



Wade H. Spears, Jr.

January 30, 1923 - October 19, 2009

SPEARS

Wade Henry Spears, Jr., passed away October 18, 2009 at the age of 86 in Rockport, Texas. He was born in Wilson County, Texas on January 30, 1923, to Wade Spears, Sr. and Mary Hayes Spears. Wade was preceded in death by his parents, Eunice, his wife of 52 years, sisters, Elizabeth Byrd, Nancy Young, and brother Bud. He is survived by his sisters Gladys Risinger of Dallas, Mary Jane Jackson of Houston, son Shelton Spears Cathy of San Antonio, grandson Brian Spears Rebecca and great granddaughter Kelsie of Dublin, California, daughter Carol Spears Barrows Davidof Rockport, along with numerous nieces, nephews, and friends. In many ways, Wade's life chronicled the history of our nation. He was delivered by Dr. Ella Ware, one of the first female physicians in Texas. Both of Wade's grandfathers were Civil War veterans and both his father's family and mother's family migrated to Texas in wagons pulled by mules. One of Wade's fondest memories was of the family piling into the Model T and going to Brackenridge Park in San Antonio for a 4th of July celebration at the age of six. Life soon became much more difficult due to the Great Depression. Wade saw his father plow under his cotton crop, while neighbors shot their cattle and hogs due to overproduction, resulting in little or no profit. As a young boy, his chores consisted of wood cutting, milking cows, and feeding the hogs. When he grew older, he plowed cotton, picked cotton in July and August, and helped weigh

the bales. To get to school, he either walked four miles or rode the family mare, Daisy. After graduating from Stockdale High School, Wade moved to San Antonio where he joined the National Youth Administration Training taking courses in the theory of flight and aircraft engine mechanics. He was soon hired at Duncan Field later named Kelly AFB as an aircraft mechanic where he worked on B-17 bomber engines both before and after the Pearl Harbor Attack. In 1942, Wade received his draft notice and although he could have taken a deferment since he was working in an essential war industry, he chose to enlist like most young men at the time. After basic training, he was sent overseas from New York Harbor aboard the HMS Queen Mary on June 3, 1943. He arrived in Scotland as part of the Fighting 86th Depot Repair Squadron. He later went on to Bedford, England; Greencastle, North Ireland; Belfast, Ireland; and Warrington, England. During this time, he worked on B-17's and P-47 Thunderbolts. At one time, he worked on three C-47's for General Eisenhower's use. After D-Day, Sgt. Spears was moved to continental Europe. He was in Belgium when the Germans launched their desperate counter-offensive which precipitated the Battle of the Bulge. He later served as part of the occupational troops in Germany until the end of 1945. On his way home from Germany, his group of soldiers rode the same box cars that American troops rode during World War I. Wade arrived home January 1946 in Brooklyn Harbor. Years later, one of the most poignant stories Wade told about the war was the day a young pilot going on a mission was unable to start his engine. Wade immediately jumped up and proudly fixed the problem. The pilot waved his thanks and flew off only to be lost during the mission. In 1948, Sgt. Spears became an Air Technician with the 182nd Fighter Squadron at Brooks Air Force Base in San Antonio. When the unit was recalled in 1950, he went to Korea as an aircraft maintenance technician. After Korea, he returned to civilian life and the 149th Fighter Unit of the Air National Guard stationed at Kelly AFB. He remained in that 149th until his retirement in 1978. Upon retirement, Wade and his wife made Rockport, Texas their home. The family wishes to thank the doctors, nurses, and staff

who took care of him during his final days, with special thanks given to his caretakers at Gulf Pointe Village, Oak Crest Nursing Center, and Harbor Hospice.

Services

Visitation will be held on Thursday, October 22, 2009 from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at Mission Park Funeral Chapels South. Funeral services will be held on Friday, October 23, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. at the funeral home. Interment will follow at Mission Burial Park South, with honorary services provided by Masonic Lodge 151 of San Antonio.

For personal acknowledgment you may sign the guest book at www.missionparks.com in the obituary section.

Tribute Wall

JM

“ *Sorry about your loss. Johnny & Ann.*

John& Ann Moryl - October 24, 2009 at 12:00 AM

DE

“ *We are so sorry to hear about your dad. Ricky, Debbie, Colton and Corgan Engelke*

Debbie Engelke - October 24, 2009 at 12:00 AM

NM

“ *Dear Carol,
I was so sorry to hear about your dad's passing. I'd like to extend my condolences to you and your family. I hope you find comfort in these words, "He is in the best place he can be, in God's hands".
Please know that I am thinking about*

Noelia Moncivais - October 23, 2009 at 12:00 AM

TF

“ *Dear Ones,
It is with great sadness that we cannot be with you at this time. We will cherish our wonderful memories of your dear father. Please know we are with you in spirit and that we share your loss.*

Terry, Betty and Family - October 22, 2009 at 12:00 AM

DS

“ *Chief Spears was one of those quiet leaders, who carried his leadership with a great attitude and dignity. He always had a kind word for everyone. It was always a great pleasure to serv with him.*

Dominic A. Scaramozi - October 21, 2009 at 12:00 AM

PF

“ Dear Family,
I have heard stories of Wade all of my life from my Dad, Cecil Hamady. They were friends for many, many years. Please, accept my condolences. I know Dad would be there with you if he felt well enough to travel.

Paula Hamady Forsgren - October 21, 2009 at 12:00 AM

RH

“ Wade was one of the dearest and closest friends of my Dad, Cecil. He was deeply touched to hear of his passing. Our thoughts and prayers are with Wades family at this time.

Rebecca Hamady - October 21, 2009 at 12:00 AM

BE

“ Mr. Spears was a good friend of my father's, retired Col. John Cook. Our family would go fishing in Rockport and we would visit with him. He was always so nice. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your families.

Brenda Cook Errico

Brenda Errico - October 21, 2009 at 12:00 AM

GR

“ Wade used to live fairly close to us. Sometimes he and my dad, retired Master Sgt. Cornelius Ripps, would car-pool to the 149th; sometimes they would work on each other's vehicles together.

Gregory N. Ripps - October 21, 2009 at 12:00 AM

AR

“ *Wade Spears was my first flight chief when I joined the TEX-ANG at Brooks AFB in '49. I served with him in Korea and after returning home at Brooks and Kelly. My fond rememberances of him are of his careing ways and my prayers are with the family.*

Asher R. - October 21, 2009 at 12:00 AM

SW

“ *My condolences to Wade's family. I was in Eastern Star with Wade. He was wonderful, and kind to all of us at Rockport Chapter.*

Sandy Walker - October 21, 2009 at 12:00 AM