

HARRY EDWARD (NED) GILLIAND, JR.

1931- 2009

BOYD: Harry Edward "Ned" Gilliland Jr., a loving husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, brother and friend, passed on quietly at home on Thursday, March 19, 2009, in Boyd.

Ned was born at home on April 8, 1931, in Dover, N.J. A witness to the crash of the Hindenburg at Lakehurst, N.J., his early fascination with flying developed into an enthusiasm that defined his early years. He traded working odd jobs at the Morristown, N.J., airport for flying lessons, receiving his pilot's license at age 16. His early interest in flying grew into a lifelong passion.

He was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1953 and acquired his formal helicopter flight training at Fort Sill, Okla. While there, Ned met Sunny, who volunteered with the USO. They were married in 1954. Ned advanced to become a military helicopter flight instructor and was selected to perform on the U.S. Army Helicopter Square Dance Team, a group that flew in airshows to promote how the helicopter was capable of performing with the military. He received an honorable discharge in 1957.



From 1957-1964 Ned flew in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest for Economy Helicopters, Columbia Helicopters and Hillcrest Aircraft Company. He received the Robert E. Tremble Memorial Award in 1963, awarded for distinguished mountain flying for a night rescue in the Nez Perce National Forest mountains of Idaho.

In 1964 Ned joined Bell Helicopter as a production test pilot. During his Bell years Ned served as coach and pilot for the USA Helicopter Team, which flew in competition at the Third World Helicopter Championships in Vitebsk, USSR, in 1978. The USA Team was awarded second place and Ned received an HSC award for outstanding team coach. In 1986 he retired from Bell and his position as supervisor of production test pilots.

Ned loved to share his knowledge and aviation interest with others. An aviation historian, he authored "Dancing Rotors," a history of U.S. military helicopter precision flight demonstration teams. He was a supporter and material donor to numerous aviation foundations and museums. During his flying career, he logged almost 18,000 hours in the air in over 100 different types of aircraft. In 2006 he was honored with the Charles Lester Morris Award in recognition of his outstanding contribution to vertical flight as a pioneer helicopter pilot.

Survivors include his loving wife, Doreen "Sunny" Gilliland; daughter, Melanie Cox and husband, Jimmy, of Hurst; daughter, Dawn Smith and husband, JW, of Kerrville; son, Mark Gilliland and wife, Jill, of Alexandria, Va.; daughter, Lori Livingston and husband, Tim, of Boyd; son, Ben Gilliland and wife, Leann, of Irving. He also leaves behind five wonderful grandchildren; one great-grandchild; sister, Nancy Nunamacher of Laconia, N.H.; and brother, Donald Gilliland of Los Angeles, Calif.

Memorial service: A memorial service for family and friends will be held at 12:30 p.m. on Friday, March 27, at Hidden Creek Ranch in Boyd.

Memorials: may be made to First Church of Christ, Scientist, 7318 N.E. Loop 820, North Richland Hills, Texas 76180.

*Hawkins Funeral Home
1909 9th St. • Bridgeport, Tx.*