



## Kenneth Thomas Crothers

May 29, 1924 - June 24, 2015

Kenneth T. Crothers, 91 years of S Toledo, passed away peacefully in his home on Wednesday, June 24, 2015. Ken was born on May 29, 1924 in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, to Paul W. and Ruth (Pollock) Crothers. The family lived on a farm near Waynesburg, Greene County, Pennsylvania from 1928 to 1930. They moved to Lakewood, Ohio in 1930 where Ken attended Lakewood Public Schools, graduating from Lakewood High School in June of 1941. During this period, he met and fell in love with Jean Kreutz. They were married in March of 1947 and resided in Lakewood until 1948.

Ken was employed as an office boy in June of 1941 with the Royal Insurance Company in Cleveland, Ohio. Once World War II broke out, he volunteered to serve his country in November 1942 in the United States Army Air Corps. His entire service time was spent in the Pacific Theater as a ground crew member with the 42nd Bomb Squadron of the 11th Bomb Group. Ken participated in 6 major battle campaigns before being honorably discharged in November of 1945 at the rank of sergeant.

He returned from the war and worked for Royal Insurance as a field manager trainee under the GI Bill program. After he completed his training, Ken was transferred to the Toledo field office in November of 1948 as a special agent for the Northwest Ohio territory. In 1953, Ken received the prestigious Chartered Property-Casualty Underwriter professional insurance designation. He was a lifetime member and past president of the Northwest Ohio Chapter of CPCU.

Ken taught insurance, CPCU and Insurance Institute of America classes at the University of Toledo in the College of Business. From 1954 through 1957, Ken was an agent for the Hylant Insurance Company in Toledo and, in 1958, he became a partner in the Martin-Crothers Insurance Agency in Maumee, Ohio. The firm later became the Crothers-Rectenwald Agency. In 1985, the agency merged with Bleckner & Bleckner Insurance. Ken served as its Claims Manager and Risk Management Consultant until his retirement in 1992.

Following his retirement, Ken returned to the University of Toledo to complete his bachelor's degree. He graduated Magna Cum Laude in 1997. He was a longtime member and past president of the Maumee Rotary Club, which awarded him a Paul Harris Fellowship in 1998. Ken served as a member of the board of directors of State Home Savings Association of Bowling Green until it was acquired by KeyBank. He also provided risk management services to many Toledo area businesses for a number of years.

Ken was the founder and longtime historian of the 11th Bomb Group Association which was established in Toledo in 1961. The association still meets annually at various locations throughout the United States. Ken authored the History of the 42nd Bomb Squadron (which included the 11th Bomb Group's history) published in 1981. Copies can be found in the Library of Congress and National Archives in Washington, DC, the U.S. Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio and the WWII Museum in New Orleans. Ken also produced a one-hour film history of the 11th Bomb Group which was distributed as a DVD to members of the association.

Because of his vast collection of records and memorabilia related to WWII, he became a prime source of information for families of former members of the 11th Bomb Group in the Pacific Theater. Most of these families had little information about where their loved ones had served and were very grateful to Ken for sharing his knowledge with them.

Ken also assisted many authors with source materials for books and articles regarding the war. A partial list includes: Gray Geese Calling, 1981, edited by Bill Cleveland; Finish Forty and Home, 2011, author: Phil Searce; Unbroken,

2010, author Laura Hillenbrand (recently made into a movie); 11th Bomb Group History, 1996, various authors; The B-24 Liberator, 1968, and Log of the Liberator, 1973, author Steve Birdsall; and What a Time It Was, 2009, local author Andrew "Bud" Fisher. Ken was also interviewed on PBS Channel 30 in 2007 in connection with Ken Burns' series, "The War." Ken was the author of Fifty Years at Risk 1941-1991, a book detailing his career in the insurance industry. The book was privately published and distributed to family members.

Ken was a longtime member of Zion United Methodist Church and served on many committees. He also sang in the church choir for over 40 years. Ken was a longtime member of The Stormy Petrels of Maumee Bay, the local chapter of the world-wide Sherlock Holmes Study Group.

