

*Flesch, Richard G 1927 - 1998*

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**Wartime ballplayer Richard G. Flesch, devoted to family, career with airline**

Richard G. Flesch was committed to his family, his career, his country and baseball.

He was a semi-professional baseball player on a U.S. Army team, a member of the Military Police, a devoted husband, father and brother and a hard-working employee.

"I guess what really comes to mind with Dad was patience, hard-working, committed, whether it was to work or family or faith," said a son, Richard Flesch of Ft. Mitchell.

Mr. Flesch, of Crestview Hills, died Saturday at St. Elizabeth Medical Center North in Covington. He was 71.

He and his twin brother, Ralph, grew up in Erlanger and graduated from St. Henry High School in 1945. They were drafted into the Army and both became members of the Military Police.

They were flag-bearers for an anniversary parade honoring U.S. Gen. George S. Patton Jr. They also were members of the elite Army baseball team that won the European League. Richard Flesch played second base and center field; Ralph played first base and left field.

"There were a lot of regular professional players that played on that team," said Ralph Flesch, of Boone County. "And Rich and I were the only ones who made the starting lineup on the team."

When the brothers returned from the Army, they worked at a Ford dealership in Erlanger - Richard as a mechanic and Ralph in body work - until the airport was built in Hebron.

In 1947, they joined American Airlines, doing everything from working the ramps and baggage to fueling and cleaning the planes. Eventually, they both got jobs ticketing.

"We had the same job classification all the way through," Ralph said. "We started out as twins, and we stayed twins."

"He was my best friend, my best buddy."

Richard Flesch married his wife, Inez, around 1950; they had five children. A daughter, Elizabeth Flesch, died in 1978.

Mr. Flesch retired from American Airlines as a passenger service manager after more than 40 years. He and Ralph retired the same year.

"It's part of who they were and what they were about: they were very service-oriented, people-oriented folks. Humility and patience kind of sums Dad up," said son, Richard Flesch.

Other survivors include his wife; sons, Mark Flesch of Lake Charles, La., Joseph Flesch of Taylor Mill, and Gary Flesch of Cincinnati; and a sister, Dorothy Flesch of Latonia.

Mass of Christian burial will be at 7:30 p.m. Thursday at Blessed Sacrament Church, Ft. Mitchell. Burial will be at 10:30 a.m. Friday at St. John Cemetery, Ft. Mitchell. Memorials are suggested to American Cancer Society, 7730 U. S. 42, Suite C6, Florence, Ky. 41042. Linnemann Funeral Home, Erlanger, is handling arrangements.