



## Edwin Franklin Pearthree

December 13, 1927 - April 24, 2024

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Edwin Pearthree died peacefully at home on April 24, 2024 at the age of 96. He was a kind person, blessed with perpetual optimism and a sly sense of humor usually accompanied by a twinkle in his eye.

Ed was born in Lititz, Pennsylvania, and was raised an only child on Liberty Street by his mother Susanna Pfautz and grandparents Henry and Emma Pfautz. His aunt Anna Pfautz who never married also claimed him as her "Honey Boy." His uncle Christian Pfautz was his idol. Christian had joined the military in WWI and did groundbreaking work with radio frequencies. His grandfather Henry gave him his love of woodworking.

As soon as Ed graduated from Lititz High School in 1945, he enlisted in the U.S. Army as a Private at the age of 17. His older cousins had joined too, but only Ed made it his career. The Signal Corps was a perfect fit for him after the Army determined that, like his uncle, Ed was gifted in electronics. He was not sent into combat and his next 13 years were spent with the U.S. Army Alaska Communication System. He loved every minute, although to most people Alaska was considered a hardship post. He was very briefly married to his high school sweetheart which faltered when she refused to move to Alaska.

He was variously stationed in Anchorage, Umnak, Adak, Haines, and Juneau.

In 1953, shy Ed married Kathleen (Dougan) Barricklow, having won the love of a divorced telephone operator with two children, Walt and Beth. They were married only a few weeks after Kathleen won the Nenana Ice Pool, but he always swore the large prize money had nothing to do with it. He moved into his ready-made family's tiny shack where at high tide the Gastineau Channel lapped about twelve feet from the front porch. Ed and Kathleen soon had two children of their own, Erik and LouAnn. Their housing problems were solved when he built a second story on the house with Kathleen's help. This included a glorious picture window for the view. Friends and relatives were always welcome, including Kathleen's niece Kathie, who came to visit after her high school graduation and stayed. Meanwhile, Alaska had become a state. Finally, the dreaded orders arrived forcing them to leave their beloved Alaska. They passed their house on to Kathie and her husband Fred Schmitz to raise their family. They are now a sprawling Juneau dynasty.

On the mainland in the early sixties, Ed was selected for intensive schooling. He was steadily promoted, resulting in more family moves but also his commission as an officer. This meant that Beth attended seven high schools. The year 1962 was particularly exciting. In October, along with 30,000 other troops, Ed was sent to Ol' Miss after white supremacist riots prevented its integration. Ed was part of the team providing communication support since the operation could not depend on the local telephone network. In November, Ed came home one day with his full battle gear and then secretly deployed during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Kathleen had to figure out from the television why he was gone. When he was at liberty to say, he loved telling the story of his "vacation" in Key West.

In the mid-sixties the family was delighted and a bit intimidated to be posted to Turkey for three years. Ed arrived first, alone. In the middle of a coup! The

family arrived and eschewed base housing for an apartment on the outskirts of Ankara. They travelled the Middle East in their Volkswagen camper van that Ed had acquired in a trade for the family Ford. They had nothing but fascinating and positive experiences in their VW. Ed and Kathleen made great friendships with other Americans who loved living in what is now known as Türkiye. The two older children left the nest, Walt and his young family were stationed in France with the Army, and Beth lived in Germany with her Army officer husband Gerry. Ed soon had his first three grandchildren.

In 1967, Ed next deployed to Viet Nam and Kathleen waited out the year in Tacoma near her dad. Ed was stationed at Tuy Hoa Air Base where he served as the Brigade Signal Officer. He was promoted to the rank of Major with the main advantage in the short run being he got to move into a better tent with fewer people. He spent the second half of his tour in Saigon. Once safely home, Ed was stationed in Northern Virginia, his final posting.

