

Remain In Touch

*FREEDOM THROUGH VIGILANCE ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER*



June 2025



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The President's Corner

Bill Brockmiller

President, FTVA

Contact: wbusaf@gmail.com

Dear FTVA Members,

Summer has arrived with intense weather across the nation. I hope you and your loved ones are staying safe, hydrated, and protected from the sun and storms. As we move from a vibrant spring, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who made our May Spring Social a resounding success. Your dedication and enthusiasm created lasting memories for all. A special thanks to our grill masters—Ken Williams, Ted Colquhoun, and Pepito Figueroa—for elevating the event with their culinary flair!

As we progress through 2025, our signature Fall Extravaganza is fast approaching. Mark your calendars for October 16-18, 2025, in San Antonio, TX, where our community will come together for a series of meaningful events. Stay tuned for our next newsletter, which will announce the banquet guest speaker. The schedule is as follows:

October 16

- Golf Tournament (Golf Club of Texas)

October 17

- Hall of Honor Induction
- Remembrance Ceremony
 - Picnic

October 18

- Annual Membership Meeting (Seaworld Marriott on TX-151/Zoom)
 - Banquet (Gateway Club)

Have ideas or want to volunteer? Contact the FTVA Board of Directors at board@ftva.us.

We are now accepting nominations for the FTVA/16 AF Hall of Honor! Honor those who have significantly contributed to our mission by submitting nominations to Greg Radabaugh at hoh@ftva.us by July 15, 2025. Visit <https://www.ftva.us/the-hall-of-honor> for details and eligibility criteria. Reach out to Greg with any questions.

Change is ever-present. As organizational roles, titles, and capabilities evolve, the FTVA may need to adapt. Yet, our core mission remains steadfast: supporting the objectives of the U.S. Air Force Security Service and its successor organizations. Our focus is on the people—past and present—who define our enterprise. In line with this, we invite you to review our proposed FTVA emblem, which reflects recent changes and embraces our cyber capabilities. Special thanks to Mr. Steve Staycoff for his time and creativity in updating the FTVA Emblem. Share your feedback at generalinfo@ftva.us.

**Proposed FTVA Emblem Symbolism:**

- 1948: Establishment of USAFSS
- Sword: Strength
- Shield: Protection

- Key: Intelligence
- Knight: Ability to strike from unknown places
- Bolts: Non-kinetic effects (e.g., offensive cyber, information operations, electromagnetic support)
- Globe: Worldwide mission
- Stars: Seven FTVA chapters
- Circuit Board: Defensive cyber operations

At FTVA, we believe strong personal connections enhance our quality of life. Engaging through events like the Anniversary/Reunion and Hall of Honor strengthens our bonds and supports our well-being. Stay connected, share your stories, and help us build a thriving family.

Your input and participation are invaluable. Reach out to the FTVA Board with ideas or to volunteer for upcoming events. Follow us at www.ftva.us and on social media for the latest updates. Thank you for your unwavering support of the Freedom Through Vigilance Association. Be well and *Remain in Touch!*

Warm regards,

Bill “Brock” Brockmiller

President, Freedom Through Vigilance Association

From the Vice President

Joseph “Pepito” Figueroa

Vice President, FTVA

Contact: joseph.figueroa361@gmail.com

Greetings, our great nation recently paused to observe Memorial Day. One of the things FTVA does very well is honor the memory of departed members belonging to USAFSS and succeeding organizations. The FTVA:

- Publishes obituaries in the quarterly FTVA *Remain in Touch* Newsletters. LINK: <https://ftva.us/newsletters/>
- Maintains a database of Fallen Eagles (updated through March 2025/Next update June 2025): LINK: <https://ftva.us/fallen-eagles/>
- Holds a Remembrance Ceremony at Joint Base San Antonio Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio Texas. Next ceremony is scheduled for October 17, 2025.

Most of the obit names are found through general internet search (majority manual search and some automated Google Alerts). However, tippers are extremely helpful. If there are any sites you can point in my direction, let me know and I will ask permission to join them. In addition, you can report a Fallen Eagle using the following site <https://ftva.us/falle/> or via emails pepfig@hotmail.com, membersupftva@gmail.com, falleneagles@ftva.us.

A key to honoring departed members of USAFSS and succeeding organizations are testimonials that add more details to their service. Examples include assignments, AFSC, dates of service, duties, and rank. Sources include social media posts and emails. The VA Gravesite Locator is a great source for ranks. In addition, I review online guest books for all obits for testimonials.

I would like to publicly acknowledge Roy Burnett. He maintains all the information technology tools that allow FTVA members to *Remain in Touch* and exchange information critical to honoring our dead. It's important that his behind-the-scenes contributions be visible to all members. Thanks Roy!

Looking forward to seeing many of you at the annual reunion events October 16 to 18, 2025.



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Dan Martin, Associate Editor

Roy Burnett, Circulation Manager & Member Support



Hello Again!

This issue is packed chock full of information to help us all Remain In Touch year after year. I hope you enjoy reading it. Great articles from the 16th Air Force and the chapters. I must highlight the prodigious activities by the Heritage Chapter. Located at Goodbuddy Airplane Patch in San Angelo, chapter members have embedded themselves with the base and the community. And finally, but sadly, we have a Fallen Eagles section which is too extensive as we report the passing of our legends.

As always, feel free to reach out directly to me at dennis.buxton@me.com or newsletter@ftva.us with your comments, recommendations, gripes and just about anything related to this newsletter.

Remain In Touch,
Dennis Buxton
Your Newsletter Editor



FTVA Hall of Honor

Greg Radabaugh, Program Chair
Contact gregory.radabaugh@gmail.com



Nominations for FTVA Hall of Honor Close Soon

Nominations for the FTVA Hall of Honor Class of 2025 are due no later **than 15 July 2025**. Criteria for nomination, the nomination form, and submission procedures may be found at <https://ftva.us/the-hall-of-honor/>.

This is your opportunity to recognize someone with whom you served deserving of being in the Hall—the best of the best. Nominees must be former members of a heritage organization and may have served in uniform or civil service (or both). They also must be either retired or no longer part of a heritage organization. Example: A person who was in uniform but is now serving in a civil service capacity in a heritage organization may be nominated for that uniformed service time. Once the nominee retires from civil service their civilian time may be considered as part of the nomination package. Review the Hall of Honor Charter for more details. While the website states that nominations are limited to FTVA members, we have accepted nominations from active-duty military members in a heritage organization (i.e., squadron, group, wing, center commanders; 16AF HQ staff).

Finally, please follow the form guidelines as noted on the FTVA website, as those exceeding them (e.g., longer than two pages) will not be considered.

All packages meeting the nomination criteria are reviewed by the selection committee which consists of previous Hall of Honor inductees. 2025 selectees will be announced at the annual Hall of Honor induction ceremony on 17 October 2025.

Greg Radabaugh
Chair, Hall of Honor Committee

FTVA Member Support

Roy Burnett, Member Support Chair

Contact: membersupport@ftva.us

New or Annual-Renewal Regular Members

Beth Powell, Wittmann, AZ
Karen Prendergast, San Antonio, TX
Rick Renshaw, Ft Worth, TX
Thomas Besterfeldt, Fredericksburg, VA
Jeff Rogers, Somerville, TX
Richard Spicer, Cameron Park, CA
Edward “King” Rogers, Watertown, MN
George Durman, Knoxville, TN
Brandon Abbott, San Angelo, TX

New Lifetime Members

David Dlugiewicz, Reynoldsburg, OH
Ray Letteer, Stafford, VA
Charles Skaug, Sun City West, CT

Please address issues relating to the FTVA website or membership to MemberSupport@ftva.us.

16th Air Force News

Articles compiled and submitted by Ken Maynard

Associate Editor Extraordinaire

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363D ISR WING EXECUTES NO-NOTICE COMBAT READINESS EXERCISE, ACC COMBAT READINESS INSPECTION

Adapted from an article by TSgt AJ Hyatt, published 16 April, 2025

JOINT BASE LANGLEY - EUSTIS, VA — The 363d Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Wing (ISRW) recently concluded its first no-notice Combat Readiness Exercise (CRE) across various locations throughout the United States in the first quarter of 2025.



Commanders discuss mission essential tasks and plans during an exercise in the first quarter of 2025. The 363d ISRW conducted its first [no-notice] Combat Readiness Exercise (CRE) in various locations throughout the United States. This exercise tested the 363d ISRW's ability to rapidly deploy/move forces and equipment and continue the mission on the go. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. AJ Hyatt)

This exercise tested the 363d ISRW's ability to rapidly deploy personnel and equipment while continuing to seamlessly execute the mission on the go. It also tested military members' skills and evaluated their ability to sustain operations in the face of challenging conditions.

"We wanted to prove that the Air Force's targeting enterprise could still operate if they had to relocate away from their day-to-day operating locations, and we did that," said Mr. Ronald Buchsen, 363d ISRW Inspector General.

Shortly before execution of the exercise, the Air Combat Command Inspector General (ACC/IG) office reached out to notify the wing that they decided to up the stakes and turn the exercise into a no-notice Combat Readiness Inspection (CRI).

According to Buchsen, the ACC/IG not only assesses the wing's combat readiness during a CRI but also assesses if the wing has the processes in place to continually measure its own readiness throughout the rest of the year.

“The key to airpower is targeting, and we take that responsibility very seriously,” said USAF Col John Thorne, 363d ISRW Commander. “Our targeting capability, driven by our ridiculously talented Airmen, must be available 24/7. This Combat Readiness Inspection, along with other large-scale exercises we’ve participated in, highlights our ability to quickly identify adversary vulnerabilities so the joint force can exploit them to achieve battlespace effects.”

Previous wing exercises primarily focused on sustaining distributed networked operations between multiple installations. This specific scenario forced members to physically travel to other locations proving the resiliency of the targeting enterprise, as well as setting a benchmark as one of the first no-notice continuity of operations (COOP) exercises for the 363d ISRW and ACC, according to the Wing’s IG.

“The no-notice exercise enabled the 363d ISR Group to realistically practice moving people and mission throughout our Targeting Enterprise, ensuring uninterrupted targeting support while also exercising competition and wartime functions,” said USAF Col Mark Chang, 363d ISR Group Commander. “In addition to moving mission [something we regularly practice] we moved Group Mission Managers, targeteers, and cyber experts ... each integral in our ability to close kill chains ... any time ... anywhere!”

This exercise also provided an opportunity for the group’s dedicated cyber squadron, the 363d Intelligence Support Squadron (ISS), to execute their core mission of providing secure and reliable network access while also focusing on data integrity and recovery during levels of increased operations tempo.

“Both were firsts for the organization and allowed opportunities to demonstrate that the Cyber Cats are highly trained, synced with Air Force Targeting Enterprise (AFTE) partners, and trusted to execute at a moment’s notice,” said USAF Maj Nicholas Henderson, 363d ISS/CC.

Thorne added that the Air Force Targeting Enterprise is accustomed to supporting contingency operations across the world daily. The fact the 363d ISRW could simultaneously support ongoing strike operations in support of United States Central Command; while meeting ACC’s rigorous readiness criteria shows they can perform their mission in a high-end fight.

AIR FORCES CYBER COMMANDER, COMMAND CHIEF, VISIT NUKE SURVEILLANCE CENTER

Adapted from an article by Susan A. Romano, AFTAC/PA, published 5 May 2025

PATRICK SPACE FORCE BASE, FL --The Commander, 16th Air Force (Air Forces Cyber) (16AF), accompanied by the 16th AF Command Chief, traveled from San Antonio to Florida's Space Coast to visit the Department of Defense's sole nuclear surveillance center 17-18 April.



CMSgt Robert Hopkins (left), 16AF Command Chief, presents his military challenge coin to several members of AFTAC for superior performance during his visit to Patrick Space Force Base, FL, 17-18 April, 2025. Pictured from left to right: Hopkins, A1C Kristina Moralez, SSgt Daniel Felipe, TSgt Brian Ebling, SrA Alexander Carty, SrA Zachary Maga, and AFTAC's Command Chief, CMSgt Brian Mitchell. (USAF photo by Matthew S. Jurgens)

Lt Gen Thomas K. Hensley and CMSgt Robert L. Hopkins made the trip to the Air Force Technical Applications Center (AFTAC) here to learn more about the center's dynamic and evolving role in detecting, verifying, and analyzing global nuclear activity in real time.

Subject matter experts from across the nuclear surveillance center provided the visiting dignitaries with specific, tailored, and in-depth information that has an overarching impact on the broader 16AF objectives. The 2-day agenda was filled with mission briefings, hands-on immersions, and tabletop discussions, covering the vast scope and breadth of AFTAC's worldwide responsibilities.

"The goal of this visit was to showcase AFTAC's vital no-fail mission, unique technology, and most importantly,

introduce General Hensley to our truly exceptional Airmen," said Col Creighton Mullins, AFTAC commander. "The men and women of this center of excellence tirelessly execute all phases of our mission, from advancing science-based tradecrafts to delivering them as cutting-edge capabilities, while executing time-dominant, full-spectrum nuclear surveillance from weapons development to employment."

Since taking command of 16th Air Force in August 2024, Hensley's focus has been on improving technology, advancing innovation, developing capabilities, and incorporating information warfare at the operational and tactical levels – all with a sense of urgency.

“For the past 20-plus years, our nation was focused on GWOT (global war on terrorism), where we operated in uncontested airspace,” Hensley said. “In today’s world, one of our nation’s biggest threats – the Chinese Communist Party – is a lethal, modernized nation-state that is expanding every day. It’s of the utmost importance for the United States to deter that threat, and AFTAC plays a crucial role in that deterrence.”

He continued, “The AFTAC at War concept really gets after the DOD’s warrior ethos priority by operationalizing science and technology to enhance battlespace characterization. This organization is like no other in the world, and the President and Secretary of Defense are relying on AFTAC to support their initiatives, especially the Golden Dome defense shield.”

Throughout the schedule of events, the general recognized several Airmen with his commander’s coin for superior performance. One recipient was 2Lt Christian Moody, an engineer and deputy branch chief for exploitation and development in AFTAC’s Strategic Integration Directorate.

“It’s an incredible honor to receive a coin from General Hensley,” Moody said, “but it really belongs to my team and the dozens of people across the center who really make things happen. I simply help orchestrate the work, but they’re the ones doing the heavy lifting. I really appreciate the time the general took to learn more about our sensor network and for the recognition of our efforts.”

Sixteenth’s top enlisted leader was inspired by what he witnessed during the visit.

“The Airmen of AFTAC are doing absolutely amazing things,” Hopkins said. “The warrior ethos is alive and well here, and the professionals who execute the mission never divested from the need to be combat ready, they merely pivoted. They are focused, prepared, and ready to face today what tomorrow’s crisis might be. It’s really impressive.”

