



Stewart Gilmer Lee

November 21, 1923 - May 25, 2026

Stewart G. Lee, age 102, of St. Louis Park, Minnesota, passed away peacefully at home on Memorial Day, May 25, 2026. The date was especially fitting, as Stewart proudly served his country during World War II and later advanced to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Air Force, remaining deeply proud of his military service throughout his life.

Born and raised in Montevideo, Minnesota, Stewart graduated from high school in Vermillion, South Dakota, in 1941. He entered military service on June 11, 1943, at Fort Snelling, Minnesota, and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant and navigator in August 1944 in Hondo, Texas.

Assigned to B-24 aircraft with the 11th Bombardment Group, Stewart served in the Pacific campaign during World War II, flying long-range search missions from bases across the Pacific as Allied forces advanced toward Japan.

One of the most memorable moments of his service occurred on August 6, 1945, while returning from a mission over Japan. Stewart and his fellow crew members observed an enormous and unusual cloud rising in the distance. Upon landing in Okinawa, they learned they had observed the massive cloud created by the first atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. Following Japan's surrender, Stewart and his crew flew their aircraft, the "Lady from Hades," across the Pacific on the journey home. After surviving an engine failure and a

series of island-hopping flights through Guam, Kwajalein, Johnston Island, Honolulu, and finally California, they learned their faithful aircraft would be retired to the boneyard after carrying them safely home.

Following his military service, Stewart enjoyed a distinguished 40-year career with Northwest Airlines, where he served as Director of Flight Operations. He was an avid reader with an impressive personal library and rarely missed reading the daily newspaper. Stewart enjoyed playing cards, golfing, watching virtually any sport, and hunting for treasures at garage sales. Most of all, he cherished time spent with family and friends.

Stewart often shared stories of his wartime experiences, preserving a firsthand connection to a pivotal chapter in world history.

Stewart is survived by his wife of 10 years, Joyce Tibbs; daughter, Cyndi (Tim) Bothwell; daughter-in-law, Mary Lee; and bonus daughter, Alison (Steve) Caputo. He is also survived by grandchildren Bryan and Erin Bothwell, Patrick Healey (Nicole Heuer), Cindy (Tom) Blomquist, Valerie and Amanda Beery, Heather (Jeremy) Pendleton, Sean and Nick Pile, Chris (Cassie) Sanko, Shannon Sanko, and Jessica Sanko; great-grandson Michael Crosbie; bonus great-grandchildren Evan and Isabel Pile; and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 51 years, Wanda Lee; his son, Gary Lee; and stepdaughters Jana Pile and Jill Sanko.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, June 13, at Plymouth Lutheran Church, 11015 Old County Road 15, Plymouth, MN 55441. Visitation will begin at 10:00 a.m., followed by the service at 11:00 a.m. Lunch will be served following the service.

NOTE: Due to ongoing road construction in the area surrounding the church, guests are advised to take Hwy 55 to Revere Lane (go south) and then follow map directions to the church. Although some navigation systems may indicate that the road is closed, it is currently a passable dirt road and remains accessible to church visitors.

For those unable to attend in person, the service will be livestreamed on Plymouth Lutheran Church's YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@plymouthlutheran9757/streams>

Military Honors and interment at Fort Snelling National Cemetery will be held for family members on July 15 at 9:30 a.m.

The family extends its heartfelt gratitude to the caregivers, family members, friends, and hospice staff whose kindness, support, and dedication helped Stewart remain comfortable and cared for in his home during his final years.

In lieu of flowers, memorials are preferred to MACV (Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans), supporting Minnesota veterans and their families, or to Plymouth Lutheran Church.

"A life well lived leaves a lasting legacy in the hearts of those who were fortunate enough to know and love him."

Tribute Wall

SJ

“ Sharon J. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Stewart Gilmer Lee.

