

T/sgt. Ret. Richard Petersen, US Airforce, 81

Jan. 7, 1931 - April 8, 2012

AVOCA — Richard Chris Petersen was born to Chris J. And Eva (Comstock) Petersen on January 7, 1931, at their home in Avoca. He was later baptized by Rev. Joseph Geralt at his grandparents, Hartwig and Christina Petersen, home. Richard, also known as Pete to his friends, grew up in Avoca where he attended school.

Richard later married Stella Grace from Neola. Stella passed away in 1951. After that, he and his brother Eddie, joined the Air Force in July 1952. He took basic training at Park Air Base in California. From basic training he went to Francis Warren AFB in Wyoming and from there to San Antonio, TX.

In November 1953, Richard married Rose Marie Beck from Atlantic. They raised six children: Terry, Kathy, Christy, Allan, Debra and Mike. Rose and the children lived in Avoca while Richard went to Scotland for 18 months. Upon Richard's return from Scotland he was stationed at Offutt AFB. From there, he was stationed in Fairbanks, AK. While in Alaska, his brother Eddie was killed in a car accident. In 1959, Richard and Rose moved their family to Bangor, ME. They were stationed at Dow AFB for approximately 1 year. He then signed up to be trained in Missiles Atlas F. He moved his family to the Shepard AFB in Wichita Falls, TX area while he trained. After training, he was stationed at Schilling AFB, Salina, KS. The family lived in Assaria, KS for four years. While not working at the base, Richard had a side business doing auto mechanic work. From Kansas, he was stationed back to Offutt AFB. The family lived in Avoca and he commuted. In 1969, he received orders for a tour of duty in Taiwan. During that time, Kathy got engaged to Herchel Wilber. Kathy picked out a pattern for her wedding dress and Richard had it made in Taiwan. Nellis AFB, Las Vegas, NV was the final move for the family while Richard was in the Air Force. At the end of his 20 year stint in the Air Force, Richard, Rose and the children moved back to Avoca; however, Christy remained in Las Vegas where she later married Paul Benavidez.

Finally back home, Richard opened a business doing mechanic work and then decided to expand his business to include towing. Through his business, Richard and Rose made many friends with people he either pulled out of a ditch or repaired their vehicle. He retired after operating his business for 20 years. This was the time he had waited so long for. Richard purchased a Honda Goldwing that he and Rose rode to several places. They especially enjoyed touring the southern and western states. The couple also enjoyed snowmobiling, in which they took trips to Colorado with their good friends, Earl and Mary Puff. They also traveled to Michigan, where his brother Duane and his family were stationed. The couple continued to ride snowmobiles in and around the Avoca area. When they decided it was time to give up the motorcycle and snowmobile trips, they purchased a travel trailer and began traveling to Arizona and Nevada during winter months. While in Arizona, they not only par-



ticipated in selling at the flea markets but also purchasing "goodies." Neither one of them could pass up a "good" deal. They loved attending auctions and garage sales. In March 2011, Richard became a resident of Salem Lutheran Homes in Elk Horn. He became ill and was moved to Myrtue Medical Center in Harlan where he spent his final days. It was there that he died April 8, 2012 at age 81 years. God Bless him.

Richard was preceded in death by his parents; brothers Edward (Eddie), Duane and Ronald (Ronnie); and granddaughter Brandy Benavidez. He is survived by his wife, Rose Marie Petersen of Avoca; his children: Terry Beck and his wife Melody of Meadow Grove, NE, Kathy Wilber of Avoca, Christy and her husband Paul Benavidez of Henderson, NV, Allan Petersen and his wife Pam of Avoca, Debra Kay and her husband Dennis Flege of Madison, NE, and Mike Petersen and his wife Molly of Avoca; eighteen grandchildren; thirty great grandchildren; his brother Jack Petersen of Avoca; sisters-in-law Martha Lynn Petersen of Avoca and Dorothy Petersen of Port St. Charlotte, FL; many nieces and nephews and friends.

Wayne Paulsen officiated the 10:30 a.m. funeral service at Trinity Lutheran Church in Avoca Friday, April 13, 2012. Honorary casket bearers were: Larry Torrey, Ed Weis, Don Nelson, Scott Pigsley, Jack Wissler, Dave Lyons, Paul Benavidez, Terry Molgaard and Steve Smith. Allan Petersen, Justin Beck, Mike Petersen, Richard Petersen, Chris Hansen, Kevin Petersen, Duane Petersen, Jr., and Aaron Benavidez served as casket bearers. Military Rites were conducted by the Avoca Fred Funston American Legion Post No. 227 at Graceland Cemetery in Avoca.

*Pauley
Jones*

FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORY
(712) 755-3135 • (800) 831-6805
www.pauleyjones.com
Baldwin at 9th, Harlan, IA
Also in Avoca & Walnut