

# MY LIFE'S QUEST



50<sup>th</sup> Wedding anniversary in 1999, Dean & Vera both age 79

**BY DEAN LADD**  
**2021 (Age 100)**

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**Photos** Thousands are available on my iPad and portable hard drives about my life and ancestors.

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# **INTRODUCTION**

While recalling my past achievements, I decided to update them into greater depth. The updated achievements are covered in the following sequence:

Childhood projects, military service, engineering career, community involvement, world travels, involvement in organizations, research/writing projects of three books and many manuscripts. It concludes with different ways my genealogy links into royalty.

## **CHILDHOOD PROJECTS**

When I was 5, I built a toy sailboat. I had been inspired by an older neighbor boy who was going to make one for me that was going to have stars on it. Before he was able to build one for me though, he ended up dying during a mastoid operation. I was so disappointed, but I did end up building one myself.

At age 12, I built a play car. It was enclosed with laths and had a lever-type steering mechanism. The mechanism had been provided to me from my playmate's father.

At age 13, I started drawing, mostly by pencil. The majority of my drawings were drawn from pictures from Teddy Roosevelt's *African Game Trails*. These are all saved in an album.

At age 15, I made skis. These skis evolved from barrel staves to a board with an upturned front attachment. I used these only for a short time on a nearby railroad track hill. I then bought ones for use on Mt. Spokane's earliest rope tow and made a simple rope grabber for this rope tow.

When I was 14-16, I built rubber band-powered and then gas-powered model airplanes. Greatest thrill was launching the first gas powered one. Then first flew them where the Esmeralda Golf Course is now located. After that, joined others in competition at various locations, near where the Magnesium Plant was later built, until my plane shorted out the nearby electrical high voltage line. We then went on to fly airplanes at the present-day location of the Spokane International Airport as thousands watched.

At age 16, I built a 20 ft. wing-span hang glider. It was a 1911 Chanute configuration which followed plans in the *Popular Mechanics Magazine*. It was on the front page of a 1936 Spokane Chronicle newspaper. It was constructed of spruce, covered by muslin fabric and trussed by piano wire and turnbuckles. We flew it primarily by pulling it with ropes into the wind like a big kite. On one occasion we flew it successfully untethered about 100 yards down a steep slope from the railway track below Illinois Ave., landing near the Spokane River road. Our problem was coping with the site's crosswind at takeoff.

At age 18, I purchased a motorcycle. It was a Harley Davidson, largest late twenties model. I learned a lot about repairing engines and was fortunate to not get hurt.

## **MILITARY SERVICE**

At age 18, I was a member of the 1939 Championship WSU ROTC Rifle Team. Included the 9<sup>th</sup> Corps Area, which consisted of the Pacific coast states, Alaska and Hawaii.

At age 18, I joined the Spokane Marine Corps Organized Reserve Battalion April 24, 1939. The Corps then totaled only approx. 20,000. Three months later, I went to San Diego, CA for the 2-week encampment which was my first time away from home. Ordered to Marine active duty (turned out to be for 5 years). Nov. 8 1940, while still age 19.

Promoted to corporal Nov. 19, 1941, as a squad leader of a newly-formed air cooled 30 cal. machine gun squad as part of the weapons platoon. Boarded the SS Lurline for American Samoa Jan 14, 1942, and arrived at Pago Pago, Samoa Jan. 20, to prevent Japanese from taking the island and blocking our supply line to Australia and New Zealand.

Received a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. commission, dated Sept. 1, 1942, after being selected to attend a six-week officer training course in Samoa. Rejoined my same company and went into combat on Guadalcanal Nov. 4, 1942.

Two near-death incidents on Guadalcanal:

Dual with an enemy sniper in a tree on Nov. 19. He shot at me first, knocking earth into my face, before I shot him.

While leading my platoon's attack on a concealed enemy ridgetop position, on Nov. 23. the one to my right was killed and the one to my left had his rifle magazine emptied by an enemy bullet.

Promoted to 1st Lt May 30, 1943.

Received a nearly fatal bullet wound on Nov. 21, 1943, when I was shot through the abdomen while leading my platoon toward the beach on Tarawa.

Two near-death incidents on Saipan:

On July 2, 1944, three of our own 155 mm artillery rounds were called in short and one struck the large tree I was under. I was very fortunate to receive only a flesh wound through my right elbow. Others were mangled.

