

## Frank Robbins Moran

### Pre-WSC Years

Frank Robbins Moran was born on May 28, 1921 to Frank Goding Moran and Grace Robbins Moran. The younger Moran was his parents' third child; he had an older sister, Mary, and an older brother, Robert, who died in 1917 at the age of five.<sup>1</sup> The elder Frank Moran was the son of shipbuilder and former Seattle mayor Robert Moran, for whom Mount Moran on Orcas Island is named. According to the *Seattle Times*, "Bob" Moran "landed in Seattle without sufficient money to pay for his breakfast," but was a master mechanic who eventually started a small machine shop.<sup>2</sup> He and his brothers established the Moran Brothers shipyard in 1889. When downtown Seattle was destroyed by a fire in 1889, Bob, then the mayor, didn't rest until Seattle's pressing problems were solved. The Morans "rebuilt better than before," and their works became Seattle's major industry. It was a "proud day for Seattle and for Bob Moran when a first-class battleship slid down the days of the Moran yard."<sup>3</sup> After his death, Moran left his \$1,500,000 estate to the confines of Moran State Park.<sup>4</sup>

Bob's son, Frank, Sr. established the Moran School for Boys on Bainbridge Island in 1914. The Moran School was a prep school developed to "educate the minds and develop the character" of the sons of Seattle's wealthy elite.<sup>5</sup> In 1919, Frank Moran, Sr. opened an extension campus in Seattle, the Moran Lakeside School, on the shore of Lake Washington in the Denny-Blaine neighborhood. Lakeside continued to educate some of Seattle's wealthiest residents throughout the twentieth century, including Paul Allen and Bill Gates, founders of Microsoft.

---

<sup>1</sup> Robert Robbins Moran, *Find a Grave*, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/13978093/robert-robbins-moran>, accessed August 1, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> C.T. Conover, "Tribute to Moran," *The Seattle Star*, April 12, 1943.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> "Death Claims Robert Moran," *The Seattle Star*, March 29, 1943.

<sup>5</sup> Mary T. Henry, "Lakeside School (Seattle)," *historylink.org*, <https://www.historylink.org/file/10621>, posted September 19, 2013, accessed August 1, 2021.

Frank Moran, Jr. was educated during his elementary years in Geneva, Switzerland, the Montezuma School in California, and the Moran School on Bainbridge Island. He graduated from Roosevelt High School in Seattle in 1939. Moran's mother, Grace, died on December 2, 1939.<sup>6</sup> His favorite sport was skiing. His "keen interest" was boat building. His favorite spot was White Beach on Orcas Island; his favorite hymns were "I Would Be True" and "In the Garden"; his favorite verse was from Tennyson's *Gareth and Lynette*.<sup>7</sup>

### **WSC Years**

Moran attended Washington State College (WSC) for one semester in the fall of 1939 as a business administration major. He transferred to Hillsdale College, a private, conservative liberal arts school in Michigan. His obituary later noted that he completed his education at Hillsdale, but it is unknown at this point if he graduated with his Bachelor's degree. Moran was a member of the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity. After he left college, his draft card, completed on February 15, 1942, revealed he was working at Seattle-Tacoma Shipbuilding Corporation and resided at his father's home in Seattle until he joined the Army in May 1942.<sup>8</sup> Moran married Evelyn Cooke in Los Angeles on June 22, 1943 in the Beverly Hills Presbyterian Church. Evelyn was taking a professional course in modeling and studying acting at the Pasadena Playhouse.<sup>9</sup>

### **Military Experience and Death**

Moran joined the Army in May 1942 and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant of infantry. He did his initial training in Camp Roberts, California. He later chose to join the

---

<sup>6</sup> "Former Porter County Woman Dies in West," *Vidette-Messenger of Porter County (Valparaiso, Indiana)*, December 5, 1939.

<sup>7</sup> Frank G. Moran, "Frank Robbins Moran Obituary" Undated document, War Records Collection, Box 1, Folder 9, Washington State University Libraries' Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections (MASC).

<sup>8</sup> Frank Robbins Moran, U.S., World War II Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947, *ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/37169263:2238>, accessed May 16, 2022.

