

# Biography, William H Reiff, M.D., FACP

By Patricia Reiff with help from Audrey Reiff, Steve Reiff, Kaethe Stella and John C Reiff Jr.



**William H. Reiff, M.D., F.A.C.P.,** Colonel, General Staff Corps, U.S. Army Retired Reserve, died May 25, 1998 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He was born in Muskogee, Oklahoma, July 24, 1918, to Cecil K. Reiff and Dorothy Ellen (McCloud) Reiff, both of whom were educators and school administrators. Dr. Reiff had one brother, John Cecil Reiff of Yukon, Oklahoma, and one sister, Margaret Ann (Mrs. John) Ooley of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (both now deceased).

## Family History

Dr. Reiff's great-grandfather John Martin Frederick Reiff was born Sept 28, 1812 and died November 22, 1889. He was a stone mason, who immigrated to the US from Germany in 1853 on the Yorktown, arriving in Castle Gardens. Four years later he had saved enough money working on the Erie Canal in Tuscarawas County, Ohio, to send for his wife and five children to join him from Wurtemberg. Unfortunately, Frederica passed away before boarding the *Danube*, and the five children J. Christian, Anna Maria, Jacob, Mary, and Mathias (aged 16 to 6) traveled alone.

Jacob (born Nov. 7, 1845) married Catherine Bair (born July 23, 1848) on October 10, 1867 and started a farm in North Manchester, Indiana. They had twelve children: Flora, John William, Mary Elizabeth, Daniel (who died less than a year old), Delilah Jane, Henry, Charles Edward, Cora Bell, Oscar, Cecil Kater, and Gladys Opal. To that



generation was born 34 "first cousins", who were all very close knit. Cecil is in the white collar in the front row. The Reiff family (including Jacob's children and the children of his aunt) all met for their first Reiff Family Reunion in 1918 honoring Catherine's 70th birthday and celebrated their 100th reunion in 2018 in North Manchester, Indiana.



Cecil K Reiff (Oct 23, 1888 – April 28, 1952) left Indiana to become an educator. He met his wife Dorothy Ellen McCloud (Feb 28, 1886 – Dec. 23, 1953) while they were both teachers; they were married Aug 27, 1915. He was Superintendent of Schools in Oklahoma City in the 1930's and then taught at Oklahoma State University. Their three children were William H Reiff (July 24, 1918 – May 25, 1998); John Cecil Reiff (Oct 5, 1921 – July 17, 2012) and Margaret Ann Reiff Ooley (Feb 27, 1926 - Jan 19, 2014).

*(Left: Catherine with William and Gladys)*

Dr. Reiff attended elementary and junior high schools in Muskogee, Oklahoma and graduated first in a class of over five hundred students from Oklahoma City (Central) High School in 1935. He was one of the first million Boy Scouts, and earned his Eagle rank.



*(Left: Dorothy with William and John C)*

**Professional Life**

He attended the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma City University where he pursued pre-medicine, participated in Band, Artillery R.O.T.C. and Phi Delta Theta social fraternity, Phi Eta Sigma scholastic society, Toga, and Y.M.C.A.

*(Right: CK Reiff with Will Rogers, John and William Reiff)*



He received a B.S. in Medicine and an M.D. from the University of Oklahoma School of Medicine and was class Marshall for each degree. He was a member of Phi Chi medical fraternity. He accepted a commission as First Lieutenant in the Medical Corps while in Medical School, and after completion of Medical School (1941) and one year of medical rotating internship at the University of Michigan Hospital, Ann Arbor, was called to active duty in the Army.

He met Maxine Ruth Hoffer (born Nov. 12, 1916 in Elgin, Oklahoma) in medical school. They married on February 20, 1942. in Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan. He was an intern at UM and she was an intern in Chicago. She was Phi Beta Kappa at OU before entering medical school. She was one of only two women in her class, earning her MD degree in 1941,

*(Right: Bill and Maxine wedding photo)*



After finishing Medical Field Service School at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, armored training at Ft. Benning, Georgia (where their first child Bill was born), and Unit training in Tennessee, he was assigned to the 712th Tank Battalion under Patton. He served three hundred eleven days in combat, as a "Combat Medic" (Battalion Surgeon) in the European campaign, from the landing at Utah Beach (DDay +1), to the Battle of the Bulge at Ardennes, to the meeting with the Russian troops in Czechoslovakia. He received the Combat Medical Badge, French Croix de Guerre with palm, Bronze Star Medal, National Defense, American Defense, ETO with five battle stars, the WWII Victory Medal, and Reserve Medal with hourglass device. His unit helped the POWs that had been in the camp in Berga (Stalag IX-B); his photo treating a malnourished POW has been shown at the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC and the WWII Museum in New Orleans.



Dr. Reiff was relieved of active duty in January 1946 with the rank of Major but remained in the Army Reserve. He returned to the University of Michigan for an extended thirty-month residency in Internal Medicine and received the "Proficiency in Internal Medicine" certificate.