I walked alone, through where the enemy was hiding on July 9, 1944, to the aid station to get my elbow wound dressed. I shot three and that night 40 more were also killed there while they attempted a banzai attack.

Promoted to captain, Nov. 30, 1944, and attended the Quantico OCS school at that rank.

On OCS Staff at Quantico in 1945. During this period was assigned as Company Commander of officer candidates, followed as Company Commander at The Basic School for new officers until the atomic bomb ended the war.

Offered a regular commission July. 1945 as captain, which I at first accepted, but decided instead to remain as a reserve officer and return to inactive duty to resume college education as an engineer.

Promoted to major Jan 1, 1951.

Promoted to Lt. col. July 1, 1957.

Retired with 30 years' service without pay, April 24, 1969. and with pay, starting Dec. 1, 1980.

I completed many military correspondence courses at the Marine Corps Schools and attended many active-duty training sessions after my return to inactive duty.

Marine active duty for training events included acting as regimental commander, on the job training, umpire for field maneuvers and a Hawaii facilities orientation trip. I attended many MCRO national conferences and 2<sup>nd</sup> Mar Div reunions.

My granddaughter, Julia, interviewed me about my WW II combat experiences in 2002 as a school project, titled "A Life Changing Time". Following are some excerpts:

I asked my grandpa how he found the courage to shoot a human being. His answer astounded me and gave me something to ponder. He was told in training to be aggressive--the motto was to "kill or be killed."

The prime example of a major battle that my grandpa fought in was when landing at Tarawa on November 21, 1943. He described an event as his most memorable experience of the war, when making an assault landing on a heavily defended Island beach. The moment he jumped out of his landing boat, bullets were whizzing by and shortly one pierced his bladder and intestines.

If my grandpa had not been dragged to a landing boat and operated on by a surgeon, who had been an abdominal specialist at Mayo Clinic, I would never have been born. The war shaped him into the man he is today. He is a brave and courageous man who I am proud to call Grandpa.

I graduated from Washington State College (later University) with a BS in Mechanical Engineering, June, 1948. Was president of the student branch of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and chaired the student Regional Conference at Pullman, May 6, 1948. It was attended by over 100 delegates from all northwest universities.

## **ENGINEERING CAREER**

I was hired as an engineer in June, 1948, by the Kaiser Aluminum, Trentwood Works in Spokane, As chairman of the student Mechanical Engineer group, I had asked Kaiser's Chief Engineer to speak to us. This opened the door for both my brother and me being hired by Kaiser.

We went through a training program, which lasted two weeks in each department such as machine shop, remelt, hot line, shipping etc, prior to working in the engineering department,

We received guidance from employees with years of experience, producing sheet aluminum. This plant, and the one in Newark, Ohio--that produced rod, bar and rubber coated wire--had been built and operated by the government during WW II. Kaiser bought them in 1946, to meet the new demand by the airline industry and other new applications of aluminum.

While doing research for my book about my grandfather, Thomas Elsom, who installed the first telephone within the inland northwest, I was surprised to see aluminum wire listed on his bill of materials being available that early from the ALCOA Pittsburg Reduction Plant. Just recently, I was also surprised to read about the great blizzard that happened where he grew up.

I consequently realized the impact of that event and that if he hadn't left for a new life in the west, none of his many descendants would have been born!

Also, in my case, if there hadn't been a surgeon from Mayo Clinic saving my life in WWII, all of my current 45 descendants would not have been born either.

At Kaiser Aluminum, I worked primarily on the drawing board, designing production line changes. They initially involved changes to sheet producing guides / limit-switch positioning, then installation of added production machinery.

A year later, I was transferred to Kaiser's reactivated rod and bar plant in Newark, Ohio. I married Vera Michel June 19, 1949, before leaving Spokane. We had a one-week honeymoon through the southern states, on the way to Ohio.

I worked as a Plant Operations Engineer there for the next two years. And had twin girls, Kathie and Michele, April 21, 1950, and another daughter, Janet, April 7, 1951. During the last nine months, we enjoyed living on Buckeye Lake and eating all the catfish we wanted.

Vera was the choir director of the country church we attended in the country town of Hebron. This country living heightened my desire to relocate back west, with mountains and lakes for outdoor recreation.

So, I accepted employment in the expanding aerospace industry with North American Aviation in the LA area, at Downey, CA. We drove our new Kaiser auto, with three recently born babies, across country through Spokane in July 1951. This employment in the aerospace industry would continue until my retirement, 29 years later.

