



## Winifred "Jean" Bearup

August 28, 1920 - January 27, 2023

Winifred Jean Bearup (nee Crooks) passed away on January 27, 2023 in Charlotte. She was born August 28, 1920 in Allison, Colorado and grew up in Telluride and during the Depression, in Durango, the daughter of native Coloradan Edna Biggs Crooks and Frederick Crooks, a Scottish immigrant who came to the U.S. at the age 17 in search of foundry work with the mines.

Jean graduated from Durango High School in 1938 and worked at a pharmacy for the following year to save money for nursing school. She entered the Denver Mercy Hospital School of Nursing in 1939 and graduated as a registered nurse in 1942, signing up for military service the month before graduation. While waiting for the Army's orders as to when and where to report, she worked as a floor nurse at Durango Mercy Hospital for six months before reporting for duty in January 1943.

She was commissioned as an Army Second Lieutenant at Fort Carson, Colorado where she immediately was assigned to the base hospital caring for soldiers injured during maneuvers. She served in this capacity for eight months before signing up for overseas duty and was transferred to Fort Jackson, South Carolina in September 1943. Here, too, she was assigned to the base hospital caring for injured and ill soldiers. During this time, her overseas unit formed, the 165th General Hospital. She and her unit, composed of 30 doctors, 50 nurses and 220 enlisted men, departed New York

Harbor aboard the British troopship HMS Scythia in early September for a twelve-day crossing to Cherbourg, France which had been liberated by Allied forces only six weeks earlier. During her Atlantic Crossing, German submarines were twice detected, causing evasive action.

Jean's unit was the first to arrive directly in France, all previous Army units having first arrived in the British Isles. The 165th promptly erected a tent hospital 25 miles south of Cherbourg. Within a week, Jean's hospital was receiving heavy casualties from Operation Market Garden, the battles for Brest and Aachen, the sieges of German-held areas in Brittany and, ultimately, the Battle of the Hürtgen Forest and the Battle of the Bulge. Jean was assigned as the sole nurse for a 40-cot post-operative tent ward, saying she never once had an empty bed for her first six months with the 165th. The heaviest single event casualties arriving at her hospital were the survivors of the sinking of the SS Leopoldville troopship in the English Channel on Christmas Eve 1944 which resulted in over eight hundred lives lost. Jean worked two days without rest caring for many of the one thousand survivors. Ironically, her future husband, one of the uninjured survivors of the torpedo attack on the convoy, gathered the soldiers under his command to re-group on a hillside only a few miles from her tent hospital.

With the war in the European Theater now beyond the German border, Jean's unit was moved eastward to Verdun in March 1945, at which time she was promoted to First Lieutenant. When V-E Day was declared in early May, the 165th was decommissioned and Jean boarded a troop train for Marseilles for re-staging and re-training as part of a new hospital unit being formed to go to the Pacific Theater. It was there that she met Captain Stuart Bearup and, after a four-month courtship, they were married on October 16, 1945 in Fontvielle, France by the 66th Division Chaplain. The couple had a five-day honeymoon on the French Riviera. The Army sent Stuart back to the States while Jean was reassigned to the 81st General Hospital back in Verdun. While there, the

Army decided to return Jean back to the States as well in late December 1945.

The newlyweds first made their home in Lansing while Stuart completed his degree at MSU and then moved to Charlotte where he became a partner in the Charlotte Insurance Agency. After the war, Jean brought three children into the world and by the mid 1950's she was hired as a floor nurse at Hayes Green Beach Hospital where she served for 22 years before being appointed Director of Nursing, a post in which she served eight years before retiring. Jean and her husband travelled extensively both before and after their retirements, including returning to the French chateau where they were married thirty years earlier. They went to Europe several times as well as Africa, took cruises in the Caribbean and visited several points around the United States, including many return trips to her beloved Colorado. Jean was also an active partner in her husband's numerous trips and conferences as part of Rotary International. She was for many years active in the General Federation of Women's Club-Charlotte, the church choir of the Lawrence Avenue Methodist Church and in her nineties spent a day each week on the campus of Michigan State University mentoring International graduate students at Friendship House MSU. Her most prized activities throughout her life were as Mother, Grandmother and Great Grandmother. Throughout her long life, she was quietly proud of her service to her country during World War II.

Even at 102, Jean was able to live in her own home in Charlotte until October when she was admitted to the Eaton County Health & Rehabilitation Services facility. Although declining and ill, during her four months there she was a delight to the caregivers and made a special point to value and thank each one individually every day.

Jean was preceded in death by her husband of sixty years, Stuart; her parents, Frederick and Edna; and her brothers, Russell and William. She is survived by her children, Pat (Gary) Webber (St. Cloud, Minnesota); George (Pat) Bearup (Traverse City); and Richard (Judy) Bearup (Charlotte); as well as her precious grandchildren Stuart, Grant, Brooke, Jay, Kate, Jessica and Ted. She had eight great grandchildren, Owen, Archer, Willa, Sutton, Winifred, Benjamin, Abbigayle and Zackery. She is also survived by Lawrence & Carol Fields (Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina) who were like a son and daughter to her; and Charles Schaefer (Charlotte) who was also like a son; and by her beloved nieces, Colette Ferran (Los Angeles) and Carol Bearup (Surprise, Arizona); and nephew, Duncan Crooks (Canton, Ohio).