At the conclusion of their tour of the facilities, Hensley and Hopkins held an All Call in AFTAC’s Northrup Auditorium to relay the Air Force’s focus on building combat readiness and modernizing for today’s extremely competitive battlespace, and to take questions from the standing room only crowd.

During the call, Hensley praised AFTAC members for being “action-oriented problem solvers,” while emphasizing, “this is not the same AFTAC from my previous visit in 2011!” He then thanked AFTAC for being a lead example in 16AF for evolving to gain advantage over our adversaries.

Hensley also touched on current events that have impacted the federal workforce recently: the government-wide hiring freeze and the deferred resignation program.

As they wrapped up the town hall meeting, Hensley and Hopkins thanked AFTAC members for their dedication and service to the nation and praised them for embracing their “AFTAC at War” mantra.

“You are a one-of-a-kind organization that does this mission on a global scale,” Hensley said. “You are doing a great job with demonstrated enthusiasm, which is a direct reflection of leadership and the instilled culture that resides here at AFTAC.”

SWEDEN CYBER COMMAND AND AIR FORCES CYBER ALIGN CYBER COMPATIBILITY

Adapted from an article by Capt Dorothy Sherwood, 16AF, published 7 March 2025

Joint Base San Antonio - Lackland, TX—All military operations rely on cyberspace — a complex domain connecting global computer systems, internet and other networks.



Swedish Navy (Marines) Maj. Gen. Rikard Askstedt (left), the Swedish Embassy Defense Attaché, Swedish Armed Forces Maj. Gen. Johan Pekkari (middle), Chief of Directorate of Strategic Plans and Policy, and U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Thomas Hensley, 16th Air Force (Air Forces Cyber) Commander, pose for a photo at 16th Air Force Headquarters, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, Feb. 24, 2024. Hensley hosted Pekkari, Askstedt and Swedish Armed Forces Col. Thomas Höglund, the Commander of the Sweden Cyber Command, along with other members of the command from Feb. 24-25, 2025. (U.S. Air Force photo by Deirdre McNamara)

It is a contested environment with cyber actors looking for vulnerabilities to disrupt U.S., partners or Allies' operations around the world.

Together, 16th Air Force (Air Forces Cyber) and the Sweden Cyber Command are sharpening their competitive edge by teaming up to counter these malicious cyber activities.

“We are building enduring advantages with our Swedish counterparts by operating and sharing information as a combined cyberspace force,” said USAF Lt Gen Thomas Hensley, 16AF (AF Cyber) commander. “These are real capabilities to collectively address global security challenges, setting the course for this relationship for decades to come.”

Sweden is a highly capable NATO ally making valuable contributions to alliance operations and exercises.

In the past year, the Sweden Cyber Command has forged cyber partnerships with U.S. combatant commands and trained alongside U.S. and NATO cyber forces in exercises Austere Challenge and Cyber Coalition, NATO's largest cyber defense exercise with over 1,000 participants from 33 countries.

All these accomplishments were conducted before Sweden's one-year anniversary of joining NATO as the 32nd member to include visiting 16th Air Force headquarters this week.

Hensley hosted Swedish Armed Forces Maj Gen Johan Pekkari, Chief of Directorate of Strategic Plans and Policy, Swedish Navy (Marines) Maj Gen Rikard Askstedt, the Swedish Embassy Defense Attaché, and Swedish Armed Forces Col Thomas Höglund, the Commander of the Sweden Cyber Command, along with other members of the command from 24-25 Feb, 2025.

"This journey has been a true inspiration and development for Sweden Cyber command," said Pekkari. "Sweden CYCOM has received good advice and inspiration that will advance in the development of our collaboration."

During their visit, the Swedish Armed Forces' distinguished visitors also toured subordinate 16th AF units and met with leadership from the 67th Cyberspace Wing, 90th Cyberspace Operations Squadron, 33rd Cyber Operations Squadron and the 616th Operations Center.

The U.S. military prioritizes interoperability by enabling coalitions with enhanced capabilities, new operating concepts and collaborative force planning. The Sweden Armed Forces also prioritizes this enterprise by briefing 16th Air Force personnel and subordinate units on its expertise in the Arctic region or the "High North" as it is called in NATO.

"Sweden has specialized cyber expertise oriented on the High North," said Pekkari. "When combined with the U.S.'s depth of technological resources and cyber capabilities, the collaboration becomes a force multiplier."

The Sweden Cyber Command, established on June 1, 2024, has been developing cyber capabilities since 2004. Its mission is to provide freedom of action for Sweden's military strategic and operational levels by conducting defensive and offensive operations.

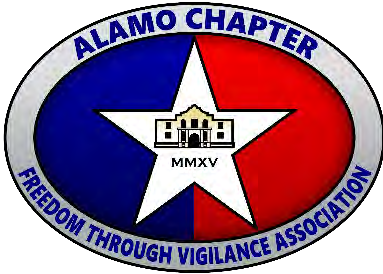
These cyber defense forces ensure that Sweden is safe, secure, today, tomorrow and in the future.

Combining 16th Air Force and the Sweden Cyber Command's capabilities will make this international partnership one of the greatest strategic assets for combating cybersecurity threats.

FTVA CHAPTER NEWS

Forward your chapter inputs at any time, monthly, weekly or all at once, to Dennis Buxton, RIT Editor, at newsletter@ftva.us or dennis.buxton@me.com. Please include captions and names on all photos submitted.

Submissions can be in any form or format, and I will edit.



Alamo Chapter

San Antonio, TX

Ken Williams, President

Chapter Meeting, 20 March 2025

The San Antonio Chapter of the FTVA held their March meeting at the Alamo Café Restaurant on IH10 on 20 March 2025. Fifteen members enjoyed fellowship and lunch. In addition, since it was Ken's birthday, he enjoyed the best wishes of all present although not a whole lot of birthday gifts. Hey, it's the thought that counts! Members present and helping Ken-Bob celebrate a Happy Birthday were:

Dan Martin
Dennis Buxton
Pete Siegel
Vince and Elise Colacicco
Rick and Debbie Wadle
Bob and Donna Crabtree

Ted Colquhoun
Greg Mahoney
Ed Barnes
Mike Berning
Paul Turner



President Ken Williams called the meeting to order at 1215 pm. The turnout was light due to many members having medical appointments or away on Spring Break. Members discussed the ongoing Air Force reorganization and what this might mean for 16 AF in the future. The Spring Social picnic originally scheduled for Friday, 4 April, at Stapleton Park has been postponed until further notice.

Jennifer and Lee Anthony and their company, Engrave Tech, graciously donated a new Alamo Chapter poster. Our next meeting is slated for Thursday, April 17, same location and time. There being no new business, we adjourned at 1315.



Left, front to back: Bob Crabtree, Donna Crabtree, Dan Martin, and Dennis Buxton. Right side, back to front: Pete Siegel, Elise and Vince Colacicco.



Left, front to back: Paul Turner, Mike Berning, and Ed Barnes. Right side, back to front: Ted Colquhoun, Debbie Wadle, Rick Wadle, and the indomitable Greg Mahoney.

Chapter Meeting, 17 April 2025

The San Antonio Chapter of the FTVA held their April meeting at the Alamo Café Restaurant. Fourteen members enjoyed fellowship and lunch.

President Ken Williams called the meeting to order at 1215 pm. The turnout was light due to many members having medical appointments. Ken Maynard, Treasurer, briefed we have \$240.00 in our account. Andy Smith provided feedback about meeting with members of the 93rd Intelligence Squadron to discuss the FTVA and how we might partner in the future with the local unit. The Spring Social picnic is now set for 11 a.m., Friday, 16 May, at Stapleton Park, and members of the 93IS were invited to attend. Board of Director members will man the barbecue grills to cook burgers and distribute hamburger plates. Given the proximity of our Alamo Chapter meeting next

month, members decided to cancel our May get together and attend the Spring Social picnic instead. Our next get-together at the Alamo Café will now be at noon on Thursday, 19 June. There being no new business, we adjourned at 1315.



Top (l-r): Greg Mahoney and Mike Berning, Andy Smith and Ken Maynard. Right (l-r): Doug Williams, Bob Crabtree, Ron and Kay Weaver, Grady and Terry Robinson, Donna Crabtree, Anne Williams and Shiela Willaims. Not Pictured: Ken Williams, Chapter President and Picture Taker Extraordinaire!





Heritage Chapter

San Angelo, TX
 Ronald 'JJ' Graham, President
 Chapter Contact: waynebascom@gmail.com

EC-47 History Site and Heritage Chapter Commemorate 50th Anniversary of Vietnam War's End

Combined EC-47 History Site & Heritage Chapter Inputs
 Photos courtesy of Carl Bradley, Faith in a Flash Photography

San Angelo was the site on 27-28 March of a huge commemoration marking the 50th Anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War; part of the DoD effort to 'Welcome Home' Vietnam veterans. The chapter assisted Tom Nurre's EC-47 History Site in pulling this off under beautiful weather where an estimated 220 attendees observed the ceremonies held at Goodfellow AFB and the Clarion Hotel in San Angelo, Texas.



The after-action report below was submitted to The United State of America Vietnam War Commemoration in Arlington, Virginia. It was submitted on a DD Form 2957 and emailed to WHS.VNWar50th_CPP_AAR@mail.mil.

After Action Report

BEGIN AAR: This two-day event began with a "Welcome Home" reception on Thursday evening at the San Angelo Clarion Hotel. The EC-47 History Site and Heritage Chapter-Freedom Through Vigilance Association (FTVA) members welcomed attendees from nine states and various Texas cities with free snacks and refreshments. The hosts displayed posters throughout the reception area featuring Vietnam War articles from the 1970s. These included the signing of the Paris Peace Accords, the withdrawal of American and Allied troops from Vietnam, and the last-minute evacuations as Saigon fell, 50 years ago.

Chapter minion Larry Miller set up the Don Goff Memorial Missing Man Table and a new Medal of Honor tribute display. Air Force veteran Dave Vargo presented three tables loaded with Vietnam War artifacts and memorabilia. He included a bottle of Seagram's VO (with short timer ribbon) that he won in the raffle last year. EC-47 ARDF veteran then-staff sergeant Dan Barbero, donated a carved wood EC-47 diorama plaque and a sign with carved flag and USAFSS emblem. He also contributed two relief carvings of eagles. Heritage Chapter members donated an aircraft model, pictures and clothing. All the items were available for the silent auction.

Friday morning, the Goodfellow Air Force Base Heritage Committee, led by senior member JJ Graham, hosted the fourth annual Vietnam War Commemoration Ceremony at the EC-47 Weyandt-Eddy Memorial Plaza.

The estimated 220 attendees included three Gold Star Family members, 30 Vietnam veterans and 15 deceased Vietnam veteran surviving spouses and their families. The Goodfellow AFB 17th Training Wing Commander, Colonel Angelina Maguinness, President of Angelo State University, LtGen (R) Ronnie Hawkins, 344th Military Intelligence Battalion Commander, LtCol Ray Kuderka, former EC-47 ARDF Operator, then-staff sergeant Joe Martin, and Texas Congressman August Pfluger were among the VIPs attending.

Following opening comments by Col Maguinness, Kuderka, and Martin paid tribute to U.S. Army and South Vietnamese Air Force ARDF aircrews. Graham presented the speakers with framed plastic Keepsake engraved plates identical to the engraved bronze plates placed in the plaza in tribute to each of the honored aircrew members.

Next, former EC-47 ARDF operator and Commemoration Partner Program (CPP) Committee Coordinator, Tom Nurre, reflected back on the less-than-warm reception so many received upon returning home from Vietnam and other overseas assignments...and then paid tribute to the attendees and their Americanism culture that brought them all together to share a moment of deep fellowship and remembrance at the Weyandt-Eddy Memorial Plaza. Nurre completed the dedication of more than 820 plaza pavers with the words, "...let us dedicate these pavers to all those honored here today, and to the wonderfully indomitable spirit that binds and sustains us as we honor the sacrifice of all who served."

The pinning segment of the ceremony began with a hearty Welcome Home and introduction of 17 Vietnam veterans as Congressman Pfluger presented those present with the Commemorative lapel pin and Certificate of Appreciation. (Ten registered veterans who were unable to attend received their pins and certificates through the CPP mail-out program.)

Nurre then introduced 12 surviving spouses, six of whom were former USAFSS personnel spouses (Bishop, Blackburn, Bumann, Burmeister, VanCamp and Ron Miller), with a thumb-nail sketch about the service of their deceased veteran spouses and their family lives. Maguinness, Kuderka, and Pfluger presented these ladies, mostly accompanied by family members, with the Blue Star lapel pin, Certificate of Honor, and a packet of Commemoration materials.

Pfluger completed the ceremony with a surprise presentation of the OUTSTANDING PARTNER Letter, a Certificate of Appreciation, and a Commemoration Challenge Coin to the EC-47 History Site CPP Committee coordinator, Tom Nurre. The letter, signed by the Department of Defense (DoD) Vietnam War Commemoration Director, Maj. Gen. Edward J. Chrystal, Jr., named Nurre “... alongside the top one percent of the (13,542) organizations participating in this noble mission.”

On Friday evening, over 80 attendees enjoyed the meal and participation in the raffles, silent auction, and storytelling during dinner catered by Chef Eddie and the Arc Light Saloon and Grill staff. Rich Renkas won one of the bottles of Seagram’s VO and booklet. Larry Miller won the second bottle but regifted it for a third drawing which JJ Graham won. He gifted it to the attendees whereby it was promptly opened and consumed. Vietnam War veteran nephew Zekiel Venne received the short timer ribbon and booklet. Pleiku and Danang EC-47 pilot, hen-1st Lt Jerry Bradley, made closing comments.

Travel and shipping budget cuts curtailed the DoD Commemoration support; however, they found “work arounds” to get us the materials we needed. We greatly appreciate this same dedicated support that we have received for the entire ten years of our partnership.

Congressman Pfluger: “Today, I had the honor of attending the United States of America 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration Welcome Home and Pinning Ceremony at Goodfellow Air Force Base. This ceremony has taken place for over 10 years in San Angelo and is an incredible way to recognize and honor Vietnam War veterans with an official commemorative lapel pin. This year’s ceremony coincided with the 50th anniversary of the Fall of Saigon and the end of the Vietnam War. I’d like to thank the Goodfellow AFB Heritage Committee, the Heritage Chapter – Freedom Through Vigilance Association, the EC-47 History Site, and all of the Command Staff at Goodfellow AFB for putting together such a meaningful event. END AAR.

The following photos highlight the event.

Master of Ceremonies JJ Graham, right, presents a thank you gift to guest speaker LtCol Ray Kuderka, 344th Military Intelligence Battalion Commander.