North American had a contract with the US Air Force to develop an air-breathing, liquid propelled, cruise type, intercontinental missile named the Navaho. However, it was cancelled in 1957, shortly before going operational, due to successful development of a solid rocket ballistic missile. I had started as a Facilities Plant Engineer and finally became a Sr. Flight Test Requirements Engineer, until the cancellation of the contract that resulted in a massive layoff.

I started employment as a Facilities Engineer at Lockheed Missiles and Space at Sunnyvale, CA July, 1957 and became Supervisor of Test Facility Design and Construction in 1960 at the Santa Cruz Test Base, overseeing about 8 engineers.

I then transferred as a Research Specialist in the Program Office, coordinating aerospace projects within the company and with the customer, originally with NASA and then with the Air Force.

That was a time of great technology transition in space exploration, that was sparked by Russia's launch of Sputnik in 1957. I found myself directly involved at the beginning of that exciting race, involving NASA space exploration to Mars, Venus and the Moon and Air Force reconnaissance satellites.

My most memorable experience was in 1964, while working in Lockheed's NASA Program Office. I was involved in the first attempt by the Jet Propulsion Lab to photograph Mars, as their spacecraft passed by. Lockheed provided the

ascent stage vehicle and a shroud to protect the spacecraft until above the Earth's atmosphere.

JPL accused our shroud of blowing up so I was tasked to take a half shroud to JPL for them to prove the cause in their temperature-altitude chamber. The test result proved that the new plastic honey cell type shroud shell structure had outgassed and exploded.

Then, I faced a difficult time convincing our engineer management that previous sample testing had proved to not be adequate, so it did fail and I was merely the messenger, bringing bad news! The originally designed aluminum-type shroud structure was rapidly built for a successful second mission.

Lockheed later placed three of Boeing's spacecraft into orbit around the Moon, taking photos that led to the landing of man. I had coordinated provision of ground support equipment that was built at our Van Nuys plant for the Fire Program by General Dynamics to send a test rocket back into the Earth's atmosphere simulating return from the Moon to determine heat of reentry that required insulation.

Awarded Able Toastmaster certificate in 1973.

I became vice president of the 3,000 member Lockheed National Management Association in 1978 and 6 months later was elected president, after the previous president married our company president.

The following were very memorable events for me:

I chaired a 700-seat banquet event, with Kelly Johnson as the keynote speaker and Neta Snook Southern as my mystery guest. He headed up production at Lockheed's Skunk Works plant where the U-2 and stealth aircraft were developed.

Neta had rebuilt a wrecked Canadian Canuck version of the Curtis Jenny in 1920 and a year later, Amelia Earhart was her first pupil. I picked her up as an 82-year-old at her home a few miles from my home, and she showed me Amelia's flight training log.

I was sitting at the head table next to her and overheard Kelly Johnson ask her what flight instrumentation she had used when barnstorm flying during the early 20's. She answered that she had followed road maps and had only an altimeter and a dangling pocket watch.

After the meeting, I drove Kelly to the airport while he talked about avoiding as much unnecessary paperwork as possible by first independently developing a prototype aircraft.

Neil Armstrong had spoken to us shortly after landing on the Moon. I asked him what his realization thoughts were as he later looked up at the Moon. His answer was. "I've learned to live with it!"

I was heavily involved with the following community Management Association projects:

1. During the oil shortage period under President Carter, I organized a Lockheed sponsored Energy Conservation Expo at West Valley Community College, with thousands attending,
2. I had a publicity photo of me taken in a tethered hot air balloon, surrounded by youth to promote free enterprise.

3. I obtained a decommissioned aircraft from Davis Monthan AF Base for the Los Gatos Park. The project involved considerable coordination such as including National Guard participation.

4. I was an advisor to Jr Achievement in starting a business.

5. I Became active as a Boy Scout District Commissioner, Involved in a Jamboree production.. Attended a world-wide 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Wood Badge at Gilwell Park, north of London in 1976.

I decided against returning to other engineering assignments, so I retired 18 months later in 1980, when my Marine retirement pension began, and I had enough other income to tide me over to start of Social Security.

During the final few months, before retiring, I was assigned as a Loaned Exec. to United Way for fund raising, followed by assisting in managing allocation of funds.

I made presentations to the board of directors and personnel assemblies of many large companies. I recall one, when Apple was beginning. Steve Jobs was sitting at a board meeting with his bare feet on a coffee table. He turned us down, remarking that other parts of the world were in more need! United Way sent a thank you letter to our chairman of the board that I had raised \$125,000.

