



Earle Wellington Kelly

October 8, 2010

Myrtle Beach Earle W. Kelly Lieutenant Colonel Earle W. "Kel" Kelly, 92, passed away peacefully at his home on Friday, 8 October, 2010. Lt Col. Kelly was born in Malone, NY on 18 November, 1917, the son of Ernest and Marion Kelly. He completed high school at Franklin Academy in Malone and in 1936, he entered Norwich University. During his senior year at Norwich, he was captain of the football team and was named Vermont All-State end; He was also a proud member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity. On 10 June 1940, he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Norwich and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant Cavalry . Lt. Col. Kelly's first active duty assignment was as troop officer (Horse Cavalry) with the 3rd US Cavalry at Ft. Ethan Allan, Vt. and Ft. Meyer, Va. His first command position was at Ft. Oglethorpe, Ga., where he was medium tank Company Commander with the 3rd Armored Regiment, 10th Armored Division. In September 1942, he was assigned to his alma mater as assistant Professor of Military Science and Tactics. While at Norwich, he served as an ROTC instructor for the junior and senior classes. He was also the stable officer for 120 horses and was responsible for conducting mounted drill and riding classes to the cadets. He entered pilot training in July 1943 and graduated as a B-24 Liberator Bomber pilot in January of 1944. He flew his plane and crew to Manduria, Italy and began his flying career as a combat pilot with the 723rd Sqdn, 450 Bomb Group (H), 15th Air Force. On 10 September 1944, while flying his 13th mission to Vienna, Austria, he was shot down from 25,000 feet by intense and

accurate flak. After parachuting to the ground, he was imprisoned in Budapest, Hungary, and later was transported by boxcar to Stalag Luft III., Sagan, Germany where he lived in Center Camp, Block 52. On January 25, 1945, he made a week long forced march in sub zero conditions to Spremburg Germany, then by rail and boxcar to Stalag Luft VII A in Mooseburg, Germany. He served as Compound Adjutant until being liberated by Patton's 14th Armored Division on April 29, 1945. After the war's end, Lt. Col. Kelly continued his Air Force career flying over 5000 hours in 14 different types of aircraft. His assignments included: Air Command and General Staff School at Maxwell Field, AL.; Base Flight Squadron Commander, Randolph Field TX; Commander 1727 Air Transport Squadron (Special Air Evac) Warner-Robins AFB, Macon, GA; Air OPS Officer for the 1603rd Air Transport Wing, MATS, Atlantic Division in Tripoli, Libya; Commander, 3rd Transport Group (Heavy) at Brookley AFB, Mobile, AL flying the C-124 Globemaster. He also served as Air OPNS Officer, J3 Division HQ, United Nations Command in Seoul Korea. Lt. Col. Kelly concluded his distinguished Air Force career at Stewart AFB, NY with the Air Defense Command Plans and Operations. He retired from active duty in August, 1966. His awards and decorations include: Purple Heart, Air Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, Distinguished Unit Citation w/ oak leaf cluster, Prisoner of War Medal, American Defense Service Medal, American Campaign Medal, Europe-Africa-Middle East Medal w/ 3 bronze stars, Victory Medal WWII, National Defense Service Medal w/ 1 bronze star, Korean Defense Service Medal, and Air Force Longevity Service Award w/ 5 bronze oak leaf clusters. After leaving the Air Force, Lt. Col. Kelly returned to the school he loved, -Norwich University, where he served as Assistant Registrar and Director of Freshman Guidance. In 1967, he became the Director of Alumni activities; a position he held for 10 years, before retiring in 1977. After retiring to the Myrtle Beach area in 1984, Lt. Col Kelly kept active by involvement in various community activities and organizations, including: Chicora Rotary of Myrtle Beach (he was past president of Northfield, VT Rotary), Elliot White Springs Flight 77 Chapter of Daedalians.

