



*Today we honor
John Hormuth*

*WWII hero, P-47 pilot, Air Medal, Purple Heart
journalist, husband, father, and brother*

January 16, 1922 - July 17, 2010

*& his loving wife Mattie Hormuth
gardener, wife, and mother
January 26, 1929 - July 20, 2009*

*July 25th, 2011
Arlington National Cemetery*



John Hormuth

January 16, 1922 - July 17, 2010

John Hormuth, 88, formerly of Rockford, beloved husband for 57 years of the late Mattie (Mathilda Jobst), passed away peacefully on July 17 after complications following surgery for diverticulitis at Venice Regional Hospital, Venice, Florida. Born in Grand Rapids Michigan on January 16, 1922, the son of John and Charlotte Hormuth, he attended Catholic Central High School, and later Michigan State University. As a member of the Army Air Corp during the final years of WW II (1942-1945), he flew P-47 pursuit planes in over 100 sorties in the European Theater, receiving the Air Medal for bravery and the Purple Heart for a leg injury he sustained after his plane was shot down over France between German and American lines. On June 7, 1952 he married Mattie Jobst of Chicago. Both grew up in cities, but loved the country and old farmhouses. They raised their seven children on farms in the Rockford area. After John's retirement the couple moved to Osprey, Florida where they enjoyed fixing up an old Boy Scout cottage, and later, building a home. John designed and oversaw the construction while Mattie created a botanical paradise to surround it. Mattie passed away on July 20, 2009. John worked as a reporter and news editor at the Grand Rapids Herald from 1949 until 1959 when the paper closed. He was then hired by the Grand Rapids Press, working as a news editor and later the Sunday Editor until his retirement in 1981. He was a lifelong newspaperman. At the age of 12 he began self-publishing numerous family newspapers, travel accounts and short stories, laying the foundation for his life's work. An article on his hand-written and illustrated family newspaper was published in the Grand Rapids Press in 1936 under the headline "Dad's Teeth are Big Story in Youngster's Newspaper". In later years, undaunted by new media and the digital age, John published a bi-monthly internet newspaper for family and friends beginning in 2001. He published his last issue this 4th of July. The Family Post became a wonderful forum for his writing talents and artistry, each issue brimming with warmth and good humor. He was a thoughtful gentleman with a lively, generous, intelligence and the adored father of two boys and five girls - all present at his bedside when he died, John (Perri Jo), Jo (John), Christine (John), Robert (Debra), Julie Forrest (Mike), Laurie Gates (John), and Dianna Steiner (John). He is also survived by grandchildren, Rob, Tracy, John D, Adrian, Tim, Kae, Marie, Melanie, and Dan; and seven great grandchildren.

Mathilda Anna Hormuth

January 26, 1929 - July 20, 2009

Mathilda Anna "Mattie" Hormuth, 80, of Sarasota, formerly of Chicago, died peacefully of leukemia on July 20, 2009.

She was the daughter of Frank and Mathilde Jobst of Chicago and attended Shurz High School, Wright College and St. Elizabeth Hospital nursing school. She married John Hormuth of Grand Rapids, Mich., in 1952. The couple raised a family on farms around Rockford, Mich., and upon retiring moved to Osprey. She was a steadfast and caring friend and mother with a colorful sense of humor. An ardent gardener all her life, she particularly loved orchids.

