



Edison F. Arnold

September 17, 1918 - October 23, 2012

Edison F. "Pete" Arnold, USAF Colonel Ret., 94, of Wenatchee, WA, went home to God peacefully on Tuesday, October 23, 2012, with family members at his side. He was born September 17, 1918, to Lester F. and Francis Rose (Gruppe) Arnold in Portland, OR. His family moved to French Creek, where they had a lumber mill. Then, they moved to Pateros, WA, after his father was killed in a car accident, where he played basketball and graduated from Pateros High School in 1936. He attended Seattle Pacific College and that's where he met his soon-to-be lifelong sweetheart, Leora (McConnell). Pete entered the Armed Forces on June 16, 1941, went through basic and "advanced" pilot training and, after graduation, came back to Seattle and married his sweetheart on June 28, 1942, in Seattle. Pete's first assignment was as a bombardier pilot, based at Kirkland AFB, Albuquerque, NM from 1942 to 1943. In 1944, he was assigned as flight commander with the 501st Bomb Wing, based in Guam from 1944 to 1945, but before he left, Pete and Leora's first child, Wayne F., arrived in 1943. Pete was then assigned to Fairchild AFB in Spokane, WA from 1946 to 1954. His first position at Fairchild was as maintenance officer, then in 1947, he became the Tactical Squadron Operations Officer, and later was moved up to the position of Tactical Bomb Squadron Commander of the 98th Bomb Wing. During this time at Fairchild, Pete and Leora's second child, Bruce, arrived. Unfortunately, he passed at six months of age. While still at Fairchild in 1950, he was appointed Wing Director of Operations for the 98th and departed Fairchild for temporary duty at Yokota

Air Base, Japan at the onset of the Korean War. But before leaving, on August 23, 1954, Pete became Colonel Edison F. Arnold. While stationed at Yokota, Col. Arnold flew 50 combat missions in the B-29 over Korea. He returned to Fairchild in 1951, as a Tactical Bomb Squadron Commander. One of the squadrons which he commanded, was the B-36; part of the 226th Bomb Squadron, which was integrated into the 91st Bomb Wing at Glasgow AFB, Montana. Glasgow's 91st Bomb Wing was temporarily stationed at Fairchild, while Glasgow's runways were being rebuilt. From 1952 to 1954, Col. Arnold also served as the Director of Operations for the 57th Air Division and Director of Materiel (aka Chief of Staff) for the 92nd Bomb Wing. In 1955, he was assigned to HQ Fifteenth Air Force at March AFB, California, where he served as Director of Training, Deputy Director of Operations and then moved up to Director of Operations. While at March, Pete and Leora adopted their third child, Susan, in 1957. In 1958, Col. Arnold attended Air War College and in 1959, was transferred to the 7th Air Division at the Royal Air Force station, Hy Wycomb, England, where he served as Director of Materiel. From 1961 to 1962, Col. Arnold was Base Commander of Brize Norton AFB, England. In the summer of 1962, the family headed back to the states to Schilling AFB, Kansas, where Col. Arnold was Commander of the 310th Strategic Aerospace Wing (SAC) until his re-assignment back to Fairchild AFB from 1964 to 1966, where he was also a SAC Commander. After his assignment at Fairchild, it was off to Viet Nam to fly a desk as SAC Commander at HQ in Saigon. Upon returning home, his final assignment was Base Commander of Kelly AFB, San Antonio, TX. He received his honorable discharge in 1971.

Few pilots still alive can match Col. Arnold's record. He had over 12,000 hours of flying the B-29, which included over a dozen missions during WWII, followed by over 50 missions during the Korean War. His closest call in combat came on his last mission in Korea, when MIG fighters hit other planes of his mission, but not his plane. "The B-29 was a wonderful aircraft, I loved it," Col. Arnold commented some time ago. In 1947, during his service years

at Fairchild, engine failure of the plane he was co-piloting led to a forced landing in a wheat field near Wilbur; after the crew was told to bail out. There are hundreds of stories that cover Pete's career and we wish that he had not been so humble and shared them with us in a book. He always said, "I'm just doing my job for my country."

