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Helen Churchill

Helen Churchill - Oakland, CA - Helen Knowles Churchill died on Thursday, March 19, 2009. She was 89. During her lifetime, Mrs. Churchill wore many hats: wife, mother, nurse, captain in the Army Air Corps. Whatever she did, she did with full vigor and to the best of her ability and always seemed to end up "in charge," a characteristic that stood her in good stead as she raised her daughter and five sons. While she probably would be surprised to hear herself described as a pioneer, indeed, she was. Upon her retirement as a captain from the Army Air Corps following World War II, she was among the highest ranking women to have served in the armed services in World War II from her home state of Florida. Mrs. Churchill was born in Missoula, Montana on May 23, 1919, to Virgil Wesley Knowles and Mabel Odneal Knowles, and grew up in Miami, Florida. She became a registered nurse at Jackson Memorial Hospital (now Jackson Memorial Medical Center) in Miami, and soon entered the Army Air Corps, where she served as a flight nurse during World War II, and was retired from service as a captain after being disabled. In 1946, she married the late William J. Churchill, of Locust Gap, Pennsylvania, a Major in the Army Air Corps, and with him raised six children, while they relocated the family three times as Mr. Churchill's job responsibilities changed. She retired as Director of Nursing at the Jewish Home for the Elderly of Fairfield, Connecticut (at the time, a 240-bed nursing facility) in 1986. After her retirement she moved to Melbourne, Florida, in 1987, where she served as a nursing and long-term care consultant at the Indian River Colony Club. In 2001 she relocated to Oakland, California, and took up residence at the Salem Lutheran Home. Mrs. Churchill is survived by six children, William, Virginia, Thomas, Stephen, Paul, and Allen; eleven grandchildren and two great grandchildren; a niece and nephew, and two grand-nieces and two grand-nephews. Funeral service will take place in Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors, on June 19, 2009. Donation in memory of Mrs. Churchill may be made to: American Lung Association, National Headquarters 1301 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20004.



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