Congressman Pfluger, left, presents the Outstanding Partner letter congratulating Tom Nurre for his and the EC-47 History Site's Commemorative Partner Program accomplishments.

Goodfellow AFB 17th Training Wing Commander, Colonel Angelina Maguinness hosted the event and welcomed the participants.





Heritage Chapter Secretary Wayne Bascom, left, and Treasurer Rick Premo registered in the attendees pitching in to keep things running smoothly.



We were all honored to have TSgt Ray Leftwich's son, Ray Leftwich, and daughter Paula Pool, attend. TSgt Raymond Francis Leftwich was killed in action on 9 March 1967, when the EC-47 aircraft, callsign TIDE 86, on which he was serving as an Airborne Morse Systems Operator, was downed by enemy fire over South Vietnam. TSgt Leftwich has dormitories at Kelly AFB, TX and Goodfellow AFB, TX named in his honor, as well as a picnic area on Misawa AB.



Heritage Chapter members (l-r) Larry and Pat Miller and Susan and John Frost enjoy early banter.

The following links provide over 300 photos and reports of the event.

<https://www.vietnam50thcpp.com>) to access the full gallery of pictures taken by Carl Bradley, Faith in a Flash Photography.

[Short Concho Valley Homepage Story](#)

[KYXS Video](#)

[KTXS Article](#)

[Fox West Texas Article and Video](#)

[San Angelo Live Interviews JJ Graham](#)

[San Angelo Live Article](#)

One MiMi Sneaks In

PMFR: Doggers Host FOSP 2025

By Larry Miller

This year's Fall of Saigon Party (FOSP), held from April 28 through May 3, 2025 was marked by the 50th anniversary of the Fall of Saigon and the official end of the Vietnam War. This year's FOSP was in Washington D.C. with a great turnout of almost 100 Dogger veterans and spouses, a good number of ChiLings, including Heritage Chapter secretary Wayne Bascom, and one MiMi, Jim Sickich. The co-conspirators tasked with making this special FOSP absolutely successful were Randy Seitter, J. P. Hill, Joe Turney, and Heritage Chapter member Larry Miller.

Hospitality Suite: War Story Central

Monday, April 28th - The hotel and focal point for our 50th anniversary was the Holiday Inn Suites in College Park Maryland, which was perfectly situated for our planned activities in Washington and the National Security Agency. Although Day One was not officially a sight-seeing day, several members of Randy's Viet language class took the opportunity to tour historic Annapolis and the Naval Academy, the rest of the group enjoyed spending time in the hospitality room to reacquaint ourselves with old friends and crew members. This involved enjoying adult beverages and retelling often repeated war stories that began "No, s***, this really happened!"

National Cryptologic Museum Tour

Tuesday, April 29th - our first planned excursion was to the newly renovated National Cryptologic Museum on the NSA campus where gals and guys from the 94th Intelligence Squadron presented a great unclassified briefing on the unit and its mission. We were all impressed with the museum and its unique artifacts, and were surprised to see the "Hanoi Hilton" brick on display that the Doggers and Heritage Chapter donated to the museum several years ago. Alongside it in the display - very appropriately - was an explanation of the "tap code" used by American prisoners held captive in the prison during the Vietnam War. After this extensive and enjoyable visit, we headed for the bus and traveled to Washington for a tour of the Capitol, thanks to Randy's Senator David McCormick and Congressman Brian K. Fitzpatrick. Needless to say, it was an excellent tour including both the House and the Senate. By Randy's count, it was an 11,000 steps workout for the day! Highlights of the day were Statuary Hall, the original House of Representatives, and, of course, the Rotunda. After a long tough day, we headed back to the hotel for more adult beverages and brand-new war stories.

Wednesday, April 30th - We started our day at Arlington National Cemetery and toured on a private tram to catch as many of the sights as possible (and hopefully rest our tired legs from yesterday). We were blessed with an excellent, knowledgeable docent. She even tipped us off to the final resting places of "Hap" Arnold, President Taft, Joe Louis, Lee Marvin and ever so many other of our nation's heroes and statesmen. The Changing of the Guard was extremely impressive and emotional. Randy noticed that the guard occasionally shuffled his feet during his watch. One of the group said that they understood that this is the Guards' way of acknowledging the presence of veterans. Thank you very much! We finished our tour with a visit to the Kennedys' grave site and

Arlington that had recently been renovated and reopened for visitors. Next stop was the Air Force Memorial. It's always impressive to see the symbols of four planes climbing high into the sky. One of the group noticed that Major General Doyle E. Larson is listed on a plaque there as one of the original directors of the Memorial.

Next stop was the Vietnam Memorial. Once again, many thanks to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) and the Park Service for allowing us to conduct our memorial service there to honor all our Fallen Doggers. Included in the brief service was a reading of all those names of our comrades who have passed. Four full pages! Our ceremony ended with Coast Guard veteran Jim McDevitt, a good friend of Randy's, playing Taps followed by a wreath laying at the Wall below the name of the father of one of group Mike Freeman who died in Vietnam in 1964. During the playing of Taps, everyone along the Wall stopped, saluted, or bowed their head in reverence to those fallen during the War. Very moving and much thanks and gratitude to Jim Knotts and the VVMF. It was another 11,000 steps day!

Our banquet was held at American Legion Post #136 in Greenbelt, MD, about eight minutes from the hotel. JP put on a great video presentation of photos of many of our departed Doggers that played during dinner. Dinner was followed first by presentation of 50th Anniversary Commemoration of the Vietnam War lapel pins to several in attendance that had yet to receive one. We were certainly honored to have Major General Ricky Mills attend our banquet along with his Mom and Dad, Chief Master Sergeant Larry Mills. Although he was given virtually no warning, Ricky gave an inspiring speech honoring his parents for helping to make him the man he has become. Following the general's words, Larry Miller presented him with a photo allegedly of the 1st FOSP with a very young – three or four year-old! – Ricky standing with his Mom and Dad on a beach in Okinawa.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of "Hanoi Hilton" bricks to four of our best - Peter Baysdell, Mark Graham, Jerry Clausen and Ed Evans.

The final presentation came as a complete surprise to everyone except Randy. Randy asked his Congressman Fitzpatrick to have the names of those present that had participated in Operation Frequent Wind, the evacuation and Fall of Republic of Vietnam, be read into the Congressional Record. It was entered on April 28, 2025. Copies of the readings were given all those Doggers present who served in either the 6990th and 6908th Security Squadrons that fateful day. Again many thanks to Congressman Fitzpatrick and his staff for making this possible.

Thursday, May 1st – This day's excursion took the group to the Udvar-Hazy National Air and Space Museum near Dulles. A very impressive display in the large facility including the SR-71, space shuttle, Concorde and many, many other historic aircraft Worst part of the trip was the return to the hotel, about 37 miles, took TWO HOURS in unbelievable traffic!

Friday, May 2nd – Many of the Doggers and spouses had left by today. Randy's 24N class took the Metro to the Mall, visited the Natural History Museum and wandered around for a couple of hours before heading back. Last day for hospitality suite!

All in all, this year's 50th commemoration of the Fall of Saigon by the Doggers was an outstanding success, but certainly not an easy thing to organize. And the kudos and "thank yous" have been

rolling in. We believe that everyone enjoyed our reunion as much as we have enjoyed putting it all together. The final order of business to take care of was the location for next year's festivities. Majority vote was to return to Destin/Fort Walton Beach area since we were last there over 10 years ago. We've already started planning for this next shindig! Although this was the 50th anniversary of the Fall of Saigon, 2026 will mark the 50th Anniversary of our get-togethers. Any excuse for a great time with friends and fellow comrades!

Heritage Chapter Memorial Day Activities

**Input by JJ Graham, Larry Miller and Wayne Bascom
Photos courtesy of the Heritage Chapter**

A tradition in San Angelo is to honor our fallen veterans each Memorial Day at various events. Members of the Heritage Chapter fan out and try to attend as many as possible.

Fort Concho Event. Larry Miller attended the first ceremony of Memorial Day at 9:30 AM at Fort Concho in San Angelo. Fort Concho is regarded as the best preserved of all the old Western forts. The ceremony was also attended by the "newly-minted" San Angelo Mayor Tom Thompson; Tom Green County Judge Lane Carter; and long-time county judge, Steve Floyd as well as representation from other San Angelo veterans groups. The guest speaker for the ceremony was Mr. Charles Anderson, a local historian and the father of a paralyzed veteran who spoke about the "ultimate sacrifice", and how the definition of that should include our veterans who bear the most horrible permanent marks of their sacrifice for the rest of their lives.

Heritage Chapter President JJ Graham lays the Heritage Chapter wreath at the foot of the monument to honor those who gave all.



Johnson's Lawnhaven Memorial Gardens. Two Chapter members, JJ Graham and Rick Primo, attended the Memorial Day Ceremony at Johnson's Lawnhaven Memorial Gardens. The Goodfellow AFB Honor Guard did an amazing job raising and folding the flag in winds gusting over 30 MPH! The guest speaker, Major Christina Behrens, the Director of Operations of the 312th Training Squadron, gave a fitting presentation on what Memorial Day means to active-duty military personnel and to her personally, citing her family's generations of military service. All attendees were given "goody bags" (American flag, tissues, lip balm, cookies, etc.) and were treated to a meal of sausage wraps with all the fixings. It was a well-done ceremony attended by over 100 people, including roughly 30 active-duty personnel from Goodfellow AFB.

County Courthouse Venue. The final event took place at 5:30 PM. Chapter President "J.J" Graham, Wayne Bascom and Larry Miller attended the 58th annual Veterans Affairs ceremony at the Tom Green County Courthouse. Along with almost all of the veteran organizations in the San Angelo community, J.J. presented a memorial wreath honoring San Angelo's fallen in front of the courthouse building. We were also met with a rain and hail storm. However, as J.J. always says when asked, "What happens if it rains?" "We get wet!". If these heroes that we honor paid the ultimate sacrifice of their lives, then we can stand out there and get a little damp.



Larry Miller, Wayne Bascom, and JJ Graham beside the wreaths placed by several veterans organizations.

Recognizing Vets in the “Meals for the Elderly Program”

Chapter Honors Veterans

Story by Wayne Bascom and Larry Miller
Photos Compliments of the Heritage Chapter

During a recent trip with lunch deliveries for San Angelo’s “Meals For the Elderly”, one of our members visited with an elderly gentleman in his home. Our guy was astonished by what he called the “finest beer stein collection” that he’d ever seen.

It was readily apparent that this elderly gentleman had spent a significant time serving in the US military in Germany. When asked if he had ever been awarded the 50th Anniversary Commemoration of the Vietnam War lapel pin, he was completely unaware of the program. Fortunately, our guy had one of the pins on his hat and proceeded to pin this veteran on the spot.

Later discussions with the Meals For The Elderly program managers revealed that there were 21 elderly veterans that they served meals to that had never been presented with pins honoring their service. We immediately set about to correct this oversight.

After these veterans were identified, the Chapter set about honoring them with a pin and certificate commemorating their service and sacrifice to the nation. The photos below depict the beginning of the chapter’s efforts to ensure recognition where recognition is deserved. This is taking the form of an outreach plan to continue to present and honor the rest of the veterans who are for the most part homebound here in San Angelo.



(L-R) Mario Vasquez proudly reviews his dad's (Martin Vasquez) Certificate as JJ looks on. Mr. Vasquez first entered the US Army in 1955 and left the service in 1965.



Above: JJ Pins Vietnam Veteran Michael LaBurtis with wife Edith at his side Michael LaBurtis served, as a Coast Guardsman. Below: JJ posing with Vietnam Veteran Michel Lopez as his family looks on. Mr. Lopez served in the U.S. Army as a machine gunner in Vietnam.





Above: Vietnam Veteran William Hamblin (left) is recognized by Rick Premo. Not pictured is Larry Miller who was also in attendance to honor Mr. Hamblin's service.



Right: Vietnam Veteran Tom Parr, who had a 20-year USAF career in Hospital Services is pinned by Heritage President JJ Graham.

Service and Support Cited

Heritage Chapter Honors City Mayor

Story by Larry Miller

On 18 March, during a San Angelo City Council meeting, the Heritage Chapter surprised outgoing Mayor Brenda Gunter by honoring her for her past service and support to the chapter’s activities. The honors were bestowed in front of the entire San Angelo City Council and the many community members in attendance.

One highlight of the surprise presentation was Mayor Gunter’s public reading of a City Proclamation marking the 50th anniversary of the end of America's involvement in the Vietnam War. This proclamation was drafted by Heritage Chapter members, including Tom Nurre and San Angelo Councilmember Larry Miller.



Left, Heritage Chapter President JJ Graham presents Mayor Gunter with the framed, engraved keepsake in appreciation of her past support as San Angelo City Manager Daniel Valenzuela looks on.

The surprise presentation was a success! Mayor Gunter indicated that if she had been asked to say a few words, she would have become “emotionally overcome” with this honor from the Heritage Chapter and the EC-47 History Site committee.

A number of Heritage Chapter members, including President “JJ” Graham and San Angelo Council Member Larry Miller attended the public forum and following her reading of the proclamation, the Chapter and the EC-47 History Site representatives “knocked her socks off” with a presentation of an engraved plastic Keepsake plate identical to the distinctive bronze plate that will be dedicated to her in Weyandt-Eddy Plaza in front of Wing Headquarters on Goodfellow AFB.

These honors were originally scheduled to be conferred during the 4th Annual Vietnam War Commemoration Ceremony in San Angelo on March 28th. Unfortunately, due to a binding commitment in Washington, Mayor Gunter was not going to be able to attend the Goodfellow AFB event so the Heritage Chapter surprised her at the regularly scheduled City Council meeting instead. During the eight years of her tenure (2017-2025), the mayor has consistently provided support and displayed enthusiasm for so many Vietnam War veteran ceremonies and chapter activities.



Those in attendance were (L-R) City Councilman Larry Miller, Heritage Chapter President JJ Graham, Mayor Brenda Gunter, American Legion Post 572 Commander Kristie Young, City Councilman Harry Thomas, American Legion Post 572 Adjutant Carl Frentz (rear), Mary Frentz, and City Manager Daniel Valenzuela.

Heritage Chapter Thanks the Clarion

Story and photo by Wayne Bascom and Tom Nurre

Once again we were honored to have our friends at the Clarion Hotel serve as 'Home Base' for our Vietnam War Veterans Commemoration and reunion activities. The hotel provided exceptional pricing for attendees, and opened up their ballrooms and lobby for displays and the banquet. We have enjoyed this outstanding partnership for several years, and plan to use them for many events in the future. The Heritage Chapter met with the staff afterwards to present Certificates of Appreciation on behalf of the EC-47 History Site and the Heritage Chapter.



