



## **RICHARD A OVERTON**

Austin, TX

May 11, 1906 – December 27, 2018

188<sup>th</sup> Engineer Aviation Battalion

Richard A. Overton, age 112, the oldest living WWII Veteran died peacefully on Thursday, December 27, 2018 surrounded by his family. He was born in Bastrop County, Texas on May 11, 1906 to Gentry Overton Sr. and Elizabeth "Lizzie" Franklin. He lived most of his young life in Creedmoor, community of Pleasant Valley (school and church named after this community). He participated in the annual July 4th Pleasant Valley Community Reunion which began in the 1970s. Mr. Overton was a longtime resident of Austin, Texas, living on 2011 Hamilton Ave, he was honored to have the street re-named after him on his birthday May 11, 2017. A Celebration of life for Richard will be held Saturday, January 12, 2019 at 11:00 AM at Shoreline Church, 15201 Burnet Road, Austin, Texas. Committal services, with Full Military Honors will take place on Saturday, January 12, 2019 at 2:00 PM at Texas State Cemetery, 909 Navasota Street, Austin, Texas.

Mr. Overton volunteered for the Army starting in 1942 and served with the 188th Aviation Engineer Battalion, an all-black unit that served on various islands in the Pacific. "He was there at Pearl Harbor when the battleships were still smoldering. He was there at Okinawa. He was there at Iwo Jima, where he said, 'I only got out of there by the grace of God,'" former President Barack Obama said while honoring Overton at a Veterans Day ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery in 2013.

He credited God for living so long but said he didn't take any medicine and enjoyed his vices. "I drink whiskey in my coffee. Sometimes I drink it straight," he said when he was 107. "I smoke my cigars, blow the smoke out; I don't swallow it."

In a statement Thursday, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott called Mr. Overton "an American icon and a Texas legend." "With his quick wit and kind spirit he touched the lives of so many, and I am deeply honored to have known him," Abbott said. "Richard Overton made us proud to be Texans and proud to be Americans. We can never repay Richard Overton for his service to our nation and for his lasting impact on the Lone Star State."

"I still walk, I still talk, and I still drive," Overton said, before hopping into his Ford F100 Custom pickup truck. Overton also said he liked to go to church and enjoyed the singing. He also loved caring for his cats. Family, friends and strangers all helped celebrate his 112th birthday in May by visiting him at his home. Richard is preceded in death by his parents Gentry and Lizzie Overton, six sisters: Annie Bell of Austin, TX, Lola Sneed of Seattle, WA, Dora Bradford of Stockton, CA, Lillie Mae of Seattle, WA, Tenola Overton of Austin, TX, Geneva Overton of Austin, TX; and three brother: Hilliard Overton of Austin, TX, Irwin Overton of Los Angeles, CA, Gentry Overton Jr. of Austin, TX. Richard is survived by many cousins and extended family members.

"On behalf of the Overton Family, we would like to express sincere gratitude to the staff for the amazing job you have done. The care that you provided is not definable through mere words. We are truly grateful for all that you do!"

Public viewing will be held from 12:00-6:00pm on Friday, January 11, 2019 at Cook-Walden Funeral Home, 6100 North Lamar Blvd, Austin, Texas 78752.

Funeral service will be held at 11:00am, Saturday, January 12, 2019 at Shoreline Church, 15201 Burnet Road, Austin, Texas 78728. Interment will be held at 2:00pm in Texas State Cemetery in Austin, Texas.