

Note: John F. Barr was a veteran of the Korean War (Marine Corps), and served as the second President of VFP, 1989-1991. Prior to his death, he wrote down the "essential knowledge" he learned in his life and asked it included in his obituary. We share his wisdom here. (VFP-Korea Peace Campaign)

Col. John F. Barr's "My Obituary"

John Frederick Barr, Jr, born on June 28, 1924 in Brighton, Mass., son of Evelyn Hogan and John Frederick Barr, left us on Sept. 22, 2014, at 90 years of age. His daughter Jill was at his side when he passed. John was preceded in death by his wife, the absolute love of his life, Ruth Skinner Barr, whom he married in 1946.

John, having lost his parents at the age of two, was raised by his aunts, Ada Whitmore and Charlotte Quinlan in Needham, Mass. After graduating from Needham High in 1942, he enlisted in the Navy in 1943. He attended Brown and Dartmouth universities and graduated in 1946, after which he began his career as an officer in the Marine Corps.

John served in Korea, Okinawa and Vietnam. He was a commanding officer specializing in artillery and weapons deployment and had various assignments throughout his military career. He was very involved with the U.S.M.C. volleyball team for many years.

After turning down an offer to be promoted to the rank of general, John retired a highly decorated and respected colonel in 1973.

John, Ruth and their kids then moved to the Winkley farm in Barrington, N.H., which had been owned by his aunts since 1940. He purchased the farm from them in 1965. After moving around the country for 30 years, John and Ruth had finally come home to the farm they loved, restoring the 1793 farmhouse, gardening, walking in the woods along the Isinglass River, and immersing themselves in the beauty of nature.

Soon after John retired from the Marine Corps, he and Ruth became very involved with the peace movement. "Beyond War" and "Veterans For Peace" were two organizations that they were associated with, with John acting as president of "Veterans For Peace" for a period of time. An eloquent writer and speaker, John traveled throughout New England and delivering anti-war speeches at colleges and various institutions. As John had witnessed the cruelty and bloodshed of war, he was an excellent voice concerning the necessity of resolving conflicts without violence. He made bumper stickers that read, "Abolish War — it's the only option!"

John is survived by his daughter, Jill (Matt) Barr- Laggis and grandson, Emmett Laggis of Crested Butte; his son, David (Sonya) Barr, and grandchildren Tegan, Indira and Isais Barr. Also surviving are John's sister, Maryann Hatch; nephew, Alan Hatch; and

niece Lisa Palmisciano. Additional survivors include John's brother Joe Barr; his nieces , Denise, Kelly and Dawn; his brother Walter (Georgia) Barr; his niece Kim, and his nephews Micheal and Chris Barr. Surviving from Ruth Barr's family are nieces Cindy, Kathy, Joan and Martha Cramer, as well as niece Polly Duryer, and nephews Chris, Jimmy and Bruce Love. John is truly missed and his love and laughter will remain in our hearts forever.

Following Dad's passing, a typed index card was found among his important documents. Dad had typed it years ago, and requested that it be included in his obituary. He asked that it be the focal point of his obituary.

The following is what he had written:

"John Frederick Barr, of Barrington N.H., died on . He served in the military forces of our nation for 30 years. He was for 10 years a nuclear weapons employment officer. He has requested that the following summary of the essential knowledge that he learned in his 90 years on our planet be substituted for the standard obituary:

1. Our nation is far less secure today than it was when I entered the Navy in 1943.
2. The extinction of life on our planet is now a real and present danger. My experience with nuclear weapons convinced me that the theory of nuclear winter is perfectly valid.
3. It is unfitting that our species be required to live under the threat of extinction — in perpetuity.
4. The existence of 50,000 nuclear warheads controlled by a small handful of men is a new and insidious form of tyranny.
5. War is obsolete. Weapons can no longer, with sanity, resolve conflicts.
6. The survival of humanity depends on its ability to mature, and to learn to resolve conflicts without violence.
7. Our species will mature and survive only if each thinking individual will make the commitment necessary to learn how to resolve conflicts without violence.
8. The Strategic Defense Initiative is an expensive cruel hoax that has been perpetrated by our president. Star Wars is a major impediment to genuine security.
9. This occasion of my personal extinction is but a small matter, important only in that it affords me this one final opportunity to appeal to my surviving friends and acquaintances to think often on the extinction of our species — and act accordingly."

Gunnison Country Times, <http://www.gunnisontimes.com/john-fredrick-barr-jr>