

Robert (Bob) F. Davis, 93, of Girard, died April 2, 2018 at Memorial Medical Center.

Robert was born July 15, 1924 in Vandalia, Illinois, son of Charles L. and Grace Satterlee Davis. He attended Vandalia public schools, graduating from Vandalia High School in 1942 as class valedictorian. By competitive exam, he won a scholarship to the University of Illinois, completing one semester with honors before volunteering for Army WWII service.

After basic training, Bob was assigned to ATSP combat engineering school at the Citadel. After two terms the Army ended ATSP, reassigning the entire 1500-man class. Bob joined the 100th Infantry Division, 398th regiment, Company I as a frontline rifleman. The 100th landed in Marseille, France in 1944 and fought through the Winter Line, attacked through the Vosges Mountains, attacked and overcame the Maginot Line twice and captured Bitche, France, crossed the Rhine and fought the German Army across central Germany. The 100th held against Operation Nordwind, the last major German offensive of the war. Unaware at the time, a combat photographer snapped a photo of Bob leading a unit at the front lines which later appeared in a LIFE magazine story. His mother in Vandalia saw it in LIFE and knew her son was still alive. The 100th fought one of the last major city battles of the war before halting outside Stuttgart, Germany after Nazi surrender. After VE Day, Bob volunteered for transfer to the Military Police, assigned to a unit that tracked down, arrested, and held German war criminals for trial. He mustered out of the Army March 1946 as a decorated soldier proud of his service (Bronze Star, two Unit Battle Stars, Campaign Medals, Combat Infantry and Experienced Combat Infantry badges, and many other ribbons). He was also proud that he had refused many promotion offers to higher rank, but had proved he was a leader. One example, as a PFC, he led a raider platoon for over one month during the Central Europe and Rhineland battles.

After return to the States, he restarted his college career at U of I. In 1949, he earned a B.S. in Management from the University of Illinois College of Commerce, graduating with honors. Bob moved to Springfield and was the assistant manager of the Springfield Association of Commerce and Industry, and its predecessor, the Springfield Chamber of Commerce. In 1953, he married Mary McGee of Dongola, Illinois and they had two children. The marriage ended in 1976. In 1967, he became Administrator of the new Dirksen House Nursing Home and from that time on, Bob spent his career in nursing home administration. Through various mergers,

acquisitions, and sales; he held management roles for seven different nursing home chains. At his last position in Waterloo, Iowa; he married Mona Reid on February 22, 1980 and they resided in Waterloo until retirement. Mona was an English as a second language teacher in the Waterloo school systems. Bob retired from Beverly Enterprises in 1990 as the North Eastern Iowa Area Administrator, where beside running a large Waterloo Iowa facility, he trained and supervised many new home managers in his district. In conjunction with Bob's retirement, Mona also retired from her teaching career.

After retirement, Bob and Mona moved from Waterloo to Hot Springs Village, Arkansas where Bob perfected his golf game by playing every day he could. Mona adopted his passion for golf. The couple also built their dream house on the side of a mountain, in the woods, and enjoyed entertaining family and friends. After Mona's health deteriorated, they moved back to Auburn, Illinois in 2008, so that Mona could be near family and friends. Bob and Mona celebrated 35 years of marriage before her death in 2015.

Bob was a member of the Ansar Shriners as Consistory, Central Lodge #71 AF & AM, American Legion Post 95 in Vandalia, University of Illinois Alumni Association, Alpha Chi Rho Social Fraternity, 100th Infantry Division Association, Elks Club; and a former member of the Springfield Chapter of the American Business Club. He also consulted with several authors who published history books about the 100th Division's WW II deployment.

He was preceded in death by his parents; infant son, Robert Brent Davis; two brothers, Charles L. Davis, Jr. and Emmett E. Davis; and his wife, Mona.

He is survived by his daughter, Grace (Gary) Wasko of Urbandale, IA; three grandchildren, Lisa (David) DeVetter of Anacortes, WA, Jason (Guillermina) Wasko of Des Moines, IA, and Kristine (Ermin Mutapcic) Wasko of Johnston, IA; a niece, Janet; two nephews, Greg and Corky; and four great-grandchildren; Robin, Noe, Lalo, and Giovanni.