## **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

In August 1957, I bought a country home in Aptos, CA. It was on six beautiful acres, surrounded on three sides by Aptos Creek among redwoods. That's where I became a leader in the Santa Cruz area conservative movement.

The focus of issues, during that period, evolved from radical free speech at universities to the local spread of communism and the beginning of HIV. Then the attack on private property rights grew by resisting property growth and encroachment of traditional family values became apparent. I became heavily involved in each issue as it progressed and wrote many letters to news paper editors that I have saved.

My initial concern was about the growing communist influence starting in 1960. Vera was a leader in the local school PTA and had innocently shown the controversial movie, *Operation Abolition*. The radical left-wing opposition in San Francisco attended with unexpected rage and I met Karl Prussian there, who had assisted the FBI at the HUAC hearings and alerted me to the challenge.

As a result, I originated anti-communist home study groups and made presentations, using taped material, developed by a Spokane dentist. I attended a program at University of California, Santa Cruz, where communist leader Angila Davis, was prominent. News commentator, Cal Thomas, was on the panel and received very strong opposition from the audience. I talked to him afterward on the way to the car park and reminisced with him years later at the Maryland Church where my son-in-law is an assoc. pastor.

I learned the extent of communist influence in Santa Cruz county, such as Pastor of the local Unitarian Church being a communist. The Pastor of my church promoted an all-day conference, and I became aware of its organized left

wing leanings. While there, I met the editor of a newspaper from the Los Altos area, who Karl Prussian told me was an executive level Communist.

I became campaign chairman for Dr. Monteith, who was running against incumbent Congressman Leon Panetta. We were for traditional family values and also concerned about the threat from HIV. We ran into considerable backlash.

When Issues moved on from anti- communism to traditional family values, I joined a small Christian group that became actively involved with writing and distributing a newsletter about this subject.

I was elected to the Aptos Elementary School Board in 1963, but the next year I bought a nearly new home in Monte Sereno to eliminate the long drive over the coastal mountain range to work.

The most important event of my life for eternity though, was in 1970, when I became a Christian at age 50, as covered in my manuscript, *Spiritual Reflections*. I became involved with Dr. Jay Grimstead, Dir. of *Coalition For Revival (COR)*, and attended nationwide conferences in Houston. TX and Wash. DC, where I met Dr. James Kennedy of Coral Ridge Church.

The goal of COR, stated in his book, *Rebuilding Civilization on the Bible*, is to establish a united, Biblical theological standard of doctrine for the global body of Christ, which is consistent with the mainstream theology of the first 20 centuries.

I bought a small telephone answering and secretarial service in 1979 for Vera to operate. After buying out five competitor services in Santa Cruz and Santa Clara Counties, her business grew to 25 employees at three locations.

I bought a nearly new home in Scotts Valley in 1981 and later I became involved with the Chamber of Commerce, promoting private property rights against those who resisted building growth. We sold Vera's business in 1989 to two separate buyers and moved to Spokane. WA.

## **WORLD TRAVELS**

In 1982, I revisited all of my WW II battle sites and many other islands for six weeks Aug.1-Sept. 15, 1982. I interviewed natives and Japanese war veterans. Tapes and notes became the prime resource for my later writing. I developed a close relationship with a few WW II Japanese officers who I had encountered during combat.

In 1983, as a tour guide for Valour Tours, I took a group of six that I had served with during WW II to many of those same sites in 1983. Due to airline flight cancellation, I remained several weeks longer so I could represent our government at the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary ceremony of the battle.

In 1985, I went to Japan for 10 days, on space available, to interview those Japanese veterans, Major Akio Tani and Capt. Sakai Oba, whom I had encountered during combat on Guadalcanal and Saipan. My unit had been shelled by Tani's artillery and later I had walked through Oba's command, after their banzai attack on Saipan, to get my wound redressed. We became close friends and continued corresponding until they died.

I have since made two additional trips; one in 2010 as a veteran, along with active-duty personnel, on a repatriation ceremony and in May, 2014, with five other veterans, financed by the *Greatest Generation Foundation*. Four of them have since died. CBS accompanied us at Tarawa four days and covered the event briefly on national TV news.

That trip also included three days at Wellington, New Zealand, where I was joined by Nola, a NZ girlfriend from 70 years ago. We were welcomed as royalty by many dignitaries and were well covered by their local TV and print news.

