

Heber Blaine "Bud" Bankhead (1919 - 2011)



Heber Blaine "Bud" Bankhead, 92, of Peachtree City, Ga., passed away Feb. 15, 2011. He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Patricia C. Bankhead; three daughters, Jan (Lyle) Guilbeau, Cindy (Mike) Clements and Debbie Bankhead; and five grandchildren.

Blaine was born and raised in Wellsville, Utah, to Heber and Margaret Bankhead. He graduated from Utah State University. He began his flying career with the Army Air Corp in January 1942. He served with the 99th Bombardment Group flying a B-17 they called "The Persuader." The 99th was one of the most decorated bomb groups of the war stationed in North Africa. Blaine flew for 50-plus missions as First Pilot stationed in North Africa.

In July 1943 he was awarded "The Distinguished Flying Cross." He skillfully flew a crippled bomber back from Messina, Sicily, with the entire crew intact landing safely in North Africa. He was credited for his achievements with the Army Air Corps WWII, President's Citation Distinguished Flying Cross, five Bronze Stars, nine Air Medals, a Purple Heart, and American Defense Medal before he returned stateside. Lt. Col. Blaine Bankhead retired from the United States Air Force Reserve in April 1978.