



Edward Richard Burka

December 30, 1930 - January 9, 2021

Brigadier General Dr. Edward R. Burka passed away on January 9th shortly after his 90th birthday simply of old age, nothing more. Born of two Russian immigrants in Washington, D.C., both of whom fled the pogroms and arrived at Ellis Island while in their teens. His father, with nothing to his name, opened a small grocery store which he eventually sold, the proceeds of which he turned into real estate, where he was highly successful and, for one thing, was co-owner of the well-known string of movie theaters in Washington D.C. known as the K-B theaters. As a result of his father's background and success, Dr. Burka was passionate about America and dedicated to the service of a country he saw as a pillar of freedom and the true land of opportunity. As a high schooler, he attended Staunton Military Academy and then went to Princeton University, where he was an active member of the track team, the Elm Club, and ROTC. He graduated magna cum laude. While a 1st Lieutenant in the Army Reserve, he got his medical degree from Columbia University, where he met his first wife, Susan Swift, who was studying to be a registered nurse. He was an avid fan of the institution of marriage, and his last wife, Jackie Cushman, sported the custom license plate NUMBER FOUR.

An eminent hematologist, he managed the Sickle Cell Anemia Clinic and Blood Bank at Philadelphia's Thomas Jefferson University Hospital while also on staff as a professor, known for his humor and ability to make complicated concepts simple and understandable. As a noted research scientist, he

published 80 times and was once a visiting senior scientist at the Friedrich Miescher Institut in Basel, Switzerland. He also served on Pennsylvania's Professional Advisory Committee on Sickle Cell Anemia, the Hematology Review Board for the American Institute of Biologic Sciences, and the editorial board of Military Medicine. In re-viewing his achievements, the Burka family is amused to learn that, among other things, he belonged to the Red Cell Club, which we imagine to be a place where doctors can mutually celebrate the existence of blood.

He also undertook an ambitious military career. As a doctor in the medical corps, he voluntarily entered the Airborne Special Forces, where he became a Master Parachutist. In 1958 and 1959, he was a Jumpmaster at Weisbaden Air Force Base in Germany. He successfully completed 69 jumps until, on his last jump, a crosswind flung him sideways at the moment of impact, and the shock of the landing travelled up his right leg to his shoulder, dislocating it and requiring the insertion of a pin. From 1979 to 1983, he was the U.S. Army's Deputy to the Surgeon General for Mobilization, responsible for, among other things, planning logistics for the evacuation of U.S. cities in the event of a nuclear or biological disaster.

He was also an avid collector of and expert on U.S. medical military insignia, uniforms, and instruments, and was regarded by some as owning the most complete collection of them in the world.

He is survived by daughters Karen and Jane, son Tom, and his grandchildren Ella and Greyson Boblitz and Nicholas and Miraya Burka. Services will be held at the Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home in Chesterton, Maryland on Saturday, January 16, at 4:00 p.m.; public visitation is from 3:00 to 4:00 o'clock. Those who wish to participate but cannot attend can view the livestream or leave a tribute at <https://www.fhnfuneralhome.com>. In lieu of flowers, the family encourages donations to St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 16. 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

Fellows Helfenbien & Newnam
130 Speer Rd
Chestertown , MD 21620

Service

JAN 16. 4:00 PM (ET)

Fellows Helfenbien & Newnam
130 Speer Rd
Chestertown , MD 21620

Tribute Wall



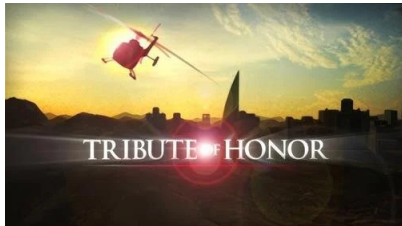
“ *Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of Edward Richard Burka*



Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home - January 16, 2021 at 12:55 PM



“ *Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Edward Richard Burka*



Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home - January 15, 2021 at 11:26 AM

NC

Amazing photos, amazing memories!

Nicole Caringal - January 15, 2021 at 01:05 PM



“ *Edward Richard Burka*

October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ *Edward Richard Burka*

January 28, 2023 at 12:44 PM



“ *Edward Richard Burka*

January 28, 2023 at 08:03 AM



“ *I just read this and I am so very sad to hear that Ed has passed. Mutual interest in militaria collecting brought us together, and among his many accomplishments was his indepth knowledge and guiding influence on the collecting community. I will miss our communications and visits to his home where he was kind enough to share the collectibles that we both cherished. And as I look over items that I received from him over the years I will remember a real gentleman who showed me sincere kindness. I mourn with his family a great loss.... Bruce Phifer*

BRUCE PHIFER - February 20, 2021 at 12:27 PM



“ *Larry Beck lit a candle in memory of Edward Richard Burka*



Larry Beck - January 17, 2021 at 12:21 AM

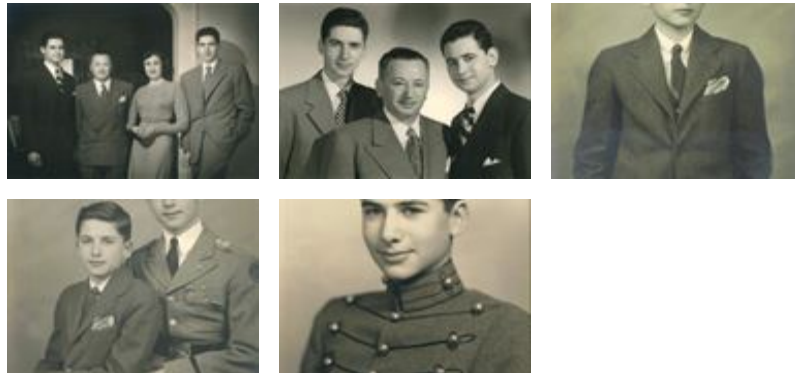


“ *I will miss our laughs over lunch my dear friend.*

Mary Ellen and Bruce Valliant - January 16, 2021 at 04:05 PM



“ 57 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home - January 15, 2021 at 11:27 AM

CB

“ You would think that having a father in law that was a Brigadier General and a doctor would be pretty intimidating. I never found Dr. Burka to be so. After losing my father 17 years ago, I was grateful to have a man such as him in my life. He will always be missed and remembered fondly.

Christopher Boblitz - January 14, 2021 at 09:49 PM

JB

“ 9 files added to the album *Memories Album*



Jane Burka - January 14, 2021 at 09:46 PM

ST

“ Suzi, Katie, Renee and Tina purchased the Reflections of Glory Wreath for the family of Edward Richard Burka.



Suzi, Katie, Renee and Tina - January 14, 2021 at 12:13 PM

RF

“ As current President of the Chestertown Havurah and on behalf of its membership I want to offer our condolences to the family of Edward Burka.
May his memory be for a blessing



Robert Farber - January 13, 2021 at 04:35 AM

RE

“ As a longtime member of former President of the Chestertown Havurah, we remember the generosity of Edward Burka and his brother Alfred, may their names be a blessing. I send my condolences to the family.

Ronnie Edelman - January 12, 2021 at 05:53 PM

JB

“ Joyce Faye Benton lit a candle in memory of Edward Richard Burka



Joyce Faye Benton - January 12, 2021 at 12:57 PM

CF

“ *Chester River Health Foundation lit a candle
in memory of Edward Richard Burka*



Chester River Health Foundation - January 12, 2021 at 10:56 AM