

# Harry H. Swinger

July 30, 1921 - July 27, 2014

Harry H. Swinger

Harry H. Swinger, born July 30, 1921, passed away July 27, 2014 at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Poplar Bluff.

He will be greatly missed by his many friends and family.

He was preceded in death by his father, Hershel Swinger who passed in 1933, and mother, Gladys Snider Swinger who passed in 1983.

He was also preceded in death by his wife of 62 years, Mary Helen Baldwin in 2003, sister Fern Gaines, brothers Charles, Otis, Lester and Hershel Jr. Swinger.

Survived by two brothers, Marlin Swinger (Morehouse, MO) and Chester Swinger (Wabash, IN).

He is survived by 2 sons, Gary Swinger (Bartlett, TN), and David Swinger (Dexter, MO); and 2 daughters, Diane Pruett (Corpus Christie, TX) and Cynthia Brown (Sikeston, MO).

He is also survived by 8 grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren and a special friend, Diane Lemmons of Dexter.

Harry was a member of the Operating Engineers Union during his working career, and retired from that occupation in 1972 having operated heavy equipment and cranes on construction projects in many areas around the central part of the United States.

The family resided in Benton, MO from shortly after WWII until 1972 when they moved to their home in Dexter, MO and retired.

Harry joined the US Army Air Corps in 1942 determined to be a pilot.

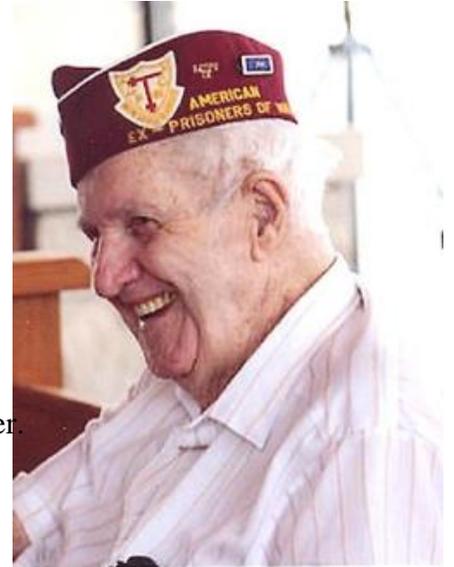
He went through training throughout the US and became a gunner on the B-17.

He said he was the smallest guy of the crew, so he wound up as a ball turret gunner.

He was shipped to England about June, 1941 and was stationed there leading up to D Day.

On June 6, 1944 he flew his first 3 missions in support of the D Day operations.

He flew with the crew on 33 missions prior to their aircraft named Fearless Fosdick being shot down on August 13, 1944.



Born: July 30, 1921  
Place of Birth: Essex, MO  
Death: July 27, 2014  
Place of Death: Poplar Bluff, MO  
Occupation: Heavy Equipment  
and Crane Operator

He parachuted right into the enemy German hands, and was held P.O.W. in Stalag Luft IV and later Luft I until liberated at the end of the war.

He weighed just 77 pounds when turned over to the American forces.

He met several times with survivors of that 10 man crew in later years.

His story was highlighted in an article in The Dexter Statesman on November 11, 2012.

He was an American Hero to our country and to his family.

Harry and wife Mary were very active in the Order of the Eastern Star in Missouri and across the world, and Harry was a member of the Masonic Lodge.

He worked tirelessly in the Disabled American Veterans organization for so many years of his life and leaves many friends in that organization.

They were also members of the United Methodist Church for all of their adult lives in Benton and Dexter.

They worked so hard with many others to get the Veterans Cemetery at Bloomfield, MO established.

Harry will be interred at that cemetery.

Friends may call at the Rainey-Mathis Funeral Home in Dexter on Thursday, July 31, 2014 from 5:00 P.M. until 8:00 P.M.

A Masonic service will be conducted on Thursday at 7:00 P.M.

Funeral services will be conducted on Friday, August 1, 2014 at 10:00 A.M. in the Rainey-Mathis Funeral Chapel with Dr. Barry Winders officiating.

Interment will follow in the Missouri State Veterans Cemetery in Bloomfield with full military honors.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Disabled American Veterans Organization, 804 Moore Street, Dexter, Missouri 63841.