



United States Air Force Veteran Robert (Bob) Lick lives in North Barrington with his daughter, Laura Mandell, her husband, Ken Mandell, and his large hat collection.

AN AMERICAN WWII VETERAN SHARES HIGHLIGHTS OF HIS 99 YEARS

"If I were feeling any better, I'd have to take something for it!"

That attitude may be the secret to Robert (Bob) Lick's long life. He celebrates his 100th birthday on November 23, 2022. He will tell you it's smoking a pipe and having a martini (just one) at cocktail hour that's worked for him.

Bob was born in Richland, Missouri, in 1922. His father was a telegrapher for the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway Co., known as the "Frisco." This type of work caused frequent moving from town to town, and Bob lived in several small towns along the Frisco lines.

"Life in a small town, like Lebanon, was quiet and probably rather dull, though I didn't realize it at the time. There were lots of kids my age around, so we were always doing things together. Especially baseball, for the area was a hotbed of St. Louis Cardinals fans, and most of us knew every player and his record. We could go downtown during a game and never miss a play, for almost every store had the game on their radio with the volume loud enough so you could hear it on the street."

JOINING THE UNITED STATES MILITARY

Bob enlisted in the Army Air Corps on his birthday in 1942. He was put on inactive status, and about this time his mother became quite ill. In late January 1943, she died, and he received orders to report for active duty the next day.

"Since my dad traveled much of the time, he made arrangements for my sister Helen to go to live with an aunt. So, in those few weeks, my father's wife died, his son went into the service, and his daughter went to live elsewhere. He no longer had a home, just a place to live."

Bob served as a waist gunner, flying B-24s with the 15th Air Force (47th Bomb Wing; 450th Bombardment Group, 722nd Squadron.) They were based in Manduria, Italy, and completed more than 50 missions targeting strategic operations in Northern Italy and Germany.

"We always said we were flying for our country on the outbound trip—and the minute we dropped the bombs and turned toward home we were flying for ourselves."

Unbeknownst to him, his father was called to duty to run railroad logistics in the European Theater towards the end of Bob's tour of duty. His dad reported for duty in Paris within a week, so Bob learned about it when he received a letter from his dad signed, "Love from your Dad, Lieutenant Colonel Lick."

Bob visits with other veterans regularly at SOUL Harbour Ranch's Soul Veterans program in North Barrington. US Air Force Pilot Lieutenant Colonel Gina Stramaglio is the co-facilitator of the program, and she proudly introduces Bob as her hero and her inspiration.

THE LOVE OF HIS LIFE

Bob attended Ohio State University after the war, where he met the love of his life, Dorothy Samuel. They married in June 1948.

"We never had an argument. We discussed things, but it didn't turn into an argument. We respected that if the other person felt that strongly about something, they deserved to make the final decision."

They had four children who were raised with love and encouraged to be their best selves.

Bob had a long career in publishing, focusing on the mining industry. He traveled regularly from Ohio to his sales territory in New York, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia to call on accounts, and he figures he's driven more than 1.25 million miles in his life, and he's never gotten a ticket.

THE MOVE TO BARRINGTON

Bob and Dot moved from Euclid, Ohio to Barrington, Illinois in 1980. Bob served as publisher for Maclean Hunter Publishing until 1991. He grew the business and the profitability of his portfolio by acquiring new publications and launching industry conventions.

"During that time, Dot and I had the chance to travel to many places together. I don't think I got on a plane without her for the last 10 years or so of my career, and we traveled for pleasure, too."

Bob and Dot lived from 1980–2008 in a home on Hillside Avenue in Barrington that was designed and built by renowned Midcentury modern architect Harry Weese. They felt right at home with the furniture they had collected in the '50s—Midcentury classics designed by Charles Eames, Charles Nelson, and Eero Bettoia. Later, Bob and Dot spent 12 years living near their son and his husband in Old Chatham, New York.

They were married for nearly 58 years when Dot passed away in 2016. "When I reminisce, my memories are always full of 'we', not 'I' because we did everything together," Bob says.

Bob returned to the Barrington area in 2020 and he will celebrate his 100th birthday with family and friends at parties beginning in September. There he will share his mottos: *As one seems to get older, one seems to remember the good things and forget most of the bad. Never stop exploring. Kismet. What will be, will be.*



Robert Lick lives with his daughter and son-in-law Laura and Ken Mandell.



Robert Lick visits with Gina Stramaglio at SOUL Harbour Ranch in Barrington

HERE ARE WORDS FROM A FELLOW UNITED STATES AIR FORCE VETERAN AND FRIEND

Lt Col Gina Stramaglio, KC-135 Instructor Pilot, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

I made the decision to join the military after studying WWII sites and battles during my study abroad experience in Rome during my senior year of college. When I started the study abroad experience, I was taking courses that would enhance my Rome experience, but little did I know how much that would alter my course in life. After my Rome semester, I was scheduled to start medical school the following fall, but after studying WWII for a semester, visiting WWII sites across Europe, and meeting veterans who survived those battles, I felt an overwhelming calling to join the military and try to continue Bob's legacy and preserve what Bob and those of the greatest generation fought so selflessly for.

When I met Bob at the [SOUL Harbour] ranch, I felt so honored and privileged to be able to talk with him and listen to his stories and military experiences. Every time I see him, I run over to talk to him trying my best to record in my mind conversations that no history book could ever capture. Although our military experiences are vastly different, we share so many things as well. For instance, we are both aircrew members who spent our military careers flying combat missions. As a pilot who was stationed in England for a period of time, my squadron and I honored the B-17 and B-24 crews weekly by reading a poem, sharing a toast, and visiting the airfields where those planes departed on their bombing missions. I even have a piece of the runway from the WWII airfields where those bombers departed from, in my home.

To have Bob, a B-24 crew member, attend our veteran's program at the ranch is truly remarkable. I sit and listen to his stories and can't believe I am in the presence of a man who selflessly sacrificed so much. He is a treasure. He is a hero. And I am forever indebted to men like him who set the standard for what it means to be in the military and epitomize what it means to be an American. 🇺🇸