He was a life member of the following organizations: American Legion Post 0503, Calabash, NC, VFW Post 10420, Murrells Inlet, SC; American Ex-Prisoners of War, Military Order of Purple Heart and the Fifteenth Air Force Association. He was also a member of the Retired Military Officers Association, Low Country Warbirds Association, 33 Degree Mason, and an Honorary Member of Arnold Air Society. In addition, Lt. Col. Kelly shared many of his POW experiences as a public speaker at area grade schools, high schools, and civic organizations. Preceding him in death in Aug 1994, was his loving wife of 53 years, Mary Adel Gamble, of El Paso, Texas, daughter of Colonel Claude and Blanch Hall Gamble. In 2007, He remarried Barbara Lovatt Craig, of Carolina Shores, N.C. He continued to actively support the University and remained close to Norwich throughout his life; often hosting "mini" reunions in the Myrtle Beach area, with his wife, Barbara. Survivors include his wife, Barbara Craig Kelly of Cary, NC, a son, John Kelly of Myrtle Beach, SC, Paula Weingarten Kelly, of Surfside Beach, SC, A son-in-law, Thomas L. Craig Jr. and wife, Georgia of Cary, NC. Grand children include Amanda and David Kelly of Surfside Beach, and Casey and Courtney Craig of Cary. The family would like to especially thank Ms. Beverly Behm of Comfort Keepers for her compassionate care of Kel over the past 2 years and to Mercy Hospice of Myrtle Beach, for the excellent services they provided. A memorial service will be held on Wednesday, October 13, 2010 at 2 pm at Goldfinch Beach Chapel, Murrells Inlet, SC. Visitation will be from 1-2 pm. Kel will be greatly missed by friends and family. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be sent in memory of Earle W. Kelly to: Friends of the Norwich University Library, 158 Harmon Drive, Northfield VT, 05663. An online guestbook is available at www.goldfinchfuneral.com. Goldfinch Funeral Home, Beach Chapel is in charge of the arrangements.

Tribute Wall



“ My Dad, Edgar H. French, died in 1999. He and Earle (Kel) were great friends growing up in this small town of Malone, NY. I recall Kel's visits to our home and the wonderful times they had recalling their teenage escapades. My Dad was a WW2 hero also, he was awarded the Silver Star; but these men of the 'greatest generation' never talked of their bravery as anything exceptional. Kel and Ed did what any man would do...according to them. I am very sorry for your loss, Kel left footprints no man can fill.##imported-begin##cathy french hollinshead##imported-end##

October 16, 2010 at 02:38 PM



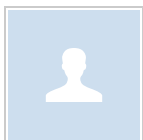
Did Edgar H French serve in the infantry 90th division during the WW2?
thank Julien

julien - August 10, 2016 at 06:02 PM



“ Colonel Kel, I miss you so much. You are in my thoughts and my prayers. Your stories are inspiration to me and others. I love you so much and I know that God has a huge smile from your jokes right now RIP kel, Courtney##imported-begin##Courtney Craig##imported-end##

October 13, 2010 at 09:42 PM



“ What a lifetime of accomplishment that are truly inspiring. Thoughts and prayers are with you all as you find the strength to pay tribute to a man that was a hero in many ways.##imported-begin##Jamie Livernois##imported-end##

October 13, 2010 at 11:10 AM



“ *Kel was one of the first people we met at the beach. We were starting a new business and building a new home at the same time in 1995. Kel was one of those special people that come into your life when you need a hand along with being a good neighbor. We also couldn't have done without all the TLC from his daughter-in-law Paula when my husband died suddenly. We were truly blessed by his family's friendship and kindness.##imported-begin##Linda Vukic##imported-end##*

October 13, 2010 at 10:52 AM



“ *Dear Tom and Georgia and entire Kelly Family, Our thoughts and prayers are with you all on the loss of your beloved Kel. Georgia told me so many wonderful stories of him even though we never met I felt as though we had. God Bless You, Barone Family##imported-begin##Linda and Tom Barone&Family##imported-end##*

