



## Theodore J. Gourley Sr.

June 11, 1918 - August 4, 2014

“I have no idea when romance will end” is the opening line of Theodore Gourley’s unpublished memoirs. “Enduring love and an incurable curiosity about life and world cultures have been an essential part of my active life.”

A retired military officer with the United States Air Force and veteran of World War II, Theodore Gourley passed away on Monday morning, August 4, 2014, after a brief illness.

In recent years, Ted had begun to write his life story with the hope of leaving a legacy of memories for his family. He often marveled at his good fortune to have had such a rewarding and long life shared with his wife of 68 years. Josephine Gourley passed away in 2010.

Born in Clifton, New Jersey, he was the second son of Louise and Hugh Gourley. Louise was a ribbon weaver and his father, a shipping clerk in a linen factory. “My birth came four years after the silent movie Tillie’s Punctured Romance, the first full length comedy silent film released in 1914. His first memories, however, were of moving to the second floor of a two-family house near Paterson. He particularly remembered the trolley car that passed by the house, and the clip-clop of horses’ hoofs from the horse-drawn wagons and carriages.

Ted Gourley's love affair with adventure began when he was just three years old—a journey by train from the East Coast to a farm in Volga, South Dakota. Ted spent his earliest years growing up on a farm, riding the family horse Lady to the one room school house, and of course, doing typical farm chores. From this humble beginning, Ted's curiosity and love of life took root. He would instill his passion for learning to his children.

In 1935, as a young man of 17, he took a job with Sikorsky Aircraft in Stratford, Connecticut. He later admitted he fabricated some prior experience in sheet metal working in order to get hired. It would not be the last time that Ted Gourley would spin some “blarney.” He loved hearing—and telling—a good story. His years at Sikorsky fostered a real interest in flying. Prior to the outbreak of World War II, Ted worked for American Airlines in Chicago. He had earned his aircraft mechanic license and had seven years of experience in aviation. His position in aviation building meant he'd likely not be drafted into military service. His goal was to learn to just to build airplanes but to fly. He enlisted in the Aviation Cadet Program. He would advance in the United States Air Force during the war to pilot a B24 Bomber, known as “the liberator.” During one mission over Germany in November 1944, an emergency landing forced the B24 down behind enemy lines. He and his crew were reported Missing in Action.

After the war, Ted remained in the Air Force, advancing eventually to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. During the Cold War years, he served in New Foundland, Massachusetts, Alabama, Hawaii, New Jersey, and the Azores. Retirement brought an opportunity to return to school and to the Midwest where he earned his Bachelor's Degree. He taught at history, social studies, and foreign languages—he was fluent in Flemish, French and Spanish—in Evesham Township.

After his “second retirement,” Ted continued to led an adventurous life. He climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro and sailed his catamaran, Jo Do Mar, through

hurricane Beth. He had trekked through Nepal and crewed aboard a whale ship in the Caribbean. He truly had a life well lived. His memoirs, although not published, is indeed a legacy for his family and his many friends.

Surviving are his seven children: Dr. Theodore J. Gourley, Jr., Mt. Holly, NJ; Janice Gourley Shaffer, Escondido, CA; Dr. Dennis Radigan Gourley, Woodbridge, VA; Susan Marie Gourley-Damon, Chalfont, PA; Paula Gourley-Taylor Kristiniak, Williamstown, NJ; LTC. John H. Gourley, currently stationed at USAG Bavaria; and Kevin N. Gourley, Marburg, Germany. Additionally, he is survived by seven grandchildren and five step-grandchildren; one great-grand daughter, and six step-great grandchildren. His brother Constance Gourley lives in West Patterson, NJ.

Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated 11 am, Thursday at Sacred Heart RC Church, 260 High St., Mt. Holly. Interment will follow in the NJ Veterans Memorial Cemetery. Relatives and friends may visit with the family Wednesday, from 2 to 4 pm and again from 7 to 9 pm at the Perinchief Chapels, 438 High St., Mt. Holly.

# Cemetery Details

## BGWCD Veteran's Memorial Cemetery

350 Provinceline Rd.,  
Wrightstown, NJ

# Previous Events

## Visitation

AUG 6. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

Perinchief Chapels  
438 High Street  
Mt. Holly, NJ 08060  
(609) 267-0399  
info@perinchief.com  
<http://www.perinchief.com>

## Visitation

AUG 6. 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM (ET)

Perinchief Chapels  
438 High Street  
Mt. Holly, NJ 08060  
(609) 267-0399  
info@perinchief.com  
<http://www.perinchief.com>

## **Mass of Christian Burial**

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AUG 7. 11:00 AM (ET)

Sacred Heart Church in Mount Holly  
260 High St.  
Mount Holly, NJ

# Tribute Wall



“ Theodore J. Gourley Sr.

