

Durham, Ralph Hayes | 1922-2012

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Ralph Hayes Durham

Funeral for Ralph Hayes Durham, 90, of Fort Worth 2 p.m. Saturday, May 26, at Slidell Baptist Church with burial at Slidell Cemetery, with full military honors.

Visitation is 6 to 8 p.m. Friday at Greenwood Family Funeral Home in Fort Worth.

Durham died Tuesday, May 15, 2012.

Born May 14, 1922 to Bob and Gyp Durham, he was a retired U.S. Air Force lieutenant colonel. He grew up on the family farm in Slidell and attended Slidell High School, where he was elected Best Boy and lettered in track and basketball.

He studied at Texas A&M University until his entire class of 1945 left for military service in early 1944. Durham served as a pilot for the 12th Combat Cargo Squadron, flying 208 combat missions in the C-47, mostly behind enemy lines in Burma.

He was awarded three Distinguished Flying Crosses and four Air Medals. After the war, he returned to Texas A&M, earning a bachelor of science degree in 1948. He returned to military service in 1949 as a B-47 pilot during the most dangerous times of the Cold War. He concluded his career flying the C-130 into Vietnam from the U.S. Durham retired from the military in 1968 and returned to Fort Worth to begin state, with his wife, Martha. After retirement, they worked as poll workers at local election sites.

He was preceded in death by brothers Capt. Ballard "Powell" Durham, Ted Durham and Don Taylor Durham; and sisters Amy Jo Lander, Lela "Marie" Carter and Bobbie Kelly.

Durham is survived by his wife; son retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Randy Durham and wife, Carol, of Niceville, Fla.; sister Peggy Stringer and husband, Don, of Mesquite; sister-in-law Martha Durham and husband, Don, of Southlake.

He is also survived by grandsons U.S. Army Reserve Maj. Christopher Durham, of Edmond, Okla., and U.S. Air Force Maj. Jonathan Durham and wife, Martha, of Little Rock, Ark; granddaughter Sara Durham of Jacksonville, Fla.; great-grandchildren Chris Jr. and Catie Durham of Edmond; and Maggie, Claire and Ryan Durham of Little Rock.