



Robert Huston Heuerman Sr.

September 15, 1929 - November 27, 2020

Robert Huston Heuerman Sr. passed away peacefully at Joan & Diana's Hospice Home on November 27, 2020 at the age of 91.

Born Sept. 15, 1929 and raised in Faribault, MN, Robert moved to Los Angeles with his mother in 1943. He sold newspapers and baby sat for neighbors and finished his education at L.A. High. Soon after, he was hired by the AT&SF railroad where he would spend 38 of the next 40 years.

By January 1951, America's involvement in the Korean War had elapsed 6 months. Robert, now known as Bob, received the call from Uncle Sam. He completed basic and advanced infantry training at Camp Roberts in Paso Robles, CA before boarding a transport ship in San Francisco for a 7 day "cruise" to Yokohama, Japan. Now just 21, he remembered passing under the Golden Gate Bridge, wondering if he would ever live to see it again. Once in Japan it was just a short ferry ride across the Korea Strait to Pusan, South Korea. In Nov. 1951, on a hillside known only as Hill 605, a site now located in North Korea, Bob earned a Purple Heart. He was hit in the neck by a piece of shrapnel, which he carried his entire life.

Anxious to get back to railroading and with his seniority intact, Bob returned to the AT&SF.

Bob met his soul mate, Leila Joy Rice. A widow with 2 small children, Leila was also an employee of the Santa Fe. They soon fell in love and were

married on March 3, 1954. Bob legally adopted Leila's 2 children and, in October 1955, they had a son together.

Living in Alhambra, CA, the two raised their family. Bob found himself working at Mission Tower, a beehive of railroad activity on the L.A. River just outside of Los Angeles Union Station. The Santa Fe, Southern Pacific and Union Pacific railroads all intersected there to gain access to Union Station. Sadly, Bob's job was abolished in early 1974.

Their children raised, the couple moved to Willow Valley, AZ. Bob completed 40 years of service with the Santa Fe in Needles, CA and, soon after retirement, moved to Kingman, AZ to escape the heat!

Bob and Leila adored the small town life in Kingman and never left. They loved traveling the back roads of Arizona with their trailer. They became members of the Grace Lutheran Church. Bob became a member of the Mohave Pioneers Historical Society where some of his railroad artifacts and memorabilia are on display at the Mohave Museum. He also joined and donated many photographs and pieces from his collection to the Kingman Railroad Museum.

As an active member of the U.S. Army 31st Infantry Regiment "Polar Bears" Association, Bob was one of the organizers and hosts of their reunion festivities here in Kingman in 1997.

He was also instrumental in the establishment of the Korean Veterans Memorial in Railroad Park and the "Freedom Isn't Free" bronze plaque in Centennial Park.

Bob will always be remembered for his infectious smile, sense of humor, his dedication to his country and his love of railroading. He is survived by his three children, John, Mary, and Robert Jr.; his four grandchildren, Erica, Jon,

Emily, and Anne; and five great grandchildren, Christopher, Justin, Gavin, Madeleine, and Macie.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, a memorial service is being planned for spring.
Close friends
and relatives will be notified.

Cemetery Details

Private Cremation

Events

Details are pending.

Tribute Wall

JC

“ I first had the pleasure of knowing Bob when I became the third trick operator at Needles telegraph in the early eighties. Bob was first trick operator who relieved me and I always made sure to pass along a good turnover! I remember Bob telling me about watching Lockheed P-38's flying overhead during WWII in the LA area as their plant was in Glendale. I would usually stay awhile after the turnover to talk with Bob about various topics (usually trains) and enjoyed his tales of the past and great sense of humor! Bob was a great railroader and a truly great guy!

JJ Clarke

Jerry Clarke - October 16, 2021 at 11:08 AM

SB

“ When I was about 7 years old my mother and younger brother moved into one bedroom of our grandparent’s Alhambra house that they shared with the 18-year-old Robert Huston Heuerman.

Uncle Bob and I became close and despite his not liking my radio soap operas I had no complaints because he was also very good at bringing in some badly needed humor to the Heuerman family but he did not always enjoy that responsibility.

He often hitchhiked around Los Angeles and he would tell me many interesting stories about the drivers who gave him rides. Don Knotts was one of those people and Bob became popular in the family for imitating Knotts.

Often, Bob would take his accordion camera and me as “assistant” to shoot hundreds of photos of trains. Later, he would spend hours meticulously tinting the photos as this was before colored film. I treasure the elementary school picture that he tinted.

When he finished taking photos, we would go up into the railroad tower where we could see views of the train yards and further. He described switching the rails and his work in the tower. He really loved the railroad.

Uncle Bob was a much-needed bright spot in my life and in the Heuerman family. He will be missed.

Sally Bishop - December 17, 2020 at 04:40 PM

SC

“ I met Bob at White Cliffs Senior Living. He lived across the hall from my dad who passed away only months earlier. Bob loved life, enjoyed playing Bingo and making many friends. I enjoyed many chats with him and also his son, Bob. I am grateful I was blessed to meet and know him. His son has been great, taking Bob on vacations and making his life pleasant. He was always there for him. Thank you for sharing him.

Susan Crews

Susan Crews - December 15, 2020 at 09:54 AM

LW

“ I first met and worked with Bob on the Santa fe in Los Angeles, I worked second trick at Redondo Jct, and he worked second trick at Mission tower, our friendship started then we had many long phone conversations, and then I bid in a the first trick job at Mission tower and Bob would be my relief. He was great guy and a heck of a good railroader. May the Lords loving arms warp around his family and may he Rest in Peace.



Lee Williams - December 09, 2020 at 03:32 PM

TH

“ Uncle Bob and his son Robert visited us in MN about a year and a half ago. It was a wonderful visit: we laughed and laughed mostly at Uncle Bob's stories, openness about his life, and love of life, which shined through. I so admire Cousin Robert for his love of his dad and the care he provided.

We send our love and sympathy to Uncle Bob's family and friends.

*Melanie and Tom Heuerman
Maple Grove, MN*

Tom Heuerman - December 09, 2020 at 10:28 AM

JH

“ Uncle Bob was the youngest of his family and just 10 years older than me...that closeness in age always made him special to me....Our first real encounter was in about 1956 when he drove his new Ford to Minnesota,,,,One day he wanted to travel north to take train pictures..I skipped school to join my Uncle Bob.....He actually let me drive his new Ford coupe part of the way,,what a treat...I always wished I could have spent more time with him over the years....He was very proud of his family, his military service and his career with the Railroad...He lived a full and satisfying life,,,he will be missed...RIP, Jim Heuerman

james heuerman - December 08, 2020 at 10:25 PM

CH

“ I ALWAYS LIKE BOB AND HIS WITTY SENSE OF HUMOR.ALSO BOB ALSO HAS ALWAYS BEEN VERY KIND TO ME.MY HEART GOES OUT HIS FAMILY.CHRISTINE MEONI

CHRISMEONI - December 08, 2020 at 05:19 PM

NS

“ I am so blessed and honored to have gotten to know Bob. He truly was a remarkable man. I loved his passion for the railroad, his military service and his wife and family . We spent many hours just sitting and talking about all of them and before the passing of his beautiful wife he would have me take him over to visit her and I loved watching him just sit and hold her hand and talk to her. He was such a genuine and caring man.

Nikki Short - December 08, 2020 at 04:03 PM