



Alice Jane Czaja

November 11, 1919 - February 14, 2017

Alice Jane (Ahearn) Czaja, 97, passed into eternal peace at 1:55 pm on February 14, 2017. A resident of the Rigden Farm independent living community in Fort Collins, Colorado, the cause of death was medical complications resulting from pneumonia.

Alice was born on November 11, 1919, in Lynn, Massachusetts, to Jane (McDonnell) Ahearn (d. 1921) and Thomas J. Ahearn (d. 1962). A child of immigrants to this country from Canada (Jane) and Ireland (Thomas), her childhood home was Waltham, Massachusetts. She had two siblings, Florence M. (d. 1995) and John S. (d. 2005). During her childhood, she developed a deep and simple faith, unbreakable bonds with her siblings, life-long friendships, an intellectual curiosity, and a passion for Red Sox baseball. After graduating from high school, she embarked on a life journey that can be easily described as well-lived. Deeply influenced by the values of Saint Francis of Assisi, Alice firmly believed in compassion, community, and service.

When the United States entered World War II, she volunteered for duty as a US Navy WAVE (Women Accepted for Emergency Volunteer Service). Called to active duty in December of 1942, she completed training as an Aviation Storekeeper at Hunter College and Indiana University. Assigned to the US Naval Air Station at Hutchinson, Kansas, she supported the training of naval aircrews as a property and supply clerk. She was discharged as an Aviation

Storekeeper First Class on November 23, 1945. She took a great deal of pride in her service, but saw it simply as her duty while her nation was at war.

Returning home to Waltham, she resumed her employment as an administrative clerk with the Waltham Police Department, where she worked prior to enlisting. She remained with the police department until 1955, when she accepted a clerk stenographer position with the US Army as a civilian employee in Orleans, France. While in France, she traveled extensively, skied in the Alps, and enjoyed exploring Europe's history and culture. It was in France that she met her future husband, Rudolph (Rudy) P. Czaja, a Lieutenant Colonel in the US Army assigned to the US Army Europe's Medical Division.

They were married on July 25, 1959, in Orleans, France. Alice resigned her position and actively engaged in the community service activities of a military spouse. While in France, she gave birth to their son, Michael, in 1960. Returning from France in 1961, Alice and Rudy served in various military assignments until his retirement as a Colonel in 1966. After retirement, the family settled in Paonia, Colorado. Though officially retired, the couple remained active in their community and at Sacred Heart Catholic Church. Alice provided bookkeeping services to the parish and also participated in local programs, such as Meals on Wheels.

When Rudy died in 1979, Alice moved to Denville, New Jersey. For the next four years, she worked in the Mission Office of the Diocese of Paterson, Paterson, New Jersey. This was a special time because her younger brother, Fr. John S. Ahearn, ofm, served as the office director. In 1984, Alice decided to return to her hometown of Waltham and lived with her beloved elder sister, Florence, who also lost her husband. While in Waltham, Alice enjoyed family activities and traveled to Europe and the Middle East. She reunited with childhood friends and reestablished her roots in the area. Never able to sit still

for long, she occasionally worked as a bookkeeper for a local hotel and restaurant.

Alice remained in Waltham after Florence's death in 1995. For the next two decades, she cherished her role within the family and remained committed to supporting veteran's programs and charitable works. After falling and fracturing her hip in January, 2011, she joined Michael and his wife, Jeanne (Schorsch), in Fort Collins, Colorado. Not letting her age nor declining health get in the way, she remained active. She stayed connected with the family, read extensively, and followed the Boston Red Sox, New England Patriots, and the Saint Bonaventure University and Marquette University basketball teams. She spent time with good friends in Paonia and traveled to Washington, DC, where she visited Rudy's grave site at Arlington National Cemetery, as well as the National WWII and Women in Military Service for America Memorials.

Until the end of her life, she had a special place in her heart for people dedicated to bringing relief to those in need and to alleviating suffering. Men and women who protect their communities and nation, whether in military, police, or fire uniform, were always thought of fondly. Her family and friends remember her as loving, joyful, and generous. In the spirit of Saint Francis of Assisi, Alice demonstrated what it means to live the Good Journey, "Pax et bonum."

In addition to Michael (Lieutenant Colonel, Ret., US Army) and Jeanne, Alice is survived by her grandchildren, Sean M. Czaja (First Lieutenant, US Army Reserve, Washington, DC), and Kathleen A. Czaja (Williamsville, New York). She is also survived by two step-daughters, Karen (Donald) Fields, Sackets Harbor, New York, and Kristin (Clement) Moorman, Passaic, New Jersey. Finally, she is survived by a niece, several nephews, grand-nieces and

nephews, and great grand-nieces and nephews.

The Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 9:30 am, Tuesday, February 21, at Saint Joseph's Catholic Church, Fort Collins, Colorado. A reception will follow at the church. She will be laid to rest with Rudy at Arlington National Cemetery on a date to be determined.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that you consider making a donation to the Special Operations Warrior Foundation: specialops.org/ or make check payable to SOWF and mail to: PO Box 89367, Tampa FL 33689. The family would also like to thank those that provided comfort and care to Alice and to the many extended family members, friends, and work colleagues who have expressed their sympathy and support.

Cemetery Details

Arlington National Cemetery

Arlington
Arlington, VA 22211

Previous Events

Memorial Mass

FEB 21. 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM (MT)

St. Joseph Catholic Church
300 W Mountain Ave
Fort Collins, CO 80521
<https://www.stjosephfc.org/>

Tribute Wall



“ *Alice Jane Czaja*

October 25, 2022 at 06:14 PM



“ *Her son, Mike, and I had been fellow Army Officers and had been close friends since 1990.*

I will never forget her kind thoughtfulness. I worked as a military contractor in Kabul, Afghanistan in 2009-2010, and Mrs. Czaja would send most welcome "CARE Packages" to me on a regular basis.

A great lady, in every sense of the word, for whom service to ones nation and fellow man had real meaning...

Mike Spight, LTC (Ret) US Army

Mike Spight - February 21, 2017 at 12:05 PM

EA

“ Hello family, I read Alice Jane's obituary with interest. My husband and I were in Orleans, France from 1958-60. Howard was a young ROTC Lt fulfilling his obligation with the Transportation Corp at the COM Z Hdqs. We lived on the economy directly across the street on Rue Bannier. We too had a baby in 1960, (March 11) in the military hospital La Chapelle, St Mesmin which was an old monastery originally. Ten weeks later the baby and I came home on the Queen Mary. Howard headed to the U of Michigan to complete his PhD in the college of Forestry and Natural Resources. In 1970 we came to Fort Collins for Howard to be on staff at CSU...he retired as a professor emeritus and sadly passed away in 2006. My condolence to your family but what a full life your mother had, it seems from reading her very interesting life "story". Kindly, Elva Alden

elva alden - February 21, 2017 at 09:35 AM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Alice Jane Czaja.



February 20, 2017 at 11:05 AM



“ Pretty Please was purchased for the family of Alice Jane Czaja.



February 18, 2017 at 09:49 AM

CH

“ *Chrissy lit a candle in memory of Alice Jane Czaja*



Chrissy - February 15, 2017 at 02:13 PM