By 1970, Ed was a widower with two teenagers he needed to finish raising. He retired from the Army and embarked on attaining a college degree. He built a small sailboat in his basement with plans from Sears and Roebuck. And he later sailed it. He drove to Alaska in his second VW camper with Erik. Although Beth and her family lived down the block, and his mother Susanna moved in to help, it was not an easy time.

In 1972, Ed married Joyce (Barnes) Vikingson, a widowed nurse with two children, Heidi and Katrina whom Ed adopted. Ed now had a sports-loving family—a first for him—and he gamely learned the rules of field hockey (for Katrina) and football (because Joyce loved it). Ed was awarded a bachelors degree in Electronics and Political Science from the University of Nebraska, one of his proudest achievements. There followed his decade of Federal service with the U.S. General Services Administration, before he retired for

good. They became founding members of King of Kings Lutheran Church in Chantilly where Ed crafted a beautiful walnut altar. They travelled to Europe but mostly around the States. Ed finished raising his third and last set of teenagers. Opinions vary as to which duo was the most challenging. With his empty nest, Ed reveled in the joys of not-handmade sailboats, taking the beautiful Deneb into the Chesapeake with first mate Joyce and poodle Fritze.

During the fourteen years of Ed and Joyce's life together at Westminster, Ed went to the wood shop 4-5 days a week. He spearheaded numerous service projects, including making mailboxes for the folks at Assisted Living. His specialty was lovingly re-repairing fellow residents' previously repaired chairs. He could fix anything. He worked methodically, probably inventing "slow woodworking." He also continued to make regular runs to Lancaster County to get Martin's handmade hard pretzels. He loved how the Mennonite women twisted the delicacy into existence and to see, smell, and taste his youth.

Ed loved Joyce, his big blended complicated family, electronics, telephones, photography, sailing, museums, gardening, genealogy, dogs, the music of the 40s and 50s, woodworking projects, his 70-year-old ShopSmith, peanut butter cups, his collection of hats, and repairing things from the many spare parts he saved.

Ed was preceded in death by his mother Susanna, wife Kathleen, stepson Walter John Barricklow, grandson John Richard Barricklow, and two sons-in-law, John Gerald Land and Jeffrey Spearin. He leaves behind children Beth (Springfield, VA), Erik (Alan, France), LouAnn (Portland, OR), Katrina (Greenbelt, MD) and Heidi (Limington, ME); grandchildren Janet, Tracey, Kelley, Kasey, Jacob, Claire, Matthew and Joshua; fifteen great-grandchildren; and, four great-great grandchildren with two more on the way.

A bench Ed crafted to honor his friend in the wood shop Tom Bower can be

seen and sat upon in the lobby of Assisted Living at Westminster. Donations in Ed's memory can be made to the Wood Shop, Westminster at Lake Ridge, marked for the purchase of a SawStop table saw, which is a safe saw for woodworkers of any age.

There will be a memorial service in the chapel at Westminster at Lake Ridge on June 20, 2024 at 2:00 pm. The date of Ed's burial with military honors at Arlington National Cemetery will be determined later.

# Cemetery Details

**Arlington National Cemetery**

# Previous Events

## **Memorial Service**

JUN **20**. 2:00 PM (ET)

Westminster at Lake Ridge  
12191 Clipper Dr  
Lake Ridge, VA 22192-2237  
(703) 457-8648

# Tribute Wall

LA

“ 1 file added to the album Ed's Life Video



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**lapearthree** - July 20, 2024 at 08:31 PM

LV

“ I am sorry to hear about Ed or Captain Pearthree as I knew him. Fond memories of our camping trips in our VW s in Turkey. Your family being right around the corner meant a second home. Dad was a radio operator in the Marines so the two of them had a lot in common besides their travels. They kept in touch for over 50 years via Christmas cards. Even though it was many decades that they were never face to face, Ed was always a best friend . Larkin Parsons Vilven

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**Larkin Parsons Vilven** - July 07, 2024 at 09:27 AM

LA

“ 0 file added to the tribute wall

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**lapearthree** - July 06, 2024 at 10:41 PM