



Frank C Stecklein

February 20, 1912 - January 8, 2013

M/sgt Frank C. Stecklein, Air Force retired, entered into rest on January 8, 2013 in San Antonio, Texas, 3 months prior to his 100th birthday. He was the eldest of eight children born to the late Carl and Anna Younger Stecklein. Frank was born on March of 1913 in Ellis County Kansas and is preceded in death by siblings Henry Stecklein; Mary Resley Mars; Evelyn Scala Louie, Agnes Ann Maupin Bob, and Josephine Gross Alphonse. He is survived by his wife Judy Stecklein; daughter, Sharon Ann Graber Larry ; son Carl Stecklein; sister Rose Linenberger Raymond; brother Richard Stecklein Maryanne; granddaughter Aiyin Graeber; step-daughters Beth Alm, Brenda Cheesman Larry; Beverly Johnson Andrew; Bridgotte Griffin Ed; and step-son Brad Alm Rhonda.

Frank graduated from St. Joseph Military Academy of Hays Kansas in 1932. Soon after graduation, he joined the US Army Horse Cavalry at Ft. Riley, KS. After Ft. Riley, Frank re-enlisted and was stationed in Hawaii where he played the trumpet in the Coast Artillery Band. He re-enlisted in the Army Air corps, and in Febuary of 1941, Frank was transferred to Nickols Field, Philippine Islands. He was placed on Detached Services in General MacArthur's Headquarters. May 6, 1942, all troops in the Philippine Islands were surrendered to Japan and he and fellow prisoners of war worked on the island of Luzon. Frank cut wood in the jungle, and carried manure to local farms. On July 2, 1944, Frank and 1500 fellow prisoners were transferred, confined in a coal carrying ship. For two months, the ship dodged US submarines and the

prisoners were given little to eat until their arrival at Moji Japan. From Moji, the prisoners were taken by train to Omuta, Japan where Frank worked for one year in the coal mines until the surrender of Japan.

After nine months of hospitalization and rehabilitation, Frank re-enlisted in the US Air Force. In 1947, Frank was recalled to Tokyo, Japan to be a witness in the War Crimes Trials. Frank testified to the brutal beatings he and other received while working in the coal mines. From Frank's family and community upbringing, Frank spoke German quite well and in 1949, attended Intelligence school in DC where he was then transferred to Frankfurt, Germany to interrogate German Prisoners of War. While in Germany, Frank traveled all countries outside the Iron Curtain, took accordion lessons, and enjoyed visiting with friends. In 1959, Frank returned to Washington DC to learn Spanish before being transferred to Ascuncan, Paraguay on Air Force Mission Duty. He was able to visit every country in South America during this time. In Sept. 1962, while stationed at Randolph Air Force Base, Frank retired from the military and then served until 1972 in the Civil Service.

Frank was a recipient of the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star and all medals connected to service in WWII in the Pacific as a POW. He is a Life member of the Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor, Prisoners' of War, VFW, and DAV. Frank was an Honorary member of the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus, and also member of the American Legion and the Moose Lodge.

Frank loved to travel, visiting family and friends across the US, and also returned to Germany several times. He loved to dance and play music on the accordion and organ. Frank sang in church choir every year since he was 13 years old. He was a member of St. Helena's Choir and sang with Judy for Christmas Eve Mass this year. His greatest pastime was watching his favorite Texas Football, Baseball and Basketball teams on TV.

The family will receive friends at Mission Park Funeral Chapels North from 6pm -8pm Sunday, January 13, 2013. A Mass of the Resurrection will be celebrated at 10:30am on Monday January 14, 2013 at St. Helena's Catholic

Church. 14714 Edgemont Street, San Antonio, TX 78247