(L-R) JJ Graham certifies of appreciation to Sofia Acevedo, lead hostess, Joe Hyde, owner of the in-house bar and grill, and Linda Blaylock, Events Manager. Although many hotel workers were recognized, these three were the first. Linda Blaylock put everything together without a hitch. She ensured we had everything we needed. Sofia Acevedo was one of the hostesses who were on the front lines for all the guests who stayed at the hotel. Guest reviews were outstanding. And to our surprise, we learned Joe Hyde, is a retired USAF B-52 pilot. He owns the in-house “Arc Light Bar and Grill”.

Heritage Chapter & City Visitor's Center Sign Agreement

Story by Wayne Bascom
Photo compliments of the Heritage Chapter

The Heritage Chapter signed an agreement with the San Angelo Chamber of Commerce Visitor's Center. This agreement allows the Visitor's Center to sell the Goodfellow Air Force Base pictorial history book that was co-authored by former Goodfellow Base Historian Dr. John 'Doc' Garrett and our own CMSgt (ret) Tom Nurre. These two gentlemen scoured many sources for images that tell the story of Goodfellow over time. The book normally retails for about \$24 online but the authors are giving the visitor's Center a small discount. Thousands of students attend classes here each year in the many disciplines. In a lot of these cases families come to San Angelo for these graduations and spend time in the city, including the Visitor's Center. Recently, the center added a small Goodfellow Exhibit. Now next to that exhibit is a display of these books ready for purchase. As a bonus each book in the Visitor's Center is signed by both authors.



Heritage Chapter Secretary Wayne Bascom poses with Linda Burdell, San Angelo Visitor's Center Manager, after completing the agreement signing allowing the center to sell the GAFB Historical Pictorial.

Miscellany: Rodeo Parade Jeep and a Rass Sighting



Above. Our own Tom Nurre with Odessa VFW Post 4372 Vice-Commander Cody Golden posing with their 1st Place Winner (Antique Vehicle category) after riding together in the 93rd Annual San Angelo Rodeo Parade. Tom received the invite to ride in the 1967 Vietnam era jeep and off they went. Photos by Odessa VFW Post 4372. Input from Wayne Bascom and Tom Nurre.



Our humble chapter was honored to get a late-breaking notice that our old friend Dennis Rasmussen was going to be in the local area for a couple of days. We immediately postponed our own monthly meeting to have dinner with this VIP (cough!) from San Antonio. After a few hugs and some good food at Cheddar's we sat about the table and dodged barbs the rest of the evening. Good to see you again Rass! Input by Wayne Bascom, photo by Heritage Chapter. (l-r) Rass, Tom Nurre, Larry Miller, Pat Miller, Wayne Bascom, and JJ Graham.



Mid-Atlantic Region Chapter

Fort George G. Meade, MD

Jerry Gething, President

Chapter Contact: sharong@thefrizzellhome.us

MARC FTVA Spring Social

Brings Members Together on Armed Forces Day

The Mid-Atlantic Region Chapter (MARC) of the Freedom Through Vigilance Association (FTVA) held its "somewhat" annual Spring Social on the warm and welcoming afternoon of 17 May, bringing together 17 FTVA members and family members for a relaxed and meaningful gathering at Mission BBQ in Beltsville, MD. The event, held in the spirit of camaraderie and shared service, served as an opportunity for everyone to reconnect, reflect, and enjoy good food in great company

- at a very reduced cost!

Mission BBQ, known for its patriotic theme and respect for the military community, provided a fitting backdrop for the MARC. Guests arrived to a friendly welcome and shared stories over hearty barbecue plates, sweet tea, and laughter that filled the restaurant's dining room. Being Armed Forces Day, Mission BBQ offered free sandwiches to veterans and we took full advantage of that!

While there was no formal agenda, the social was rich with conversation—updates on life, memories of service, and a few tales from “back in the day.” The gathering demonstrated the strength of the bond that connects us - those who have served in missions of vigilance and intelligence around the globe. Attendees included: Jerry Gething (MARC, President), Sharon Frizzell (MARC Communications), Bob Bastian (MARC Treasurer), Trish Gething, Stephanie Gething, Nick Gething, Mark Graham, Jim Griffie, Stu Labovitz, Tom "TJ" Morse, Dan Scott, Frank Stross, Rick Yeh, Jenny Russell, John Nichols and Wil Nichols.



MARC Chapter President Jerry Gething looking over the arrangements at the chapters Spring Social on 17 May.

"These small gatherings keep us close," said Bob Bastian. "Even after the uniforms are gone, the mission and the friendships live on."

The FTVA thanks everyone who joined and looks forward to an even bigger turnout at our FALL Social Event. Plans will soon be underway for a Fall Reunion, and all members are encouraged to keep an eye on the official MARC FTVA communications for dates and details.

Until then—stay vigilant, stay connected, stay proud - and *Remain in Touch!*

Jerry



Above, left: Bob Bastian (left) and Dan Scott (right) discuss chapter strategies and tactics. Above, right: Jenny Russell and Rick Yeh pose for the camera while Frank Stross, left, appears in awe at something off camera.



Above, left and around the table: : TJ Morse, Jim Griffie, Jenny Russell, Rick Yeh, Dan Scott, Mark Graham, Bob Bastian, Jerry Gething and Sharon Frizzell.



Rocky Mountain Chapter

Colorado Springs, CO

Greg Roman and Stan Cook Co-Presidents

Chapter Contact: g.eichelberger08@yahoo.com



The FTVA's Rocky Mountain Chapter met May 15th. Depicted (L-R) are Stan Cook, Andy Smith (FTVA Treasurer who was visiting the Colorado Springs area), Dennis Daniels, Ike Eichelberger, Aaron Prupas and Thomas Disilverio. The next MARC FTVA Chapter meeting is slated for 19 June at Rhinos beginning at 1800 MDT.



Wasatch Chapter

Salt Lake City, UT

Jacob Scheid, President

Chapter Contact: lawson.scott1@gmail.com

FTVA Wasatch Chapter Update

It's been a while since you've heard from us, but the Wasatch Chapter is still here—and we're excited to get things rolling again.

Shawn Heckman, Jake Schied, and Scott Lawson (left to right in photo) recently got together to do some planning and we're committing to more consistent and predictable meetups. Starting June 24, we'll hold monthly gatherings at 11:00 AM on the last Tuesday of each month at Santo Taco in Rose Park (910 N 900 W, Salt Lake City, UT). Same time, same place—easy to remember, close

to the base, and a great excuse for good food and good company.



Behind the scenes, we're refreshing our membership list, working on a new chapter website, and working on better ways of getting reconnected.

It's been too long, and we're excited to rebuild momentum. Hope to see you soon!

To find the latest info on our chapter, join and follow us on [Facebook](#).

Scott Lawson
FTVA Wasatch



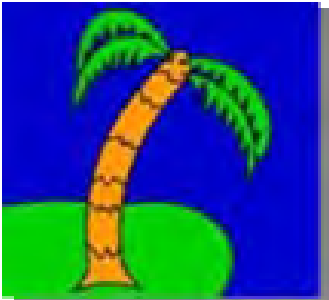
Gold Country Chapter

Yuba City, CA

John Aurelius, President

Chapter Contact: jaurelius@mikodi.com

Check Back in September!



Aloha Chapter

Honolulu, HI

John "Tilly" Toillion, President

Chapter Contact: alohatilly@hawaii.rr.com

Check Back in September!

Join a Chapter Today!
Contact information for each chapter
is listed above.



REUNIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

San Vito Vets Swap Tall Tales

Submitted by Dennis "Rass" Rasmussen



Last April 28th found this motley group of San Vito (Italy) Vets swapping giant fables at their monthly get together at a local Applebees. No one questions the accuracy of their mutual memories of 1979-82. Depicted (l-r): Bob Andress, Rick Sassaman, Jim Gonzalez, Dennis Rasmussen, Bill Etherton, Bert Pickell and Ed Klem. (Lanny Abee was missed due to sickness).

Annual FTVA Reunion 16-18 Oct 25

Mark your calendars for October 16-18, 2025, in San Antonio, TX, where our community will again come together for a series of meaningful events. Stay tuned for our next newsletter, which will announce the banquet guest speaker. The schedule is as follows:

October 16

- Golf Tournament (Golf Club of Texas)

October 17

- Hall of Honor Induction
- Remembrance Ceremony
 - Picnic

October 18

- Annual Membership Meeting (Seaworld Marriott on TX-151/Zoom)
 - Banquet (Gateway Club)

Have ideas or want to volunteer? Contact the FTVA Board of Directors at board@ftva.us.

FTVA VIGILANT PARTNERS

POC: Karen "Bam!" Rolirad
roliradlopez.karen@gmail.com

Your support is pivotal as we honor exceptional individuals who have elevated Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance, and Cybersecurity to new heights. The 2025 Hall of Honor and Remembrance Ceremony, Banquet, Golf Tournament, and Fall Picnic are not just events but celebrations of dedication, service, and legacy. To ensure their success, we rely on the steadfast commitment of our Vigilant Partners. Whether you've contributed before or are considering joining us, your annual generosity helps to uphold the excellence of these initiatives and strengthen the bonds within our community.

Become a Vigilant Partner and help continue to grow our legacy.

Partner Levels

Platinum Partner ~\$2,500 and up
Gold Partner~ \$ 1,000.00 – \$2,499.99
Silver Partner~ \$ 500.00 – \$999.99
Bronze Partner~ \$ 250.00 – \$499.99
Patron Partner~ \$ 100.00 – \$249.99

Benefits

Special invitations to association events.

By name listing posted at FTVA events and in the association newsletter.

Invitation to command events sponsored by Vigilant Partners.

Honorary membership in Freedom Through Vigilance Association.

Receive Association newsletters and membership.

The individuals and organization listed below have, in the past, and currently, lent their annual, monetary support to the FTVA. We thank them for their spirit of generosity which enables us to continue the FTVA mission.



PLATINUM PARTNERS



Prop Wash Gang

Mrs. Doyle E. Larson IMO Maj Gen Doyle E. Larson



GOLD PARTNERS



Security Services Federal Credit Union

Engrave-Tech & Graphics

Anonymous IMO MSgt Robert "Bob" Fenstermacher)

Regis F.A. Urschler IMO Maj Gen Doyle Larson and

Tom Tennant

Greg Radabaugh



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E.W. Forbess



PATRON PARTNERS



CMSgt Roger Towberman

James Mayer

Charles Bishop

Edward Sellmeyer



FALLEN EAGLES

Compiled by Joe Figueroa, Associate Editor
Contact: falleneagles@ftva.us



Received word of the following losses from caring relatives, friends and obituaries and we offer prayers and sympathy to the families.

“It is the soldier above all others who prays for peace, for it is the soldier who must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war.” Douglas MacArthur

Adamiak, Joseph B. “Joe”, MSgt (ret), USAFSS
Anderson, Michael "Mick", USAFSS
Anderson, Robert P., “Murphy”, USAFSS
Baney, Euel, Irvin, USAFSS
Barb, Markus N., SMSgt (ret), USAFSS
Barney, Garry L., MSgt (ret), USAFSS
Bennett, Graham, “Ben”, CMSgt (ret), USAFSS
Bergseng, Christine, V., Amn, USAF
Box, Floyd Allen, USAFSS
Bridger, Clyde J., Maj (ret), USAFSS
Buda, Anthony J., USAFSS
Buff, Roy Lynn, Sgt, USAFSS
DeMarco, Leonard, SSgt, USAFSS
Dombrowsky, David Lynn, Sgt, USAFSS
Duncan, Thomas John, A1C, USAFSS
Fadal, William, Kenneth, Col (ret), USAFSS
Fast, Delbert Allan, USAFSS
Fekety, Daniel Mafus, MSgt (ret), USAFSS
Fineout, Barry B. “Huck”, A1C, USAFSS
Fischer, Joseph Philip, A1C, USAFSS
Forbes, Alan Dale, USAFSS ***FTVA Member
Fritze, Robert Carl, USAFSS
Frye, William “Bill”, USAFSS
Fulk, Waylon Ornin., Maj (ret), USAFSS.
Gaugler, Richard Leroy “Rick”, Sgt, USAFSS
Gee, Gary Warren, USAFSS
Gerard, Joseph Arthur, SMSgt (ret), USAFSS
Greathouse, Robert Jackson, Sgt, USAFSS
Grogan, James Sherrill, USAFSS

Hammer, Robert Eugene, SMSgt (ret), USAFSS
Heintskill, James J., USAFSS
Higgins, Patricia "Patti", USAFSS
Hoven, Riley, Cadet First Class (ret), Air Force
Hudzik, John Louis, Sgt, USAFSS
Husby, David Jon, USAFSS
Jackett, Donald Charles, Sgt, USAFSS
Jones, Ronald A., USAFSS
Knight, James David, MSgt (ret), Electronic Security Command
Kruzan, Delano "Dee", A1C, USAFSS
Larsen, Erling David, USAFSS
Leino, Murray E., USAFSS
Leech, Ruchard L., USAFSS
Luther, Brian Spencer, USAF
Madden, Jack Lester, USAFSS
McClain, Terry F., USAFSS
McClelland, John A., A2C, USAFSS
Millsap, Charles Douglas, USAFSS *****FTVA Member**
Mitchell, Kenneth Eugene, Sgt, USAFSS
O'Rourke, Michael J., USAFSS
Palmer, James A., MSgt (ret), USAFSS
Ringeisen, Michael Duane "Mike", SSgt, USAFSS
Roberts, Trefor Duane, USAFSS
Rodrigues, Peter Wendell, USAFSS
Rooney, John E., USAFSS
Ryan, Stephen Collister "Steve", Capt, USAFSS
Sabatino, John Michael, SSgt, USAFSS
Schmidt, David F., USAFSS
Sega, Gregory A., USAFSS
Sherwood, Robert Lee, CMSgt (ret), USAFSS *****FTVA Lifetime Member and Hall of Honor**
Simms, James Robert, USAFSS
Smith, Donald Raymond, USAFSS *****FTVA Member**
Sutherland, Nicholas Daniel, CMSgt (ret), USAFSS
Taylor, William D., USAFSS
Thomas, William Dennis Jr., A1C, USAFSS
Thornhill, Stephen Dwight, MSgt (ret), USAFSS
Throckmorton, Robert Wayne, Colonel (ret), USAFSS
Underwood, James Riley, USAFSS
Verti, James Peter, USAFSS
Wilhelm, Robert B. "Bob", Sgt, USAFSS *****FTVA Lifetime Member**
Wittenberg, Gerald Lee, USAFSS



