

Col. Gerald L. Purkey (1919 - 2010)



Retired USAF Colonel Gerald L. "Jerry" Purkey, 90, of Lebanon, Illinois, born December 6, 1919, in Celeste, Texas, died Wednesday, August 4, 2010, at Memorial Hospital in Belleville, Illinois.

Colonel Purkey received a BAC in Engineering at the Air Force Institute of Technology and a Master's Degree in Education from the [University of Texas](#). He retired as a full Colonel in the Air Force after 32 1/2 years of active duty service. He served in [World War II](#), Korea and Vietnam. He was a member of the Alpha Lodge No. 172, under the Grand Lodge of Masons of Free & Acceptance Masons of Florida for more than 60 years, a member of [VFW](#) Post 4183, the University Baptist Church in Austin, Texas and the 36th Infantry Division Association.

He was preceded in death by his parents, H.T. and Willie Alma, nee Stafford, Purkey; first wife, Bonnie V. Purkey; and a son-in-law, Dr. Paul McWilliams.

Surviving are his wife of 38 years, Sevilla A., nee DeMond, Purkey of Lebanon, Illinois, whom he married May 27, 1972 at Scott AFB, Illinois; three daughters; Sandra McWilliams of Boise, Idaho, Sharon (Dr. John) Fields of Mt. Vernon, Illinois, and Rhonda S. (Charles) Abbe of Sugar Land, Texas; four grandchildren, Tammy (Keith) Sanders of Robinson, Illinois, Jodi (Jon) Davis of Downs, Ill., Ashley M. Gabler of Houston, Texas and James "Jimmie" Gabler of Sugar Land, Texas; and great-grandchildren, Payton Davis of Downs, Illinois, and Stephen Hayden Kirby of Sugar Land, Texas.

Graveside services, with full military honors, were held November 10, 2010, at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia.

NOTE: Colonel Purkey served in Headquarters, GEEIA, Griffiss AFB, New York.