

# On The Record

**PETERSON**—Richard Lee Peterson passed away Friday May 3, 2019, at 11:20 p.m., with his family beside him.

Known to many as "Pete" Peterson, he spent the later years of his life living in Greentrees Village in the quaint coastal town of Florence, with his wife, Shirley Ann Peterson, who passed away on Feb. 26, 2016.

They were married 60 years, loved their pet cats and local wild birds at their beautiful property on the river.

Pete was born in Angels Camp California, Feb. 5, 1931, to Walter Lee and Virginia Rose Peterson, and first lived in the small gold-mining town of Melones, Calif. (now under Melones Lake).

After the mines closed, the family moved to El Cerrito, Calif., where Pete had a paper route as a boy and bought his first motor bike — a Cushman Scooter.

In the early 1940s, the family moved to Orland, Calif., where his father bought him an Indian Motorcycle at the age of 15 in 1946. He started practicing right away and began racing on dirt tracks in Chico, Redding, Corning, Red Bluff, Marysville, Lodi, Fresno, Santa Rosa and Sacramento.

By 1949, he was winning so much he decided to become professional and was sponsored by his lifetime buddy, Bill Brownell, who owned the Chico Honda Triumph Dealership (back then Indian/Cushman) and the Cycleland Speedway Race Track.)

Then, Pete enlisted in the U.S. Army and trained as a paratrooper at Fort Bragg, N.C., for the Korean War, and was honorably discharged in January 1954 as a sergeant in the 2nd Battalion, 504th Airborne Infantry, 82nd Airborne Division.

Following his discharge, Pete met Shirley Mais who became his wife. They moved to Chico, Calif., where Pete started a Shell Gas Station and started raising four young children: Danny, Dave, Kathleen and Jeanine.

After a while, the family moved to Orland, Calif., where Pete worked at Barcelona Brothers Auto Parts as a shop machinist and quickly became well known for providing the best machine work in Northern California for the next 25 years.

In 1978, he bought the business, which is now known as Orland NAPA Auto Parts, and ran it for 10 years. During that time, he bought a Cessna airplane and enjoyed exploring numerous small towns and airports together with Shirley.

He sold the business to his eldest son, Dan, and moved with Shirley to San Francisco to enjoy retirement after many years of hard work — but an earthquake in 1998 encouraged them it was time to leave the city!

They relocated to Sun River, Ore., to enjoy a mountain lifestyle. However, once they visited Florence, Ore., they fell in love with the coastal town and moved there permanently.

Pete and Shirley visited frequently with many friends in the historic downtown area, spending hours at their favorite coffee shop. They loved the friendly, relaxing pace in Oregon so much they never wanted to leave.

While in Florence, Pete's hobbies included building a wonderful collection of over 60 antique motorcycles with Bill Brownell and participating in antique motorcycle club events throughout the western states, parading his bikes on back roads and in fun little towns for people to enjoy.

Pete also loved displaying different bikes each year during the annual Florence Rhododendron Festival for locals to enjoy and talk about. Pete continued to fly his airplane a lot and even bought a boat to try his hand at crab

fishing.

Pete's passion in life really was his wife, family, friends, animals and — of course — motorcycles. In fact, his motorcycle buddies will all tell you Pete was a great guy, and he was damn fast!

**ELLIS**—Charles (Chuck, Bud) Ellis, 95, of Florence, died May 15, 2019.

Chuck was a WWII veteran who was inducted into the U.S. Army on June 7, 1943, at Camp Dodge, Iowa, near his home town of Des Moines, Iowa. After three months of basic police training at Fort Custer in Michigan, he served one year as an MP (Military Police) at Camp Stoneman and Camp McQuaide, in California. He was then sent to Camps Bowie, Swift & Bliss in Texas to train as a Combat Engineer with the Third Army to be commanded by Gen. George S. Patton.

Chuck became a Demolition Specialist, which involved finding and disabling booby traps, land mines, setting and detonating explosives and other dangers. He helped assemble Bailey Bridges over rivers, working in the open, often dodging bullets from German air attacks.

The Bailey Bridge was a key element, allowing troops

to advance quickly through France and Germany, where he also assisted in the liberation of concentration camps.

His two Bronze Stars were awarded for the Rhineland and Central Europe Campaigns. Like the Combat Infantry Badge, the Bronze Star belonged to those who slogged it out on the front lines.

The Combat Engineers were the first to go into enemy territory and were the last out. We all owe them a great deal of gratitude, for if the war had turned out differently, many of us would not have been born and others would have had a vastly different and possibly much shorter life.

Chuck was honorably discharged Feb. 7, 1946, and joined his mom and two sisters who had moved to Southern California.

He married Ann Krohn in 1949 (She died in 2008). He drove an ice cream truck to support his growing family of four adopted sons. He went to college at night on the rather new GI Bill and earned a degree in business administration from USC, and started work at Hoffman Electronics.

Their claim to fame was the development of the solar cells that powered the first solar-powered satellite, the Vanguard 1, launched in 1958. Chuck worked for them as a supervisor and then for Ford Aerospace, in the Aeronutronic division, based in Newport

Beach, Calif.

When he retired, they moved to Florence. He and Ann were active in the community, and Chuck especially enjoyed singing with the Presbyterian Church Choir and participating in the Kiwanis Club.

He is survived by his four sons, a daughter-in-law, two grandsons and their wives.

His nephews, Eric, and Blair Krohn and family, who live here in Oregon, were a great source of joy to him with their regular ball game visits, boating and water skiing, when Chuck could watch from his deck.

He is also survived by his second wife since 2011, Laurie, along with stepdaughter Angie Terrell, four stepsons and their families. He also has numerous other relatives scattered about.

Thanks to our doctors; Dr. Randy Boespflug for help with driving issues, Dr. Weinstein for help with cranky knees, and Dr. Kerner for coming to the house at the end. Also, much gratitude goes to our superhero, Dr. Glen Keiper in Eugene, who did back surgeries for both Angie and Mom, making it possible to care for Chuck at home during his slow decline due to dementia, a debilitating stroke in 2014, and congestive heart failure.

And thanks to Mr. Burns and his daughter, for taking Chuck on his last ride.

Chuck did not want a funeral service but did want us

## OBITUARIES

to express his gratitude to all his friends and family that made his life a long and happy one — so, thanks to you all.

Burns's Riverside Chapel Florence Funeral Home.

**VIRDEN**—Phyllis Jean Virden, 85, formerly of Florence, passed away in Springfield, Ore., on Friday May 10, 2019.

Phyllis was born July 27, 1933, in Seldovia, Alaska to Isabelle and George Baltazor.

Prior to moving to Springfield in 2018, she had lived in Idaho and Oregon. She married James Virden in July 1984 in Florence, living here more than 30 years, eventually retiring from the Florence Safeway. She enjoyed walks on the beach, collecting agates, watching hummingbirds, crocheting and attending Eugene Emeralds baseball games with her husband.

Phyllis loved her many cats and dogs over the years.

Weekly outings included swimming and coffee with her friends.

Phyllis was preceded in death by her husband, Jim Virden; son Myke Johnson; and grandson Jeremy Wilson.

She is survived by a son, Daniel Johnson, and wife Becky; and grandson, Jim Wilson.

At her request, there will be a private inurnment next to her husband Jim at Pacific Sunset Cemetery in Florence.

Burns's Riverside Chapel Florence Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.



**Phyllis Virden**

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