

Henry Poplawski

May 26, 1914 - July 15, 2015

Obituary

Poplawski, Henry Richard "Pops" Lt Col Henry Richard Poplawski, USAF, Ret, took his final flight on July 15, 2015. He was 101 years young. Henry was born May 26, 1914 in Worcester, MA to Stephania Baremba and Leopold Poplawski. He was the 5th of 7 children. His loving wife Claytrice Mary Gannon predeceased him on February 8, 2006. The tallest boy in school at 6'1"; "Pops" played basketball and graduated from Commerce High School in 1933. After finishing one year of Worcester Polytechnic Institute in 1936 he enlisted in the Army Air Corps, completing training as an aircraft mechanic, and was stationed at Selfridge Field, MI. While there he became a Link trainer (simulator) instructor, and during the off hours taught himself how to fly the simulator. He applied and won a cadet flying spot in 1938, and reported to Randolph Field, TX in February 1939. "Pops" soloed on April 5, 1939 and graduated flight training in November - Class 1939D. His first assignment was to the 6th Air Transport Squadron, Middletown Air Depot, PA, where he flew the C-47 around the country. Between 1940 and 1941 2Lt Poplawski supported the development of airborne parachute drops at Ft Benning, GA. From September 1941 to October 1942, he was assigned to the Pan American Africa Airways, operating a military air transport line in Africa. He had the opportunity to transport Gen Joe Stilwell over Jerusalem and into China, ferry RAF fighter aircraft, and establish the supply network to support the North Africa Campaign. Between October 1942 and August 1945, Captain Poplawski served as a test pilot for the Glenn L. Martin Company in Baltimore, MD, flying the B-26, A-30, and PBM. "Pops" joined the "Caterpillar Club" when he successfully bailed out of a crippled B-26G on November 8, 1944. Henry married his wife Claytrice Mary Gannon on May 26, 1944, and following the war, they both attended and graduated from the University of Southern California in 1948. "Pops" returned to the Glenn L. Martin Company, working as guided missile Engineer from 1948 to 1951. Captain Poplawski was recalled to active duty and assigned to the Pilotless Training Unit at Lowry AFB, CO from 1951 to 1955. From 1955 to 1959, he served in the Office of Scientific Intelligence (OSI) in Washington, DC, and from 1960 to 1964 served in the Foreign Technology Division, Detachment 4, Tokyo, Japan. "Pops" returned to Wright Patterson AFB, OH in 1964, continued to work for the Foreign Technology Division and retired from Active Duty in April 1966. In 1966, Lt Col Poplawski joined the USAF Civil Service, and continued to work for the Foreign Technology Division from 1966 until his retirement in 1977. In his retirement years, "Pops" traveled the world on numerous cruises, always enjoying the company of his wife, the adventure of seeing new worlds, and writing poetry. Lt Col Poplawski was a long time member of the Order of Daedalians – "Fraternal Organization of Military Pilots" and Saint Helen's Catholic Church. Many thanks to the staff at Liberty Nursing Home, Brighton Gardens, and Hospice of Dayton who cared for Henry in his last few months. There will be a visitation on Saturday July 25th at 9:30 followed by a funeral mass at 10:30 at St Helen's Catholic Church, 605 Granville Place, Dayton Ohio. Burial will be at the Veteran's Cemetery in Dayton at 10:00 on July 28th. Memorial contributions may be made in Henry's memory to Flt 9 Order of Daedalians or Saint Helen's Catholic Church.