October 29, 2022 at 11:57 AM



“ Theodore J. Gourley Sr.

October 29, 2022 at 09:53 AM



“ To the entire Gourley clan,

*So many memories from Mt. Holly. He just spoke to Mom not too long before his passing. He used to call her often. What an amazing man he was, as was your Mom. We all had so many wonderful times together at dinners in the back yard of that "house across the street from us.*

*Know that I am thinking about all of you and praying for some comfort in your time of grieving knowing that he lived the fullest of lives - don't we all wish we could have done all the "adventures" he did. Much love, Barbara Geho Baboyian, Germantown, MD*

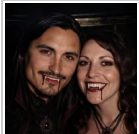
**barbara baboyian** - November 26, 2014 at 05:09 AM

LK

“ To Teds family,  
I'm so very sorry for your loss. I met Ted at the Yoga Center and enjoyed sitting next to him(on a mat on the floor!) He was so in love with life and his enthusiasm was contagious. He said once that he didn't have enough hours in the day for all of the things he wanted to do! He had such wisdom,wonderful stories and an occasional blonde joke.  
I adored him.  
Lee kaiser

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lee kaiser - August 08, 2014 at 12:06 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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Stacey Reeves - August 08, 2014 at 09:26 AM



*We were so honored to have met Ted, and been a part of his life.*

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Stacey Reeves - August 08, 2014 at 09:27 AM

SC

“ Dear Cousins, May the comfort of God's love bring you peace and guide you through your loss. We thank God for sharing his servant Ted with us. From the time I was young I had heard stories of "Cousin Ted Gourley." I did not know him as well as some other family members but have great respect for his many gifts. He will be remembered like my Grandpa Con Heylens for his spirit, wisdom, and drive for lifelong learning. His is very much a life worth celebrating. Take care. The Shawn Culey Family, Sioux Falls, SD



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**Shawn Culey** - August 07, 2014 at 03:37 PM

AA

“ TED - YOU HAVE A GREAT SINGING VOICE - ONE THAT RIVAL'S THE LIKES OF THE LATE ENZIO PINZA; AND "SOME ENCHANTED EVENING" THOUGH WE NEVER DID OPERA AND STUCK TO THE POP TUNES LIKE "MAME", "5 FOOT 2" AND MANY MORE - EVEN "OKLAHOMA" AND OTHER SHOW TUNES, I LOVED TO HEAR YOU SING THE GERMAN DRINKING SONG; I'M SURE WE COULD HAVE DONE MANY OTHERS TOGETHER TOO TED. I KNOW THEY HAVE RESERVED A SPECIAL PLACE "UP THERE" FOR YOU TO SING ON DEMAND TED. I WILL LOOK FORWARD TO GETTING TOGETHER WITH YOU AT A MUCH LATER DATE - IF I HAVE MY SAY; BUT AS YOU FOUND OUT - ONE NEVER KNOWS WHEN THE FINAL CALLING COMES AND THAT CURTAIN FALLS UPON US WHEN WE'RE UPON THIS EARTH FOR THE LAST TIME - I WILL SURELY MISS YOU AND YOUR ESPECIALLY GREAT BARITONE SINGING VOICE AT HAPPY HOUR TED, BUT YOUR MEMORY IN MY MIND WILL LAST FOREVER; OF ALL THE FOLKS I HAVE DEALT WITH IN MY PRACTICE OF UROLOGY - YOU LOOKED LIKE YOU HAD THE BEST CHANCE OF ALL OF EM: TO MAKE IT TO 100 YRS OF AGE SO THE LORD MUST HAVE SPECIAL PLANS FOR YOU UP THERE BECAUSE YOU GOT AN "EARLY" CALLING, AND WITHOUT ANY WARNING EITHER

WITH GREAT ADMIRATION TED; WE WILL MISS YOU

DOC AND HARRIET

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AL SQUITIERI, MD, FACS, COLONEL US ARMY - August 07, 2014 at 03:27 AM

JH

“ To the family of Ted. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you. I am so great full for the great conversations with Ted, Connie and Connie's son a few years ago when they visited South Dakota. We visited the home where Ted spent a few years growing up near Volga. Ted also shared many great memories of my grandfather Constance Heylens. I farm and own some of the properties that Ted and grandpa lived and farmed on many years ago. I pray that we all can maintain the flair for life as Ted did.

