



Carl J. Hagen

March 14, 1923 - October 7, 2013

Carl J. Hagen died Oct. 7, 2013 at the grand age of 90 & 1/2 years. He is survived by daughters Ann Buckner (John), Gail McMahon (Bud), Jane Hagen (Tom Selling), son Eric Hagen (Debbie), sisters Diana Cain and Shirley Vanderhoff (Gene), 16 grandchildren, 9 & 1/2 great-grandchildren and many wonderful nieces and nephews.

Carl was born in Spokane, Washington, to Carl Barney Hagen and Signe Andersson Hagen on March 14, 1923. He graduated from Lewis and Clark High School and attended the University of Washington before joining the Army Air Corps in 1942. His final flight training took place in Van Nuys, California where he met the beautiful Janet Smetzer on a blind date. At a pond-side picnic, Carl tried to impress her by swimming underwater and grabbing the webbed feet of an unsuspecting loon, proudly offering the struggling duck to a surprised Janet. No one had ever done that before!

Carl was assigned to the 71st Fighter Squadron and stationed near Foggia, Italy in 1944. As a P-38 pilot he flew combat missions escorting B-17's, B-24's and flew fighter sweeps of German railroad lines. While others' planes may have been decorated with Varga girls, Carl's fighter plane had "My Janet" painted across the nose. After WWII ended, Carl returned to California and proposed to Janet. They were married Nov. 4, 1945 and began their married life in Spokane, working at the Hagen Photography Studio.

In 1951, as the U.S. entered the Korean War, Carl was called up to active duty service. Over his career he rose to the rank of Colonel, working as a fighter pilot, an officer in radar and space systems, and as a base commander. His assignments included Alaska, Texas, Germany, Washington, Montana, Australia and Colorado. Carl enjoyed taking his family camping, fishing, skiing and sightseeing on every assignment and he took scores of photos in these beautiful locations.

Carl retired from the USAF in 1975 and he and Janet moved to Breckenridge, Colorado. Living in a tent, they built their dream home and hosted friends and family for 10 fabulous years of skiing and Colorado mountain beauty. Carl and Janet then moved back to Spokane where they enjoyed close family and many friendships from their early married years.

In 1991, while riding his 10-speed bicycle, Carl was hit by a drunk driver. A new chapter in this amazing man's life began. He wasn't expected to live. He wasn't expected to walk. He did! Carl had eight surgeries and 1 & 1/2 years of hospitalization and rehabilitation, during which time he and Janet moved to Fort Collins. There he reached his goal: to dance with Janet again. Carl's accident had left him 95% blind, so he learned how to use "JAWS" (specialized software) to help him read and type.

Over several years he wrote his World War II memoirs and then expanded his writing to publish "My Life Story" in 2006.

Carl and Janet were always active in the Episcopal Church, including at St. Luke's in Fort Collins.

Carl also attended his 71st Fighter Squadron reunions, traveled with Janet and sister Diana on Elderhostel seminars, participated in Newcomers' Club, and enjoyed World Affairs classes at the Senior Center.

Carl Hagen was a member of the Greatest Generation. He adored Janet, his wife of 67 years, who just passed away December 14, 2012. He loved his family and lived his life with optimism and a good sense of humor. What a brave example he has set for his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers please consider donations to Pathways Hospice or Craig Hospital in Denver (www.craighospital.org). Memorial Service at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Fort Collins, Colorado 9:30 a.m., Monday, October 21, 2013, followed by a reception in the Parish Hall. A short service with military honors will be held at 2:30 p.m. the same day at Fort Logan National Cemetery, Denver, Colorado. Vehicles must be at Staging Area B promptly at 2:15 p.m.

Tribute Wall



“ *Carl J. Hagen*

October 25, 2022 at 06:14 PM



“ *During the early 70's I had the honor and privilege of spending 15 months at a base in Australia commanded by Carl. On a monthly basis they graciously invited me over for a fabulous dinner cooked by irrepressible, ebullient Janet. To this day I'll never know why they chose me, except that's the way they were – generous, thoughtful and caring. What a perfect match for one another! If the world were ever to have a Mr. and Mrs. Universe, they'd be my choice.*

Mike Rankin, Fort Worth, TX

Mike Rankin - January 09, 2014 at 10:24 AM



“ *We wish to say Thank You to your loved one for his service to our great country. Our sympathies are with your family.*

*Marine Corps League Auxiliary #785
Fort Collins, CO*

Marine Corps League Auxiliary - October 20, 2013 at 04:45 PM

JG

“ To my flying buddy and good friend forever---

*Carl and I got our flying wings and commission together in March 1944,
and have been great friends ever since.*

*Carl & Janet have been great companions on many of our trips and
at
many reunions of our 1st Fighter Group.*

*In the accompanying photo of the 71st Squadron at Foggia, Italy in
1945*

*Carl is in the back row and I am in the front row, 3rd from the right,
holding Cragmore, the pup that Carl and I brought back from our
rest leave in Capri.*

*In the second photo taken at the 2002 reunion of the 1st Fighter
Group,*

*Carl & I are on the right and accompanied by his wife Janet and his
sister Diana -- and others of my family.*

*Carl and Janet have left a wonderful human legacy for their great
family.*

May they forever inspire their progeny!

Jim Graham



JIM GRAHAM - October 19, 2013 at 06:23 PM