



WALTER A. READ

W6ASH

Silent Key

November 11, 2004

Walt's obituary published in the San Jose Mercury News.

Walter A. Read, Lt. Col., U.S. Army, Ret. Walter A. Read, passed away peacefully at El Camino Hospital, Mtn. View on Nov. 11, 2004 at the age of 92. Devoted and loving husband of Marion for 66 wonderful years. Cherished father of James Read of Inverness, CA and Billie Jean Gergis of Concord, CA. Dearly loved grandfather of James and Thomas Read, Mark, Erik, Jeanne, Kristin and Peter Gergis. Proud Great Grandfather of Emily, Aaron, Patrick and Maya Read. Loving brother of Edward M. Read and Betty Read Thornton. Dear Uncle of many loving nephews and nieces. He loved you all.

Walt was born in Oakland, Ca on May 31, 1912 and enjoyed early childhood in Grass Valley, CA, then Berkeley, CA. At age 11, he built a crystal radio and a one-tube receiver at age 16. Clearly an avid interest in radio was developing and he obtained his amateur radio license, W6ASH. By age 19 he obtained a commercial license and was a radio operator aboard the S.S. President Pierce. Upon returning home from the Western Pacific, he installed the 1st police radios for Oakland cruisers. Walter attended U.C. Berkeley and graduated with an Electrical Engineering degree. He enjoyed playing trombone in the Cal band and belonged to the Army ROTC Signal Corp. Unit.

He married Marion Birkland, a high school teacher, on August 14, 1938 and in Sept., 1939, son Jim was born. Walt was called into service in Dec. 1940 and assigned to the 10th Army USAAF at March Field where he made improvements to Northrup Black Widow Night Fighter Aircraft Radar. In May 1941 he was sent to a 3 month MIT RADAR School and returned to March Field where daughter Billie Jean was born in Oct. 1941. Subsequently, he installed and commanded many Pacific Coast Radar Sites and set up and commanded Radar school at Camp Pinedale in Fresno, CA. He completed WWII as company commander of Radar sites in Burma. Following 6 years in military service, Walter and brother, Edward M. Read, formed a partnership in their television business in Concord, CA. There, Walt established one of the first early cable T.V. networks. He was also a president of Lion's Club in the 1950's. For the next 25 years, he designed and perfected microwave antennas for Dalmo Victor and Randtron Corp., retiring in 1982.

Walt's passion was amateur radio and emergency services. He served in the Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS) for 15 years and became Northern California's Chief Net Director. He was a designer and builder of

the amateur radio OSCAR orbiting satellite program. Walter contributed over 30 years of emergency communication service with CDF, Red Cross and RACES. This included earthquakes in Anchorage, Coalinga, Mexico City, Loma Prieta and fires at Big Sur, Grass Valley, Inverness Ridge and many other events. Walt was the father of the Southern Peninsula Emergency Communication System (SPECS). This was the 1st amateur emergency communication system in Santa Clara County and it was installed in El Camino Hospital, using his radio license, W6ASH.

Among his many other interests, Walt loved to travel with his family, studied Native American Indian lore, played trombone with his band and enjoyed photography. He was also a sports fan and an avid reader. Walter became a "Silent Key" on Veterans Day, 2004. He will be dearly missed and remembered by all his family and many wonderful friends. A private family Memorial Service was held at the CUSIMANO FAMILY COLONIAL Mortuary, Mtn. View, CA on Nov. 14, 2004. Private inurnment will be at Riverside National Cem., Riverside, CA. Donations in Walters's memory may be made to the American Cancer Society or the Palo Alto Red Cross.

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