

## *Floyd Francis Reck*

We are gathered here this morning to bear witness to our faith in the resurrection, the resurrection of all who are buried in Jesus Christ the Lord and resurrection of Floyd Francis Reck. Floyd died on July 11, after a period of declining health. He was 90. Floyd had two great loves in life – his beloved wife Carrie, who preceded him in death in 1995, and the US Navy. It is as his family, his church family, his friends, and a grateful nation that we are here today.

Floyd Reck was born in 1918 near Buffalo Lake, Minnesota, the 2<sup>nd</sup> son of the six children of Elmer and Sarah Reck. With his brother and four sisters, Floyd grew up on the family farm. He started school a year early, as his older sister was unwilling to go to school alone. Floyd distinguished himself as both a scholar and an athlete in high school, playing on the school's state championship basketball team. On that team he also found a life-long friend with whom he eventually had a business relationship. Floyd used to drive a horse and wagon to school until finally, after a summer vacation trip to the world outside of Buffalo Lake, he demanded a car to drive to school – or he would quit. His parents got him a model T.

After high school Floyd attended Hamlin University for two years. Then the Second World War came along. Floyd left college, qualified for flight training, and became a pilot in the United States Navy. He flew a sea plane, seeing service in the southwest Pacific, doing both bombing runs and air sea rescue. Following the war Floyd qualified for a special program in aeronautical engineering at California Institute of Technology, earning a master's degree. In his 26 years of active service, the Navy made good on its promise to “show you the world”, as Floyd was stationed on both coasts and places between, as well as overseas assignments such as Trinidad. He did test flight training with the guys with “the right stuff” like Chuck Yeager. Once in a layover in Thule, Greenland, he ran into a man who asked, “Did you do sea rescue in the war? You rescued me!”

Floyd's most challenging assignment was as the executive officer of the Brunswick, Maine, installation. During his service there, they lost a flight crew that went down at sea, and the commanding officer was not up to handling the memorial service, so that difficult duty fell to Floyd. Floyd found a faithful word for that situation in Ecclesiastes 3, a text I will read later in the service.

Floyd's favorite duty station was the installation at China Lake. China Lake – the base is nowhere near China and has no lake. Even so, this top secret installation in the Mohave Dessert of California was a choice assignment Floyd and Carrie enjoyed. Particularly in June 1963. As the Executive Officer, Floyd has the duty (!) of escorting President John Kennedy on a day long inspection that was the highlight of his military career. Daughter Shelly had her high school yearbook signed by the President. It is rumored Carrie never washed the white gloves she wore when she shook JFK's hand. Even Floyd was impressed. He used to say, “I am a life-long Republican and I didn't vote for him in 1960, but I was really impressed by that young man, and I planned to vote for him in 1964.”

Floyd retired from the Navy in 1967 with the rank of Captain. The now empty nester couple settled in Coronado, California, and Floyd went to work with that high school basketball teammate from Minnesota, with Weiser Sporting goods of San Diego. In 1990 Floyd and Carrie moved to Midlothian to spend their latter years with and near their son and daughter.

Floyd first met Carrie Ellen Strong over the radio. Around 1939 Floyd heard a young woman singing on a South Dakota radio station that also was featuring a very young Lawrence Welk. At the time he thought, "I'd like to meet that woman." A year later on New Year's Day the two met at a party. As the conversation developed, Floyd learned Carrie was the vocalist he had heard on the radio. The relationship blossomed, and along with a generation of other young couples, they rushed to the altar in the days following the December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, marrying on Christmas Eve, 1941. Carrie and Floyd enjoyed 53 wonderful years together before her death in 1995. They had two children, Floyd Francis, Jr, and Shelly. It was Carrie's wish that she precede him in death, but "not by long". We give thanks today that after somewhat of an extended delay that is but a not-long wink in God's eye, Carrie and Floyd are now re-united. As will be their ashes, as they are interred together in the church memorial garden later today.

Floyd was brilliant to the point of being inventive. As was needed from the naval and aviation engineers of his day, Floyd could fabricate just about anything he needed for work or at home. He was equally comfortable at home with the family or greasing the skids at the Officers' Club, or puttering around in his workshop. As you might expect from a career Navy man, Floyd was a stickler for doing things the right way at the right time, meaning the first time. As that old saying goes, "everything has its place, everything in its place." He was an attentive and proud, but I suspect also demanding grandfather. He was always ready with a story, reminiscence, a big smile, and a warm handshake.

Floyd was born and baptized in the old Evangelical United Brethren Church, now part of the United Methodist Church. Throughout his naval career the family worshipped either in the base chapel or in neighboring churches. He and Carrie first became Presbyterians while living in Maryland. When they moved to Richmond in 1990, they joined Bon Air Presbyterian. Here Floyd served as a teller, counting the Sunday collection on Monday mornings. He was a devoted reader of the *These Days* devotional booklets (and wanted to know where they were when it was time for the next edition; we began mailing him his copy years ago). Until his legs gave out, Floyd was such a fixture on the aisle seat of the back row in Sunday worship that some years he logged perfect attendance. As his health kept him homebound, Floyd looked forward to the elders' in home monthly service of Holy Communion. He was always eager to receive his pastors' prayers and visits.

Floyd Reck was preceded in death by Carrie Ellen Strong Reck, his loving wife of 53 years; his son, Floyd Francis Reck Jr.; his parents, Elmer F. Reck and Sarah Manthei Reck of Buffalo Lake, Minnesota; a brother, Wesley Reck; and three sisters, Erma Chadbourn Reck, Lilah Reck Hubin and Mavis Reck Thompson. He is survived by his sister, Phyllis Lucille Engstrom; daughter, Shelly and her husband, Fletcher Wright; daughter-in-law, Kathleen Morris Reck; four grandsons and 11 great-grandchildren.

Having gathered for our mutual support and comfort, and to bear witness to our faith, let us worship God:

R. Charles Grant  
Bon Air Presbyterian Church  
Richmond, VA  
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