Mac’s Obituary

FOSTER A. MCEDWARD 97 YEARS OLD

Foster A. McEdward, “Mac” passed away peacefully in his home in Middlebury, VT on Thursday, January 17th surrounded by his family. After a long, full life of adventure, Mac’s passing brings much awaited relief to his extended bout of neuralgia from the shingles late in life.

Mac was born in Strong, Maine on October 22nd, 1921, the third eldest of seven children. Mac’s family moved to Union, Maine where his dad had a creamery. As young teenagers, he and his brothers drove the 100-mile milk route to pick up milk from area farms, before school started. He grew up loving nature and sports and excelled in baseball, snowshoeing, and speed skating during his high school years.

In the fall of 1941, Mac enrolled at the University of Maine. Six months later he was drafted into the Air Force, known at that time as the Army Air Corps, to fight in WWII. He trained to be a pilot in California, graduating as a cadet. On June 6th, 1943, he left for China to serve as a pilot in the China-Burma War. Mac was just 22 years old.

In a C-46 with no radar or radio communication, Mac flew “the Hump”, a 580 nautical mile flight route over the 21,00 foot Himalayan mountains. The flight route later became known as the “Aluminum Trail” from so many planes lost along the way. Some nights, Mac was the only pilot to return to his barrack. For this dangerous flying mission, Mac received The Distinguished Flying Cross and many other military awards.

From 1946-1950 Mac lived in Shanghai China flying DC-4’s and C-46’s for the China National Aviation Corporation (CNAC) and China Air Transport (CAT). These missions provided airlifted supplies and food into war-ravaged China.

In 1950 Mac was recalled into the Air Force for the Korean War. During this time, he flew missions to Thule, Greenland and Europe.

From 1953 - 1960 Mac flew for the ARAMCO, the Saudi Arabian Oil Company. He was based out of Dhahran, Saudi Arabia flying missions to Europe, the United states as well as missions to oil wells throughout the Arabian desert.

Wherever he went, Mac shot 16mm movies and photos, accumulating amazing footage from all over the world. Consequently, Mac’s films are now archived at Getty Images and highly sought after.

In 1960 Mac met his future wife Kirsten Gram in Copenhagen, Denmark. After a short courtship, they married in Beirut Lebanon and spent their first year in Cairo, Egypt where Mac was part of a government contract to aerial map all of the Egyptian desert.

Their first child Jackie was born in Denmark, Kirsten’s homeland, and a month later they settled in Middlebury, VT in a house Mac owned in Chipman Park and now their home of 58 years. Their second daughter Pennie was born two years later.

Mac managed to live in beautiful Vermont and fly worldwide for the rest of his career. For his final 20 years of flying he worked for a private company piloting his favorite plane, the DC-3. He flew it worldwide to Europe and South America. The company also owned a T-28 Navy Trainer with a single 350 horse power engine. With this plane, Mac flew the company president, who loved old planes and flying, to meetings all over north America. Some of their “joy rides” in this plane included a trip to Alaska, where, among other flights, they circled Mt. McKinley and flew the entire length of the Mackenzie River in the Yukon and Northwest Territories at low altitude. It was not unusual for Mac to buzz his daughters at the Middlebury Union High School Field Hockey games as well as slalom races at the Snow Bowl.

In 1983, the company renovated a DC-6 into a machinery show room and flew it across the Pacific Ocean on a 4 ½ month trip to New Zealand, Australia and Asia. Mac was a pilot for 50 years and accumulated 25,000 hours of flying.

Most of all Mac loved his family. When home, Mac reveled in the out of doors, spending the majority of his free time with his family at their hideaway cabin, “Eagles Nest” in Ripton, VT enjoying nature, tennis, hiking, canoeing, hunting and back country skiing.

Mac’s positive spirit and wonderful sense of humor inspired everyone around him. A lot of neighbors will recall, with a smile, Mac’s

appearance in the annual Memorial Day parade in “BIG RED”, his old Ford pick-up truck, loaded with all the kids in Chipman Park and flags flying.

Until Mac contracted Shingles at 85 yrs. old, he biked fifteen miles every day in the summer and speed skated, skied or snowshoed every day in winter. He loved Vermont and the four seasons that would transform the rural landscape. He called it “the land of honey cake and ice cream.”

Mac inspired his family to be good athletes, live a healthy life and to appreciate nature. He supported his daughters in their sports pursuits and later on, his three wonderful granddaughters competing on foot, skis and skates.

Mac is survived by his wife of 58 years, Kirsten, their children Jackie Morse and her husband Cullen of Snowmass, Colorado, Pennie Rand and husband Matthew, of Richmond, VT, granddaughters Brianna, Annavitte and Karin.

Mac was pre-deceased by his brothers Perry McEdward, James McEdward and Robert McEdward. He is survived by his brother Donald McEdward of Scottsdale Arizona, and his sisters Norma Dodge and Joicey McEdward both of Epping New Hampshire as well as many wonderful nieces and nephews.

The family wants to thank Addison County Home Health and Hospice for their amazing care and support. Thank you also to friends, family and neighbors for helping keep Mac’s spirits up with visits during his long illness.

In lieu of flowers please make contributions to Addison County Home, Health and Hospice.

There will be a Memorial Service celebrating Mac’s long and interesting life the weekend of May 4-5th. The celebration will be on Sunday May 5th in the afternoon. If you can join us, please let us know, and we will give you more detail.