



## **KENNETH R. MESSELL**

March 2, 1921 - January 1, 2003

391st BG / 574th SQ

Bombardier / Navigator

Kenneth R. Messel, a decorated World War II veteran, died at 6:25 AM on January 1, 2003 at Good Samaritan Hospital in Vincennes, Indiana.

Born to Charles and Elizabeth Green Messel on March 2, 1921, Ken served as a lead squadron bombardier/navigator in the ETO. Shot down over Ahrweiler, Germany, on December 23<sup>rd</sup> during the Battle of the Bulge, Lieutenant Messel was imprisoned at Stalag Luft One in Barth, Germany, until May, 1945. Awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross by General Omar Bradley, Lieutenant Messel also earned the Purple Heart; the Air Medal with Four Clusters; and the POW Medal. His 391<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group lost sixteen B26 Marauders in the Ahrweiler battle but successfully bombed their targets. The crews' heroic actions resulted in the 391<sup>st</sup> receiving the Distinguished Unit Citation.

After the war, Mr. Messel was elected to two terms as Knox County Auditor. He then became Vice-President of Hoosier Supplies, Inc. in Vincennes.; and later served as Postmaster of Bicknell, Indiana until his retirement in 1983. An active member of the community, he was a Trustee of the Vincennes Good Samaritan Hospital; an officer in the Knox County Civitan Club; Chairman of the Board and Elder Emeritus of the Bicknell First Christian Church; and a 32<sup>nd</sup> degree Evansville, Indiana Scottish Rite.

He is survived by his wife of fifty-nine years, Kathryn Jordan Messel; two daughters, Pamela Messel Kirchoff of Nashville, Tennessee; and Nancy Messel Boberg of Chicago, Illinois. One brother and a granddaughter also survive. He was preceded in death by his parents, five brothers and two sisters.

Following the funeral service on January 4<sup>th</sup>, Military Graveside rites will be conducted by the Bicknell and Vincennes VFW posts.