



## William Nat Hart

April 14, 1925 - May 31, 2016

William Nat Hart of Chestertown, MD, died on May 31 at age 91 of heart failure.

He was the beloved husband of over 18 years to Anne W. D. Folwell, and previously to Charlene N. Hart for over 51 years; father of three children; grandfather to six adult grandchildren; and great-grandfather of three.

“Bill” was born in Grafton, WV, on April 14, 1925. His parents deserted him as a child, and he was raised by his paternal grandmother and her third husband. When his step-grandfather passed while Bill was a junior in high school, his grandmother moved to New York City, leaving Bill to finish high school alone.

Nevertheless, he graduated from Grafton High School in 1943, and worked the following summer as a brakeman on the B & O Railroad before joining the Navy in November, 1943, for service in WWII. While in the Navy’s V-12 commissioning program at Emory University, he met Yeoman 2nd Class Charlene N. Burnett. They married on January 21, 1945, in Atlanta, GA. After being commissioned an Ensign in the United States Naval Reserve, Bill served on the aircraft carrier USS Philippine Sea, home-ported in Quincy, MA.

After the war and discharge from active duty, Bill worked as an insurance salesman in Phoenix, AZ, where his daughter was born, and as a portrait

photographer in Manhattan, living in East Orange, NJ, where his eldest son was born. Recalled to active duty for the Korean Conflict, he served on the aircraft carrier USS Leyte, homeported in Norfolk, VA. He was the Senior Watch Officer and a Gunnery Officer, and a qualified Bomb Disposal Technician and Deep Sea Diver. While he was deployed to the Mediterranean, his younger son was born at Millington Naval Air Station, TN. Bill was aboard the Leyte in October 1953 at South Boston Naval Shipyard, when a conflagration killed 37 men, including Bill's roommate, and injured 28 others. Lieutenant Hart was cited for courage in organizing fire-fighting and damage control efforts in the aft of the ship.

Bill left the Navy in January 1954, taking a job with RCA Corporation as a radar and communications technician. He was then hired by the Central Intelligence Agency in 1956, and Bill and his family moved to Alexandria, VA. He rose to be the Director of Communications, and subsequently earned a Master of Science degree, having never attempted an undergraduate degree. He was then named CIA's Assistant Deputy Director of Administration, where he advocated for an onsite childcare center at Langley, and planned construction of The New Headquarters Building. During this period, the family lived in various Northern Virginia locales.

During 30 years with the CIA, Bill completed three tours abroad and was awarded the Distinguished Intelligence Cross, as well as several other awards. Following 36 years of government service, and two years as a contractor with the Defense Mapping Agency, he retired to Cambridge, MD, in 1989 where he was a journeyman sailor, spending nearly 20 years active with both the Coast Guard Auxiliary and the Cambridge Yacht Club, where he rose to the position of Commodore in 2001. While living in Easton, MD, he lost his wife, Charlene, to cancer in 1996 and subsequently married widow Anne Folwell on May 20, 1998. They shared homes in Cambridge and Chestertown, MD, before moving to Chestertown full-time in 2012.

Bill was an exceptional provider and a workaholic who credited “going in early and staying late every day” for his success. No one could outwork him. He had a deep affection for both the Navy and the CIA. He was a self-taught engineer and brilliant technocrat. Bill was widely traveled, having visited over 60 countries, enjoyed reading U.S. history and espionage thrillers, and was a fan of Gilbert and Sullivan’s music. He excelled at anything he undertook, including private pilot, sailor, oil painter, and Asian chef. He lived by the axiom that "anything worth doing was worth doing right."

He will be sorely missed by his wife, Anne; eldest child Kathy, a former Department of Defense employee; youngest son, Charley, a retired Navy Captain; and their longtime spouses, Charles D. Digges and Wendy L. Hart, respectively. His eldest son, Bruce, a retired senior CIA officer, predeceased him in 2011.

His family will share a private memorial and a private interment will be scheduled at the Eastern Shore Veterans Cemetery.

# Cemetery Details

**Private**

# Tribute Wall



“ *William Nat Hart*

October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ *William Nat Hart*

January 28, 2023 at 12:44 PM



“ *William Nat Hart*

January 28, 2023 at 08:03 AM



“ *On behalf of the Flag and Board of Governors of the Cambridge Yacht Club, we would like to express our deepest sympathy for your loss.*

**Carol Baker-Jones** - June 13, 2016 at 10:11 AM