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**John Heylens,Volga,SD** - August 06, 2014 at 11:04 PM

BJ

“ Ted Gourley Family, Our thoughts are with all of you. Ted was a wonderful man and full of adventure, we really enjoyed visiting with him when he came to South Dakota, I'm sure he will be missed greatly.

*Bill and Kathy Heylens.....Volga, South Dakota*

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**Bill Heylens Jr.** - August 06, 2014 at 09:16 AM

PG

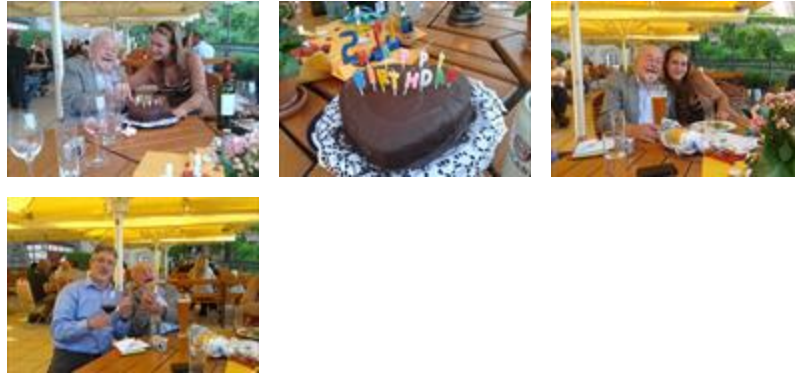
“ Erica, I didn't have the pleasure of knowing your Grandfather, but I am so sorry for your loss. My prayers are with you and your family as you say goodbye.....Love & Light.....Phyllis Gatti

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**Phyllis Gatti** - August 05, 2014 at 11:45 AM

RB

“ 4 files added to the album *95 Birthday in Germany* <3



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**Rebecca Berger** - August 04, 2014 at 10:37 PM

PA

“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



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**Patsy** - August 04, 2014 at 09:15 PM

PK

“ *Lt. Col (Ret) and Mrs. T.J. Gourley. That is how I addressed all my thank you notes, invitations, cards and what nots through the years... The most wonderful Uncle Ted and cutest sweetest Aunt Jo are reunited. I will miss you so much Uncle Ted and your wonderful laugh, asking me for the past 41 years about Hot Cross Buns, talking about taking Greg and me in, and just hanging out. You have been such an inspiration to not only me, but Owen, Eryn and Clara and Neal. You were the topic of one of Neal's projects this year for school - The most interesting person I know. I will miss your cooking. I will always remember trips in the bay on the catamaran, hiking wherever, and just stuff. I have so, so many memories. I am so honored to have known you and to have called you Uncle. Thank you for that! Love you always! Patsy*

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**Patsy Keller** - August 04, 2014 at 08:25 PM

BJ

“ *3 files added to the album New Album Name*



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**Bill Gourley, Jr.** - August 04, 2014 at 04:45 PM

BJ

“ My Uncle Ted was the first younger brother to my dad, Bill Gourley. He was so proud of my dad and their youngest brother, my Uncle Connie, and he spoke lovingly of them often. After my dad died 18 years ago, Uncle Ted became a treasured connection to my dad with countless...yes, countless :-) stories of their adventures and pranks growing up in South Dakota or of how dad helped his inexperienced younger brother wrangle a job out of Sikorsky Aircraft. Uncle Ted was so proud of his Josephine, their children and the entire Gourley family in which he showed great interest and affection. Never shy or quiet in a crowd, family parties will never be the same without him. You will be sorely missed, Uncle Ted. Rest in peace.

Love,  
Bill Gourley, Jr.

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**Bill Gourley, Jr.** - August 04, 2014 at 03:47 PM

MK

Colonel Gourley is how I and my brothers and sisters always addressed him. It was a different time back in the late 1950's into the late 1960's that many Air Force families settled into a new Ravikio built "Lakeview" section of Mount Holly. We all grew up together - the Gourleys, The Sengs, the Gallos, The Gehos, The Molossos and more. As the years went on, we all went our separate ways but those memories still last. I was so grateful that he took the time to come to my younger sister's funeral in 2005. What an exciting and full life he had. So although this is a sad time, memories will comfort you Ted, Janice, Dennis, Susan, Paula, John and Kevin  
"Taffy" Seng Kelly for all the Sengs

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**Marianne "Taffy" Seng Kelly** - August 07, 2014 at 11:51 AM