

John G. Buschman Sr.

John George Buschman, Sr., a member of long standing of The American Legion Towson Post 22, a retired special education teacher and WWII pilot who survived capture in Germany, died of pneumonia July 13 at the Veterans Medical Center in downtown Baltimore. The Towson resident was 88.

Born on Fairmount Avenue in Towson and raised on Maryland Avenue, he was a 1940 Calvert Hall College High School graduate.

He worked in the purchasing division of the old Merchants and Miners Transportation Company on Pratt Street and joined the Army Air Corps in January 1943.

After pilot training in Mississippi and Tennessee, he sailed to England and flew six missions over German-occupied Europe.

"We went up over the North Sea to decoy German fighters from the main bomber force going to Bremen," he told an Air Force Times reporter several years ago. "A German fighter rammed our lead aircraft. It swerved from side to side and knocked down the other two aircraft in the lead element. That left me leading the bomb group after losing my right vertical stabilizer. I trimmed up the aircraft, led the formation back and landed safely with a badly damaged B-24."

Three days later, on October 8, 1943, when he was sent to hit a submarine repair yard near Bremerhaven, Germany, twin-engine enemy fighters approached him from the rear and shot down Mr. Buschman's B-24. The turret gunner was killed but the rest of the crew bailed out. Mr. Buschman jumped last.

He was captured and became a POW. He ended up in a camp at Zagan, Poland. In January 1945, with Russian forces advancing, the Germans emptied the camp and marched Mr. Buschman and others to Munich. He was liberated by advancing soldiers of General George S. Patton's 3rd Army in the spring of 1945.

He remained in the service and flew a B-17 Flying Fortress to drop test bombs at Aberdeen Proving Grounds. During the Korean War, he dropped off troops and supplies near the front lines in Korea.

Mr. Buschman continued his education at Florida State University, the University of California and the University of Maryland, where he earned a degree in 1959.

He concluded his military service while stationed at Andrews Air Force Base and retired in 1966 as a Lieutenant Colonel.

He then became a special education teacher in the Baltimore City Public Schools system and retired a second time in 1981. He taught at the old Samuel Gompers School on North Avenue. "He was a tireless worker," said his son, John G. Buschman, Jr. of Elkridge. "He didn't like to take time off. He was always busy."

Mr. Buschman was also a member and Past Exalted Ruler of the Towson Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, as well as an avid hunter, Baltimore Colts loyalist and football fan. He moonlighted as a bartender at the old Johnny Unitas' Golden Arm Restaurant on York Road. He befriended many Colts players there.

A mass was held at Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church in Towson, where he was a member.

In addition to his son, survivors include his wife of 54 years, the former Margaret Patterson; another son Bryant Buschman of Yarnell, Arizona; a daughter Patricia Curtin of Granite; a sister Anna Radebaugh of Towson; and three grandchildren.