



Melvin Foster (1929 - 2015)

Oct. 17, 1929 - Aug. 16, 2015 Melvin Hagan Foster, 85, passed away at Bailey Manor in Fayetteville, TN. Mel was the son of Sallie Elizabeth Wiggins and John Lois Foster of Woodruff SC, where he grew up and worked in the cotton mills till he joined the Navy in 1948. He was a veteran of the Korean War. He married Nancy Carolyn Randle of Memphis TN on Dec 31, 1951.

Honorably discharged from the Navy in 1952 as AK3 Aviation Storekeeper, he took advantage of the GI Bill to be the first one in

his family to attend college at what was then **Clemson College where he received his BS in Mechanical Engineering in 1956.** While he was in college, he and Nancy had 3 children; Cynthia, Russell, and Dru. He then worked as a Field Engineer for Schlumberger Oil Well Surveying Corp living in 5 different towns in Louisiana in 5 years. After a few years with Boeing as an Engineer on B-52 airplanes in Wichita KS, he moved on to settle his family in Huntsville AL in 1961, where he first worked for Chrysler on the Saturn Rocket. In 1963 Mel began his civilian service career for the US Army and DOD as a General Engineer with the US Army NIKE-X Project Office. Mel was instrumental in helping develop the latest Anti-Ballistic Missile Defense Systems for the US Army in all progressions of the Ballistic Missile Defense commands from Nike-Zeus, to Nike-X, to Sentinel, to Safeguard Systems Command developing Sprint and Spartan Missiles, through Ballistic Missile Defense Systems Command (currently known as US Army Space and Missile Defense Systems Command). Between working for these commands in Huntsville, he spent 4 tours at Kwajalein Missile Range with his final tour as Senior Project Engineer and Chief Engineer at Meck Island. He retired from BMDS COM in 1989 with 30 years combined federal service. Mel was very proud of his service to his country both as a Navy Veteran and as a US Army Civilian. Mel was widowed from Nancy in 1998. He was lucky enough to find and marry the second love of his life, Linda Lou Whitt, in 1999, with whom he led a very busy and fulfilling life well into his retirement with service to their community, church and God. Mel Foster is survived by his wife, Linda Lou; Daughter Cindy Otwell with husband Jerry Otwell; Son Russ Foster with wife Lori Foster; Daughter Dru Hites with husband Dan Hites; Grandchildren Arwen Otwell, Jerry Otwell III, Patrick Otwell with wife Jessica Otwell, Michelle Jerrolds with husband Daniel Jerrolds, Sarah Jones, Jessica Stevens with husband Len Stevens, Benjamin Foster with wife Jamie Foster, and Jeremiah Foster with wife Devon Foster; and Great Grandchildren Case Otwell, Jonathan Jones, Matthew Jones, Ryan Stevens, Andrea Stevens, Nathan Foster, Sjaan McCargar, and Grayson Jerrolds. Mel and Linda Lou are members of the Friendship Methodist Church in Athens AL. The funeral was Saturday, Aug 22 at Ardmore Chapel Funeral Home in Ardmore