Robert Alton Ballard

October 21, 1922 ~ July 18, 2016

Robert "Bob" passed away on July 18, 2016 in Bangkok, Thailand. He was born October 21, 1922 to Orlando Day and Minnie Rideout Ballard in Draper, Utah.

After high school, he joined the Navy to serve in World War II. Upon his graduation from Naval Flight Training, he married Berneita "Betty" Tout in Corpus Christi, Texas. Their marriage was later solemnized in the Salt Lake LDS Temple.

After his stateside training, he went to war in early 1945 flying the F-6F Hellcat in the US Pacific Fleet, Fighting Squadron 24 (VF-24) based on the USS Santee. He fought as a fighter pilot and photo recon specialist in the Philippines, Formosa (now Taiwan), the East China Sea and the Battle of Okinawa. During a mission over the Ryukyu Islands where his Hellcat was damaged by ground fire, he survived by ditching his aircraft in the sea and was rescued by PBN aircraft and recovered to the USS Eldorado. For his service, he received the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with 5 gold stars.

Bob began his career as a pilot with Western Airlines in 1951. Western later became Delta Airlines. He retired after 30 plus years.

Betty passed away on February 2, 1971. Bob later married Maye-Lynn Gon on September 25, 1976. They divorced on March 24, 1987. In 1999, Bob moved to Thailand. There he later married Buakhiang "Nok" Lakhumiek on May 21, 2013.

Survived by his daughter Joan McIllece and son Robert James "Jim" Ballard, 8 grandchildren and 24 great grandchildren. Preceded in death by son in law Stanley Roy McIllece, daughter in law Judy Lynn Peterson Ballard.

Memorial services will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, October 21, 2016 at Larkin Sunset Gardens, 1950 East Dimple Dell Road (10600 South) in Sandy, UT. A visitation will be held from 9:30-10:30 a.m. prior to the services. Online condolences welcomed at www.larkincares.com.