feet and is 18 inches thick. To create it, loose waste and topsoil from six different islands in the Eniwetok Atoll were transported to the site and mixed with concrete. This process sealed the nuclear blast crater created by the Cactus test. It took three years and the efforts of four thousand US servicemen to complete this massive cleanup operation.



Final Launch



Philip S. Downey - 1929 - 2021 Philip Stuart Downey, 92 March 9, 1929 to September 4, 2021 Phil was born in St. Louis Missouri on March 9th, 1929. The family moved to Chicago and as a child of the depression era, he started working at an early age in a garage learning how to repair vehicles and general mechanic skills. He enlisted in the Air Force in 1946 and proudly served his country for 20 years

retiring as a Master Sargent in 1966. Phil served in 6th Weather Squadron Mobile from 1958 to 1966 and was a member of 6WSAA. While stationed at Earnest Harmon Air Force Base in Stephenville, Newfoundland Canada he met and married the love of his life Mona McIsaac on April 13th, 1948 in New York City. Phil and Mona were married 58 years and inseparable until her passing in 2006. After his retirement from the Air Force, he worked

as a Sound Technician for 20 years and then as an electronics technician at Tinker Air Force Base for 6 years. Phil and Mona had a hobby company, Quality Crafts, and they designed and made specialty items for craft shows. They loved traveling the country with their travel trailer and spending time with their children and grandchildren. Phil was a master craftsman and could make almost anything out of wood. He also had the keen ability to fix or repair anything. His mechanical skills were amazing. His hobbies were varied including amateur HAM Radio, woodworking, model trains, collecting firearms and motorcycles. He was in the process of building what he called a rat bike in his garden shed but passed on before completion. He loved his Harley Davidson motorcycle and rode it as often as possible. He had it converted to a Trike so he could continue to ride up to shortly before his death. Phil is survived by children; Betty Burnett, Denise Campbell, Jeffrey Downey, and Colleen Fields. Grandchildren; Nicholas Burnett, Eric Burnett, Nicole Wade, Rachel Davis, Adam Campbell, Angela Challis, Stuart Downey, Chance Guiles, and Shannon Young. 18 Great Grand Children and 6 Great Great Grandchildren. He was preceded in death by His wife Mona Downey and daughters Darlene Guiles and Maureen Downey.



Harold R. Crowl - 1929 - 2020 It is with great sadness that the family announces the sudden passing of Harold Ray Crowl in the early morning hours of Saturday, April 25th, in Gladwin, MI. He was 90 years old. "Uncle Harold" was born on Sept. 2, 1929, in the bedroom of the family home in Beaverton, MI, to parents Ralph and Margaret Crowl. He joined the Army Air Force out of high school, and flew 52 missions as a tailgunner on a B-29 during the Korean War. He served in 6th Weather Squadron (Mobile) at Tinker AFB, OK from '68 to '71 and was a member of 6WSAA. After 21 years, he retired and went to work for the National Weather Service, eventually totaling more than 40 years of service to our country. Harold loved to hunt and fish and go camping, leading him to spend 9 years in Alaska as part of his service, as well as numerous places around the country and the world, even spending 3 years stationed in Japan in the late '50s. In retirement, he developed many hobbies, like bird watching, stained glass, wood sculpting and more.

His life-sized wrought iron silhouettes of wildlife like elk, moose and bear still adorn public buildings in Sundance, WY. He loved to mix humor in with whatever he did. He loved his family, and after living all over the USA, he returned to spend his last 8 years of life in his hometown of Beaverton, MI, surrounded by family. Harold is survived by his son, Ralph, 66, of Kennewick, WA, and one grandson, Brian E.H. Crowl, 41, of Portland, OR., and many nieces, nephews, and cousins. He was preceded in death by his brothers Foster and Kenneth, sisters Ethel, Eunice and Alice, and son Mark. No services will be held, and his ashes will be buried in the Black Hills National Cemetery in Sundance, WY, next to his beloved late wife Caroll.



Stephen A. Heinrichs - 1933 - 2023 Stephen Andrew Heinrichs, August 15, 1933 to April 29, 2023. He served in 6th Weather Squadron Mobile from 1957 to 1963 and was a member of 6WSAA. He lived in Las Vegas and was 89. An obituary is not available.

