



Vernon Dale France

January 9, 1917 - July 19, 2010

Vernon Dale France

Vern France, 93, died peacefully and comfortably on July 19, 2010, having fully participated in the “Greatest Generation”. The oldest of six children born to Wenatchee pioneers Herbert and Vivian France, he rode horses to school, lived through the depression, married his hometown love, Emma Lou Nancekivell and together they raised a family of four children. Vern was working on Grand Coulee Dam at the moment of Pearl Harbor and became a US Navy flight instructor during WWII. With Emmy, he designed and built two homes and several businesses in Wenatchee, including Nancekivell Cleaners and Trevi Tile. They shared a love of dancing and attended the Church of God, Faith of Abraham.

He was a life-long member of the Lions Club. He served in numerous local, district, and national offices of Lions; he loved flying his private plane to Lion’s Club events. For more than 20 years he sang in the award-winning Wenatchee Lions Quartet. Fifty years after Pearl Harbor, he served as an International Director of Lions Club, where he and Emmy traveled and worked closely with other directors from around the world. Among them were pilots who flew for Japan during WWII. They laughed and cried together as they shared their WWII experience. He considered them among his best friends. In 1997, his wife, Emmy, died after almost 60 years of marriage. After a brief period of wrenching grief, he woke one morning and began to reinvent himself. He and Elaine met and became inseparable companions and he

enjoyed getting to know her family, and doing what he could to draw the two families together. He and Elaine traveled in August, 2000, to Schoharie County in upper New York State to visit the site where his great-great-great-great grandfather and grandmother settled in 1752. They married in October. Vern wrote a short memoir about “the greatest influences in my life” and then launched on the research for and writing of his book, “Early Wenatchee...and a little more...as I lived it.” He self-published at age 90, and took pleasure in sharing it whenever he could.

In addition to Emmy, Vern was preceded in death by two of his younger brothers, Arden and Howard, and in 2008, his daughter Rebecca. He is survived by three sons and their wives, Bill and Sarah in Everett, Greg and Karen in Wenatchee, Jeff and Terri in Sammamish. Two brothers, Gary and Clell, live in Wenatchee, his sister, Helen Behrend, lives in Marysville. His wife, Elaine lives at Colonial Vista.

Others family members who already miss Vern include ten grandchildren, a smattering of great-grandchildren, a slew of cousins, nephews and nieces, and Elaine’s children and grandchildren.

Memorial service: Typical of Vern’s pragmatic nature, he hand wrote two final instructions to his three sons: “No viewing; No Service”. Typical of his three sons, we are almost complying. There will be a brief, informal graveside service at the Wenatchee Cemetery at 10 am, Saturday, July 31, 2010. All family and friends are welcome. Afterward there will be a coffee and cake gathering in the basement of the Church of God, Faith of Abraham, across Western Ave from the cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, people are invited to send a donation to one of Vern’s life-long causes: Lions eye bank, c/o North West Lions Foundation, 221 Yale St., suite 450, Seattle, WA, 98109

“Grandpa shared his love for his family by drawing them all together and helping them know they are each an important part of something bigger than themselves.”

Please express your thoughts and memories on the online guest book at jonesjonesbetts.com. Jones & Jones ~ Betts Funeral Home are entrusted with the arrangements.

Cemetery Details

Wenatchee City Cemetery

1804 N. Western
Wenatchee, WA 98801

Previous Events

Service

JUL 31. 10:00 AM (PT)

Wenatchee City Cemetery
1804 N. Western
Wenatchee, WA 98801

Tribute Wall

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“ I was quite touched and awe-stricken to read Vern's history. A pioneer of a great Central Washington town, a war hero of WWII, lifelong service to the community through Lions, a great family man, and much, much more. Thank you Vern for your service to us at the country, state, and local levels. You truly lived. Your contribution continues through you and your family's thoughtful invitation to donate to the Lions Eye Bank. On behalf of our staff and the 46,000 people helped through cornea transplant by the Lions Eye Bank local, nationally, and internationally, I want to thank you personally for your support of our program; a Lions program started in 1969. To Vern's family, my deepest condolences and peace unto you at this time.

*With sympathy and respect,
Bernie Iliakis
Chief Operating Officer
SightLife (Lions Eye Bank)*

Bernie Iliakis - July 28, 2010 at 07:57 PM