Ken was preceded in death by his beautiful and loving wife of 60 years, Jean K. Crothers, in 2007, and by his parents and brother, Phillip. He is survived by his sons Thomas (Linda) of Toledo, Douglas (Cynthia) of Boulder, CO and daughter Nancy (Hal) Paul of McCordsville, IN; grandchildren Jamie (Joni Meyer) of Sylvania, Dean (Rachel) of Morrow, OH; Shannon (Chris) Marth of Boulder, CO, Michael of Naples, FL, Nick (Sarah) and Neil Crothers of Boulder, CO; Erika Paul of Noblesville, IN and Derek (Karley) Paul of Knoxville, TN. Eleven great-grandchildren also survive.

Friends may visit at the Coyle Funeral Home, 1770 S Reynolds Rd on Friday, July 24, 2015 from 4-8 pm. Memorial services will be held on Saturday, July 25, 2015 at 11:00 am at Zion United Methodist Church, located at the corner of Copland Blvd. and the Anthony Wayne Trail. Interment will be private.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a memorial contribution to Zion United Methodist Church in Ken Crothers' name. You may also view and sign the on-line guest registry at [CoyleFuneralHome.com](http://CoyleFuneralHome.com).

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUL **24.** 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Coyle Funeral and Cremation Services  
1770 S. Reynolds Road  
Toledo, OH 43614  
(419) 865-1295  
<https://www.coylefuneralhome.com>

## Memorial Service

JUL **25.** 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Zion United Methodist Church  
2600 Copland  
Toledo, OH 43614

# Tribute Wall

NG

“*Mr. Crothers took a chance on my husband and I when we were 18 years old and needed an apartment. We were getting married. He rented us the apartment above his insurance company in Maumee. He was the nicest man, and I will always remember him fondly for having faith in us and providing us with our first home.*”

Natalie G. - January 19, 2025 at 09:55 AM

GH

“*Here are the names and Ken Crothers is among these fine young airman who fought so bravely in the worst of wars in the PACIFIC Theater. We ALL OWE SO MUCH TO MEN LIKE KEN CROTHERS WHO PUT GOD AND COUNTRY BEFORE HIMSELF.*”



Gregg Heilman - July 22, 2016 at 06:58 PM

GH

“ I met Ken about 60 years after my father did during WORLD WAR TWO. My father had survived the Japanese Attack on Hickam in 1941 by 1943 replacements were badly needed. My father was brought back to Hickam to train replacement Armors for the guns and bombs used on Air Corp Bombers. That is when my father who by this time was Tech Sgt. Ray Heilman met Ken Crothers a sharp replacement in a class my father helped teach. My father always wrote names and dates when possible on all his photos, Ken is on this photo. Ken knew more about the 11 th BGH and 42 Squadron then anyone I ever met. He taught me so much and was a friend of Lou Zamperini from the movie UNBROKEN. Without Ken I don't know the movie would have been made. He is DEEPLY MISSED BY EVERYONE WHO KNEW HIM, I MISS HIS STORIES and kindness to everyone he talked to.



---

**Gregg Heilman** - July 22, 2016 at 06:54 PM

CO

“ 2 files added to the album New Album Name



---

**Coyle** - July 27, 2015 at 09:07 AM

MV

“ Tom and Doug, Gayle and I were sorry to learn that your father had passed. Although I did not know him well, the information in his obituary told me that he had a very interesting life with many accomplishments. I am sorry that I could not make it to the memorial service. Wishing you the best.  
Mark Vonderembse

---

**Mark Vonderembse** - July 26, 2015 at 09:50 AM

 Donald Munkacy

“ Tom, please accept my deepest sympathy for the loss of your dad.  
Peace, brother.  
Don Munkacy

---

**Donald Munkacy** - July 22, 2015 at 04:48 PM

CV

“ 1 file added to the album VIDEO TRIBUTE



---

**COYLE FUNERAL HOME VIDEOS** - July 22, 2015 at 07:34 AM

CV

“ 1 file added to the album VIDEO TRIBUTE



---

**COYLE FUNERAL HOME VIDEOS** - July 21, 2015 at 10:46 PM

JA

“ Sorry for your loss. May his memory be eternal.

---

**Joyce Anagnos** - July 17, 2015 at 07:40 AM

SB

“ I'm an Australian author and I met Ken while working on a book about the B-24 Liberator. We watched the moon landing together at his home in Maumee.

*As I told him at the time, I thought the chapter about the Seventh Air Force was the best in the book, and that was largely the result of his help and support.*

*He was a fine man.*

*Steve Birdsall*

---

**Steve Birdsall** - July 14, 2015 at 12:34 AM