UCF Veterans Legacy Program

William Richard King (1927-1992)

https://vlp.cah.ucf.edu/biographies/BMC-0-23-F.html

William Richard King was born in Clarksburg, WV to Herbert and Pearl King on March 7, 1927. His parents were both born and raised in West Virginia. Growing up, William's dad worked as a crane operator at a steel mill, and his mom was a housewife raising William and his siblings.

Both William King and his older brother, Herbert (1924), joined the military during World War II. Herbert joined the US Army as a private on April 5, 1943, at Fort Hayes, Columbus, Ohio. On May 12, 1945, two months after his eighteenth birthday, the US Army Air Force called Private William King to service. We think William King entered the military as a mechanic or aircraft trainer.

William King served in Hawaii. During World War II, the Hawaiian Department of the US Army Air Force became an important force in defeating the Japanese Empire. In 1940, the Navy asked the Army to increase the number of aircraft and weapons to protect the Pacific Fleet based at Pearl Harbor. During 1941, the number of soldiers enlisted in the Hawaiian Department doubled. The Japanese attack on the US Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, a great blow, directly led the US to enter World War II. By the time William King enlisted in May 1945, US defenses in Hawaii had been greatly strengthened, and the US Air Force played a vital role in defeating the Axis Powers.

King completed his tour of duty on October 31, 1949, and then Sgt. King re-enlisted on July 28, 1950 to support the Korean War. Evidence suggests that the US Air Force stationed him in West Germany. King's wife, Annemarie Stritter grew up in Oberer Zwerchweg, Germany, close to a US Army base in Bingen, Germany, where they likely met. She immigrated to the United States in 1951, arriving in New York. Annemarie's arrival documents showed that she, William, and their two year old daughter, Ellen Jean Stritter, arrived in the US together and that they had married in Germany. William and Annemarie married again once they settled in Harrison County, WV, where they raised their daughter.

King retired from the US military on February 28, 1966. The King family, including their daughter, Ellen, and their son, Ralph, moved to Ship Bottom, NJ. At some point, Herbert and Annemarie moved again, this time to Florida, living in Spring Hill, about forty miles north of Tampa. William's older brother Herbert lived nearby in Crystal River, FL.

William R. King died of natural causes on May 19, 1992 at the VA hospital in Tampa, FL. He was survived by his brother, wife, son, daughter, and four grandchildren. He is buried at Florida National Cemetery, in Bushnell, FL., Plot C, Row O, Grave 9. His brother Herbert passed away three years later, on May 26, 1996, in Florida and was buried in Sunset Hills Memorial Park, Jackson Town, Stark, Ohio.

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