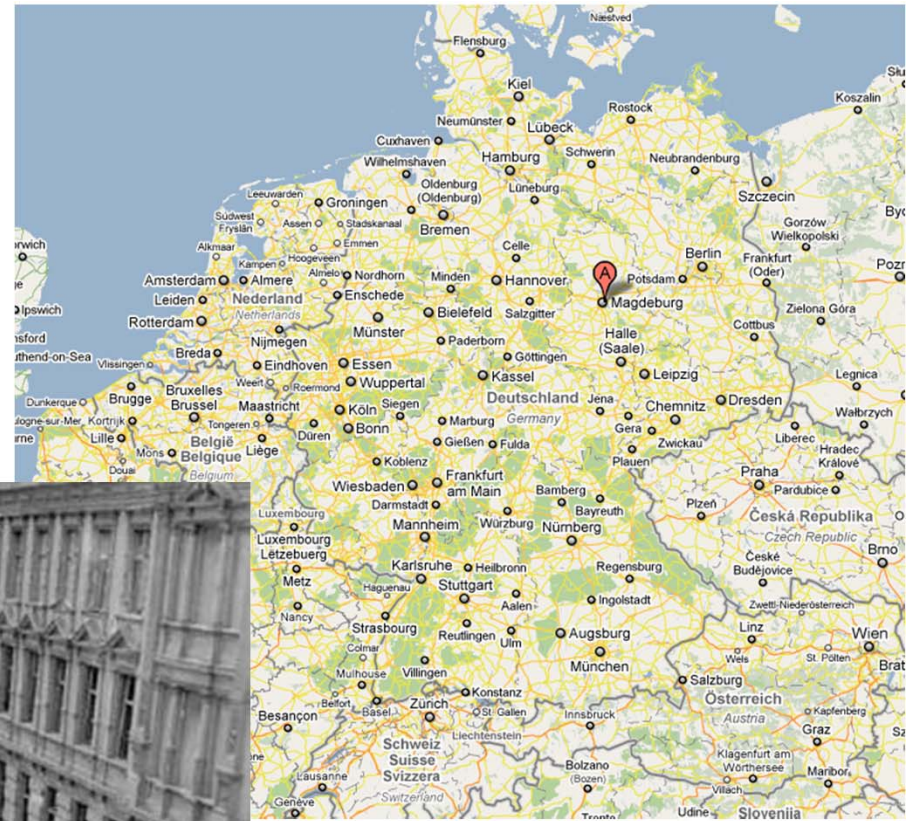
Mattie is survived by her husband, John, and their seven children, John F. (Perri Jo) of Niceville, Jo (John Phillips) of Chicago, Chris (John Young) of Easton, Pa., Robert (Debby) of Cannonsburg, Mich., Julie Forrest (Mike) of Newaygo, Mich., Laurie Gates of Grand Rapids, Mich., and Dianna Steiner (John) of Rockford, Mich.; and stepchildren Tracy Barrentine (Kurt) and Tim Forrest (Denica). She also is survived by seven grandchildren, Rob, John D., Adrian, Kae, Marie, Melanie and Dan; great-grandchildren Marilyn, Logan and Aden; and a sister, Zita Jobst of Chicago.

Family and friends gathered at Mattie and John's Florida home on July 21 for a remembrance.



John with his P-47, "Any Ole Bag"





Magdeburg, Germany
*Target of sortie during which
John was injured*

Inspiration & Reflection

We are gathered here today to honor LT John Hormuth and his wife Mattie Hormuth. John defended the free world in war, earning himself and his wife the honor of burial in this shrine to the defenders of liberty. John and Mattie built a strong family, earning themselves the highest of all honors, a legacy of service, family, love, and a life well-lived. I never knew John or Mattie, but I can see from those here today that they earned the respect of all around them.

Let us be honest with death. Let us not pretend that it is less than it is. It is separation. It is sorrow. It is grief. But, let us also not pretend that death is more than it is. It is not annihilation, for as long as memory endures, their legacy lives on. Death is not an end to love and the love they imparted to you is boundless. It is not an end to joy and laughter -- nothing would less honor one so vibrant than to make our lives drab due to their absence. Let us be honest with death, for it allows us to grieve and to honor and to grow and to make our lives a tribute worthy of their lives.

We should grieve their loss, recognizing the sorrow we feel at having lost parents and grandparents. We should grieve the loss of those who were not just parents but friends in our times of need. We should grieve those who have made life better for those around them, for our lives will be just a bit darker for their absence. But we should remember what they would say. John and Mattie would tell you that they lived long and happy lives. The wisdom of age has made them accept death as a natural conclusion to life. We can smile as we see their lives not as lost but as complete, and as well-lived as anyone could hope.