## INVOLVEMENT IN ORGANIZATIONS

I became further involved in the local organizations. I was president of the Retired officers Assoc. the Downtown Exchange Club, Deacon in the Scotts Valley Baptist Church and chair of various committees.

I sold our Scotts Valley home and moved to Spokane on Oct. 13, 1989, a few days before the very damaging earthquake.

I was operated on for prostate cancer in 1990 and then became very involved in the Spokane community to 2016. I served as Vice Chair of the Spokane Republican Central Committee, president of the Retired Officers Assoc., The Sons of the American Revolution, Engineers Forum, The Westerners (incl. being custodian of that organization's publications).

I became Vice Chair of the Ice Age Floods Institute, handling a database of membership and government agencies. It resulted in Congress authorizing a National Geological Trail that follows the massive Ice Age floods that began at Greater Lake Missoula. The last flood was about 8,000 years ago.

I was Secretary of the national SMDA Endowment Fund and was active in several other organizations such as the Marine Corps League, Friendship Force and Bible Study Fellowship until double vision made driving too difficult near the end of 2016.

## RESEARCH / WRITING PROJECTS

I have written and published three books including *Faithful Warriors* (self-published) that was then rewritten and published by *The Naval Institute Press*. and since, *Thomas Elsom, Spokane's First Telephone Installer* which was published through the *Westerners*, a northwest history organization which I belonged to and was responsible for distribution, nation-wide of its many publications that had been written over the previous fifty years. My book was their first book format.

I have traveled all over the world since 1954, as detailed in my manuscript *Journeys Recalled*. The first nine years took advantage of daughter Janet's family discount passes as a cabin attendant with TWA. My greatest challenge was a five weeklong backpack lone adventure at nearly age 87 to the UK in 2007, walking in the footsteps of my royalty ancestors.

That became the basis of my manuscript, *Medieval Quest*. I had discovered my genealogical connection to King Edward 1 in 2000, which I had

documented in my manuscript, *Hello Ancestors* in 2002. In 2007, at age 87. I established a web site in 2010 that includes most of my many manuscripts on biography, history, genealogy and archeology. My three books can also be purchased from there. My many writings currently include the following:

## **DIFFERENT WAYS MY GENEALOGY LINKS INTO ROYALTY**

### **1. King Edward 1 of England 1239-1307**

**Gordon Ladd 1813-1900**

**m. Eliza Moulton 1822-1898— Dean 1790-1875— John Woodbridge 1620- 1594**

**m. Mercy Dudley 1621-1691— Tiploft 1430-1470--- Charlton 1405-1430--**

**Thomas Holland 1320-1360 m. Joan Plantagenet 1335-1385--- Edmond**

**Plantagenet 1303-1334— King Edward 1 1239-1307 m. 2<sup>nd</sup> Margaret Capet**

**1278-1318, daughter of King Phillip III of France 1245-1285 and continues back through Henry 1 of France, to Charlemagne and the earliest Franks.**

### **2. King Edward IV of England, on back to King Edward 1 of England as above.**

**A. Daniel Ladd 1686-1769**

**m. Mehetable Philbrick 1693-1779 ---- Roberts 1600-1673 ---- Hilton 1602-1674---**

**Lumley1483-1518--- Elizabeth Plantagenet**

**1464-1503 --- King Edward IV 1442-1483**

**B. Through Mercy Dudley 1621-1691, as above, for King Edward IV on to Cecilia Lumley to Elizabeth Plantagenet**

You ARE MY HERO!  
WE WILL ALWAYS HAVE  
NOV 21

I LOVE you PAUL  
Happy Birthday!  
I love you SO much  
-Kate

Happy 100th  
Happy 100th  
lots of love  
Sherry

Happy Birthday!  
Thank you for all you've  
done!  
-Scott Davis

Happy Birthday 100  
Dad I love  
Love you,  
Janet

Happy 100th Birthday,  
Grandpa! Your strength,  
courage, and stability  
have been an inspiration  
to us all! I love you!  
Watt

Happy Birthday!  
Uncle Dean  
Love Susan  
Jenny

Dad, you are my  
hero, my mentor, my  
example in life. Thanks for being  
my father! Happy Birthdays!  
Love Michelle