<sup>9</sup> "Woman Dies in Crash At St. Helena," *The Press Democrat (Santa Rosa, California)*, February 1, 1971; Frank G. Moran, "Frank Robbins Moran Obituary" Undated document, Box 1, Folder 9, Washington State University Libraries' Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections (MASC)..

paratroopers and trained at Fort Benning, Georgia. He was assigned to the 507<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division. The 507<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR) was activated on July 20, 1942 at Fort Benning, with Lieutenant Colonel George V. Millett, Jr. given command. After jump-training at Fort Benning, the regiment and Moran deployed to the Army air base at Alliance, Nebraska and became part of the 1<sup>st</sup> Airborne Brigade.<sup>10</sup> After arriving in Northern Ireland in December, 1943, the 507<sup>th</sup> was attached to the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne along with the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment. The 507<sup>th</sup> moved to Nottingham, England in March 1944 to prepare for the Allied invasion of Europe.

The 507<sup>th</sup>, and Moran, first saw combat during the Normandy invasion on June 6, 1944. By this point, Moran was a First Lieutenant. Both the 507<sup>th</sup> and the 508 PIRs were to be dropped near the west bank of the Merderet River, with the objectives of both regiments to establish defensive positions in those areas and to prepare an attack westward sealing off the Cotentin Peninsula.<sup>11</sup> According to an article published in his grandmother's hometown newspaper in Valparaiso, Indiana, Moran became separated from his unit.<sup>12</sup> Many of the troopers who jumped with heavy equipment were unable to swim free and drowned; others such as Moran roamed the countryside until they encountered other units. Even Colonel Millett, the commanding officer of the 507<sup>th</sup> was separated from his troops and captured three days after the drop in the vicinity of Amfreville.<sup>13</sup> It is unknown how First Lieutenant Moran died, but all official records show he was killed in action on June 15, 1944, nine days after the D-Day invasion. Just two weeks and a

---

<sup>10</sup> "The 507<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment," *The 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne World War II*, <https://www.ww2-airborne.us/units/507/507.html>, accessed May 16, 2022.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> "Grandson Killed on Norman Front," *Vidette Messenger (Valparaiso, Indiana)*, July 28, 1944.

<sup>13</sup> "The 507<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment," *The 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne World War II*, <https://www.ww2-airborne.us/units/507/507.html>, accessed May 16, 2022.

few days earlier, on his twenty-third birthday, Moran's only child, Linda Melanie, was born at Swedish Hospital in Seattle.<sup>14</sup>

### **Postwar Legacy**

Moran is buried at the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial, Colleville-sur-Mer, Department du Calvados, Basse-Normandie, France, Plot I Row 8 Grave 31. His father, Frank, Sr., created a brochure entitled *A Crucible of Faith* that allowed him to reflect on his feelings about the loss of his remaining son. The elder Moran noted that he was President of the Seattle War Dads, a chapter of a national organization that began in Kansas City, Kansas in 1942. He wrote, "I have written many fathers who have faced this experience which is now mine. I have sought to assuage their grief with the assurance that there is a plan and purpose to life and that Personality is indestructible...Can I now hold to it as a truth?"<sup>15</sup> He went on to note that he was not alone in his grief, for First Lieutenant Moran's passing would "challenge the Faith of his only sister," a First Sergeant in the Women's Army Corps stationed at Fort Knox. The elder Moran wrote:

*For forty-two days I was happy and active about my responsibilities, sustained by a deep reservoir of memories of fine association. I was conscious of the risks and dangers of a paratrooper. I was confident he would meet any issue with his face up and fulfill his responsibilities. With the death of his mother, we three had fused our philosophy on death...He loved life and lived it to the fullest. He was eager to establish his home and be with his wife and child. He had great plans for the future. He could face death unflinchingly because he believed in an ordered world*

---

<sup>14</sup> Frank G. Moran, "Frank Robbins Moran Obituary" Undated document, War Records Collection, Box 1, Folder 9, Washington State University Libraries' Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections (MASC).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

*of plan and purpose of an Author. Where and how this splendid personality is to function is beyond answer but for a certainty, it will carry on...To sustain me I will constantly draw on that unfailing resource of fine memories of intimate, shared associations of Son and Dad. Pity that father who, in his quest for material assets, has not stored up such a reservoir of fine memories for such an hour.<sup>16</sup>*

Evelyn Cooke Moran would move back to Northern California with Linda; she remarried and died in a car accident in 1971. Frank Robbins Moran is memorialized at Roosevelt High School in Seattle, Washington, and the Washington State University Veterans Memorial.

---

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*