

ARNOLD, Rhodes F., Born 5 January 1919 Alexandria, Louisiana, was the oldest son of Capt. Rhodes F. Arnold of Minot, N.D. & Jessie M. Taylor of Kansas City, Mo., passed away September 2, 2007. He was a direct descendant of the 1st Arnold in America, John Arnold of Milton Abbas, Dorset, England, later of Cambridge, MA., 1634 and a founder of Hartford in 1636. His Revolutionary ancestors: Jabez Arnold & son Samuel Brown Prince Arnold, of Haddam Neck; Civil War ancestor: Charles Willard Arnold of the 15th Penn. Cavalry. Rhodes Arnold Sr. & brother John Willard Arnold served on the Mexican Border and at Verdun as CO & First Sergeant, respectively, of Company F, 140th Infantry, Missouri Nat'l Guard. Rhodes Sr. retired as a Regular Army colonel, serving 40 years through WWI, WWII and Korea. An Army Brat, Rhodes lived at Fort Wayne, MI., Fort Benning, GA., Windsor Hills, MD., La Ballaja & Fort San Cristobal, P.R., Fort Snelling, MN., Fort Leavenworth, Ks., Fargo, N.D., Plattsburgh Barracks, N.Y., & Western Michigan Military District, Grand Rapids. A Latino at heart, his roots lie in Puerto Rico where he learned Spanish at the age of six in La Casa Blanca in San Juan & Saint John's Academy in Santurce, P.R. Other schools: Homecroft School, St. Paul, Mn; Roosevelt Jr. & Central High, Fargo, N.D.; Univ. of Missouri, Columbia; Grand Rapids Junior College, MI., Western University, Silver City, N.M.; U of A & Pima CC, Tucson, earning a BA in Anthro. at UNM '48 & a BS in Econ. & Acct. at Univ. of Albuquerque '58. Military service: enlisted in the Army Air Corps, 17 December 1941; Air Mechanic at Sheppard Field, Tx; Hudson Mechanic, Lockheed Factory School; Burbank, Ca; Beechcraft AT-11 mechanic, Midland Army Flying School, Tx; Commissioned 2nd Lt, 28 Oct, 1942 at AAF OCS Miami Beach; Weather Forecaster training at the 2nd Air Force Weather School, University of Utah; Weather Officer, Biggs Field, El Paso, Tx; Combat Intelligence Officer, Orlando, Fl; Rapid City Army Air Base, S.D.; Radar Intelligence Officers' Course, Langley Field, Va. initial class. Radar Intelligence Officer, 28th Bomb Group and 404th Bomb Squadron, 11th Air Force, Shemya, Aleutian Islands; Commanded the 188th Weather Station, New Mexico Air National Guard USAF Supply School, Lowry AFB; Base Supply Officer of the NMANG; Korean War: Intelligence and Supply Officer of the 57th Fighter Group, Elmendorf AFB; U. S. Property & Fiscal Officer, State of New Mexico. In '61 he asked to be transferred to serve as the Supervisor of Purchasing for the Titan II site, which included 18 missile holes,

Upon completion of the missile sites in Tucson, Rhodes decided to stay in Tucson and take a position at Pueblo High School, where he taught Physical Science and Social Studies for several years, and Special Education for eight years. After 14 years at Pueblo he was transferred to Cholla High School where he taught Free Enterprise (comparative economic systems) for his final year of teaching. Both schools had a mix of Hispanic American and Caucasian, with a few Orientals, Native Americans and African Americans. Rhodes knew that he had made a difference, judging by the students' reactions--a standing ovation from the entire student body on his departure from Cholla. As early as 1966 he had become involved with the creation of an air museum, first named the Pima County Air Museum, (later the Pima Air Museum). First a volunteer, he eventually was made a member of the Air Museum Committee. He discovered a Vultee BT-13 at Tucson High School and convinced the Board of Education that the airplane should be donated to the museum, their first acquisition. He then read that the Indian Air Force was still flying B-24 Liberators, and he wrote to the Indian government, requesting that one be donated to the museum. In December '67 Rhodes received word from India that one B-24 was being "gifted" to the museum and would be available to be flown to a suitable airport in India. With his friends in the 9428th Air Reserve Squadron Rhodes began a campaign to collect funds to retrieve the airplane. By spring '69 Shell Oil promised to provide all fuel and oil for the flight, and the Reserve Squadron had raised approximately \$6200. With a volunteer crew of regular Air Force, Rhodes went to Poona, India, in March of '69. After the crew had been checked out on the operation of the airplane, they began their journey from Poona to Karachi, Pakistan, to Tehran, Iran, Ankara, Turkey, Athens, Greece, Naples, Italy, and Madrid, Spain. There he had to leave the crew because he had to return to teaching. Having only \$20 in his pocket, he hitchhiked from Madrid to Washington, D.C., to Oklahoma City, and to Las Vegas, Nevada, then flew commercial to Tucson, completing his around-the-world trip. Rhodes rode in the "waist" of the plane to watch the engines for excessive oil consumption.

The B-24 arrived in Tucson approximately 16 days after Rhodes had departed Spain. The airplane was put on display at Davis Monthan AFB awaiting the construction of the air museum. As Chairman of the Acquisition Committee, Rhodes was responsible for obtaining its first hundred planes. After his retirement from teaching Rhodes moved back to New Mexico, building a house of his own design. It seemed a perfect spot to relax, and write aviation history. Rhodes wrote four books. He had flown in more than 110 different types of aircraft out of, or into, more than 300 airfields in different parts of the world. He has had numerous articles published in aviation magazines in the U.S. and Britain. On 21 May 1993 Rhodes married Mary Wirts Clark in New Orleans and settled with her in Metairie, Louisiana. In September of 2005 Rhodes and Mary were stranded in a fifth-floor condo during hurricane Katrina, and were near death, when their grandson, David J. Roybal of Albuquerque, flew a small plane to Lafayette, Louisiana, and drove on to Metairie to rescue them. The long-time resident then returned to Albuquerque, a place he has always called "paradise," for the final years of his life. He is survived by wife, Mary; a daughter, Raquel Roybal; grandchildren, James Felton Arnold, Danielle Peralta, Laura Pals, David Roybal; and great-grandchildren Brooke and Colton Arnold, Andrea Duran, Gabriella Roybal, Victor and Alexandra Peralta, and Jacob David Roybal. His son, Rhodes Felton Arnold III predeceased him on March 18, 2006. A memorial service was held at French Mortuary Westside Chapel, 9300 Golf Course Rd, NW on Saturday, September 8, 2007 at 11:00 a.m. Donations in lieu of flowers may be made to Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, Washington, D.C., or the Pima Air and Space Museum, Tucson.

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