

JESSE BERNARD BOOTH

1923-2013

SUN CITY CENTER, FLORIDA: Jesse Bernard Booth, 90, of Sun City Center, FL., died in his sleep at home on September 16, 2013.

Jesse was born in Miami, Arizona, on July 1, 1923.

He was the only son of Blanche E. Hawkins and Jesse Virgil Booth. Although he was born in Arizona due to his father's employment in a copper mine, he only lived there for six months and then his parents and he moved to Long Beach and Los Angeles, Calif., where they lived for five years.

As an adult, during football season, Jesse rooted for USC, his "kindergarten alma mater."

Actually, Jesse was a Texan. His family had settled in Wise County, TX. several generations earlier in and near a small town called Chico, TX. Jesse attended elementary school there, where his aunt (Blanche's sister Browneyes) was his first grade teacher.

Then the family moved to Dallas, where they settled in the Oak Cliff area.

More job changes for Jesse's father took him to Mississippi for a short time, and back to Texas again--this time Houston where Jesse graduated from Lamar High School.

Although Jesse's father was a University of Texas graduate, Jesse decided to go to Texas A & M, a move which positively affected his life until the day he died. Jesse was an Aggie to the core. He was selected by his fellow corpsmen to be an Aggie yell leader, one of four. For his senior year, he was selected Head Yell Leader. He had many, mostly hilarious, stories to tell of his yell leader days, such as when he and his buddies would hitchhike to the out-of-town games. Jesse led the Aggie Muster on April 21, 1945, at the Charles de Gaulle Hotel in Paris, France, which was attended by any Aggie graduate who could make it there. A picture of that event hangs in the Aggie Museum in College Station, TX.

When World War II broke out, Jesse and his classmates knew it was just a matter of time until they were involved in the fighting. Jesse wanted to be in the Army Air Corps, and tried to register as such, but he was rejected because he was too tall. Eventually, he was in the regular Army and became a topographical map-maker under Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower. When reconnaissance pilots flew over France and other parts of Europe, Jesse and his platoon would transcribe the pictures into maps, showing roads, troop movement, etc.

For the rest of his life, Jesse loved all kinds of maps. Most of his time in the Army during the war was spent in England, although after D-Day, he was sent to France.

While in England, he was stationed at Kew Gardens, London. One day about a week after arriving, Jesse and his buddy Scottie got a leave to go sightseeing in London. On that fateful day, he met the love of his life--his future wife Peggy Ruth Freeman. She was walking on the same street with her friend Sheila, and the two soldiers stopped to ask directions. They ended up in a pub, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Six months later Jesse and Peggy were married. They were married for 69 years. Upon returning to the United States, at the War's end, Jesse went to Beaumont, TX, where Peggy had gone before the end of the War to live with Jesse's parents. The two moved to their own little apartment. Jesse accepted a job with Sun Oil Company as a scout, the bottom rung of the ladder. Over the years, he moved up with the company until his last job was that of Offshore Leasing Negotiator for the continental United States.

He often spoke of his many travels representing the company and the various characters, both within and without the company, that he had met. Eventually, while living in Houston, he and Peggy welcomed two girls, Judy Ann and Betty Jean, into the family. In 1963, the family moved to Lafayette, LA., where Jesse continued his landman activities for Sun. He met and drank coffee with many good ol' Cajun boys. During those years, he also developed a love of Cajun food. In 1970, Jesse was transferred back to Houston and then to Dallas in 1977, where he retired in 1985. Upon retirement, Jesse became involved in other pursuits, such as real estate agent and travel planning. He began to cook and enjoyed trying out recipes, particularly chili. Mostly, Jesse and Peggy enjoyed traveling. They had a time-share apartment in the Kensington area of London, and they visited Peggy's relatives in various areas of England for over 30 years.

One of their favorite places was Le Jules Verne Restaurant at the Eiffel Tower. On their fiftieth anniversary, they celebrated with a flight on the Concord to London and a return cruise to New York on the QE II. After that, they enjoyed 15 cruises together, including going through the Panama Canal, the Alaskan inside passage, a Mediterranean cruise, and the last one to Australia and New Zealand. Jesse also enjoyed learning how to fly. Although he was not allowed to join the Army Air Corps in 1944, he did learn to fly when he was 55 years old, living in Houston. Upon moving to Dallas, Jesse continued his lessons, and eventually learned to do aerobatics with renowned pilot Gene Soucy as his teacher.

One of Jesse's outstanding achievements was flying across the English Channel with Peggy. They landed in France, had lunch, then flew back to England.

In 1989, Jesse and Peggy moved to Sun City Center, FL, where they quickly became involved in the life there. They volunteered for the Emergency Squad, joined the Art Club, and enjoyed an active social life, until a few years

