

Robert Martin Garrison

June 22, 1922 - March 20, 2018

Robert Martin Garrison, 95, of Benton, passed away on Tuesday, March 20, 2018, at his residence surrounded by his loving family.

He was born on June 22, 1922, to Herman Clark and Elizabeth (Hartman) Garrison in Benton, IL. Robert and his mother Elizabeth were the first caesarean section birth performed in Franklin County where mother and baby survived. He attended Benton High School and graduated with the Class of 1940, but three days prior to the graduation ceremony, Robert left to play professional baseball with The House of David in Benton Harbor, MI., where he played from 1940 to 1942.

In late 1942, he joined the Army Air Corp and received pilot training and was assigned to the 8th Air Force.

During WWII Robert was stationed in Belgium and England flying P-51's.

Prior to returning stateside, Robert along with many other professional ball players stationed in England participated in an Exhibition Baseball Game in London before a crowd of 10,000.

Following WWII he returned to civilian life and married the former Eva June Myers on December 16, 1945, in Benton, IL.

From 1946 to 1948, Robert returned to professional baseball with the St. Cloud Northern League and the Florida International League.

In 1949, he and his wife Eva returned to Benton where Robert would work for Old Ben 11 and Orient #3 Coal mines until 1950.

In 1951, Robert was recalled to the USAF as a First Lt.

In 1955, Robert graduated from the Air Force Top Gun Training School at Nellis AFB, in Las Vegas, NV.

In 1956 - 1957, during the Korean Conflict, Robert proudly served his country flying F-86's.



Born: June 22, 1922

Place of Birth: Benton, IL

Death: March 20, 2018

Place of Death: Benton, IL

Occupation: Retired United States Air Force Officer
Pilot

Later during the Vietnam War, Robert flew the Cessna O-1 Bird Dog as a Air Force Liaison Officer with the United States Army as a Forward Air Controller (FAC).

During the Vietnam War Robert flew 128 missions.

During his career Robert along with family were stationed at Air Force Bases in Selma, AL, Las Vegas, NV, Youngstown, OH, Bunker Hill, IN, Bitburg and Wurzburg, Germany, and Richards-Gebaur, MO.

In 1969, Robert retired from the USAF as a Major.

He and his wife returned to their home town of Benton, residing on a 40 acre farm with a beautiful lake.

The community will remember the U-Cut Christmas Trees and Public Fishing at Garrison Lake.

Robert enjoyed fishing, quail hunting and playing golf.

He raised several excellent bird dogs.

Robert was a long time member of the Benton Country Club, where he participated in many Grandfather Tournaments.

He was on the Benton County Club Board of Directors for 3 years and also served on the Hill City Water District Board of Directors for 6 years.

He's a life time member of the Benton American Legion Post 280 and the VFW Post 2671.

Robert is survived by his loving spouse of 72 years, Eva June Garrison; three children, Rosemari Jo Davis and husband Bill of McMinnville, OR., Roberta "Bobbi" Garrison Smith and husband Richard of Seattle, WA., and Robert Michael Garrison of St. Louis, MO; four grandchildren, Kris Simmons, Kim Kayfes, Ashley and Reilly Smith; and seven grandchildren; and beloved dog, Jack.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Funeral Arrangements have been entrusted to Pate Funeral Home, 301 S. Main St., Benton, IL.

A memorial service and celebration of life to honor Robert Martin Garrison will be scheduled at a later date.

Information will be published closer to the date of the service.

Memorials contributions may be made to the Benton American Legion Post 280 and the VFW Post 2671, and will be accepted at the funeral home.

The family would like to extend a special thank you to Dr. Richard Rethorst and staff (Margaret), Hospice of Southern Illinois and dear friends, Marguerite Matyi, Tom Saxe, Keith & Jeannie Bragg, David Linn and John Rone.

Online condolences can be given at www.patefh.com.