



Wendell Walker Wilber, LTC, "Ret" R Usaf

August 30, 2011

Wendell Walker Wilber, LTC, USAFR (Ret), 90, of Canton, Ohio, on August 30, 2011, at the Sanctuary at Tuttle Crossing, Dublin, Ohio. Mr. Wilber was born in Rossville, Illinois, and graduated from the Alvin High School, Alvin, Illinois. He enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps in 1939. After completion of basic training at Selfridge Field, Michigan, he was assigned to the 49th Pursuit Group and relocated to Florida for further training. Immediately following the U.S. declaration of war against Imperial Japan in December 1941, the 49th was shipped to San Francisco for embarkation. The unit was among the first to deploy from the United States to the Pacific Theater of Operations, arriving in Australia in February 1942. Shortly thereafter, the 49th was relocated to heavily contested territory in New Guinea to support U.S. Army ground efforts against the occupying Japanese. Then-Technical Sergeant Wilber was actively involved throughout these operations. The redesignated 49th Fighter Group played a key role in halting Japanese advances in the Southwest Pacific. During four years of World War II combat, the group was successful in providing air defense from Australia to the Philippines. By war's end, the group's pilots had destroyed 678 enemy aircraft, a record surpassing that of any other fighter group in the Pacific Theater. The group's World War II activities merited two Philippines Republic Presidential Unit Citations, three U.S. Distinguished Unit Citations, and 10 battle honors. Wilber attended Officer Candidate School and was commissioned in 1943. He returned to the U. S. in late 1944 for convalescence and was serving near

Cleveland, Ohio, at war's end. During the Korean conflict, then-Capt. Wilber served in West Germany as well as Virginia and South Carolina. He remained in the USAF Active Reserve until retirement in 1965. Mr. Wilber attended Western Reserve University and the University of Maryland. During his business career, Mr. Wilber was employed in the aeronautical industry by the Cleveland Pneumatic Tool Company and Lear-Siegler Inc. From 1965 to 1989, he served as a senior manager with the Hercules Engine Division of White Motors, Inc., Canton, Ohio. Mr. Wilber was an active community volunteer before and after his retirement. He was a 50 year member of the William McKinley Lodge #431 (Scottish Rite 32nd degree), the York Rite and a member of the Legion of Honor of the Tadmor Shrine of Akron, Ohio. In this latter capacity, he was a long-time driver for severe burn victims in his region. He also served in the Military Officers Association of America (Past President, Canton Chapter), the Retired Officers Association, the 49th Fighter Group Association, the Professional Football Hall of Fame enshrinement volunteer group, the federal Service Corps of Retired Executives, He was a member of St. Mark's Episcopal Church of North Canton, Ohio. Mr. Wilber was preceded in death by his wife of 49 years, Jean Jeavons Langell Wilber. His marriage to Virginia E. Bohn Wilber ended in divorce. Mr. Wilber is survived by Christine E. Kramer (John) of Gates Mills, Ohio, W. Scott Wilber (Mary Moore) of Arlington, Virginia, Karl R. Wilber (Julia) of Santa Rosa, California, Gregory A. Wilber (Karen) of Nashville, Tennessee, and Daryl B. Wilber (Jodi) of Dublin, Ohio. A daughter, Linda J. Boyer of Worthington, Ohio, preceded him in death. He is also survived by nine grandchildren. A memorial service will take place at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, North Canton, Ohio, on Saturday, September 3, 2011 at 4:00 PM. Contributions to Shriners Hospitals for Children are requested in lieu of floral remembrances.

Tribute Wall



“ *Wendell Walker Wilber, LTC, "Ret" R Usaf*

January 28, 2023 at 10:24 AM