Lt. Col. Dale E. Jackson, USAF (Ret), 84, of Sun City, Ariz., passed away on Nov. 16, 2012 in Peoria, Ariz. Funeral services were held Nov. 21, at Sunland Memorial Park; Sun City, Ariz., with Pastor Scott Williamson presiding. Luke APB performed the Military Funeral Honors.

Dale Ethel Jackson was born April 12, 1928 in Paton, son of Ethel Herbert and Mabel (Day) Jackson. He spent his childhood in Grinnell, and graduated from Grinnell High School. He married Della Lightfoot on June 4, 1948.

Dale is survived by his beloved wife of 64 years; three children, Linda (Gerald) Creager, St. Lawrence, S.D., Dale Ethan Jackson Jr., O’Neill, Neb., and Judy (Richard) Gates, Peoria, Ariz.; five grandchildren, Teri (Dan) McRae, Houston, Texas, Ethan Gates, Gordon, Neb., Jason (Mandy) Jackson, Fort Bragg, N.C., Derrick Jackson, Norfolk, Neb., and Cody Gates, Peoria, Ariz.; two great-grandchildren, Samantha Kelley and Alexandra Kelley, Midland, Texas; and two great-grandchildren "on the way." He is also survived by many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, two sisters, Wanda (Gerald) Read, and Audrey (Alan) Nally; one niece, Rhonda (Tim) Holen; Megan (Smith), wife of nephew, Loren Reade, and one grandson, Daniel Jackson.

Dale led a remarkable life, a humble and honorable man in every step of his journey. As a young boy in Iowa, he saw his first airplane fly overhead and it was to become his lifelong passion. He worked to earn enough money for flying lessons at many odd jobs including working at theaters and the local town hall. Once he turned 18, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corp, his first career. It was during his initial training at Fort Sill in Oklahoma, that he met his beautiful wife of 64 years, Della. Courtship involved travel on a boat, train and bus each time just to see her. They would begin their married life in South Dakota at Ellsworth AFB. As his military career developed, they would have the opportunity to move and live in many places.

Dale performed many duties in the Air Force including tornado chasers, and weather tracking in Bermuda, deployment to Nicosia, Thailand and Vietnam, and in the Pentagon on the Joint Chief of Staff. Dale retired from the Air Force in 1974 after 28 1/2 years of service. He flew many planes, some for their first flights. Some of his favorites included the Peacemaker (B-52), the Flying Fortress (B-17), the Superfortress (B-52) and the Gooney Bird (C-47) taking trips to the Pima Air Museum in Tucson as well as numerous air shows.

Dale’s career began 1973, in Sioux Falls, S.D., for Flight Safety International, on the inaugural Joe Foss Field. He was an instructor, and also transported state officials and business executives on both business and pleasure trips. Dale retired in 1988, as a simulator instructor for Flight Safety International, in Wichita, Kansas. He worked at Flight Safety for 10 years. He loved meeting and teaching pilots in safe practices for flight. He wanted every student to have success. He received letters from students around the globe thanking him for his kind manner and patience. He never shared these; though we discovered he had kept them in his small desk at home. Night or day, he was ready to go to work. He loved to fly.

Dale and Della had three children; Linda Lou, born in Rapid City, Dale Ethan, born in Bermuda, and Judy Lynn, born at Ellsworth AFB. He took great pleasure in teaching and inspiring his children and grandchildren to have an adventurous and creative life. He was an exceptional teacher and loved to share as well. At every family gathering there was a fair amount of teasing, laughter, card playing and a guaranteed trip to see an airplane.

Throughout his life, he demonstrated love for his family, his flying and his country. But his greatest love was for the Lord. He attended, as well as taught, Bible Study Fellowship for many years and was active in his local church. He lived as a man of integrity and great faith. Those who met him felt a friend and a part of his word. We have been blessed beyond measure. While he will be deeply missed, we rejoice in the knowledge that he stands eternally heaven, free from this life’s pain and we are comforted to see him again.

"God’s me with strength, and He makes my way perfect.

1 Pt 4:32"