

Obituary of Past President Colonel Robert S. Coleman of our Society, years 1998 & 1999

ROBERT S. COLEMAN

NEWPORT NEWS - Colonel (Ret.) Robert Sherrill Coleman, 86, of Newport News, Va., passed away peacefully on May 16, 2012, at his home and surrounded by his loving family.

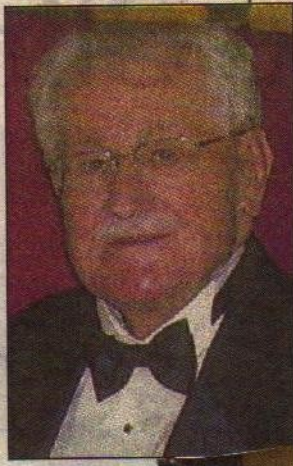
Born in Sylacauga, Ala., in 1926, he was the son of Dr. Stephen Nelson Coleman and Mrs. Mary Culberson Coleman.

Col. Coleman began a distinguished military career at the age of 18 when he enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1944 during World War II. He served for three years in North Africa and the European Command.

He returned home after the war and began studies at the University of Alabama for a career in medicine. On June 18, 1950, he married the love of his life, Bette Jeane Liddell of Columbus, Ga. His peacetime life was abruptly interrupted by the outbreak of the Korean War just a week after his wedding. He immediately mobilized and remained on active duty for 28 years. In the ensuing decades, his military service took him to Austria, Korea, France, Germany, Okinawa, as well as many parts of the U.S. He completed two tours of combat duty in Vietnam. Col. Coleman was awarded numerous medals including the Bronze Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Meritorious Service Medal, and the Air Medal.

After retiring from military service, Col. Coleman joined Aero Maritime International and devoted 10 years to planning and building the port operation system in Lagos, Nigeria. After returning to the U.S., he assumed management of one of his family's businesses, the Coleman Garden Plow Manufacturing Company in Dothan, Ala.

A lifelong scholar of American history and a relentless genealogical researcher, Col. Coleman was an active member of the Thomas Nelson Jr. Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, the William Penn Society, the War of 1812 Society (as President of the Virginia Society), and the Sons of Confederate Veterans (as Commander of the Maquuder-Ewell



In 1993, he founded the Descendants of Valentine Hollingsworth Sr. Society for historical, educational, preservation, and genealogical research purposes. He was the organization's first president and the longtime editor of its quarterly publication, "Hollingsworth Heritage."

In keeping with his lifelong devotion to service, Col. Coleman regularly volunteered and worked with the veterans hospitalized at the Hampton V.A. Medical Center. He also was active as a Freemason for many years, belonged to the

Saint Andrew's Society, and was a member and officer in the Braxton-Perkins Post 25 of the American Legion.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his stepmother, Odessa Coleman; and his four brothers, Virgil, Jasper, Benjamin Stewart and Floyd.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Bette Liddell Coleman; his four children, Mary-Alice Coleman and her husband Charles Mattson, of Davis, Calif., Betsy Fox and her husband Jim, of Chesapeake, Va., Melissa Coleman-White and her husband Steven White, of Newport News, and Robert Stephen Coleman, of Davis, Calif.; his seven grandchildren, Cory Coleman, Amber Coleman-White, Matthew Coleman Mattson, Elise Coleman-White, Christy Philyaw (husband Travis), Amy Fox, and Nathan Coleman-White; and his many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Robert Coleman was a devoted husband, a caring father, a beloved grandfather, an American veteran, and a patriot. He shall be deeply missed, and his legacy will be treasured by many.

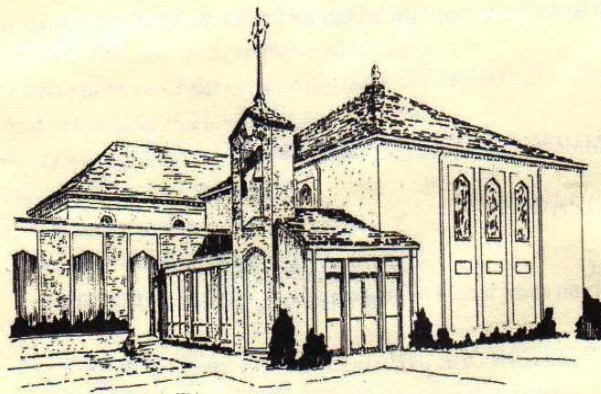
The family would like to extend a special thank you to the Rev. Gary Bagley and the many friends at Hilton Presbyterian Church, and also the Home and Hospice care nurses/staff Chandra, Terri, and Melissa for their excellent and loving care during Col. Coleman's final months.

Masonic rites will be held at 7 p.m. Saturday, May 19, at Peninsula Funeral Home. The family will receive friends following until 8:30 p.m. A funeral service officiated by the Rev. Gary Bagley will be held at 4 p.m. Sunday, May 20, 2012, at Hilton Presbyterian Church, 34 Main Street, Newport News, VA 23601. Col. Coleman will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery at a later date.

Arrangements are being made by Peninsula Funeral Home.

View and post condolences on our online guestbook at dailypress.com/guestbooks.

Hilton Presbyterian Church



Hilton Presbyterian Church

Newport News, VA

A Service of Witness to the Resurrection

In loving memory of

Colonel Robert Sherrill Coleman

January 10, 1926 - May 16, 2012