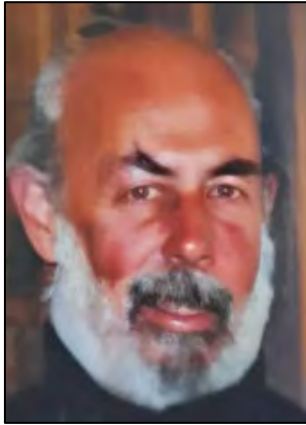
Adamiak, Joseph (Joe) B., MSgt (ret), 81, passed away February 27, 2025. He had a distinguished career in the USAF, retiring as a Master Sergeant with 24 years of service and numerous awards. Joe was proficient in several languages, including Chinese, Korean and Spanish. The Air Force trained him to be a Chinese Linguist. He studied at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, CA three times to get proficient in Mandarin Chinese. He was then trained for his duties at Goodfellow AFB San Angelo TX prior to his first duty assignment in Pakistan. He was reassigned several times as a surveillance and intelligence instructor at Goodfellow. Besides living in San Angelo, Joe, spent three years in Taiwan and a tour at Fort Ord, California. He served a remote tour in Korea and was then assigned to the National Security Agency, Fort Meade MD, where he retired in 1989. He is survived by his wife, Myong Cha Graham, Daughters: Juanita Cheek (Douglas), JoAnn Adamiak Moore, Jeanie Garza (Ralph) and Tina Banfield (John), son Michael Graham (Katherine). //Obit – Cremation Society of Maryland//



Anderson, Michael "Mick", 75, passed away March 17, 2025. Mick served in the Air Force (1968-1976) in various roles from morse code intercept operator to his last assignment at the Air Force Technical Applications Center (AFTAC) at Patrick Air Force Base. Mick is survived by his loving wife of 56 years, Gayle; his son, Christian Anderson (Tracy); his daughter, Kara Anderson (Dave Carbin). //Obit - Ammen Family Cremation & Funeral Care - Rockledge//



Anderson, Robert P., "Murphy", 80, passed away May 21, 2025. Robert went on to serve in the United States Air Force Security Service in Peshawar from 1962 to 1966. Robert was preceded in death by his beloved wife Patricia Anderson and his four siblings; Charles Anderson (Carol), Kenneth Anderson (Julie), Margorie Carbonneau (Gary), and Rose Mary Cosgrove. //Obit – McDonal and Son Funeral Home//



Baney, Irvin Euel, 93, passed away February 28, 2025. He proudly served in the U.S. Air Force Security Service in the South Pacific and Far East. After his military service, Irvin attended Humboldt State College, where he earned a degree in business administration. Irvin Euel Baney is survived by his three children: Phillip Shook-Baney, Michael Addison-Baney, and Noemi Baney-Herrera. //Obit – Girdner Funeral Chapel//



Barb, Markus N., SMSgt (ret), 68, passed away December 10, 2024. He joined the Air Force in 1974 and honorably served his country for 26 years, receiving many decorations. Markus is survived by his wife of 43 years, Gail, sons Jeremy (Amy), Daniel (Julie), Garrett (Emily). //Obit - HZ Obituaries//
According to USAFSS Facebook page, he was assigned to Brooks AFB in 1977. //Joseph "Pepito" Figueroa//

According to the Veterans Affairs Gravesite Locator he served during the Vietnam and Persian Gulf war periods. //Joseph "Pepito" Figueroa//



Barney, Garry Lee, MSgt (ret), 89, passed away April 12, 2025. Garry joined the United States Air Force. Having taught himself to play the piano as a teen, his "natural ear" prompted the USAF to send him to Yale University to learn Mandarin Chinese. Garry also became proficient in Russian (Syracuse University), and he used both languages as a cryptologic intelligence analyst and reporter. He served in Korea (including PY-do, an island outpost only 10 miles off the coast of North Korea), Japan, Germany, Turkey, and at Goodfellow AFB in San Angelo, Texas, where he was a tech school instructor. After studying accounting at Angelo State College, Garry retired as a Master Sergeant in 1973, and he and his family returned to Mayfield. Garry later retired from his second career as a trust officer at the City National Bank in Gloversville. Garry is survived by his loving wife of 68 years, Loretta Trevett Barney, children Arlene Renee Carr (David) of Gulfport, Florida, and Gregory Barney of Porter Corners. //Obit – Northville Funeral Service//

Chinese linguist. (IFEL 1953-11), Korea, Japan, Germany, Turkey, Goodfellow. //Bert Turner//

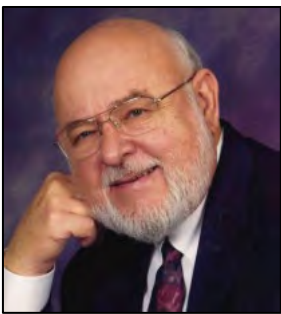


Bennet, Graham (aka Ben), CMSgt (ret), 85, passed away December 28, 2024. He enlisted into the USAF and quickly excelled in his military career receiving numerous decorations and medals during his 22 years of service retiring honorably as a CMSgt in May 1984. He continued working after retirement with several defense contractors. He is dearly loved and will be greatly missed by his wife of 63 years, Brenda Baker Bennett; daughters, Deanne Gibson, Bernay Johnson and husband Tom. //Obit – Ingram Funeral Home//

Bennett was Maintenance Supe at Offutt, and I worked with him extensively on a couple of Big Safari projects. //Lee Anthony//



Bergseng, Christine V., Amn, 38, passed away February 13, 2025. She went into the Air Force as a linguist studying the Korean language. She spent 3 years in South Korea and finished her service in Maryland. She spoke English, Korean, Spanish, Italian and some sign language. Christine is survived by her husband, Michael Bergseng and their children, Alanna, Felicitee, Lillian, and Collin. //Obit – Farmer Funeral Chapel//



Box, Floyd Allen, 83, passed away April 15, 2025. He enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, where he proudly served with the Air Force Security Service in Okinawa and South Korea. Following his honorable discharge, Floyd married the love of his life, Rubye, on August 30, 1963. //Obit – Porter Loring Mortuary//



Bridger, Clyde J., Maj (ret), 93, passed away April 12, 2025. While still in high school he enlisted in Oconto's Company C, 127th Infantry, Wisconsin National Guard. Upon graduating high school in 1949, Clyde transferred directly into the US Air Force and spent the next twenty years on active duty, retiring on July 31, 1969. On April 7, 1951, Clyde married Lola Jean Ziesmer at the Brooks AFB Chapel in San Antonio, Texas. Clyde was a veteran of both the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Overseas assignments took him to

Tokyo, Japan; Peshawar (Northwest Frontier/Kyber Pass), Pakistan; Bremerhaven, Germany; Anderson AFB, Guam; and Saigon, Viet Nam. In Viet Nam Clyde was assigned to the US Army Military Assistance Command (MACV) Headquarters Counterintelligence Division. In the United States his assignments were at Brooks AFB, San Antonio, Texas; USAF Security Service Headquarters, Kelly AFB, Texas; The National Security Agency, (NSA), Washington D.C. and Key West Naval Air Station, Florida. In addition to numerous awards Clyde was the recipient of the Bronze Star Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal and the Army Commendation Medal. Except for pilot training and technical schools, all of Clyde’s assignments were in Special Intelligence Operations or Counterintelligence Operations. He was a graduate of the USAF Senior NCO Academy. Clyde is survived by sons William (Peggy Scheffen) Bridger Green Bay, WI; Chief Warrant Officer Robert Bridger, US Army (retired) St Cloud, FL; step-sons Bruce (Kathy) Retzlaff, Green Bay, WI; Randal (Kim McDonald) Retzlaff; David (Theresa) Bake Retzlaff); and Scott (Bonnie) Retzlaff, all of Oconto. As a Lt/Col in the US Air Force Civil Air Patrol (CAP) he flew numerous missions in search of people or aircraft reported missing. Clyde was one of only two CAP pilots in Northeastern Wisconsin selected to fly missions in support of Federal Drug Enforcement operations. **//Obit – Gallagher Funeral Home and Cremation//**

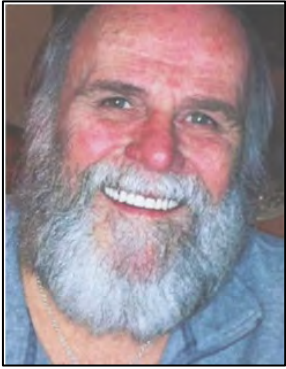
Major Bridger was my commander in Key West NAS in 1968. I was a radio intercept analyst and was honored to serve under his command. Rest in peace, sir and God bless! Bob Seering, Green Bay. //Bob Seering//



Buda, Anthony J., 81, passed away February 11, 2025. Tony’s career started out in the Air Force in San Antonio which included a tour in the country of Turkey and several years in Security Service in San Antonio. He is survived by his loving wife of 58 years, Diane, and son Randall Buda. **//Mission Park//**



Buff, Roy Lynn, Sgt, 75, passed away February 27, 2025. He proudly served in the United States Air Force as a sergeant during the Vietnam War for four years. Lynn was a linguist and spoke five different languages. Lynn is survived by his wife of 14 years, Karen Toles Buff. **//Obit – Heritage Funeral Service & Crematory of Valdese//**



DeMarco, Leonard "Lenny" Sr., SSgt, 67, passed away April 23, 2025. He was a 1965 graduate of Dunmore High School and went on to serve in the United States Air Force Security Service during the Vietnam War. Lenny was a life member of the V.F.W. Post 5209 in North Scranton, where he served as Commander, as well as numerous other positions. Leonard is survived by his devoted wife, Monica Cupina DeMarco. Lenny is also survived by his four children, Julieanne Lewis and husband Ryan of Scranton; Leonard, Jr. and wife Kimberly of Jermyn; Nicholas and fiancée Kathy Knott of Jessup; and Elizabeth Vohar and husband Joseph of Manassas, VA. //Obit – Nepa Funeral

Home//



Dombrowsky, David L. "Dave", Sgt, 80, passed away March 17, 2025. A proud patriot, Dave served his country as a decorated member of the United States Air Force during the Vietnam War. He later worked with the Central Intelligence Agency, serving in various locations around the world. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Barb Dombrowsky; daughters Debbie Schillinger and Kelly (Falko) Jonkhans; //Obit – National Cremation//

Listed in Our Losses section of 6994th Security Squadron web site <https://6994th.com/our-losses/> //Joseph "Pepito" Figueroa//

Carefree days at the Marine House in Mogadishu, Somalia back in the early Seventies. Officially a hardship posting but we made such good friends there and had lots of fun.
//John and Shan Durha//



Duncan, Thomas "Tom" Jr., A1C, 82, passed away April 11, 2025. He graduated from Downey High in 1960 and served 3.5 years in the U.S. Air Force in Okinawa and Japan with the 6922nd Air Force Security Service. He is survived by his former wives, Joy Duncan and Chris Hamzeff; children Mark Duncan (Cherise) and Stephanie Duncan. //Obit – Dignity Memorial//



Fadal, William, Kenneth, Col (ret), 85, passed away March 12, 2025. Affectionately referred to as "The Colonel" by friends and family, attended Texas A&M University, where he was a proud member of the Corps of Cadets. In 1961, upon graduating, he was commissioned into the USAF. Over the course of his distinguished 28-year career, he served as Commander and Chief of Security Police at most of his assignments, including: Lackland AFB, Texas; Shaw AFB, SC; Kadena AFB, Okinawa; Security Police Academy, TX; Laredo AFB, Texas; Takhli RTAFB, Thailand; Holloman AFB, NM; Howard AFB, Panama Canal Zone; Langley AFB, VA; Kelly AFB, Texas; and Kirkland AFB, NM. Under his command, he was most proud of the 355th Security Police Squadron earning Best Security Police Unit in the USAF for 1979 at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona and of his 1,500 troops at Clark Air Base, Philippines earning Best Security Group in the United States Air Force in 1985. His staff assignments include serving as Electronic Security Command Chief of Security Police and as the Chief of the Plans and Programs Divisions at both HQ Tactical Air Command and at the HQ U.S. Air Force Office of Security Police where he retired in 1989. His service was recognized with numerous honors, but most notably include the Legion of Merit (one Oak Leaf Cluster), the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal (4 OLC), the Air Force Commendation Medal (1 OLC), and the Supreme Command Master Badge from the Royal Thai Armed Forces. He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Sammie Fadal; his sister, Donna Marie Fadal; his children, Ken Fadal II, Michael Fadal, Koury Fadal and fiancé Blake Yowell. //Obit – Waco Tribune Herald//



Fast, Delbert Allan, 84, passed away January 26, 2025. In 1964, Del enlisted in the US Air Force. Assigned to the Security Service, he undertook intensive Russian language study at Indiana University. From 1965 to 1968, he lived in Misawa, Japan. He is survived by his wife, Peggy Jean Fast; his son, Todd Alan Fast; his daughter-in-law, Fang Lu. //Obit – Funeral and Cremations//



Fekety, Daniel Mafus, MSgt (ret), 79, passed away March 26, 2025. He served in the United States Air Force for 22 years as Radio Communications Analysis Technician. At seventeen, between his junior and senior year at Sumter County, Dan joined the Marine Corps Reserve unit in Meridian, MS, and went off to Paris Island, SC, for Basic Training. Upon returning, he completed his senior year of high school, graduated, and entered the Active-Duty Marine Corps as a Private First Class. He was stationed at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, NC. After one year in the Marines, Dan requested an interservice transfer to the Air Force. He tested out so high on the Air Force Vocational Aptitude Battery Exam (AFVAB), he was assigned to the United States Air Force Security Service (USAFSS). His talent working with state-of-the-art communication equipment took him to many assignments such as Wakkanai Air Station Japan, Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Vietnam, and other not-to-be-mentioned garden spots. He mustered out of service at Homestead AFB, Florida, in 1987 with 22 years of service and the rank of Master Sergeant. A few of his military awards include the Meritorious Service Medal with one Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, Navy Meritorious unit Commendation, AF Overseas Ribbon with two Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm, and Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon. He is survived by his wife, Janice Ponsell Fekety. //Obit - Cedar Bay Funeral Home//



Fineout, Barry B. "Huck" B., A1C, 85, passed away April 25, 2025. He proudly served in the United States Air Force Security Service for 8 years between Italy, Alaska, and Scotland. He is survived by his children Jennifer (Josh) Schmidt, Lisa (Bob) Wilson, Todd Nutter, Lori (Nancy Kevelin). //Obit - Forsythe Gould Funeral Home//