Col. Arnold's Military Decorations and Commendations included: The Air Force Commendation Medal, Legion of Merit with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, The Bronze Star with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster, The Distinguished Flying Cross with Oak Leaf Cluster, The Republic of Viet Nam Army Distinguished Service Order/2nd Class, The Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation, The American Defense Service Medal, The WWII Victory Medal, The Armed Forces Reserve Medal, The National Defense Service Medal, The Korean Service Medal, The UN Service Medal, The Distinguished Unit Citation, The Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, The Air Force Longevity Service Award with Silver Oak Leaf Cluster plus 1-Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, The Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon, The Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, The Soldiers Medal and the Air Medal with 4-Oak Leaf Clusters.

Upon Pete's retirement, the Arnold Family retired to Bellevue. Pete took courses in land management at the UW and graduated in 1973. Upon graduation, his instructor in Land Management, took a sabbatical for six months and left his class in Pete's capable hands. The family then moved to Wenatchee in 1974, where Pete became the manager of Pangborn Airport, helping to get it straightened out from previous mismanagement. He also joined the East Wenatchee Rotary Club and even when they moved to Twisp, he still maintained perfect attendance for many years and was President of the club from 1989 to 1990, and was awarded a Paul Harris Fellow for "Service Above Self". In addition, he became a Sustaining Member by helping the Club to award others. This prestigious award was also presented to his

wife, Leora, for her contributions. Pete also supported the Ken Allen Scholarship Fund diligently. This whole time, even before he retired from the Air Force, he had land developments in the Methow Valley. Lost River Airport and Twisp River Sky Ranch, and after leaving Pangborn, Pete and Leora moved to Twisp and lived there for a number of years, before making Wenatchee their final home. While and, even before they moved to the Methow, Pete was active in helping develop the area. He was a member of Good Roads, helped in getting the North Cross State Highway put in and tried to help develop Early Winters as a ski resort, bringing in Olympic Ski Committee members and showing them the mountains via snowmobile.

Pete Arnold lived a full, rich and very active life, he loved his Cascades; hunting, fishing, hiking and snowmobiling, as much as possible, and showing other people their beauty as well. He was even a member of the "Octogenarians," a group of pilots still flying in their 80's. He will be missed by many.

Survivors are: wife of 70 years, Leora Arnold of Wenatchee; son, Wayne F. Arnold and wife, Lonnie of Tracy, CA; daughter, Sue Waller and husband, Kirby of East Wenatchee, WA; grandchildren, Erin Honeycutt of Spokane, WA, Merideth Chaudoir and husband, Joel of Jeffersonville, VT, Kathleen Wenzl and husband, Don of Port Angeles, WA, Wayne E. Arnold of Tracy, CA, Kory Waller of East Wenatchee, WA and Zachery Waller of East Wenatchee, WA; and five great-grandchildren, Cameron Honeycutt, Cooper Honeycutt, Madelyn Wenzl, Delaney Wenzl and Olive Chaudoir. He was preceded in death by: mother, Francis; father, Lester; sister, Dorothy; brother, Norman; and son, Bruce.

A Funeral Service will be held Friday, November 2, 2012, at 10:30 a.m. at the Wenatchee Free Methodist Church, 1601 5th Street, Wenatchee. Concluding Services and Interment will follow at the Wenatchee City Cemetery with

Military Honors. Viewing will be Thursday, November 1, 2012, from 2:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the funeral home. Donations to Pete's favorite charities would be appreciated. They are GAP, INTL, P.O. Box 27112, Overland Park, KS 66225-7112; Seattle Pacific University; and the U.S. Air Force Memorial Fund. Arrangements are by Telford's Chapel of the Valley, East Wenatchee.