



Mr. Donald E. Coates

October 31, 1926 - March 28, 2014

Donald E. Coates, 87 of Bluffton, Indiana passed away at 4:35 p.m. on Friday, March 28, 2014 .

Don Entered the U.S. Air Force as a cadet pilot in January of 1944. He attended Rose Hulman & Indiana University and the Navistar School of Management. As the war with Germany was ending Don's pilot training ceased. He served in Japan as a communication sergeant. While being discharged at Fort Sheridan in Chicago, he re-met a neighbor and class mate, and a Army Cadet Nurse, Norma Claire Hedges at the Presbyterian Hospital School of Nursing. They were married on June 1, 1947 in Bluffton and shared 66 ½ years together. Norma preceded Don in death on March 2, 2013. They had two sons. David A. Coates, who precedes his parents in death on February 28, 2011, and Kenneth D. (Mary) Coates of Indianapolis. He was very proud of his four grandsons, one granddaughter and five great-grandchildren. He is also survived by a daughter-in-law Patricia Coates of Newnan, Georgia.

He was also preceded in death by his parents; Forrest W. & Winifred L. (Crowl) Coates and two brothers Richard Coates & Lewis Garrett.

Don was employed at Navistar for 30 years starting as an assembler of motor trucks. He was promoted to management at the age of 23. He held many

supervisory and staff positions culminating as the Superintendent of the heavy truck and Scout assembly . While employed at Navistar Don and his family lived in Ossian, Indiana as well as Fort Wayne, Indiana. After retirement from Navistar at the age of 49, he attained his real estate license in Florida and built many houses in Florida while living there for nearly 20 years. Don and his family built and remodeled lake properties at both Long and Crooked Lake where they enjoyed boating and skiing for many years. Don and his wife Norma were both pilots and owned a Piper Cherokee 180 and traveled over the United States to many points of interest. He was the happiest in this life, spending time with his bride, Norma Claire. Together, they were both a shining example of accomplishing their dreams as members of the Greatest Generation.

He was also a proud member of the American Legion for 67 years and the Masonic Temple obtaining his 32nd degree.

A Memorial Service will be held to celebrate Don's life at 12 noon on Tuesday, April 8, 2014 in the Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton, with calling one hour prior to the service. Pastor Lon Johnson will officiate. Private family graveside services will take place at Oaklawn Cemetery in Ossian. In Lieu of Flowers, memorials may be made in Don's memory to the Wounded Warrior Project through the funeral home. Friends can send online condolences to the Coates family at www.thomarich.com.

Cemetery Details

Oaklawn Cemetery

701 S. Jefferson St.
Ossian, IN 46777
(260) 622-6526

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 8. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home
308 West Washington Street
Bluffton, IN 46714
<http://www.thomarich.com>

Service

APR 8. 12:00 PM (ET)

Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home
308 West Washington Street
Bluffton, IN 46714
<http://www.thomarich.com>

Tribute Wall



“ *Mr. Donald E. Coates*

September 08, 2022 at 08:26 PM



“ *Ken-- Some how I hit the wrong button so don't know if my first post got to you. Sorry to learn of your dad's passing. I read about your mom a year ago and learned of David's passing, too. So sorry for your losses as I know too well the impact it causes on our lives. I should have responded at that time to let you know you and Don were in our remembrances. Please know I have thought of you and your family over the years. I trust God has been watching over you and is in your life. In the first post, I had started to give some details about my family, but who knows what happened to the post. Please let me know if you want me to fill you in re my siblings, etc. Take care and know your family is fondly remembered.
Janice (Yager) Neuenschwander and Siblings (Carol, Ray, Kevin, and Brent Yager)*

Janice (Yager) Neuenschwander - April 08, 2014 at 08:22 AM



“ *White Sympathy Baskets was purchased for the family of Mr. Donald E. Coates.*



April 07, 2014 at 06:58 PM



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April 07, 2014 at 06:58 PM



“ *Ken, thinking of you as you go through this time. I remember many times of Christmas happiness and riding your pony outside Ossian with families. I remember one of the last times I was able to play golf with my Dad and your Dad was in the group, but a different foursome. Will see you on Tuesday and be lifting your family in prayer throughout the week. God Bless.*

Ted Mahnensmith - April 01, 2014 at 08:24 PM



“ *Porter&Carolyn Dailey lit a candle in memory of Mr. Donald E. Coates*



Porter&Carolyn Dailey - April 01, 2014 at 08:43 AM



“ *I was able to sit with Don on the day he passed/ I was there from nine until he died at four thirty. Don was peaceful that day as i sang to him and read the bible. We held hands and I think he felt at peace. Beverly Liechty (Family Life Care)*

Beverly Liechty - March 31, 2014 at 05:00 PM