

Salvatore S. Sala

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Retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Salvatore S. "Sal" Sala, 93, of Fredericksburg died Sunday, Sept. 5, 2010, at Mary Washington Hospital following a brief illness.

He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Mildred E. Sala; four children, Anthony J. Sala, Nicola C. Neil, Michelle M. Lesinski and Sabrina M. Dohm; eight grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren. A fourth daughter, Lisa D. Frey, preceded him in death.

Born in Queens borough, N.Y., he graduated from Penn State with a degree in journalism. He then joined the U.S. Army, transferred to the Army Air Corps and ultimately moved to the U.S. Air Force. His 22-plus year military career culminated with his appointment as chief of personnel security investigations division for the Air Force 21st District Office of Special Investigations at Langley Air Force Base in Newport News. Subsequent to his military career, he continued with the Office of Special Investigation, earning numerous governmental citations including one from the Treasury Department for outstanding leadership between agencies.

A decorated veteran of World War II and the Korean conflict, he rose to command pilot status and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, as well as the Air Force Commendation Medal, a presidential citation and numerous campaign ribbons for his African, Middle East, Asiatic and Korean service.

His more than 4,100 hours of flying experience found him in more than 20 types of aircraft from the Stearman trainer to the early B-45 jet, including the B-17 "Flying Fortress," B-24 "Liberator," B-25 "Mitchell," B-26 "Marauder," C-45, -46 and -47, P-47 "Thunderbolt" and P-51 "Mustang," among others. His military travels took the family to numerous bases in California and then to Wiesbaden, Germany, and Naples, Italy, prior to his final duty station at Langley.

In spite of his military background, he was a tender, caring husband and father, whose gentle approach to life's many challenges, together with his dry humor, will be missed.

He was active in the Knights of Columbus at St. John's Roman Catholic Church in Warrenton, where he also served in numerous other capacities when called upon.

The family will receive friends from 7 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 8, at Moser Funeral Home, Warrenton. A Mass of Christian Burial will be said at 2 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 9, at St. John's Catholic Church, Warrenton. Interment with military honors will be in Quantico National Cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made to the St. Vincent de Paul Society at either St. John's Catholic Church, Warrenton, or St. Marys Catholic Church, Fredericksburg, Va.