



James Gray

September 26, 2013 - September 26, 2013

HOLYOKE-James Gray, 88, died peacefully on September 26, 2013 at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke, MA. Born on March 11, 1925 in Dewdrop, KY to the late James Gray and Bertha Carter, he spent his childhood in Kentucky and graduated from Dupont Manuel High School in Louisville, KY in 1943. He immediately joined the Navy and spent WW II based on Long Island, NY as an aviation mechanic and aircrew member on long-range reconnaissance aircraft searching for Nazi U-Boats off the east coast of America. In New York he met his future wife, Ruth Marie Pettersen. They were married for 65 years until Ruth passed in August 2011. Jim transferred to the Air Force after WW II and was assigned to Donaldson AFB in Greenville, SC where he maintained cargo and troop carrier aircraft. This took him to his next assignment in France. In 1957 he was reassigned to Dow AFB in Bangor, ME where he maintained KC-135 refueling aircraft. His next assignment was to Goose AB, Labrador, Newfoundland where he maintained refueling aircraft on alert during the Cold War. In 1965 he transferred to Westover AFB in Chicopee, MA working in maintenance logistics in support of local aircraft deployed to southeast Asia. His final assignment was split between South Vietnam and Thailand during the Vietnam War working on A1E Spad aircraft. In 1970 he retired from the Air Force and spent the next two decades working in the maintenance field as a master mechanic and supervisor in the Springfield, MA area. During their time in the military Jim and Ruth raised a family of five sons: Wayne and his wife Effie of Colorado Springs, CO; Alan and his wife

Germaine of Seattle, WA; Jeffrey and his wife Joanne of Salem, NH; Cary and his wife Paula of Chicopee, MA and Kirk and his wife Cindy of Feeding Hills, MA. Jim is also survived by 12 grandchildren, 7 great grandchildren and his older sister, Lois Powell of Hopkinsville, KY. There was always a family dog around for their sons. His younger brother, Matthew Lee, preceded him in death. Jim could design and build most anything. He actually built and maintained a house on Green Lake in Dedham, ME for 50 years. Jim loved being at Green Lake. His family would like to thank the following: the great staff at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke, the staff at the Holyoke Medical Center, Kimberly Babin and her family of Chicopee, Sharon Riley and her daughters of Belchertown, Crista Appletree of New Hartford, CT and Jennifer Van Sant of Great Barrington, MA. They also wanted to thank Jim's sister-in-law, Barbara Belmonte of East Cannan, CT and niece, Ingrid Mahoney of New Hartford, CT and her husband John and three sons of their sacrifice and efforts over the last two years. Ingrid took care of Jim in his last days, better than the daughter that he never had. Services will be at the convenience of the family. New England Funeral & Cremation Center, LLC 25 Mill St., Springfield, MA has been entrusted with the arrangements. Visit www.nefcc.net