KENNETH NICHOLSON (1919 - 2015)

Kenneth Floyd Nicholson "Nick" was born on December 3, 1919 in the town of Hooper, Utah to Daniel Tavish Nicholson of Scottish background and Marie Gertrude Lattin Nicholson from Kansas. He was 95 when he died. When Nick was three years old the family moved to California where his father worked on the Owens Valley Water Project for a while then worked for Spreckles Sugar in the San Joaquin Valley.

Spreckles sent him to Scotland to oversee the building of a sugar beet facility near the town of Cupar. Nick received his fourth and fifth grade education in Scotland which he claimed was much more demanding than that of the USA.

When the family returned to the United States they built a home in the Silver Lake District of Los Angeles. That is where Nick spent his teenage years, making good use of a nearby playground and often traveling to Muscle Beach to practice gymnastics. He attended Belmont High School.

Shortly before the U.S. officially became involved in WWII he joined the Civilian Pilot Training (CPT) and spent several months in Lone Pine, CA learning to fly. He went from the CPT to the Army Air Corps. After more months of stateside training, he spent 10 months in East Anglia, Britain in the 364th Fighter Group, flying P-38s and P-51s, escorting bombers as they flew their missions over Germany. In later years he was instrumental in bringing together veterans of the 364th Group for annual reunions held at various sites throughout the U.S. We all heard some great war stories at those reunions.

A few years after leaving the army, Nick spent six years at Caltech earning an engineering degree in aeronautics. Just before his junior year there, he met and married Dorothy "Dot" Nicholson from Michigan. At the time they were both working in the GALCIT Wind Tunnel on the Caltech campus.

His first job upon graduating was with Douglas Aircraft in Long Beach. As years passed he also worked at Aeronutronic, and then North American where he worked on the space shuttle for 17 years. North American was bought by Boeing and it was from there that he retired in 1984.

Some of his many hobbies during his working years and throughout retirement were scuba diving, boating, fishing, hiking, motorcycle riding, flying, traveling and long bicycle rides with his wife, Dot. When 67 years old, he and Dot rode across the country from Anaheim to Savannah, GA. Also, for a few years, he was active in the cosmological debate over dark matter.

In addition, during retirement he spent several years building a two-seater Lancair airplane. As he was flying off some of the required hours for home-built airplanes, he had to make an emergency landing on the 15 freeway just before the 91 on a Friday afternoon. No one was hurt nor were any vehicles damaged, but that was the end of his flying career.

Surviving Nick are his wife of 63 years, Dorothy; their two children, Laura and Dean, as well as 6 grandchildren: Elaina and Emma Present, Tavisha, Lisa, Jenna and Scott Nicholson.

A memorial service will be scheduled for a date in early April.

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