

# FRANK WINCHESTER TOWERS Sr.

## Obituary



TOWERS, SR., FRANK WINCHESTER, 99

Gainesville, FL -Frank Winchester Towers, Sr., 99, died Monday, July 4, 2016 in Gainesville, Florida.

He leaves his loving wife of 73 years, Mary Olive (Thomas), a son, Frank Jr. of Orlando, FL, daughters Jane King of Jacksonville, FL, Anne Kuhns (Rolf Kuhns) of Winter Garden, FL, and Kathy Teal (the late Dr. Peter Teal) of Gainesville, FL., four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Born in Boston, MA on June 13, 1917, to Everett and Jane Winchester Towers, he lived in Boston for 10 years then for the remainder of his childhood was raised in St. Johnsbury, VT, where he attended and graduated from the St. Johnsbury Academy.

After high school he was employed as a claims insurance adjuster with the Commercial Credit Corp. Later Mr. Towers enlisted in the Vermont National Guard.

His military training took him to Camp Blanding Florida, just outside of Starke, where he would meet his future wife, Mary Olive Thomas. They were married in a military wedding on March 1, 1943 in Macon, GA. He was commissioned an officer in the Army and was transferred to the 30th Infantry Division just prior to the Normandy Invasion of World War II. At that time he became a liaison officer and held this position for the duration of the war. He left the US Army with the rank of Captain. During his service in the military, Mr. Towers received many awards for recognition of valor and bravery, including the Purple Heart, Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Clusters, and others.

Following the war, Mr. Towers and his wife returned to Germany for post-war occupation duty, and during this time three of their children were born, and their fourth was born after returning to the States. They settled down in Brooker, FL, near his wife's family farm, and Mr. Towers built the house that he and his wife live in to this day. After service in the Army, Mr. Towers was self-employed, he served one term as a Trustee on the Alachua County School Board, and was later employed by the University of Florida, from which he retired in 1979.

In retirement, Mr. Towers was dedicated to the phrase 'lest we forget', and became passionately involved in ensuring the history of the 30th Infantry Division of the US Army was shared, and that their comrades who 'gave their all' would not be forgotten. He was the National President and Executive Secretary of the 30th Infantry Division Veterans of World War II Association. He co-founded Les Fleurs de la Memorie, a foundation in France dedicated to caring for the graves of American soldiers who are interred in France and Belgium. He became the consummate historian of the 30th Infantry Division. He was a Camp Blanding Museum Association charter member and served in a number of roles for the Association over the years. He was an 'in-demand' speaker to groups with an interest of the Holocaust and all things related to the history of the 30th Infantry Division in World War II. His speaking engagements spanned Northern Europe, Israel, and the United States. His story-telling style of speaking captured his audiences and resulted in opportunities for further historical research with people around the world.

Locally, Mr. Towers received the Alachua County Veteran of the Year Award on two occasions, and was active in the D-Day Normandy Veterans of North Central Florida.

In addition to his family, Mr. Towers was particularly proud of the presentation of the Order of Orange Nassau, from Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands. The equivalent of the Medal of Freedom in the United States, it was awarded to Mr. Towers because of the good-will he promoted over the years between the United States and The Netherlands. He has been the only non-Dutch individual to receive this award. And, for having served in WWII in France, he was awarded the distinction of Knight of the French Legion of Honor, an order first established by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802.

The family will receive friends on Thursday, July 7, 2016 from 5-7 PM at Milam Funeral Home.

Funeral Services will be on Friday, July 8, 2016 beginning at 10:30 at St. Madeleine's Catholic Church, 17155 NW Hwy 441, High Springs, FL 32643 with a short prayer and sharing time, followed at 11am by a Catholic funeral mass, then at Noon-1:30 Fellowship hall for a meal and memory sharing, and, finally, Interment at 2:30 at Forest Meadows Cemetery - East, 3700 SE Hawthorne Rd., Gainesville, FL 32641

In lieu of flowers the family requests donations be sent to:

The Camp Blanding Museum

5629 SR 16 West

Building 3040

Starke, FL 32091

or, to

Les Fleurs de la MÃ©moire

Georges Pierre Joret

Le Bourg

50810 VIDOUVILLE France

or, to the charity of your choice . Arrangements are in the care of MILAM FUNERAL AND CREMATION SERVICES 311 South Main Street Gainesville, FL 32601 (352) 376-5361 [www.milamfh.com](http://www.milamfh.com)



Funeral Home:

**Milam Funeral Home and Cremation Services, Inc. of Gainesville**

311 South Main Street

Gainesville, FL 32601-1803

(800) 433-5361

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<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/gainesville/obituary.aspx?page=lifestory&pid=180584812#sthash.2nDaKUA9.dpuf>