



Eldon J. Brunner

March 31, 1923 - August 31, 2018

What a Life! Eldon Brunner, of Reddick, died on August 31, 2018. In March, he passed his driving test and had a great time at his 95th Birthday party with 13 immediate family members plus dozens of relatives, friends and people from his residence at Harvest View in Herscher. Born in 1923, as a young farm boy he got an airplane ride from a barnstormer based at his parents' farm. In high school, he explored innovative ways to heat chicken brooder houses and experimented with the brand new "hybrid" corn seed he won in a 4-H competition.

Eldon enrolled at the University of Illinois shortly before the attack on Pearl Harbor. Starting as an ROTC cadet, Eldon became an Army artillery liaison pilot. He spent 1946-47 in Austria flying as an Army pilot at the end of WWII. He signed up for an extra year so his new bride, Gladys (Dassow) Brunner, could join him in Austria. She described it as "the best time of our lives." After that, Eldon returned to the U of I to get his Masters Degree, flew charter flights for the university, and trained other pilots as an instructor. He wrote training simulator specifications for the B-58 Hustler, the first supersonic bomber. When Eldon heard about a course on nuclear power, he enrolled with enthusiasm for the newly developing energy source. In the 1950s he was in charge of an operating small nuclear reactor flown in a huge B-36 bomber airplane, to explore the possibility of a nuclear powered airplane. That project was abandoned.. For the next thirty years, Eldon worked closely with nuclear agencies and power plants to make the generation of electricity as safe as possible by developing standards, testing procedures, and government regulations. After working all over the US, he and Gladys returned 35 years ago to the farm where Eldon was born. He volunteered on the school board, fire department, Lions Club, and as an ambulance driver.

Eldon was an extrovert who loved talking to people. He spent 30 years as a Hospice volunteer encouraging folks to tell him their life stories. He finished writing his own life story this year and left an indelible legacy with his well-lived life. Eldon had a wonderful, exciting life and enjoyed church, family, playing bridge, flying, and learning about new things for 95 years. He liked genealogy, planting trees, Apple computers, and pecan pie! Eldon felt that God played a major role in guiding him through an important and satisfying career as a pioneer in many ways.

Eldon was preceded in death by his parents, George and Laura (Oberlin) Brunner; his wife of 66 years, Gladys (Dassow) Brunner; his sister, Elaine McKimson and her husband Wendell, their daughter Joyce; and Eldon's grandson, Christopher Roza. Eldon is survived by his children, Roger Brunner (Niesje Steinkruger) and Betty Roza (Joe); his grandchildren Laura S. Brunner (Grayson Westfall), Jill Brunner Scott (Tristan), Stephanie Roza; and 4 great-grandchildren- Anna Valerie Westfall, Jackson Brunner Westfall, Cameron Brunner Scott and Nathan Brunner Scott.

Lt. Colonel Eldon J. Brunner will be interred with military honors at 1 p.m. at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood, Illinois on November 9 and a public memorial service will be held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, November 10, at Zoar Community Church, 18172 W. Route 17, Reddick, Illinois, 60961. Donations in his honor may be made to Zoar Church.

Cemetery Details

Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery

20953 W. Hoff Road
Elwood, IL 60421
(815) 423-9958
<http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/abrahamlincoln.asp>

Previous Events

Graveside Service

NOV 9. 1:00 PM (CT)

Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery
20953 W. Hoff Road
Elwood, IL 60421
(815) 423-9958
<http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/abrahamlincoln.asp>

Funeral Service

NOV 10. 10:00 AM (CT)

Zoar Community Church
18172 W RTE 17
Reddick, IL 60961

Tribute Wall



“ Eldon J. Brunner

February 03, 2023 at 04:30 AM



“ Our family felt so privileged to know Eldon and Gladys. They were "extra" grandparents to our girls Amanda & Tiffany when they visited Illinois, dearest of friends to parents Jim & Alta, rock-solid supporters of their church, and even though we didn't know them as well they just felt like family. I don't think we ever saw Eldon without a smile and a chuckle, even in later years after he lost his dear Gladys. Thank you so much for sharing him with the rest of us. The world was a richer place because of his passion for learning, life, faith and people.

Gerald & Brenda Everett - February 28, 2019 at 09:03 PM