Dr. Reiff entered the private practice of internal medicine in Oklahoma City in August, 1948. He was certified as specialist in Internal Medicine by the American Board of Internal Medicine, becoming one of the first "Board Certified" internists in Oklahoma City, in 1950. He was one of the first to use a radio "pager" device and the first MD in private practice in Oklahoma to own and use a radioisotope scanner for diagnosis and treatment. Shortly thereafter, he was elected a "Fellow" of the American College of Physicians. His nurse Frankie McLaughlin was amazing, and as a result, he was instrumental in getting "Physicians Assistants" as a recognized career with privileges. He continued his practice until August 1978 when he retired to Bella Vista, Arkansas. He returned to Yukon, Oklahoma in 1997.





While in practice, Dr. Reiff continued to actively participate in the Army Reserve, rising to the grade of Colonel, General Staff, as Chief of Staff of the 95th Reserve Training Division, with units in Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana, and operations in Oklahoma City and Ft. Chaffee, Arkansas. He served on the volunteer part-time teaching staff at the University of Oklahoma Medical Center, rising to the rank of full professor of Clinical (i.e., bedside) Medicine. He also taught Anatomy, Physiology and Medicine at the St. Anthony Hospital School of Nursing. He was also advisor to the local chapter of the American Association of Medical Assistants. Dr. Reiff

was involved in the development and testing of many innovative diagnostic and therapeutic measures, including emergency medical care, physicians assistant (P.A.) programs, Emergency Medical Services (EMS / EMT), emergency room upgrading, hospital expansion planning, critical care facilities (ICU-CCU); and clinical investigations of antibiotics, antihist-aminics, anticoagulants, electrolytes, vitamins, steroids, anticholinergics, hypotensive drugs, and radioactive Iodine and diagnostic Nuclear Medicine.

He interrupted his practice in 1959 to attend the Command and General Staff College, US Army, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, graduating second in a class of over three hundred Army Officers, U.S. and Allied.

Professional organization memberships included the American College of Physicians, American Society of Internal Medicine, Oklahoma Society of Internal Medicine (past President and charter member), Oklahoma County Medical Society (Board of Directors; Civil Defense Chairman), Oklahoma State Medical Association (Civil Defense Chairman), American Medical Association (Disaster Medical Care Committee), American Society of Nuclear Medicine (charter member), American College of Nuclear Medicine (charter member), Oklahoma Department of Public Safety Medical Advisory Committee.

Continuing medical and military education included numerous short courses, college meetings, staff and departmental meetings, School of Military Psychiatry, Mass Casualty for Medical Officers at Walter Reed Hospital, Washington, D.C., US Army Command and General Staff College, USA Medical Field Service School, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

## **Personal Life**

Civic and non-professional activities included the Board of Regents, Oral Robert University, Tulsa, Oklahoma; Elder, First Christian Church, Oklahoma City; Elder, Christian Center, Oklahoma City; Bella Vista Baptist Church; American Association of Retired Persons (past President of one thousand member Chapter 109); Lions Club; Bates Hospital, Bentonville, Arkansas; Development Associates; Bella Vista Community Television Association (charter member, past president, certified producer-director); Retired Officers Association; 712th Tank Battalion Association; University of Oklahoma Association; University of Oklahoma Alumni Band; Lake Sentinel (Florida) Community Band; Bella Vista Big Band; Bella Vista Community Band; Villages of Lady Lake (Florida) Community Band. He played the saxophone, flute and piccolo, and frequently was a soloist on the "Stars and Stripes Forever". He enjoyed playing in the OU alumni marching band, under the direction of "Doc" Severinsen. Thursday afternoons he enjoyed a game of golf.



Maxine retired from active medical practice after the war to raise the children. She stayed active, however, giving lectures on breastfeeding. She wrote a book which can be downloaded from: [http://space.rice.edu/reiff/Bottles\\_or\\_Bust.pdf](http://space.rice.edu/reiff/Bottles_or_Bust.pdf) .

Bill and Maxine had three children: William Cecil Reiff, J.D., Attorney in Somesville, Mt. Desert Island, Maine (born April 1, 1943), married to Tina Trull Reiff; Kaethe Marlene Stella (born May 13, 1947; B.A., Wellesley College, 1969), widow of Daniel F. Stella, prominent attorney and civic leader in Detroit and retired Captain, US Navy Reserve; and Patricia Hofer Reiff, (born March 14, 1950); Ph.D, Professor of Physics and Astronomy and founding Director of the Rice Space Institute, Rice





University, Houston, Texas, who is married to Dr. Thomas Westfall Hill, a Professor Emeritus in the same department. Dr. Reiff had nine grandchildren (William Radley Reiff, Susan McCloud Reiff Allen, William Marshall Reiff, Dante Andreas Stella, Davide Alessandro Stella and Ciara Stella, Andrea Hofer Hill Palermo, Adam Reiff Hill and Hunter Amelia Rook) and four step-grandchildren. He presently has six great-grandchildren (Lily and Violet Allen; Daniel and Silvia Stella; and Zia and Zen Palermo). After Dr. Maxine's death in July 12, 1991, Dr. Bill married Betty Jayne Worstell Borgmier. Betty had two daughters, Cathleen Susanne Borgmier of Austin, Texas and Margaret Ann Griffin of Oklahoma City, and one grandson, Zack Metcalf of Guthrie, Oklahoma.

Bill and Maxine are buried in Bentonville, Arkansas, but have a memorial centotaph near his brother and sister's graves in Oklahoma City.