Fischer, Joseph Philip, A1C, 85, passed away March 23, 2025. Joe trained with the Army National Guard of Ohio in 1960 and then joined the U.S. Air Force. The Air Force sent him to Yale University to learn the Chinese language and to study Chinese culture, distinguishing him as a Mandarin Specialist. He then served as an Intelligence Officer in Taiwan, working as a Voice Intercept Processing Specialist. Joe concluded his service at Grand Forks Air Force Base, North Dakota, in January 1965. Beloved husband of 63 years to Mary Ann (nee Czerr), loving Father of Cheryl (friend Joe Provenzale), Renee (partner Michael

Huddleston), & Andrea Immke (Jim), son of the late Agnes & Joseph Fischer, brother of Carol Brunarski (Wayne), son-in-law of the late Ann & Arthur Czerr. //Obit - The News-Herald Daily OH//

Chinese linguist. (IFEL 1961-04). //Bert Turner//



Forbes, Alan Dale, 84, passed away April 8, 2025. Alan was a Vietnam vet. He retired from the Air Force and later retired from the National Security Agency, after working for over 20 years each. Alan is survived by a son, Kevin (Sam); daughter, Kitty (David). //Obit Charleston Cremation Center and Funeral Home//

Listed in Our Losses section of 6994th Security Squadron web site <https://6994th.com/our-losses/> //Joseph "Pepito" Figueroa//

Very sorry to hear of Al's passing. I also served with the 6924th Security Squadron, RVN. Al was a regular attendee at our annual reunions. He also attended many of our USAF ROTC scholarship award ceremonies at the UNC in Charlotte. You will be missed Al! //Paul Talbott//

I served with Al in the Air Force in Japan , Viet Nam and Thailand. He was always someone you could depend on and always would make everyone laugh. A truly wonderful person. He truly will be missed. //Kevin Critzer//

Al was a great down-to-earth individual. He was a forever friend from the Air Force and Vietnam. //Dave Masson//



Fritze, Robert Carl, 86, passed away May 19, 2025. Bob graduated from Cocksackie-Athens High School in 1957 and enlisted in the USAFSS. Bob was a proud, patriotic veteran who served his country with honor from 1957 to 1961. He was stationed in Texas, Mississippi, California, and Turkey. He is survived by his son Robert Fritze (Anneliese) of Englewood, Florida. //Obit – Stephenson Nelson Funeral Home//



Frye, William "Bill", 91, passed away April 4, 2025. He served in the United States Air Force during the Korean War as a Russian linguist intercept operator. He met his wife Shirley at the Lyceum in London. He is survived by his sons Kevin (Karen) and Dale (Susan); his daughters Kimberley (Mike) and Sherry. //Obit – Kristan Funeral Home//



Fulk, Wylon Ornin, Maj (ret), 88, passed away February 14, 2025. He enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1954. In 1958, while stationed in Ramstein Air Base, Germany, he married his childhood sweetheart, Jimmie Eloise Walters.

Wylon was trained as a linguist (Hungarian and Russian) before receiving his commission through the Officer Candidate School in 1962 and then became a pilot in 1963. He served with the 344th Bomb Squadron, flew C-130s with the 777th Tactical Airlift Squadron, and later piloted AC-130 Spectre gunships in Vietnam. A command pilot, he flew 104 combat missions in Vietnam, earning the Silver Star, Purple Heart, and Distinguished Flying Cross for gallantry. Wylon finished his Air Force career flying C-130 transport with the 317th Tactical Airlift Wing and retired in 1975 after 21 years of service. Wylon is survived by his son Darryl, daughter Doreen Wagner (Brent). //Obit - Jernigan-Warren Funeral Home//



Gaugler, Richard Leroy, Sgt, 76, passed away January 23, 2025. On April 21st, 1969, he enlisted in the United States Air Force, completing Basic Training at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas. He then attended a nine-month intensive Russian Language course at Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York, and Radio Intercept School at Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas. With a Top-Secret Security clearance, Richard served the remainder of his time at San Vito Air Force Base near Brindisi, Italy, before receiving an honorable discharge on April 21st, 1973. He is survived by his wife, Debbie (Roth) Gaugler; daughters, Rachele Roemmich (Dave Ferderer), Elyse (Jesse) Crouch, and son, Emery (Holly) Gaugler. //Obit – Evanson Jensen Funeral

Home//

It was with profound sadness I learned of the passing of my comrade in arms. We met at the USAF Russian Language facility located at the University of Syracuse "Skytop" in 1970. The intensive nine-month course forged many a lifelong friendship between the students. Gaugler (everyone went by last names back in the day) and I later became roommates at San Angelo's Goodfellow AFB.

Sometime during this three month "security training program" the Air Force gave us the opportunity to fill out a "dream sheet" or otherwise known as a wish list of what countries we wished to be stationed upon completion of training. Since I am of Italian heritage with relatives in Italy, Italy was a natural choice for me. Rick and Tony Carp decided to choose the same. As the fates would have it, Italy was approved and we spent the following three years in Puglia, the heel of the boot. It was very inexpensive place to live. Tony married and found a wonderful apartment for his wife and himself. Rick and I rented a huge two-bedroom apartment with dome ceilings, chandeliers, and marble floors. We shared the rent, an unbelievable deal of only \$30 a month. Off our living room was a balcony overlooking the main street of our quaint little town of Latiano. Three years later we decided to take our military separation papers in Italy so that we could tour Europe for 90 days on a first class Eurorail ticket. Rick and I traveled from Syracuse, Sicily to north of the Arctic Circle, stopping at Stavanger, Norway, birthplace of Rick's grandfather. From there we went to Paris, then across the English Channel to London for fish and chips. Then we hopped the rails to Madrid, attended a bullfight, then on to Lisbon. The last leg of our journey took us to the French Riviera, Monaco to visit with friends of mine and finally back down to Rome. My relatives gave us a great send off. We feasted on homemade pasta and wine, lamb, and rich Italian desserts. We spent only \$500 each during this three-month excursion! The plane flight from Rome to NYC was paid for courtesy of the USAF. There are just too many memories to recount. Rick was a very special person. Everyone loved him. He didn't have an enemy in the world. The Italians took him as the quintessential American cowboy, strong, quiet, and unassuming. And that he was. //Jim Costanzo//

My name is Bob Simpson, and I was in the Air Force Security Service with Rick during the period roughly 1969-1973. I'm originally from Massachusetts but now live in the Finger Lakes area of Upstate New York. Those of us who volunteered for the language program during basic training did so because it was a good opportunity. We were initially investigated and then held top secret security clearances. Those among us selected for Russian were first sent to Syracuse University to learn the language from native speakers in an intensive 9-month program and then to Goodfellow AFB in Texas for radio training for three months. Our graduating class of 45 were then sent to many military sites around the globe to collect intelligence. I went to West Germany and then to West Berlin. Rick went to San Vito Air Station in Italy (13 miles west of Brindisi on the "heel of the boot"). Jim Costanzo and Tony Carp from our class were also assigned there. Rick and Jim lived in an apartment together in the local town. Many of us developed friendships while we were at SU learning Russian. //Bob Simpson//



Gee, Gary Warren Sr., 84, passed away May 9, 2025. Gary graduated from Huntsville High School, an alumnus of the Class of 1958 and a member of the National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta, and Pi Delta. He later studied Chinese and Mandarin at Yale University. As befits his studies, Gary was a former Chinese translator for the USAF Security Service. Also, a former career intelligence officer, he specialized in the analysis of foreign ballistic missile systems and programs. During 1982 through 1988, while employed with the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Gary worked inside British Intelligence (on exchange) in London. He retired from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in 1993, and the following year was awarded the National Intelligence Medal of Achievement by then-CIA Director James Woolsey (pictured). Gary returned to duty with the DIA after the 9/11 tragedy. He eventually retired again and became a full-time writer of fiction through Clandestine Publications. His books include "China's Exploding Powers – The Unmasking of China's Strategy to Take Over the United States." //Bio by **James E. Zielinski, Family Friend**//

*After graduating from Huntsville High School in 1958, Gary enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, where his aptitude for languages earned him a year of study at Yale University. He became fluent in Mandarin Chinese and served as a USAF language interpreter. Following his honorable discharge, he earned a degree in Political Science from the University of Alabama in 1967 and began a career as an intelligence officer at Redstone Arsenal, specializing in foreign ballistic missile analysis. In the 1980s, he worked in London with British Intelligence as part of an international exchange program, and later joined the Central Intelligence Agency in Virginia, retiring in 1993. He briefly resumed intelligence work following the events of 9/11 before retiring fully to pursue writing. He authored both fiction and nonfiction inspired by his extensive intelligence experience. He is survived by his sons Gary Jr. (Lori) of Huntsville AL and Oliver (Wendy) of Tuscaloosa AL, his brother Jack (Phyllis) of Madison, AL, and his niece Sheila (Chip) and nephew Jack Warren Gee. //Obit – **Berryhill Funeral Home**//*

Chinese linguist. (IFEL 1958-11). //Bert Turner//



Gerard, Joseph Arthur, SMSgt (ret), 85, passed away June 29, 2024. At the age of 16 he got his mom to sign a waiver and enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. He served all over the world, including Italy and Alaska. He was found to have an affinity for languages and attended Language School in Monterey, CA in 1969. He focused on the Slavic languages, including Russian. In the early 1970's he and his family moved to a very small town in Bavaria, Germany. In 1975 his assignment took the family to Vienna, Austria where Joe worked at the American Embassy as an interpreter and translator. He even had the opportunity to meet President

Jimmy Carter when he came to Vienna for the SALT II talks! In 1979, after serving for 25 Years, he retired from military life as a Senior Master Sergeant and moved home to Housatonic, Ma. He is survived by his two children, Chester Gerard and Lori Gerard Kurland. //Obit - Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home//

I first met Joe at Czech language school in Monterey, CA. in 1969. We were then stationed at HOF AS in W. Germany. We were then transferred to Rimbach WGer. We met up again in Vienna, Austria, He was truly an "Iron Man!". //Bob Miller//

He served from 1955 to 1979. His AFSC was 203. Assignment included OLJA 6910 SG. Joe was affectionally known as "Iron Man". I served with Joe at Mt Eckstein OLJA 6910 SG (later 6913 ESS) . Joe was my first supervisor in the USAF at Mt Eckstein, West Germany, in 1972. He was a stern, but fair supervisor and a great guy to share a beer with after work. He encouraged me to reenlist, and I served 23 years. //Glenn Miller, SMSgt retired//



Greathouse, Robert Jackson, Sgt, 71, passed away February 6, 2025. He joined the United States Air Force in January 1973. He was in the security service as a Morse code operator. In 1974 he was stationed at Shin Lin Kou Air Station, Taipei, Taiwan, where he met his wife Susan Mills. It was love at first sight. They were married March 29, 1975. He portrayed Mr. Harmon in the film “The Captives” produced by Judy Miller. He appeared alongside his family in the documentary “Bridges” produced by the WV Department of Transportation. He is survived by his loving wife, Susan Greathouse, one daughter Cassie Greathouse (Joey Harmon) of Charleston, WV, one son Caleb (Shannon) Greathouse of Spencer. //Obit – Vandale Funeral Home//



Grogan, James Sherrill, 86, passed away April 29, 2025. Inspired by his uncle and hero, U.S. Air Force Colonel Garnet Daryl Page, he joined the U.S. Air Force Security Service. He served in air-to-ground communications, helped organize the First Okinawa Jazz Festival, and performed Afro-Cuban percussion-igniting a lifelong rhythm that echoed through the rest of his life. He is survived by his wife, Phoebe Yen; his children Christine, David, Parker, and Yasmin. //Obit - Legacy Remembers//



Hammer, Robert Eugene, SMSgt (ret), 86, passed away February 12, 2025. Bob was a proud veteran of the United States Air Force, enlisting in 1958 and retiring in 1984. His military career helped shape his character – disciplined, dependable, and always ready to serve. Bob’s career in Air Force Intelligence took him to places around the world including Taiwan; Okinawa; Thailand; Frankfurt Germany; Iraklion AS Crete; NSA in Ft Meade MD; Misawa AB Japan and Kelly AFB (Security Hill). He retired in San Antonio and continued a career with Civil Service for the next 13 years. Bob was awarded many Air Force decorations during his career – among them, the Meritorious Medal with many Oak Leaf Clusters and a myriad of Defense Air Force medals. //Obit –

Dignity Memorial//



Heintskill, James J., 85, passed away February 25, 2025. He graduated from St. James High School in 1957 and went on to serve our great country in the United States Air Force as a Morse code operator. During his time in the Air Force, he had the privilege of playing baseball on the Air Force Baseball Team. His love for the game continued as he played on several baseball, softball and blooper ball teams in Bay County for many years. Jim was extremely proud of his service to our country and held deep respect for his time in the military. On June 10, 1967, he married the love of his life, Julie J. Swinehart, who survives him. Together, they built a life filled with love, laughter, and cherished memories. He was a devoted father to his children, Jenifer J. Kusak of Trenton,

MI and James J. (Lynda) Heintskill II of Portage, MI. //Obit - Trahan Funeral Chapel//

Julie and Family, I just received your kind note to inform me of Jim's passing. I was so saddened to hear this. I was in the USAF Security Service with JJ, and we worked on Security Hill at Misawa AB, in Northern Honshu Japan. We played baseball together for the Air Force and became very good teammates and friends. Of course, I never seen JJ once getting assigned back to the States in 1964, but we always exchanged cards every Christmas and always talked about our fun playing baseball in Japan and that we were lucky enough to travel by plane all over Japan to play other military and college teams. Additionally, we always compared my Red Sox to his beloved Tigers and had a few laughs. A wonderful person and will be greatly missed by all who knew him. May the wonderful memories of Jim help you through this difficult time. RIP JJ, and you certainly made a difference in serving our country. //Gregg Brooks//



Higgins , Patricia ‘Patti’, 70, passed away January 28, 2025. She joined the United States Air Force where she excelled in Russian Language School in Monterrey, California. From there, she was stationed as a Russian Linguist in Misawa, Japan, where she met Thomas Jackson while riding dirt bikes, and they married soon after. The military took them to Hawaii; Virginia Beach; Maryland; London, England; and Pensacola, Florida. Patti is survived by her children, Nathan (Janelle) Jackson, and Jennifer (Jeff) Higgins; stepchildren, Brett (Jeannie) Higgins and Travis (Jennifer)Higgins. //Obit - **Brainard Funeral Home**//



