

New River Valley

GRAHAM, Andrew Lester Jr., 81, of Pulaski, died Tuesday, March 5, 2002, at Pulaski Community Hospital. He was born February 3, 1921, in Floyd County, Virginia, to the late Andrew Lester Graham, Sr. and Pearl Yeatts Graham. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Elrica Sowers Graham, daughter and son-in-law, Amy and Donald Brooks of Dublin, son and daughter-in-law, The Rev. Mark A. Graham and Rena P. Graham of Roanoke; four grandchildren, Amanda L. Brooks, Aaron M. Brooks, Emily Rose Graham and Katelyn P. Graham, brother and sister-in-law, Curtis and Helen Graham of Dublin, sister and brother-in-law, Virginia Lou and Franklin M. Jones of Radford; sister-in-law, Frances H. Graham of Galax, and several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by two daughters, Emily Karen Graham and Anne Sowers Graham, sister, Mildred G. Dallas, and brothers, Cleo C. (Buddy) Graham, Hubert Graham, and Jimmy Graham. He served as Mayor of Pulaski from 1994 to 1997 and served on Pulaski Town Council for 24 years before that, including eight years as Vice-Mayor. He was known as "The Taxpayer's Man" since he believed in sound financial policies. A graduate of Buffalo Ridge Mission School, Patrick County, Virginia, in 1939, he entered Mars Hill Junior College in the Fall of 1939 and studied there until World War II began. He entered the U.S. Army Air Force in July, 1941 and received his commission as 2nd Lieutenant, Bombardier. He went overseas in 1942 with the 306th Heavy Bombardment Group, 8th Air Force, and was shot down over St. Nazaire, France on November 9, 1941, while bombing submarine pens. He spent 2½ years in a German prison camp. Following World War II, he entered Virginia Tech and graduated in June 1948. He began working for Appalachian Power Company (American Electric) as an Agricultural Engineer and spent his entire professional career with the company, retiring in 1986 as Marketing and Customer Services Manager. A member of the U.S. Air Force Reserve, he retired in 1981 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Ever enthusiastic about being a contributor to his community, he served over the years as a Boy Scout leader and in various projects to benefit youth, and chaired the Town Finance Committee, the Utilities Committee, and the Pulaski Railway Complex Task Force. A longtime active member of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, he has served in various leadership roles. He was a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #1184 and a past Exalted Ruler of the Pulaski Elks Club. He also enjoyed membership in the Thornspring Golf Club and the Pulaski Hensel Eckman YMCA. Funeral services for Andrew Lester Graham, Jr. will be held Friday, March 8 at 11 a.m. at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Pulaski, with Pastors Terrie Sternberg and Steve Ridenhour officiating. Burial with military graveside rites provided by Pulaski VFW Post #1184 will follow the service at Oakwood Cemetery, Pulaski. The family will receive visitors Thursday, March 7, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Stevens Funeral Home. The family requests that memorials be sent to Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, P.O. Box 378, Pulaski, Va. 24301.

708 Wren Drive
Pulaski, VA 24301-2727
October 23, 2002

To: The Editor
306th Echoes
5323 Cheval Place
Charlotte, NC 28205

With deep regret, I am writing to inform you of the death of my husband, Andrew L. Graham, Jr. on March 5, 2002. A POW friend of Andrew's said he had not found this notice in the Echoes, and asked me to notify you.

I am enclosing a copy of the obituary and also a copy of a speech made in Pulaski, Virginia on July 4, 2000. Our pastor, as a surprise for the family, included a copy of the speech in the service bulletin and it has been appreciated by family and friends.

Very best wishes,

Elrica S. Graham
Elrica S. Graham

From Life 31 May 1943



It reads

Captured American Fliers pose for a snapshot in a prison camp somewhere in Germany. 2nd Lt. A.L. Graham Jr. of the Air Forces, who was shot down over Europe on Nov. 9, 1942 sent this picture to his mother, Mrs. Pearl Graham of Floyd, Va. stitced to the inside of a letter. Graham sits third from left with his back against building. His letter, dated Jan. 19 follows:

Dear Mom, just a few lines to let you know I am well and getting along fine. Attached to this letter is a picture of a group of us Americans taken outside of our barracks. I am learning to ice skate on an ice skating rink we have fixed up inside our compound. Ice skating, attending a few lectures and sleeping, just about dominates our time here in camp. Mama is my allotment still coming in every month? If so, how much do I have in the bank now? You can send a food parcel every three weeks; send such things as oatmeal, cocoa, chocolate bars, tinned stuff and meat and stuff to make puddings. In clothing parcel send me a pair of pants, shirt, socks, undershirts, and shorts, toothpaste and brush. Contact the post office and they will give you information on sending parcels. Love. A.L. Graham Jr. 2nd Lt. U.S.A.A.F