



Lt. Col. George "Howard" Groff

February 21, 1915 - September 21, 2010

Lieutenant Colonel George "Howard" Groff, 95, of Salisbury, NC passed away Tuesday, Sept. 21, 2010 at Rowan Regional Medical Center due to complications from pneumonia.

Groff was born February 21, 1915 in Lancaster, PA to the late Edith Hostetter Groff and Alpheus Groff Groff. He was educated in the Lancaster, PA public schools, and graduated from Lancaster High School in 1932. Following high school he received his B.A. in Chemistry from Catawba College, graduating in 1936. In 1962 he received his Master's Degree in Comptrollership from George Washington University in Washington, DC.

Groff enlisted in the Army Finance Department and served in the Headquarters Air Force Combat Command prior to selection for Finance Officer Candidate School in Holabird, Maryland

Finance Officer assignments included Air Transport Command stations at New Castle, Delaware; Manchester, New Hampshire, with World War II assignment as Staff Finance Officer for the India China Division, often called the "Hump Operation."

During the Korean War, he was assigned as Finance Officer, Fifteenth Air Force, Colorado Springs, Colorado, and subsequently as Comptroller,

Barksdale Air Force Base, Shreveport, Louisiana. A tour of duty as Comptroller, Air Material Command, in Chateauroux Air Depot, Chateauroux, France followed.

After a tour with the Tactical Air Command at Lawson Air Force Base, Georgia, and Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina, Groff attended and was graduated from the Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery Alabama, and was assigned as Comptroller, Charleston Air Force Base, South Carolina. His next assignment was as Comptroller, Iceland Air Defense Force in Keflavik, Iceland.

Returning to Washington, D.C., Groff was assigned to the Budget Directorate, Headquarters USAF, where he performed legislative liaison duties.

Following retirement from the Air Force in 1964, Groff returned to Salisbury where he was involved in Republican politics, serving as Milford Hills Precinct Chairman.

He was active in the Salisbury Toastmasters Club, serving as Secretary for 25 years, and one term as Area Governor. The Cleveland Toastmasters Club, where he served on the Board for several years, was recognized in 1985 and 1986 as the Number One Club in Toastmasters International, with over 3,000 clubs world-wide.

Groff served as Executive Director of the Rowan County United Fund for seven years, then directed the Red Cross Blood Program, expanding participation to high school students, and substantially increasing the number and quality of bloodmobile visits in Rowan County. He was awarded the Pat Wellman Award for exemplary service on the Board of Directors of the Elizabeth Hanford Dole Chapter of the American Red Cross.

He was an enthusiastic member of the Salisbury Kiwanis Club, serving one term as President, and selling countless tickets to the annual Pancake fund raiser. He was recognized as a sixty year active Mason by Fulton Lodge 99 in 2007, and also sixty year memberships in Scottish Rite and Shrine. He especially enjoyed playing the French Horn in the Oasis Temple Shrine Band, Charlotte, until recently.

His other interests included volunteering, membership in a local China-Burma-India Theater Veterans' group, travel, bridge, landscaping, attending Catawba College activities, public speaking, singing, current events, reading, telling tales of his Pennsylvania childhood and World War II adventures, driving a sports car, spectator sports, and enjoying his his home, family, and pets. His French Horn, which he once played in a concert conducted by John Philip Souza, was his constant companion since childhood. He began using a computer when he was 84 years old.

He was an Elder and choir member at John Calvin Presbyterian Church.

Survivors include his wife: Doris Pinkston Groff, a Salisburian, whom he met while studying at Catawba College. They "courted" during the war years in Washington, D.C., where Mrs. Groff served as a Lieutenant, j.g. in the U.S. Navy. They celebrated their 64th anniversary on June 15, 2010; daughter: Elizabeth Groff Williams of Wilmington and Asheville; sisters: Edith Groff Clagett of Silver Spring, Maryland, and Mary Groff Hershey, deceased, of Millersville, Pennsylvania; and Special Nephew: Colonel David Clagett of Alexandria, Virginia.

A Private Service was held September 24, 2010 with burial being at Rowan Memorial Park, Salisbury, NC.

Memorials may be made to: The American Red Cross, Elizabeth Hanford Dole Chapter; Rowan Helping Ministries; John Calvin Presbyterian Church.

Tribute Wall



“ Elizabeth, we are sorry to hear about your loss. Please give your mother our condolences.

Wendy and Lee Jessen

Boone, N.C.##imported-begin##Wendy and Lee Jessen##imported-end##

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