



## William McKnight Pardee

September 20, 1920 - March 13, 2016

William McKnight Pardee, retired navy pilot and skipper of the aircraft carrier, USS Hornet (CVS-12), died March 13, 2016 at Valle Verde Retirement Home in Santa Barbara, California, where he had been a resident since 2012.

Born on September 20, 1920 in Atlanta Georgia, he was the 3rd of 4 children born to Emily Purvis and Robert McKnight Pardee. He graduated from Boys Prep Academy in Atlanta in 1938 and attended 1 year at Georgia Tech before enrolling at the United States Naval Academy. Demands of World War II expedited the graduating class of 1943; he was sent to the pacific war arena aboard the destroyer, USS Ingersoll (DD-652). After the war, he transferred to Pensacola Florida for flight training, earning his wings in 1948.

Will married Jane Stewart Tupper of Calais, Maine on December 30, 1947. They had 3 children : William McKnight Jr, Catherine Stewart, and Diana Purvis. When Will retired in 1973, the family remained in Alexandria, Virginia. Will and Jane celebrated 62 years of marriage before Jane died in 2009.

Will flew S-2s, had over 1000 tail hook landings and commanded 2 ships in his naval career: the oiler, USS Mispillion(AO-105) and the aircraft carrier, the Hornet. He skippered the Mispillion down the St. Lawrence seaway in November of 1963 to drydock; he remarked in later years that he would still

wake up in a sweat, dreaming that the Mispillion was grounded in the frozen channel! One of his proudest accomplishments was commanding the Hornet from 1965-1966. Most of the year, the ship was at sea in the western Pacific. To stay in shape, he had a chin-up bar installed on the bridge, a feature that remains today. In fact, when he returned for the Hornet reunion in 2012, he was still able to perform a few chin-ups for the volunteers . At that same reunion, a retired E-5 under his command, approached Will and shared his story from the Hornet. His Retirement ceremony had been the same day as the Captain's Change of Command and he had remembered that Will broke away from his own ceremony to congratulate and meet the sailor's parents on the lower deck, with the words: they'll miss you a lot more than they'll miss me!

Will was an avid gardner and tennis player. Long before it was common he had a disciplined workout schedule, lifting weights 3 times per week. The Pentagon Officers Athletic Club did a feature story on him in 1999 (?) and quoted one of his workout companions: "He is like a damn ant; he can lift over 100 times his weight". In fact he could leg press 500 pounds well into his 80's. He celebrated his 90th birthday at the beach and made sure to take a turn on the boogie board. When he relocated to Santa Barbara, his first request was a chin-up bar on his patio!

His brother Jack, sister Connie, and a grandson, Christopher McKnight Pardee died before him. Surviving are his companion of 3 years, JoAnne Ando, a brother Robert McKnight Pardee; his children William (Judy ); Catherine Kennedy (Robert ); and Diana Grater (William); and 4 grandchildren: Anne Kennedy Crosby (Mathew), Elizabeth Chapman Grater, William Lawrence Grater, and Amanda Irene Baldwin Pardee.

Will had a long and happy life and will be missed by his family. A memorial service at Arlington Cemetery will take place in the spring. Donations may be made to the Hornet Museum: [www.uss-hornet.org](http://www.uss-hornet.org) or a charity of your choice, in his name.

# Cemetery Details

## Arlington National Cemetery

1 Memorial Dr.  
Arlington, VA 22211

# Tribute Wall

DG

“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



**Diana Grater** - March 21, 2016 at 01:46 PM

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“ 2 files added to the album *New Album Name*



**Diana Grater** - March 21, 2016 at 01:38 PM

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“ <http://hosted.verticalresponse.com/206000/03d9571d7b/1470117069/217566d1b3/>

*Please visit the Hornet Museum for a tribute to William.*

**Diana Grater** - March 21, 2016 at 10:23 AM

MP

“ *MaryAnn Perales lit a candle in memory of William McKnight Pardee*



**MaryAnn Perales** - March 16, 2016 at 05:22 AM