



## Benjamin "Ben" Gerard Cromwell

August 31, 1924 - October 26, 2021

Benjamin Gerard "Ben" Cromwell of Ocala entered into eternal rest peacefully on Tuesday, October 26, 2021.

Born on August 31, 1924 in Brooklyn, NY, he was the son of Benjamin Brewer and Florence Marie Farrell Cromwell. On October 11, 1947, at St. Gabriel Catholic Church in Queens, NY, he married Helen Ann Amideo, his loving wife of 71 years, who predeceased him in 2019.

His early education was at P.S. 113, Halsey Jr. High, and Bushwick High School in Brooklyn, graduating in 1942. Ben entered the U.S. Army Air Corps in March 1943, completed basic training in St. Petersburg, FL and then Aircraft Mechanics School in Biloxi, Mississippi and at Ford Willow Run Plant in Michigan. He was then assigned as a B-24 crew chief at McCook, Nebraska prior to his departure to England on RMS Mauretania in July 1944. In England, Ben was assigned as an Aerial Engineer with the Troop Carrier Command of the 9th Air Force, flying on a converted B-24 to haul gasoline to forward bases. He was transferred to a former Luftwaffe base in France in March 1945, from which he flew on missions delivering supplies to the front and transporting wounded to England. After VE Day, he flew from France to Waller Field in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, then to Miami, and finally to Mitchell Field on Long Island, NY, where he was discharged on November 19, 1945. Following his WWII service, Ben lived in Brooklyn and, following their marriage, Ben and Helen lived in Queens and then on Long Island, New York in Franklin Square, Jericho, and Syosset. He was a member of the Masonic

Lodge and during this time had served as Grand Master of Lodge 806 in Oyster Bay, NY. Ben and Helen moved to the Oak Run community in Ocala in 1988.

Ben was employed by Asiatic Petroleum from 1945 to 1964, initially working in the mail room and then in the Aviation Section of the Transportation Department. From 1964 to 1986, he worked in Sales Representative and District Manager positions for BOAC, American Flyer Airlines, and Scandinavian Airlines. From 1986 to 1988, Ben worked as an Independent Travel Representative.

After their move to Ocala, Ben and Helen were charter members of Joy Evangelical Lutheran Church, where they were very involved in church ministries and he had served as Congregation President. He was also for many years an active member of Friendship Volunteer Fire Department. He was a proud veteran, a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion, having served as Post Commander of American Legion Post 354 in Ocala. He had also served as the president of the Oak Run Veterans Association.

Ben is survived by three children; Deborah (Michael) Miller of Kingsport, Tennessee; Jean Blacklidge of Ocala; and Stephen (Kathy) Cromwell of Sudbury, Massachusetts. He also has 8 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews.

A service will be held Thursday, November 18, 2021 at Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell, Florida. Please check back for the exact time once available.

Memorials, if desired, may be made to the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, or Joy Evangelical Lutheran Church.