



Pete F. Garbarini, Jr.

February 5, 1925 - March 4, 2012

Lt. Col. (ret. USAF) Pete F. Garbarini, Jr., 87, of Hollywood, SC entered into eternal rest on March 4 2012. He was born on February 5, 1925 in Clarksdale MS to Pete F. and Antonette (Sorice) Garbarini. A veteran of World War II, Korea and Viet Nam, Pete's passion for flying airplanes was ignited when he and his boyhood friend, John Hines, began assembling model airplanes as young boys and sealed when his father arranged a ride on a Ford Tri-Motor passenger plane that had landed in Clarksdale. Pete attended elementary school in Clarksdale and CBC High School in Memphis until he was drafted into the Army Air Corps on May 6, 1943. Following aerial gunnery school in Laredo TX, he was assigned to the 15th Air Force, 450th Bomb Group, in Manduria, Italy. Thanks to the skill of his crew, including Pilot Lt. Charles (Chuck) Herrington, Co-pilot Bernard (Steve) Stevens, and Navigator Flight Officer Jim Greenwood, he flew 50 missions as a tail gunner on a B-24, Heaven's Above. On his 24th mission to destroy a locomotive depot in Verona, Pete and a fellow crewmate were wounded by flak, earning him the Purple Heart. Before boarding the Mariposa for his return trip home, Pete and his crew were dining in a small, family-owned restaurant in Naples when they were suddenly showered with hugs and champagne as news was received that Italy had been liberated. Four days out to sea they received the news that Germany had surrendered. After being discharged in September 1945, Pete entered Memphis State College and on December 7, 1945, he married his childhood schoolmate, Patsy Hamlin, with whom he would have four beautiful

children. While attending Memphis State, Pete joined a P-51 squadron with the Tennessee Air National Guard. He was recalled to active duty in the summer of 1951, during the Korean conflict, when he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant and entered pilot training at Malden AFB, MO, where he trained on a T-6. Subsequent assignments included flying P51s at Craig AFB, AL; T-33s at Bryan AFB, TX; F-80s at Tyndall AFB, FL; F-94s and F-89s at Kinross AFB, MI. After attending Aircraft Maintenance Officers School at Chanute AFB, IL he received a series of temporary duty assignments in the U.S. and Japan ending with a brief tour in Yuma, AZ. His subsequent assignment was as Commander of a training detachment at Tyndall AFB, training pilots and maintenance personnel on several aircraft including the B-57. Following tours in Bentwaters, England and Langley AFB, VA, and Korat, Thailand, Pete was assigned to the 41st Military Airlift Squadron, Charleston AFB where he flew C-141s during the Viet Nam war. He subsequently became the Commander of the 437th Organizational Maintenance Squadron. He retired at Charleston AFB in 1969. His awards included five bronze stars, the Air Medal with 3 OLCs, the Purple Heart, the Command Pilot Medal and the Air Force Distinguished Service Medal. Not quite ready for retirement, Pete and his business partner, Ernie Belcher, opened the Summerville Paint Store which they operated during the 1970s. He subsequently obtained his Coast Guard Captain's License and operated yachts for various businesses and private owners as well as his own houseboat Second Choice. After making a visit to Manduria Italy in 2005 with his children, to visit the site of the 450th Bomb Group, Pete met local historian and current mayor, Anna Rita Morleo. After exchanging photos and stories from World War II, Anna Rita included Pete's stories about the Heaven's Above crew in her collection of memoirs titled *Meminisse invabit, Memorie di Guerra*, published in 2006. The following year, Anna Rita and the people of Manduria invited Pete, as guest of honor, to attend the Italian national holiday, the 2nd of June, during which a special dedication was made to honor all those who served in the 450th Bomb Group. Pete was a member of Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church in Charleston. He

was a founding member of the Charleston Hangar of the Quite Birdmen. He enjoyed golfing, boating and fishing, but most of all, spending time with his family and friends (including his Thursday Lunch Bunch) who adored him. Pete is predeceased by his first wife, Patsy, and his brother, Marshall. He is survived by his wife, Carla; sons Paul Garbarini and Michael Garbarini (wife Sherry); daughters Julie Smith and Donna Jenkins (husband Eddie); grandchildren Summer Smith; Jantzen Smith; Casey Smith; Hali Jenkins; Tighe Jenkins; Philip Garbarini (wife Angela); and Nick Garbarini (wife Jen); Ali Knight; Isaiah Meders; Jacob Meders; great-grandchildren Maria Garbarini and Philip (PJ) Garbarini Jr.; sisters Ramona Carimi and Mary Lou Jones, sister-in law Billie Layfield, cousins, nieces, nephews, and many, many friends. Donations may be made in the name of Pete F. Garbarini, Jr. to the American Heart Association, 409 King Street, #300, Charleston, SC 29403. Gone West in his P-38. Funeral mass will be held Thursday, March 8, 2012 at 11 o'clock at St. John the Beloved Catholic Church, Summerville. Rite of Committal with Final Commendation will follow at Live Oak Memorial Gardens, Charleston. Friends may call at James A. Dyal Funeral Home, Summerville from 6 until 7:30 o'clock Wednesday evening. A memorial message may be written to the family by visiting our website at www.jamesadyal.com.

ARRANGEMENTS BY JAMES A. DYAL FUNERAL HOME, 303 S. MAIN STREET, SUMMERVILLE, SC 29483(843) 873-4040.

Tribute Wall



“ *Pete F. Garbarini, Jr.*

September 29, 2022 at 10:11 AM