Hoven, Riley, Cadet First Class (ret), 27, passed away May 19, 2025
Riley was born on June 11, 1997, at RAF Lakenheath in England, where his journey began as part of a proud military family. Riley was assigned to Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska, where he served aboard the RC-135 Rivet Joint, an airborne command and electronic intelligence aircraft affectionately known as “The RJ.” As a Senior Airman, Riley quickly distinguished himself, volunteering for deployments and logging over 783 flight hours on the RJ, Combat Sent and Cobra Ball, directly contributing to the targeting of five high-value threats. His performance reflected not only technical skill, but an unwavering commitment to duty. In 2019, Riley was selected as one of just 85 enlisted members—out of more than 10,000 applicants—to attend the United States Air Force Academy. In May 2024, he graduated from the United States Air Force Academy. He is survived by Mother and Stepfather: Linda and Andrew Trainer; Father: Arthur Hoven. //Obit – **Svoboda Funeral Home**//



Hudzik, John Louis, Sgt, 79, passed March 26, 2025. He proudly served his country as a linguist and analyst in the United States Air Force for six years, including during the Vietnam War. John considered it a great privilege to serve his nation and often took time to share stories with fellow veterans, making each one feel valued and respected. John's life was one of many passions. John is survived by his beloved wife, Bunny Hudzik. //Obit – **Ofield Funeral Home**//



Husby, David Jon, 80, passed away January 29, 2025. David was a proud member of the U.S. Air Force and served for 26 years. During his time, he was a Vietnamese Linguist, Logistics Officer, and ROTC Recruiter. He was active with the 6924th Security Squadron and Propwash Gang. He is survived by his wife, Katherine Husby of Cumberland; son, Jon (Joanna) Husby; daughter: Kristina (Scot) Waggoner. //Obit – Skinner Funeral Home//

I first met Dave at one of 6924th Heritage Association reunions around 2005. Although we served at different times at Danang Vietnam he in 1963 and me in 1970 we quickly became friends because that was the type of person Dave was. // Ruben Villafranca//



Jackett, Donald Charles, Sgt, 78, passed away May 5, 2024. Donald is survived by his wife, Patricia; children, Tammie Jackett, Mike Jackett, Clinton (Danielle) Jackett, Julie (Larry) Tinnin, Shawn Jackett; stepchildren, Sarah (Jaime) Hill and Nathan (Brittany) Wolf. //Obit – Allen Funeral Home and Cremation Services//

Served in the Air Force with Don 1971-1975. We were stationed together at Karamursel Turkey, Clark Air Base in the Philippines and Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana. I'll always remember Don for having a bright and cheerful demeanor and a great sense of humor. Don was a music lover and spent much of his spare time collecting and recording his favorite types of music. Rest in peace. //Thomas Hunt//

I was stationed with Don in Air Force Security Service. In 1972, I was a 19-year-old sent to Turkey I needed a friend to help me get by. Don was always there for me with a smile and pat on back. His nickname "JOLLY" was perfect he tried to joke around and make everyone happy despite our circumstances. //Jerry Frazier//



Jones, Ronald A., 91, passed away May 14, 2025. After graduating from Le Sueur High School in 1951, he enlisted in the Air Force and was a stationed in Japan (Johnson AFB and Shiroy AFB). Upon his return from Japan, he was assigned to the Headquarter of the United States Air Force Security Service at Kelly AFB in San Antonio. Surviving family members are his daughters, Kellie Chaney (Jim) and Kaycie Moore (Randy) all of Lake Jackson. //Obit – Dignity

Memorial//



Knight, James David, MSgt (ret), 65, passed away April 12, 2025. His professional career included joining the United States Air Force in 1980. David was a Master Sergeant and worked as a Nuclear Weapons Specialist where he spent his first four years on active duty in Wurtsmith Air Force Base, Michigan. Sergeant Knight then crossed trained into the Electronic Intelligence (ELINT) analysis career field. As an ELINT analyst he enjoyed assignments to the 6912th Electronic Security Group (Electronic Security Command) Tempelhof Airport, Berlin Germany; 544th Intelligence Exploitation Squadron, (Strategic Air Command) Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska; Headquarters Air Combat Command, Langley Air Force Base, Virginia; 488th Intelligence Squadron OL-RM, (Air Intelligence Agency), RAF Molesworth, England; and finally, the 48th Intelligence Squadron, (Air Intelligence Agency) Beale Air Force Base, California. As a nuclear Weapon Specialist, then airman Knight was selected as “Professional Performer” during two Inspector General visits. Sergeant Knight is an honor graduate of the Electronic Intelligence Analysis Course and the Strategic Air Command NCO Leadership School at Offutt Air Force Base. He is a graduate of the NCO Academy at Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana. Sergeant Knight’s decorations include- Joint Service Commendation Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Air Force Achievement Medal. After his time in the military, David spent 21 dedicated years at Lockheed Martin before retiring. A proud veteran, David took great pride in his military service, considering it one of the great honors of his life. //Obit – **Wooster Funeral Home**//



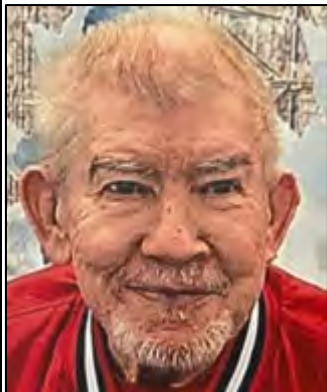
Kruzan, Delano “Dee”, A1C, 91, passed away November 27, 2024. In 1953, Delano joined the U.S. Air Force, attended the Army Language School, and then was sent to Germany as a Russian language specialist in the USAF Security Service. Returning to the U.S. in 1957, Dee is survived by his special friend, Lois Lueck of Macomb. //Obit - **Clugston-Tibbitts Funeral Home**//



Larsen, Erling David, 85, of Fitchburg, passed away May 20, 2025. He graduated from Fosston High School in 1958 and joined the United States Air Force Security Service (USAFSS), a branch of the Air Force tasked with monitoring and interpreting military signals of countries of interest. He was honorably discharged in 1964. David is survived by his children, Kristofer (Emily) Larsen and Emily (Brian) Porter. //Obit - Gunderson Fitchburg Funeral & Cremation//



Leino, Murray E., 68, passed away April 12, 2025. A 1974 high school graduate, top student and All State vocal musician, he enlisted in the Air Force as a Russian Linguist. After a tour of duty that took him from California and Texas to Okinawa and Omaha, Murray returned home to be present for his parents. Murray is survived by his wife Patty (nee Ketchum), daughter Elizabeth Leino and partner William Alderman of Augusta, daughter Dr. Zoe Albee and husband Ben of Gray, best friend and constant canine companion Humphrey. //Obit – Chandler Funeral Home//



Leech, Richard Larry, 84, passed away March 4, 2025. He served in the USAF for 26 years, doing long range reconnaissance missions as an Albanian Linguist. He also was a counselor at the Defense Language Institute of Monterey, California; an instructor at San Angelo, Texas; and a computer programmer at Scott Air Force Base, Mascoutah, Illinois. He served in Germany, Italy, California, Nebraska, and Texas. Richard played baseball, football, and basketball while in the USAF. He was lucky enough to be asked to play for a minor league Italian baseball team from Milan, Italy. Richard is survived by his wife: Ruth Leech of Fairview Heights, Illinois; daughter: Cinda Leech of Belleville, Illinois. //Obit – Lake View

Funeral Home and Memorial Gardens//

I met Dick Leech when I arrived at my first duty assignment at Offutt AFB in 1970, after I finished the Albanian Language class at Monterey CA. Dick was one of two Albanian linguists stationed there and became my OJT trainer. He was a good mentor in bringing me up to speed on the Security Service way of life. I will remember him always. //Dan Martin//



Luther, Brian Spencer, MSgt (ret), 52, passed away April 27, 2025. Loving son of Teddy and the late Ralph. Beloved brother of the late Karen. Cherished nephews of Beverley Scott and Joy Joanne Guzik. He will be deeply missed and loved by many family members and friends. Brian retired from the military after 21 years of service in the Air Force where he was a highly decorated Master Sergeant. //Obit - Santeiu & Son Funeral Home//

To my friend, we had so many memories together from tech school and Chicksands. I always thought we would have time to catch up and hang out. I will miss you man! I so wish we would have got together like we talked about.

I'm laughing and crying at the same time remembering our fun times and even our head-to-head confrontation lol. Such great times coming back to me remembering our friendship! Thanks for being a good guy and friend. //Tommy Fridy//

To my brother, they just aren't ready to take you on in heaven, so be nice! To Teddy, I was the Quartermaster at the post in San Antonio when Brian was Commander, and we became very good friends. My sincere condolences, the world will not be the same without Brian around! //Gary "Gunner" Farris//

The 25th (Intelligence Squadron) has lost a warrior. RIP, Lex. //Mike Tyson//

Brian was an exceptional NCO. I cherished my time working with him in Korea, messing with the "heat packs" and mop4 exercises. I was so proud when he was assigned to a very special unit, providing security for our nation, a mission he could never talk about, but so important. May it be said, "Well done" "Be thou at peace." //Scott Hayford//

When I was the Squadron Superintendent at the 31st IS at Fort Gordon, Georgia Brian (Lex) had to come to my office on a TDY and convince me to put a couple of my airmen potentially in harm's way. He was a Tech Sergeant; I was a Chief and a pissed off Chief at that because I didn't feel my troops were trained for the mission at hand. I closed the door and Brian, and I had it out. He stood his ground like the warrior he was and in the end, because he gave me his word and I trusted him, I let my airmen leave with him for what was a dangerous mission. Many years later he told me how difficult that was for him because he respected me. Well, the respect and love went both ways. I just cannot believe he's gone. God has a true warrior in heaven now and one of the best men I've ever met. RIP my old and dear friend. //Danny L. Prichard, Chief Master Sergeant, United States Air Force (Retired)//



Madden, Jack Lester, 88, passed away January 14, 2025. Upon enlisting, Jack was sent to the U.S. Army Language School in Monterey, CA (for foreign languages), served in the U.S. Air Force Security Service, and the U.S. Air Force Air Reserves. Jack is survived by his devoted children, Jenifer O'Briant (Stonie), Jackie Madden, and Bart Madden (Angie). //Obit - Hendersonville Memory Gardens, Funeral Home & Cremation Center//



McClain, Terry F., 83, passed away April 25, 2025. Terry joined the Military and became a Russian linguist in the Vietnam War until receiving an honorable discharge. He attended Angelo State University upon his return home and had several jobs along the way before moving to Corpus Christi. Terry is survived by daughter Tammy Carver (widowed) of Corpus Christi: son Scott and wife Patricia McClain of San Antonio. //Obit – Caller Times//



McClelland, John A., A2C, 87, passed away March 13, 2025. He enlisted in the Air Force in 1958. After a tour as a linguist at Osan, Korea, he returned to Randolph AFB at San Antonio where he was assigned to a new career field, computer programming. After discharge, he found a computer-related job with the Air Force at Randolph. He retired from a middle management position at Air Force Recruiting Service in 1991. John is survived by Sandra, his wife of 59 years, a daughter, Susan May (Jim) of Newnan, Georgia. //Obit - Stevens Funeral Home//

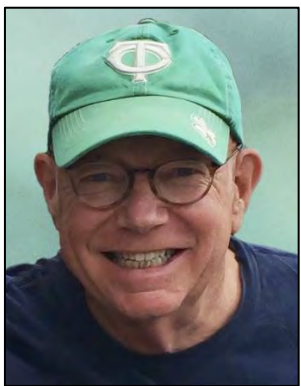


Millsap, Charles Douglas, 78, passed away March 4, 2025. Doug spent his early years in Gatesville before living in Waco and Temple. He actively participated in the Brotherhood of Vietnam Veterans of America and American Legion Post 133. He is survived by his wife, Lisa; daughters Brenda Buckley and Ericka Argomaniz. //Scanio-Harper Funeral Home//

He is listed in the 6994th "Our Losses" website. <https://6994th.com/our-losses>
//Joseph "Pepito" Figueroa//



Mitchell, Kenneth Eugene, Sgt, 79, passed away March 16, 2025. He was a Vietnam veteran where he served in the United States Air Force security service. During his time in the Air Force, he logged more than 2,000 hours in the air while on surveillance missions. Survivors include his wife, Candie Mitchell; his children and their spouses, Huron and Eric Hendrix, Christina and Joshua Williams, James and Dawn Alexander, and Chris and Christy Alexander. //Obit – Rainwater Funeral Home//



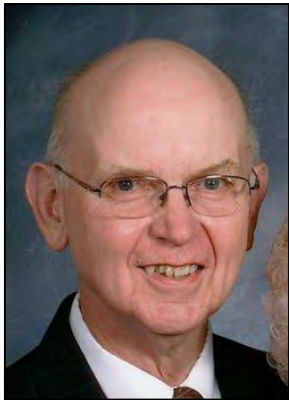
O'Rourke, Michael James, 75, passed away February 11, 2025. Mike enlisted in the U.S. Air Force; he was trained as a Korean linguist and completed two tours as a member of 6903 Skivvy Nine, Able Company. Mike is survived by his wife Leah, his children Cap (Sara) and Molli. //Obit – Minnesota Star Tribune//

My sincere condolences to Mike's family and friends. During our DLS Class of '67 50-year Reunion, I remember him asking classmates attending to stand if you were a veteran. I was surprised to see how many stood up, since De was a college prep school and 'Vietnam' was still going on. //Paul Engeldinger,

USAF, Ret.//



Palmer, James A., MSgt (ret), 82, passed away March 18, 2025. In 1961 Jim joined the United States Air Force. He served with the Military Assistance Command Vietnam-Studies and Observation Group, also known as SOG a unit that conducted clandestine missions into North Vietnam where he supplied close air support with SOG Team-54 and again in 1965 with SOG Team-59. He was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon, The National Defense Medal, The Meritorious Service Metal, The Air Force Outstanding Unit Citation with one Bronze Star, The Armed Forces Expeditionary Ribbon, The Vietnam Service Ribbon with Two Bronze Stars, The Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Ribbon. He also served with USAFSS, a branch of the Air Force tasked with monitoring, collecting, and interpreting military voice and electronic signals in countries of interest. He retired in 1984. Left to mourn his passing, his wife of 25 years Madeline “Maggie” Palmer, ex-wife Linda, son Michael as well as stepchildren Zeb Basquette, Marguerite Bryant. //Obit - Crawford-Bowers Funeral Home Killeen.//



Ringeisen, Michael Duane “Mike”, SSgt, 86, passed February 5, 2025. After graduating Kokomo High School in 1956, Mike attended Taylor University and Indiana University- Kokomo. From 1961-65 (active duty) and 1965-67 (reserve duty), Mike proudly and humbly served in the United States Air Force, rising to the rank of Staff Sergeant. During his time with the USAF, Mike worked as a radio intercept operator in the USAF’s Security Service, a selective and specialized communications and intelligence branch of the USAF. He spent most of his active service time deployed to Iraklion Air Station in Crete, Greece. Along with Nancy, his wife of nearly 65 years, Mike is survived by his children: a son, Duane Ringeisen, of Lafayette and a daughter, Michelle Ringeisen, of Kokomo. //Obit – Stout and Son//



