



Robert E. Bryant

July 14, 1918 - June 20, 2015

Obituary

Robert Edman Bryant, Colonel, US Army, Retired

Colonel Robert E. Bryant died on June 20, 2015 of natural causes at the age of 96 in Gig Harbor, Washington. He was born in Wichita, Kansas, on July 14, 1918, the son of William Edman and Beth Tolle Bryant. In 1921 his family moved to Manhattan, Kansas, and in 1935 to Topeka, Kansas. Robert attended Roosevelt Grade School, Manhattan Junior High, and Manhattan High School (through his junior year), graduating from Topeka High in May 1936. That summer the family moved to Denver, Colorado, where he worked fourteen months before returning to Manhattan to attend Kansas State College (now Kansas State University) during his freshman year 1937-1938. In the fall of 1938 he entered the University of Colorado, Boulder, from which he graduated in June 1941 with a BA degree in Modern Languages. He was a member of the Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity, of which he was chapter president in 1940-1941.

Later that June Robert was drafted into the Army, beginning a career of almost 32 years. Initially commissioned in the Army of the United States (AUS) in November 1942, he was later integrated into the Regular Army following World War II. His Army years were divided about equally between serving in the United States and overseas, with tours of duty in Germany, Korea,

Okinawa, Viet-Nam, and Panama. His schooling and aptitude in foreign languages played very significant roles in his assignments.

He received a number of awards and decorations, principal among them the Legion of Merit with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Joint Service and Army Commendation Medals. He was also cited by the Republics of Korea and Viet-Nam.

In May 1949 Robert and Ursula H. (Vicky) Chudzicki were married in Heidelberg, Germany. They had two children, sons Light Robert and David Conrad. Vicky passed away in December 1995, well into the forty-seventh year of their marriage. She is buried in the Willamette National Cemetery, Portland, Oregon - where Robert will likewise be laid to rest.

In November 1964 the family moved to Corvallis, Oregon, purchasing a home and beginning a long-time residence there. At this same time Robert was assigned to Viet-Nam, and during his 20-month tour there, he was selected for promotion to colonel. By a stroke of fortuitous timing, his promotion list number was reached the very day of his arrival back in Corvallis. Colonel Clayton A Shaw, then the PMS&T of Oregon State University, performed the promotion ceremony in his campus office, with the family present.

Robert's first assignment after promotion was Deputy J-4, Headquarters, US Southern Command, Panama Canal Zone, where Vicky and sons also moved. His terminal assignment was Headquarters, Sixth US Army, Presidio of San Francisco, California; there he retired on February 1, 1973. Subsequently he became a Life Member of the American Legion, the Retired Officers Association, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Following retirement from the Army, Robert and Vicky resumed residence in Corvallis. From 1973 to 1976 they pursued post-graduate studies at Oregon State University, whence he graduated in June 1976 with an MA degree in Inter-disciplinary Studies. He was elected to Phi Kappa Phi, the scholastic Honor Society. Subsequently he worked as an insurance underwriter, retiring therefrom in 1986.

With a common great interest in vocal music, Vicky and Robert sang in civilian

and military choirs wherever stationed. Following their return to Corvallis in 1973, they became members of the Kings Circle Assembly of God; they joined its choir, singing in regular services as well as in Christmas and Easter pageants.

Travel was a passion for the couple. In addition to extensive military-based travel, they continued wide adventures abroad after retirement. By the time of Vicky's death in 1995, they had lived in and visited major portions of the world. They belonged to the Retired Officers Club of Corvallis, of which Robert was a past president; he was also an active and enthusiastic member of the Rotary Club of Corvallis for 20 years, including being a Paul Harris Fellow. Fully occupied with the Rotary Club, the Retired Officers Club, service as the church parliamentarian, and his writing, Robert stayed in Corvallis for several years following Vicky's passing.

In June 1998 Robert sold his house and moved to Gig Harbor, Washington, home to son David and his family. There he began attending their church, Harbor Covenant, of which he soon became a member. During his first three and a half years in Washington he led an active life in his retirement community, serving at times as president of the Resident Council and presenting several a capella vocal concerts for fellow residents. From 2001 to 2005 he lived with Dave and his family, transferring in 2005 to an adult family home in Tacoma. In late 2014 he moved back to Gig Harbor, settling happily into a new family home, where he was living at the time of his death.

Robert had a life-long interest in history and politics. Under laws in effect in 1936 (when the minimum voting age was 21), he could not vote in the Roosevelt-Landon (the governor of his home state) presidential election. Starting in 1940, however, whether he was then stationed in the United States or somewhere overseas, he took pride in voting in every national election. Following in the footsteps of his father and several uncles, in 1951 Robert joined the Masonic Order, taking the basic degree work in York Lodge 225, Cheverly, Maryland. While studying at the Command and General Staff

College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, he took additional work and was awarded the 32nd degree in 1962.

This account would be incomplete without telling of Robert's great interest in athletics. Upon his relocation to Washington he became an avid fan of the Seattle Mariners for several years; his zeal faded as the team's fortunes slipped. Meanwhile he remained faithful to the teams to which he had developed earlier personal allegiances: the Kansas State Wildcats, Colorado Buffaloes, and Oregon State Beavers.

Over quite a number of years Robert worked extensively on writing his life's story. He wrote dozens of vignettes concerning various incidents or people in his life. Many of these individual stories were later compiled or adapted into one or both of two longer booklets.

Robert is survived by his sons, Light (Bob) (Yuma, Arizona) and David (Gig Harbor); granddaughter, Alexandra (Lexi) Bryant (New York City); nieces Sue E. Holbert and Judith A. Ramey (Evanston, Illinois); daughter-in-law, Deborah L. Bryant (Yuma). Daughter-in-law Andrea L. Bryant and grandson Andrew D. Bryant (both Gig Harbor) preceded him in death.

Interment with full military honors will occur on June 30, 2015 at two p.m. at the Willamette National Cemetery. A memorial service is scheduled for 1:00 pm, Friday, July 10th and will be held at the Harbor Covenant Church, 5601 Gustafson Drive, Gig Harbor, Washington, 98335.

In accordance with Colonel Bryant's wishes, in lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the Special Olympics or to the Tacoma Youth Symphony Association.

Tribute Wall

CO

“ I am saddened to learn Bob has passed away, I really enjoyed our late nights & his story telling, he will be remembered and missed, the Airey family

connie - February 28, 2019 at 10:30 AM

SS

“ Col. Bryant was a good and memorable man. He made a big impression on me when I met him 51 years ago. I was then visiting his home, as a guest of "Bob", which is what Light was called then. My condolences to the family, and I am thankful for treasured memories. Stephen D. Frolander Sr.

Stephen D Frolander Sr. - July 02, 2015 at 08:09 AM

DB

“ Dad Bryant was a wonderful, kind, loving, and supportive father-in-law who accepted me into the family as soon as I married his oldest son, Light. He told me that he was now my "Dad #2" and he treated me as a daughter. I will always treasure his singing voice mails which he recorded for birthdays and anniversaries. He loved the Lord and lived his faith. Once, years ago while on active duty, he asked one of his junior officers what the men in his command thought of him and the response was "a practising Christian." He lived his life with grace and love and kindness.

Deborah Bryant - June 27, 2015 at 07:42 PM