Sharon J. - June 12 at 11:34 PM

MA

“ Sharon, Jim and I (Malaske), have very fond memories of both Wanda and Stew. They were friends of our parents (Bud and Jo), and were a part of a monthly card club. Mom always made sure she had chips and dip for Stew. I believe mom and Stew knew each other before they met their future spouses and Stew taught mom how to drive a stick shift. Thank you Stew for the fond memories. With love, Mary

Mary - June 07 at 04:45 PM

CY

They certainly made a lot of great memories through the years... for all of us 😊 Love you Mary💕💕💕

Cyndi - June 10 at 12:01 AM

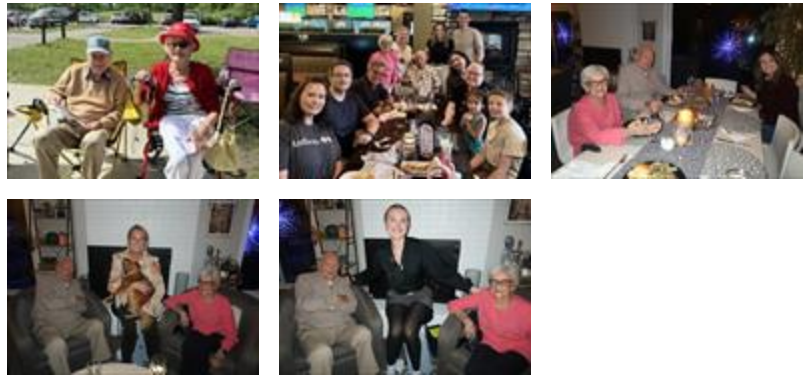
MK

During the short time I knew him, he was a wonderful man.

Marshall Korvela - June 15 at 10:26 AM

AC

“ 7 files added to the tribute wall



Alison Caputo - June 07 at 02:05 PM

AC

“ 7 files added to the tribute wall



Alison Caputo - June 07 at 02:04 PM

AW

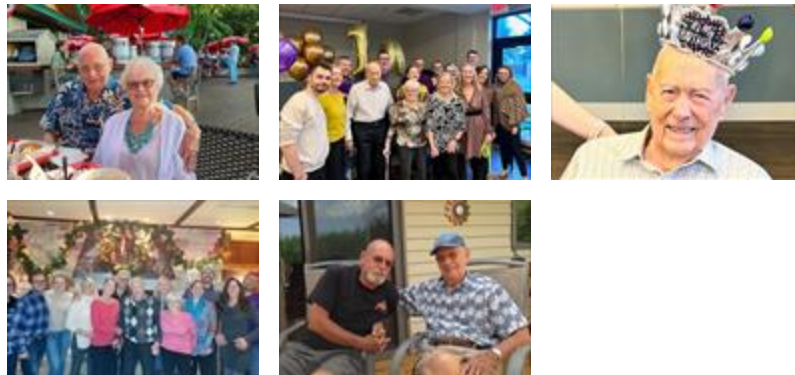
“ *Deepest sympathy to Stewart’s family , we only met Stewart a few times , but will always remember him for the kind and interesting person he was, we still remember him and Wanda taking Vince and me on a great tour around MN. They made our visit so memorable, you are in our thoughts and prayers at this time, he is definitely a hero .*

*Ann & Vince Wadden
(Mary’s sister & brother in law)*

Ann Wadden - June 04 at 11:23 PM



“ *12 files added to the tribute wall*



Cindy Blomquist - June 02 at 08:41 PM

KM

*We just heard that Stew is gone from this earthly life and Heaven bound.
Sorry we missed the funeral and celebration of life.
Stew and Wanda were such dear friends of our family and especially my parents.
They even hosted an engagement party for Rhonda and I.
Love to you all,
Keith and Rhonda Myrmel*

Keuth Myrmel - June 19 at 09:58 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Cindy Blomquist - June 02 at 08:36 PM

LR

“ Love, the Renne's purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Stewart Gilmer Lee.



Love, the Renne's - June 02 at 06:38 PM

LR

“ Love, the Renne's planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Stewart Gilmer Lee.

Love, the Renne's - June 02 at 06:38 PM

AC

“ 6 files added to the album Stewart Lee photos



Alison Caputo - June 02 at 03:15 PM



Cindy Blomquist - June 02 at 08:42 PM