



## William T. Allen

August 7, 2017

William Thomas Allen of Mackinac Island and Sarasota died at VitalCare's Hospice of Little Traverse Bay, Petoskey, Monday, August 7, 2017, at the age of 94.

He was born May 19, 1923, in Philadelphia and was graduated from high school at National Park, New Jersey.

At the age of 18, on December 8, 1941, the day after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Mr. Allen enlisted in the United States Air Force and attended flight engineering school at Goldsboro, North Carolina. He was shipped overseas in 1943 and assigned to the 312th Bomb Squadron, 70th Bomb Group of the 9th Air Force in England, where he flew a B-26 bomber on short bomb runs over northern Germany and Norway. He participated in the invasion of Normandy on D-Day June 6, 1944, and was shot down five days later near Saint Lo, crashing 20 yards from the German lines. Unconscious and having lost three of six crewmen, he was recovered by American infantry. He suffered a crushed and burned leg, shrapnel wounds, and broken nose and jaw.

Throughout the rest of his life, he would endure lasting injuries to his leg and

subsequent hearing loss from hours in military bomber cockpits.

Returning to combat with his bad leg, Mr. Allen participated in other bombing runs, including one near the end of the war on Adolph Hitler's "Eagles Nest" outside Berchtesgaden, during which the plane he was piloting put a bomb through the picture window of Hitler's Berghof. Hitler was in Berlin. Mr. Allen's unit was stationed at Fürstenfeldbruck, about 50 miles away, and the next day he toured the ruins and found the diary of Hermann Göring, which was lost when he mailed it home.

During World War II, Mr. Allen participated in 67 bombing missions and crashed three times before he was 23 years old. His unit was mobilized for the continued war with Japan, but was returned to Europe when Japan surrendered. He was discharged in 1946.

Mr. Allen was recalled to active service in 1950 during the Korean Conflict and served with the Strategic Air Command as an engineer on B-36 bombers, which had 10 engines and 18-man crews and carried hydrogen bombs on Cold War deterrent missions that would last several days in the air.

Following his second discharge in 1953, Mr. Allen operated a manufacturers' representative business in the automobile aftermarket, which covered six states with 10 salespersons. He would later sell the business and move to Florida.

He was first married to Rita Walsh, who died in 1983, and the couple reared

four sons, three of whom survive.

On a cruise ship in the Bahamas, he met Jean Beardsley, whom he married August 5, 1984, and they enjoyed 33 years together.

Mr. Allen was a charter member of the first Veterans of Foreign Wars post in New Jersey, and served in many capacities with the VFW, including New Jersey state commander in 1965 and 1965. He was also an officer of the organization in Florida, serving as senior vice commander in Fort Lauderdale in the 1970s.

In addition to his wife, Jean, Mr. Allen is survived by three sons, Thomas, William Jr., and Richard, two stepchildren, Richard Beardsley and Paula Steele, and many grandchildren and step-grandchildren, including Blisse and Woodward, whose father, Douglas, founded the Butterfly House on Mackinac Island.

A funeral for William Allen will be Tuesday, August 15, at 11 a.m., at Little Stone Church on Mackinac Island with Pastor Dan Hans officiating. Burial will follow the service at the Mackinac Island Protestant Cemetery.

Memorial contributions in William Allen's name may be made to the Wounded Warriors Project, directly, or through Mackinac Island American Legion Post 299, PO Box 1518.

The American Legion will convey military honors at the funeral.

# Tribute Wall



“ *William T. Allen*

October 05, 2023 at 09:54 AM



“ *William T. Allen*

October 02, 2023 at 10:14 PM



“ *William T. Allen*

September 01, 2022 at 07:49 PM



“ *Our condolences to Aunt Jean and the Allen Family for their loss.  
Our prayers are with you all,  
Leo and Cristy*

**Lionel and Cristy Echeverria** - August 24, 2017 at 05:19 PM



“ *My prayers are with you, and I send my sympathy for your loss.  
Kelly Allen (mother of grandson Dylan Thomas Allen)*

**Kelly Kilpatrick Allen** - August 15, 2017 at 08:59 PM

JC

“ *Our condolences to the Allen Family for your loss. Prayers for peace and comfort.*

*With deepest sympathy,  
The Carnes (siblings of Melissa Allen)*

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**James and Heather Carnes** - August 14, 2017 at 07:55 AM