

William Orland Gruber

Port Hadlock, Washington
June 4, 1920 - June 1, 2014

William Orland Gruber died peacefully at the age of 93.

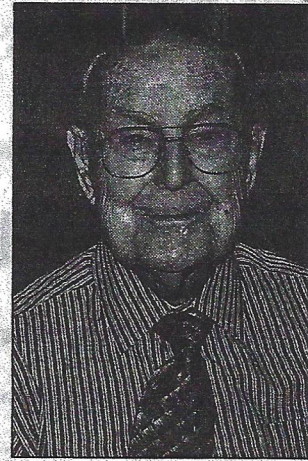
He was born in Great Bend, Kansas, and was the second child of John and Bessie (Strickland) Gruber.

Bill always said that he had the best parents anyone could ever have and that Great Bend was the perfect place to grow up. His father, John, owned a sand and gravel business, so Bill and his older brother, Vernon, grew up helping in the pit. Because a pond formed at the digging site, Bill learned to swim almost as soon as he began to walk. At the age of 13, he got his first driving license and started to drive a dump truck to deliver gravel for the family business.

After graduating from Great Bend High School, he moved to California to learn a trade in the aviation industry. One evening he went roller-skating with friends and met a pretty, dark-haired girl named Virginia Norton. He and Virginia married and settled down in Redondo Beach, California.

Bill served in the Navy during World War II and was stationed in Coronado, California, as a boat instructor on LST craft. After the war he returned to the Los Angeles area, where he worked at the Douglas Aircraft Co. for 20 years. In the evenings, he continued his education at Loyola University. The skills he learned there enabled him to advance his career in various management positions at North American Aircraft, National Cash Register, Western Gear and several other large companies.

He and Virginia enjoyed traveling and visited Europe and Asia. In 1985, the couple retired and built



their dream home at Cape George in Port Townsend, Washington. They had been married 62 years at the time of Virginia's death.

At the age of 90, Bill married Beverly Gauntlett, and they shared three happy years together.

Bill was a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Port Townsend, the Quilcene Masonic Lodge, Key City Order of the Eastern Star, Port Townsend Kiwanis Club and Nile Shrine. He was particularly proud of his sponsorship of more than 100 children who received free medical treatment at the Shriners Children's Hospital.

He was a loving and devoted husband, father, grandfather, brother-in-law and uncle. Family members say he will be missed by all who knew and loved him.

He is survived by his second wife, Beverly, of Port Townsend; daughter Lynn Chase (Ron) of Port Hadlock; grandson Aaron Cox, of Los Angeles; granddaughter Jolene Cox of San Rafael, California; sister-in-law Lorna Wyman; stepchildren Jeanne Meyer and James Gauntlett and their spouses; and many nieces and nephews.

Bill was preceded in death by his parents, John and Bessie Gruber; his brother, Vernon John Gruber; and his first wife, Virginia.

A memorial service is set for 1 p.m., Saturday, June 28 at First Presbyterian Church of Port Townsend, 1111 Franklin St.