October 13, 2010 at 08:05 AM



“ *Col Kelly defines the perfect gentleman, friend, and American Hero. His commitment to Norwich and his country were second to none and I will never forget his sacrifice to this great Nation. It is my prayer that he flew to his permanent home smoothly with no parachute needed. As John told me, "it was a beautiful day for flying" on 8 Oct 2010. Essayons Brother, Col Kelly made us all better people for knowing him and having the privilege of sharing his memories. David Bishop, NU Class of 1989##imported-begin##David Bishop##imported-end##*

October 12, 2010 at 10:11 PM



“ Hi, I am so sorry for your lose. I had the privilege of meeting Kel when I was down visiting my sister Bev in August of this year. He certaintl lived a very long and adventurous life. His room of memorabilia brought a tear to my eye. It truely was a privledge to have gotton to see and know a little about him. With our Love Steve Margaret and Casie###imported-begin###Steven Smith###imported-end##

October 12, 2010 at 06:29 PM



“ My deepest condolense to you and your family, Although I met him once I will truly miss this amazing man. I only wish we could have met again. I know when the time comes we will all see him again.###imported-begin###Ruben DeIValle###imported-end##

October 12, 2010 at 12:34 PM



“ My prayers and thoughts are with you John and your family. I know this is a difficult time but always keep the many good things in your mind for it will help.###imported-begin###Dee Young###imported-end##

October 11, 2010 at 05:56 PM



“ I didn't know Col. Kelly very well but did have a few chances to meet him as a member of Chicora Rotary Club. I do know though that he was an American hero. My thoughts and prayers go out to his family.###imported-begin###Neal Bowers###imported-end##

October 11, 2010 at 04:45 PM



“ John, Deepest condolences to you and your family from both of us. Your father has quite an impressive list of accomplishments. He will always be remembered.##imported-begin##Scott and Sharon Forbes##imported-end##

October 11, 2010 at 01:16 PM



“ John and the rest of the Kelly family, I am very sorry for your loss, but after having read the obituary, there was not a day lived that was not full of excitement and adventure. It is stories like his that make me a proud member of the Air Force and I can only hope to make my military career half as rememberable. My prayers are with you all. Dena M. Forbes, SrA, USAF##imported-begin##Dena M. Forbes##imported-end##

October 11, 2010 at 01:08 PM



“ A fine gentleman and husband to one of my favorite people. He will be missed.##imported-begin##Greg Wing##imported-end##

October 11, 2010 at 10:10 AM



“ In memory of one of the most wonderful men I have ever meant! Our country has lost a valuable treasure. I hope you are able to have all the turkey AND mashed potatoes you can possibly eat! Cover them in chocolate too!! We will do everything possible to take care of your Barb for you! You will be forever missed - Michelle Bishop##imported-begin##Michelle Bishop##imported-end##

October 11, 2010 at 08:41 AM



“ From your Northfield family, we will miss you dearly Col. Kel you brought so many stories of wonder and much laughter to our lives. You served your family and your country with the highest of honors. For all you did "THANK YOU" Much love Miss Darlene and Miss Morgan###imported-begin##Darlene St.John###imported-end##

October 10, 2010 at 09:17 PM



“ Kel brought wonder and joy into our lives with his courage, humor and zeal for life. He was a true American hero and we can only pray to God that he sends us more like Kel.###imported-begin##Thomas Craig###imported-end##

October 10, 2010 at 04:09 PM



“ Dear Tom and Georgia: We are so sorry to hear of the colonel's passing and are keeping you, the girls and Barbara in our prayers. What an amazing and interesting life the colonel led. I know you have both contributed so much so his care and Barbara's since leaving Sudbury. We miss you. In Sympathy, Colleen and Erwin###imported-begin##Colleen and Erwin Martens###imported-end##

October 10, 2010 at 02:04 PM