A memorial service celebrating Jean's life will be held Thursday June 29th at 2:00 PM at Pray Funeral Home. Interment will follow at Maple Hill Cemetery. For those wishing to share a memory or words of tribute to Jean, they can do so on the website at [www.PrayFuneral.com](http://www.PrayFuneral.com). For those wishing to consider, donations in Jean's memory may be made to Friendship House MSU, Maple Hill Cemetery, Lawrence Avenue Methodist Church or Sparrow Eaton Hospital.

# Cemetery Details

## Maple Hill Cemetery

801 Tully Brown Rd.  
Charlotte, MI 48813

# Previous Events

## Memorial

JUN **29**. 2:00 PM (ET)

Pray Funeral Home  
401 W. Seminary St.  
Charlotte, MI 48813

# Tribute Wall



“ Pray Funeral Home, Inc created a Webcast in memory of Winifred "Jean" Bearup



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**Pray Funeral Home, Inc.** - June 29, 2023 at 11:54 AM

KS

*What a beautiful tribute and celebration of Jean.*

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**Kathy Spanier** - June 29, 2023 at 07:11 PM



“ Pray Funeral Home, Inc created a Tribute Video in memory of Winifred "Jean" Bearup



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**Pray Funeral Home, Inc.** - June 27, 2023 at 01:20 AM



“ 50 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



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**Pray Funeral Home, Inc.** - June 27, 2023 at 01:17 AM

SG

“ *Jean was a beautiful person, always willing to do what was needed. She was a blessing to the people who knew her.*

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**Sandy Packard Garrison** - February 13, 2023 at 07:37 AM

RB

*Thank you, Sandy. We're so glad you had a chance to know her and be around her. She is equally missed and celebrated,.*

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**Rich Bearup** - February 17, 2023 at 09:34 AM

RB

“ 1 file added to the album *Jean Bearup Photo Album*



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**Rich Bearup** - February 05, 2023 at 06:51 AM

RB

“ 2 files added to the album Jean Bearup Photo Album



Rich Bearup - February 04, 2023 at 05:03 PM

MB

*Jean was there for all six of my children. She always came in and visited me while at HGB. Stu was a partner with Daryl for many years and they were our neighbors for a long time. RIP Jean!*

Mary Jean Baker - February 05, 2023 at 10:22 AM

RB

*Thank you, Mary Jean.*

Rich Bearup - February 06, 2023 at 04:29 PM

VN

“ *I remember Jean as a wonderful mother, who managed to take care of the family while being a great health care provider at the same time. She raised three great children. She will be missed by all she touched.*

Val Nelson - February 03, 2023 at 09:36 AM

RB

*Thank you very much, Val. She loved your parents and they made some good memories together.*

Rich Bearup - February 06, 2023 at 04:29 PM

ST

“ *The hard part of doing home healthcare is when you lose someone who became like family! She had me call her Grandma and in return she always called me Dear One.... She was such an extraordinary woman, a true living link to history as she was 102 and was one of MI last surviving WWII Army nurses in Europe. The stories she told me were amazing! I cared for her even after she went into a facility and was privileged to be with her the last days of her life. Frail, unable to speak, I held her hand, stroked her head and told her I loved her and would see her in Heaven. It was very precious to me as I never had the chance to say goodbye to my grandma before she passed. This was truly more than a job for me, she will always have a special place in my heart. My prayers for all who loved her.*

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**Shannon Turner** - February 02, 2023 at 03:00 PM



RB

*Thank you, Shannon. Mom loved you and so appreciated your excellent, compassionate care in the many months preceding her passing, up to and including your many, many hours with her at the facility. Our entire family is grateful to you.*

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**Rich Bearup** - February 06, 2023 at 04:33 PM

MD

“ *Sending love and prayers to the Bearup Family   love, Cantin's and Dellinger's*

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**mandy dellinger** - January 31, 2023 at 03:38 PM

RB

*Thank you, Mandy. She loved the condo you built for her and lived in for 18 years. Your family's many kindnesses to her gave her many good memories.*

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**Rich Bearup** - February 06, 2023 at 04:32 PM

BM

“ I did not know Mrs. Bearup but she sounds like an amazing person!  
Thank you for all of your service "Jean".

Barry L Martin - January 30, 2023 at 06:35 PM

RB

Thank you, Barry. Mom lived an extraordinary life as well as a long one.

Rich Bearup - February 08, 2023 at 11:40 AM

EC

“ Sending our condolences from the staff at ECHRS

ECHRS - January 30, 2023 at 08:37 AM

RB

Thank you very much. The staff care Mom received at the ECHRS was first-rate and our family deeply appreciate the kindness and concern always in evidence.

Rich Bearup - February 06, 2023 at 04:35 PM

LN

“ God bless her soul and God Bless your family. I loved Jean, such a sweet lady. She stood next to me in Women's Club chorus for a few years and I would help her on and off the risers.

Laurie Newland - January 28, 2023 at 08:31 PM

RB

Thank you, Laurie. She loved being part of the choir and no doubt appreciated your kindness.

Rich Bearup - February 06, 2023 at 04:36 PM