



Sigurd "Fred" Alfred Larson

December 2, 1923 - February 18, 2017

Fred Larsen, born in Yreka Dec 2 1923, passed away in Yreka Feb 18 2017 following a short illness.

A classic nerd, young Fred took apart early radios in his dad's radio shop just to see how they worked. While still a teenager, he'd become the neighborhood fix-it guy for phonographs and radios. At 17, he was licensed as a ham radio operator with call letters W6SHY.

Shortly after graduation from Yreka High School in 1941, Fred was up in Pondsosa working at a logging camp, stringing a radio antenna between two trees. Prior to US involvement in WWII, he had volunteered to become part of the AARS communication system of ham radio operators. "I stopped by a diner in Susanville where I heard the news about Pearl Harbor. I turned to the waitress and said, 'This changes my life forever.'" He packed his bag and headed for San Francisco.

Arriving at the Presidio, he was immediately hired for his radio skills. Within a year, he realized that he'd been given a draft exemption due to his job, so he quit in order to join the Army. He wanted to be part of the real action. For the rest of the war, Fred served in the Pacific theater, supporting Air Force and Naval communications and radar systems.

Fred had an exceptional memory and could remember schematic diagrams and repair radar sets without any documentation. He'd rebuild radar sets on battleships and hitchhike on planes between islands. As the war ended, he was sent to Hiroshima. Traveling on an underground rail, he climbed to the surface: "I was unprepared for the utter devastation of the atomic bomb," he said.

At home amongst oscilloscopes and image orthicons, Fred was devoted to understanding and improving the electronics of television. His radar experiences in the Pacific theater gave him insights into the new technology of microwave communications, which he used to help pioneer America's cross-country television networks.

When Philco Electronics sent him to Brasília in 1958, Fred did more than create one of South America's first television stations. He developed communications networks for Brazil's budding infrastructure and built microwave links between Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo. Along the way, he trekked across the Andes, learned fluent Portuguese, and met with Gina MacPherson - Miss Brazil of 1960. Fred returned to California, where he spent the rest of his career in aerospace communications systems with Philco-Ford in Mountain View.

Forever Mr. Fix-it, if a family member bought a new television set, he could expect Fred to show up and take it apart. Then he'd put it back together again a different way--and get better reception! Everyone had a glass jar behind the television where Fred put "extra" tubes and parts as he reassembled the sets.

After retiring in the 1980's, Fred retained his intellectual fervor and curiosity. He focused on genealogical research, supplemented by extensive travel. His visits to distant libraries uncovered family links across America. And Fred had many interesting ancestors to research. He was the descendant of pioneering

Siskiyou County families, many involved in gold mining. His grandfather John F. Boyle was considered one of the top gold mining experts throughout all of the western United States. His uncle John C. Boyle was engineer for the Klamath River Dams.

When his age caught up with him and travel became difficult, he returned to Yreka to the home where he had grown up. For many years, he was a grateful recipient of Yreka's Senior lunch program. In November 2016, he reluctantly gave up his independence and moved into the Brookdale Assisted Living facility. He was, as always, enjoying the community.

During his last weeks of life, Fred still practiced Portuguese, and was never far from his trusted voltmeter and needle-nose pliers. True to his never-ending curious nature, a couple weeks before his death he submitted a DNA sample to Ancestry. Unfortunately he didn't live to see the results.

His parents, Sigurd A. Larsen and Isabel Christie Boyle Larsen, as well as his older sister, Margaret Ann Larsen, predeceased him. Fred never married and had no children. He leaves numerous cousins including Barbara Hull and Don Meamber of Montague.

He will be interred beside his great-grandfather, John Christie, at Evergreen Cemetery in Yreka on May 19 at 10:30 am. Friends and family wishing to do so are invited to join together at that time.

Cemetery Details

Evergreen Cemetery

Top of Evergreen Lane
Yreka, CA 96097

Previous Events

Memorial Graveside Service

MAY 19. 10:30 AM (PT)

Evergreen Cemetery
Top of Evergreen Lane
Yreka, CA 96097

Tribute Wall

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“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Gregg Girdner - May 15, 2017 at 12:58 PM

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