Full Military Honors. This is what we have seen in the carrying of the caisson, the uniforms of the soldiers here, the volleys of the rifles, and interment in this hallowed ground of our nation. I am not family and did not know John. But I am a prior soldier and combat veteran. John's service is an inspiration to me, and along with the soldiers in this memorial detail I am here to say thank you and to salute John one last time. I do this because LT John Hormuth is a hero to the nation, serving in war as an elite soldier, a pilot, who was also wounded in battle. He served in World War II, defending the free world from the advances of Hitler. Modern hyperbole often calls to mind the Nazis and Adolf Hitler as mythological caricatures of evil. Well John went off to fight that fight. Leaving friends, family, and his home, he went to hard training, long days, flying bullets, the wounds he suffered, the friends he lost, and the need of the world to fight and win... these were all present and real. The fears he felt many times were all real and he faced them the nonetheless.

John served with the 9th Air Force, 373rd Fighter-bomber group, 411th Squadron. He flew over 100 sorties during 1944 and 1945. He earned the Purple Heart for wounds sustained to his hand and leg in a crash on one of those sorties. For his actions, he earned the Air Medal for meritorious achievement in flight. This great hero was only 23 years old, and he did all this in resolute determination to defend freedom and also in friendship.

I was inspired by a story John himself wrote. He tells of Bruce Byers, a hometown friend whom he was able to stay close to throughout his service. He tells of convincing clerks to continue assigning them together. They trained together and eventually arrived at the 373rd Group location about a week after the invasion of Normandy to meet this challenge and help push back the Nazi forces. In combat, we understand that service is often not about grand strategy or political power or even the free world. We serve longest and hardest, through the atrocities of war, through days and nights without sleep, through injuries and hardship, not only for our ideals, but for our friends, those whom we serve beside. John clearly understood this idea of the brotherhood of arms.

Lest we forget that John was a young man at war, I will also remember this happier story that John wrote. Following his crash, he sought help from a passing truck. "The farmer and the girl helped me into the bed of the truck and the girl joined me in the hay. She cradled my head in her breasts as we rode back to the farm house, which put me in a warm frame of mind." He tells of how the French people praised him as the first American to liberate their town, despite his being alone and injured.

Even at 23, John had lived a wonderful, inspiring, and successful life. But the best of his life was yet to come. And that best part of life was not a French maiden but the love of his life, Mattie Jobst. This was the traditional family we hear about. John continued his life's passion of writing as Sunday Editor of the Grand Rapids press. He went to work every day, able to look forward to coming home to Mattie and their children. Mattie tended the farm while raising seven children who in turn raised 12 grandchildren and great-grandchildren. They lived their lives together through good times and hardship, expanding their love into a large and supportive family.

Yes, we have gathered to celebrate the life of John and Mattie. But, even as this ceremony is about them, it is truly for all of us. It is our celebration, our acknowledgement of the example and legacy they have left us. It is an opportunity for us to grieve friends lost, to celebrate and honor friends, and to move on, living our lives more richly by their example and by the reminder that life is singular and fleeting.

Let us declare John's service an example to revere, Mattie's gardens a joy, and their marriage and family a great achievement. May we dedicate ourselves to spend our time as they did, remembering to truly live in the example they have set. The three volleys the soldiers fired arise from a battlefield tradition. Soldiers would cease fire for a time and then fire three volleys to indicate that the dead were properly cared for and that the battle could continue. We too should recognize that John and Mattie are properly cared for and that we can continue. I remind you all to grieve fully, for we must come to terms with our loss, but remember that John and Mattie as well as all of those still with us, are honored not by your grief, but by your celebration, laughter, joy, and continuing love. Later, we will share thoughts among ourselves.

As the soldiers depart, let us consider the following poem by A Price Hughes as we reflect on the lives of John and Mattie Hormuth.

*If I should die and leave you here awhile,
Be not like others, sore undone, who keep
Long vigil by the silent dust and weep.
For my sake turn to life and smile,
Nerving thy heart and trembling hand to do
Something to comfort weaker hearts than thine.
Complete these dear unfinished tasks of mine,
And I, perchance, may therein comfort you.*

Delivered by Jason Torpy
West Point graduate, former Army Captain, Iraq Veteran
President, Military Association of Atheists & Freethinkers
Fighting for the Freedoms We Defend