



# Harold Sr

**Godfrey | Tuesday, October 14 2014**

Harold Richard Baird Sr., 86, died at 2:30 a.m. Tuesday, October 14, 2014 of natural causes at Alton Rehabilitation and Nursing. Born May 3, 1928 in Gillespie, IL, he was the son of William J. and Loraine (Williams) Baird.

Mr. Baird (Corky) served in the U.S. Army for nine years and the Navy Seabee's for fifteen years, pride fully retiring with 24 years of service. Arriving in Italy in 1946, he immediately assumed responsibility as a Disbursing Clerk. A passionate lover of history, places he traveled to included Leghorn, Switzerland, and Rome where he visited The Coliseum and attended an audience with the Pope. He often noted entering The Coliseum was freely granted as well as exploring the ruins uninhibited.

Corky shared lengthy detailed stories with family and friends outlining his military service, especially as it related to some dramatic adventures in multiple locations; such as Harlem, Georgia, Colorado Springs, and the Yukon. A desire which remained unfulfilled was to serve as a history teacher. However, he influenced many family members who developed an interest in history; specifically a focus on the Civil War. Mr. Baird toured a majority of key battlefields impacted by the War Between The States.

He was a member of the Odd Fellows, VFW Post 1308, and a past president of the Alton High School Booster Club. Community members have stated they recall Corky and Faye (his wife of 66 years) sitting in the same row at countless Alton High School basketball games in the old "West Junior High School Gymnasium." A longtime Boy Scout leader, he chaperoned young men at Camp Warren Levis and on noteworthy hikes like the Lincoln Heritage Trail in Springfield. His collection of antique tools is legendary.

On September 11, 1948 he married the former Ella Faye Wood. She survives. Also surviving are two daughters; Sandra Gellar (Jim) of Tulsa, OK, Lori Schwartz (Gary) of Lake Cormorant, MS, a son, Harold "Richard" Baird, Jr. (Terry O'Connor) of Alton, and Butch Chapman (Brenda) of Jerseyville, raised and considered a son.

He is also survived by 16 grandchildren, 22 great grandchildren, and two great-great grandchildren. Along with his parents, he was preceded in death by a daughter, Phyllis Harrell, and two brothers, Gerald and James Baird.

Visitation will be from 4:00-8:00 p.m. Friday, October 17, 2014 at Gent Funeral Home in Alton where funeral services will be at 11:00 a.m. Saturday, October 18, 2014. Reverend Tom Olney will officiate. Burial will be at Valhalla Memorial Park in Godfrey. Memorials may be made to the Salvation Army or the USO. Online guestbook and information may be found at [www.gentfuneralhome.com](http://www.gentfuneralhome.com)