DEAN  
Happy 100th!  
Ron

Happy  
100th!  
Birthday  
Love Trevon

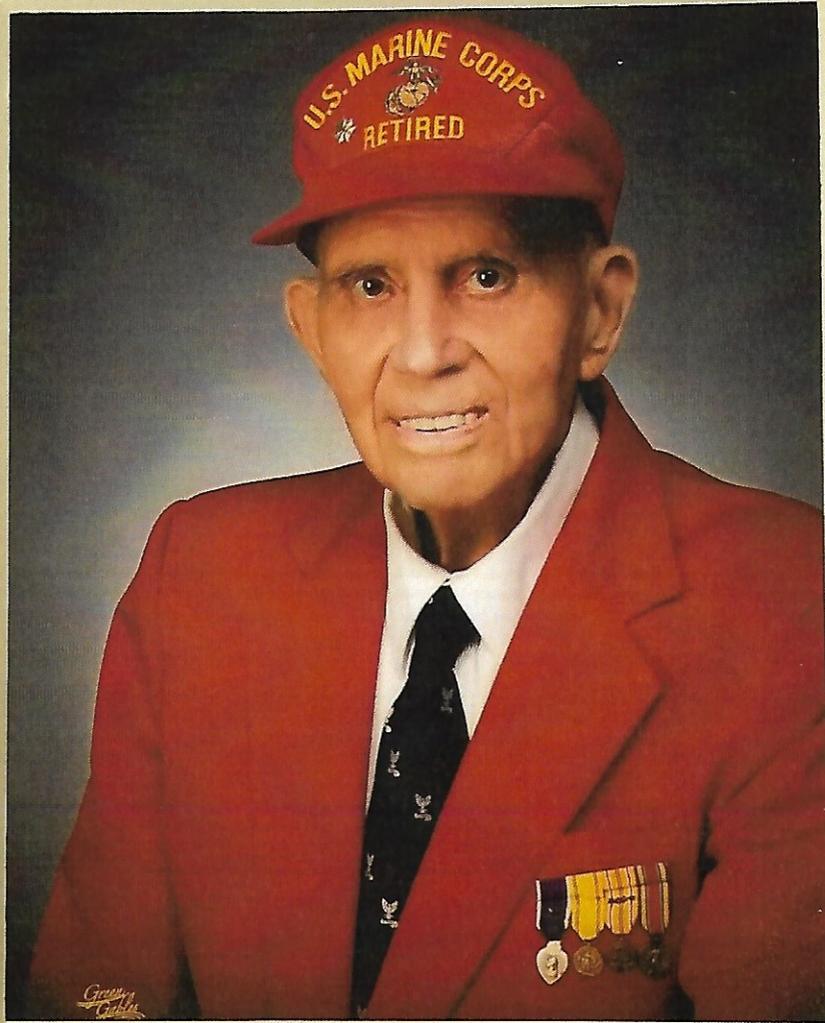
Happy 100th  
Birthday Great  
Have a great  
Birthday!  
Cecilia

Congratulations Dean!  
100 years old...  
... you're an  
amazing person.  
Melody C.

100 years old and 100%  
made-in-America!  
Steve Darnito

Happy 100th Day  
Dick Kaelin

Grandpa  
you are amazing &  
such an inspiration!  
I love you & Diana  
Robby  
DEAN!  
Chris



Happy 100th  
birthday Uncle  
Dean, our hero!  
Steve  
Happy 100th Birthday  
Grandpa!!!  
Love  
Jenny

Happy Billy Dasee

Never could you have guessed  
how great a legacy you would  
build. Thanking God for the life  
He gave you and how you have  
faithfully lived it. You have  
answered and honored MANY  
calls! Thank you Dean (LTC)!  
A truly remarkable 100 YEARS!  
Happy Birthday, DADDY  
Brad Marner

Happy Birthday Dean!  
Happy birthday you are a great American!

Grandpa thank you  
for all that you have  
done for us. We love you  
so much  
Thanks for being here  
we love you  
-Chris

Jerry Claridge

Happy birthday  
great grandpa

-Braeden

Daddy, you are  
special! I have  
a great 100th  
Birthday!  
Lia Bertholic

Rylie  
Loves  
you!  
Happy Happy  
Birthday Dean!  
Cousin Jeff

Happy Birthday!  
Love  
The Moyers

Happy 100th Birthday  
Grandpa! We are so  
thankful to the Lord  
for you and for blessing  
you with long life so that  
all of us can continue to  
learn from you. May you  
continue to delight in the  
Lord and look forward to  
spending eternity in His  
presence. We love you!  
Love Timothy, Julie, Anjal,  
Silas and James  
Pala mooti!

RYDER