



Herbert William Ridyard

July 6, 1925 - June 11, 2026

Herbert (“Herb”) W. Ridyard, Sr., a member of the Greatest Generation who dedicated his life to God, his country, his family, and the frontiers of space, passed away peacefully on Thursday, June 11, 2026, at the age of 100.

Born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, on July 6, 1925, he was the son of Herbert and Emily Ridyard, immigrants from England and Scotland, respectively. Herb was incredibly proud to be an American, and often reminded his older brothers, Thomas and John—who were born in Scotland—that he could become President of the United States, but they could not.

Answering the call of duty during WWII, Herb served two and a half years in the U.S. Army in Europe as a rifleman and ammunition bearer in a heavy machine gun squad in Patton’s Third Army, 94th Infantry Division. During the Battle of the Bulge, he saw action as a Platoon Runner when the 301st captured Sinz, Germany, along the Siegfried Line. Guided by the Holy Spirit, Herb led a platoon through a minefield that the melting snow had just revealed. He earned the Combat Infantry Badge and four Battle Stars: Northern France, Ardennes, Rhineland and Central Europe.

Upon returning home, Herb attended Lehigh University on the G.I. Bill, earning a Mechanical Engineering Degree, cum laude, in 1949. He then embarked on a remarkable career during the dawn of the Space Age at

National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (the predecessor to NASA), in Hampton, Virginia, where he designed a Mach 10 Hypersonic Wind Tunnel Nozzle and contributed to the design of the North American X-15, a hypersonic rocket-powered, crewed aircraft, all while earning a Master's Degree in Aeronautical Engineering at the University of Virginia in 1956. His work as one of the first bona fide Rocket Scientists left an enduring mark on the history of modern aerospace.

Moving back to Pennsylvania, Herb and his family lived in King of Prussia and then Valley Forge before retiring to Masonic Village, Elizabethtown in 2013. He worked for the General Electric Aerospace Re-entry Division for 32 years where he was Chief Engineer of the Minute Man Intercontinental Ballistic Missile Penetration Program.

Notwithstanding a demanding career, Herb always put his faith first. He was an active member of St. Matthew's United Methodist Church in Wayne, Pennsylvania, where he taught Sunday School, served as a lay leader, and led Boy Scout Troop 206. He found his voice later in life and cherished singing in church choirs even into his 99th year.

While his professional achievements were stellar, Herb's greatest legacy was his enduring love story. He was married to his beloved wife, Nancy Lou Ayre, also of Bethlehem, for almost 76 years. Together they built a foundation of unwavering devotion that served as an inspiration to everyone who knew them.

Herb is survived by his wife Nancy Lou, their two daughters and two sons, Amy Lou Landers (wife of Jeffrey) of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Leslie Ann Monahan (wife of Mark) of Allentown, Pennsylvania; Herbert W. Ridyard, Jr. (husband of Kristine) of Storrs, Connecticut; and Robert Thomas Ridyard (husband of Lori), of Spring City, Pennsylvania; seven grandchildren and

twelve great-grandchildren.

Family and friends are invited to attend a memorial service at Sell Chapel, Masonic Village, 200 Freemason Drive, Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania 17022, at 12:30 on Sunday, June 28, 2026. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the 94th Infantry Division Historical Society, c/o John Clyburn, Jr., 136 Hippocrates Way, Burlington, NJ 08016 (“In Memory of Herb Ridyard”).

Upcoming Events

Memorial Service

JUN **28**. 12:30 PM (ET)

Sell Chapel
200 Freemason Drive
Elizabethtown, PA 17552