Roberts, Trefor Duane, 86, passed away February 20, 2025. In early 1959, Trefor joined the Air Force. Armed with basic training (Lackland AFB), Romanian language school, and advanced crypto logic skills training (USAF Security Service, Goodfellow AFB), he carried out his 1st duty at Karamursel Air station in Turkey. There he spent two years in Signal Intelligence. The Air Force then sent him to intensive German language school in Syracuse, where he met Marilyn Jean Stanton, who was in nursing school at the time. They married on Feb 23, 1963, and then moved to Germany for Trefor’s

second duty at Templehof, a US Military Airfield in Berlin. There he intercepted and translated communications during the Cold War, became a member of the Berlin Island Association and became an expert, according to USAF Documents, in "...all subjects related to the Island City and the Iron Curtain". After two years he and his wife Marilyn returned to the States just weeks before his first daughter (Elisabeth Christin) was born. Trefor was Honorably Discharged in March 1965 after serving a total of 6 years. Trefor worked as a civilian for the Department of Defense, as a Computer Security Specialist, first at the Air Force Accounting and Finance Center on York Street in Denver, and then at Lowry AFB. Trefor continued his career there until his retirement. Trefor and Marilyn were married for 57 years until Marilyn's passing. They raised three children and enjoyed three grandchildren. Remaining to cherish Trefor's memory are his daughter Elisabeth Christin (David Solano), his son Trefor Todd, his grandson Trefor Dylan, and his granddaughter Tarah Jean. Preceding Trefor in death are his wife Marilyn, his daughter Elissa Karen, and his granddaughter Cheyenne. //Obit – Afterall Funeral//



Rodrigues, Peter Wendell, 79, passed away January 24, 2025. He joined the United States Air Force, where he performed the position of Morse Code Intercept Operator which sparked his passion for technology. Following his time with the US Air Force, he knew he wanted to work in the field of technology. He was a devoted husband to his wife of 42 years, Ramona V. Rodrigues, and a loving father to Sandra Rodrigues of San Francisco, Peter Rodrigues of Los Angeles, Jonelle Woodmansee of Sacramento, and Justin Rodrigues of Manteca. //Obit – P.L. Fry and Son Funeral Home//



Rooney, John E., 85, passed away March 17, 2025. A U.S. Air Force veteran, Rooney was a Russian linguist assigned to the Air Force Security Service in Germany. //Obit – New Jersey Globe//



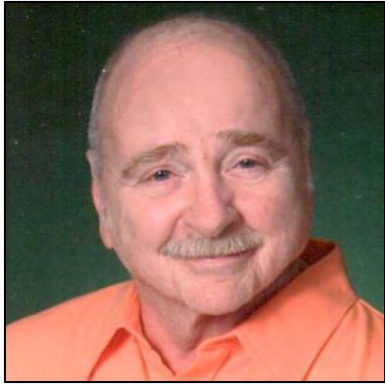
Ryan, Stephen Collister “Steve”, Capt, 83, passed away February 24, 2025. Steve attended the University of Kansas and received a BS degree in Business Administration in 1964 and a Certificate of Graduation from the Mortuary Science Program at the KU Medical Center, Kansas City, KS in 1965. He was a cadet member of the Air Force ROTC program (The Flying Jayhawks). He was also a member of the Arnold Air Society, Alpha Kappa Psi and the Phi Gamma Delta Fraternity. He received his Air Force officer's commission upon completion of the Summer Training Unit at Schilling AFB, in Salina, KS, on July 10th, 1964. Ryan served as Wing Administrative Officer, 351st Strategic Missile Wing (SAC), Whiteman AFB, Mo, (1965-67) and Chief Administrative Services, 6932nd Security Group (USAFSS), Samsun Air Station, Samsun, the Republic of Turkey (1967-69). He attained the rank of Captain and completed his tour of active duty in January 1969. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Lynne; son Scott and wife DeDe; daughter Carrie Wilson and husband John. //Obit – Salina Journal//



Sabatino, John Michael, SSgt, 82, passed away January 11, 2025. John proudly served his Country in the United States Air Force from 1960 to 1968. During this time, he trained as a Russian linguist at Syracuse University in New York. Later, he was transferred to San Antonio, Texas. John is survived by his loving wife of 48 years, Betty Lou Sabatino. He is also survived by his three children: Tony Sabatino and his wife, Jana; Addie Sabatino; Raymond Sabatino and his wife, Teresa. //Obit – Dignity Memorial//



Schmidt, David F., 79, passed away April 19, 2025. David joined the US Air Force Security Service, where he served his country as a Communications Intercept Analyst. He described that time during the Vietnam era as "an education in foreign affairs which few have the opportunity to receive." He was discharged in 1972. Dave's survivors include his sister, Karen, of Lynchburg. //Obit - Lenroot-Maetzold Funeral Home//



Sega, Gregory A., 80, passed away December 20, 2024. Greg served in the United States Air Force during the Vietnam Conflict with the USAF Security Service as a Security Analyst. Greg was stationed at Zweibrucken, Germany, for three years and served two consecutive tours of duty at Danang AFB in Vietnam. From 1968 through 1999, Greg enjoyed working for the US Army Communications Command, Northeast Telecommunications Switching Center (USACC-NETSC) at the old Hancock Airfield in North Syracuse. He started work there as a Computer Operator and worked his way up through various levels and retired as the Chief of Resource Management Division with responsibilities for security, financial management and budget, personnel management, power production, logistics, travel, procurement, administration, and mopping the floor. Surviving besides his loving wife of fifty-three years, Vicki; are his siblings, Jan (Connie) Sega, of Rome, Gayle Ann (Henry) Bush, of Naples, FL, Kathy (Paul) Katchmar, of Ava, and Mary Beth (Michael) Fautt, of Wilder, ID. //Obit – Ironside Funeral Home//



Sherwood, Robert Lee, CMSgt (ret), 82, passed away May 5, 2025. Chief Master Sergeant Robert L. Sherwood was the MAJCOM Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Commander of Electronic Security Command, Kelly Air Force Base, Texas, at the time of his retirement from the United States Air Force effective 1 October 1989. A native of Terre Haute, Indiana, is an alumnus of Glenn (IN) High School, Indiana University at Bloomington and the University of Maryland at College Park. He also earned a degree from the Community College of the Air Force and is an in-resident graduate of the USAF Security Service NCO Academy at Goodfellow AFB, Texas, and the USAF Senior NCO Academy at Gunter

AS, Alabama. Chief Sherwood entered the Air Force in February 1962 and spent the majority of his career as an operator in intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. His overseas assignments included Elmendorf AFB, Alaska; Shemya AFS in the Aleutian Islands; Peshawar, Pakistan; Danang AB, Republic of Vietnam; RAF Chicksands, United Kingdom; Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, Thailand; and Hahn AB, Germany. His ConUS assignments included Bunker Hill AFB, Indiana; Goodfellow AFB, Texas; Fort George G. Meade, Maryland; and, Kelly AFB, Texas. A Vietnam War veteran, Chief Sherwood is credited is 512 combat missions and over 2,500 combat hours aboard EC-47 aircraft in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Further, he performed intelligence and reconnaissance aircrew duties aboard RC-135 and electronic warfare equipped C-130 aircraft in the Pacific and European Theaters of Operations. In addition to MAJCOM Senior Enlisted Advisor duties at the Electronic Security Service NCO Academy, Goodfellow AFB, Texas, and senior enlisted advisor for the Air Force component of the National Security Agency at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland. His awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit; three Distinguished

Flying Crosses; four Meritorious Service Medals; 15 Air Medals; two Air Force Commendation Medals; seven Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards and Valor device; the Combat Readiness Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with eleven campaign stars; the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm; and, the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal. Chief Sherwood was inducted into the Air Force Intelligence Hall of Honor in 1998; was Director Emeritus and former President of the Freedom Through Vigilance Association; a former member of the Fisher House, Inc. Board of Directors; and, served several years as a committee chairman with the Alamo Chapter of the Air Force Association. Bob was devoted to his roommate and his family. A love story for the ages, he loved her unconditionally for 67 years. He is predeceased by his daughter Leah Renee Sherwood (San Angelo, TX). Survived by his wife of 53 years Martha Ann Sherwood (Terre Haute, IN) and his daughter Laura Jo Shew Sherwood (Terre Haute, IN), Jean Chi Kroecker (Korea), and Lisa Marie Smith (Terre Haute, IN). **//Mission Park Funeral Chapels, Cemeteries, and Crematories//**

*Chief Sherwood was a giant among giants in the USAF and USAFSS. He showed us all what servant leadership was all about by his word, actions and beliefs. He gave selflessly to all - and we are the better for it. God speed Chief and rest in eternal peace. **//Marco Aldaz//***

*Bob was my coworker and friend. He did many wonderful things in the San Antonio community supporting the military community. Bob never sought attention. He was always about the mission. He always gave me his honest and best counsel. His passing is a terrible loss to all who knew him. **//Bob Glenn//***

*We were all better, because Bob Sherwood was among us. He was an operator, an intelligence ISR professional, an example for others, a mentor, a friend and a leader. He was the best advisor that a commander needed. He served us, the Air Force, and our community (FTVA, SSFCU, and San Antonio) ...w/o any expectation of personal benefit or return. He made us better and will be missed, by many Silent Warriors and others, who may not have the opportunity or take the time to say it. We'll miss you Bob...and Ann we are here for you, if you need anything. **//Sincerely, Chris Cook//***

*He was a giant. **//A. J. Harrison//***

*CMSgt Bob Sherwood, a former Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Commander, Electronic Security Command (ESC), passed away Monday morning, May 5, after an extended illness. The Chief's distinguished career took him from the skies over Viet Nam to the halls of academia at the ESC NCO Academy, Goodfellow AFB, TX, among others. He is a member of the FTVA Hall of Honor and Director Emeritus on the FTVA Board of Directors. **//Ken Maynard//***

*So sorry to hear the news of Bob's passing. Dry sense of humor, great guy. I'll keep Bob and his family in my thoughts and prayers. RIP, my friend. **//Ron Graham//***

*This one hits hard. I worked with Bob at the ESC NCO PME Center in the early 80s. Steady and reliable with a wonderfully dry sense of humor, his classes were enjoyable to sit through. Rest in peace, Chief. **//Sharon//***

*We were instructors at USAFSS/ESC NCO Academy and Leadership School at the same time. Great loss! **//Ryhan T. Whittaker//***

I was at the Goodfellow Academy in the 70's. We were at the club during a leadership school graduation. Instructor Bob Sherwood came around and some of my classmates decided they would buy him drinks so that he wouldn't be as straight in class the next day. Having known 'Coach,' as we called him during EC-47 days, I kind of warned them by saying 'if you think you can afford it.' I knew his drink of choice was Chevas and I'd never seen it affect him. The next morning the participating class members were the worse for wear, and Bob, as usual, was unfazed and ramrod straight. //Tom Rinderle//

What a man, making everyone smile, he was a true face of Security Service as an instructor, 207, and FTVA representative. It was a pleasure attending his class and being greeted by him whenever we met after his retirement. He made me feel good whenever we would meet. He even called me by name many years after attending NCO academy. //Darrell and Kathleen Ritzema// I'm saddened to hear this. Bob Sherwood was a good friend of mine since 1985. I last saw him in 2016 when I was in San Antonio for a retirement ceremony. //William Spruill Jr.//

Had privilege of serving with him at Chicks and NKP. Outstanding man and leader. Will be sadly missed. RIP. //Gerald Ellis//

Rest in Peace Chief. We served together in Germany and reconnected in Korea when he was Command SEA. //Jerry Jones//

Bob and I served together at Det 3, 6994th NKP. He was a TSgt then, in charge of scheduling. When I asked him to schedule me for a flight I would ask him to pick the Electric Goon with both engines working. Always had a good laugh. A leader by example! //Ed Marek//

Listed in Our Losses section of 6994th Security Squadron web site <https://6994th.com/our-losses/> //Joseph "Pepito" Figueroa//



Simms, James Robert, 72, passed away October 23, 2024. He enlisted in the USAF and proudly served his country in Vietnam. He is survived by his loving wife Kathy Simms and son Matthew Simms. //Obit – Gallop Funeral Services//

According to the USAFSS Facebook page Jim Simms was a Vietnamese Linguist at the 90th and NKP. //Joseph "Pepito" Figueroa//

Jim and I were stationed in Texas, Kadena AFB in Okinawa and our last year in the Air Force at NKP, Thailand. Just a great guy and really enjoyed our time in the service. //Bill Ford//



Smith, Donald Raymond, 75, passed away February 4, 2025. He enlisted in the United States Air Force in 1968. He trained for two years to become a Vietnamese Linguist, flying over 130 radio recon combat missions over Vietnam. He was honorably discharged in 1972, from the USAF. Donald worked briefly with NSA Breaking Code upon his return from Vietnam. He is survived by his wife, Mary at home; a daughter, Haley Smith. //Obit - Mohawk Valley Funerals and Cremations//

My sympathies go out to Smitty's family. I served with Don in Viet Nam and at NSA. Not only was he a great guy, but he was also a big help to me and the other linguists at Tan Son Nhut. May his memory be a blessing to all who

knew him. //Harv Goldstein//

Listed in Our Losses section of 6994th Security Squadron web site <https://6994th.com/our-losses/>
//Joseph "Pepito" Figueroa//



Sutherland, Nicholas Daniel, CMSgt (ret), 86, passed away April 9, 2025. He was the valedictorian of Corvallis High School, Class of 1956. He earned a scholarship to attend Montana State University but decided to join the U.S. Air Force with dreams of playing saxophone in the Air Force band. An aptitude test sent him on a different career trajectory where he learned Mandarin Chinese, at Yale University, and became fluent in reading, writing, and speaking the language. He designed and inked his own Chinese dragon tattoo on his left arm. He climbed to the top of Mt. Fuji in Japan. While stationed in Taiwan, he met the love of his life, Kuei-Mei Chuang. Nick retired from the U.S. Air Force as a Chief Master Sergeant with nearly 30 years of service in Intelligence. He was proud to have served his country. His last assignment brought him to Lackland AFB in San Antonio, Texas, where he retired. He is survived by his loving wife and best friend, Kuei-Mei Sutherland; his only daughter, Tracey Mary Sutherland Whelan and his son-in-law, Charlie Whelan. //Ravalli Republic//

Chinese linguist. (IFEL 1956-10, 1959-10), Taiwan, Lackland. //Bert Turner//



Taylor, William D., 74, passed away March 22, 2025. A proud veteran of the United States Air Force who retired as an L-3 Contractor after many dedicated years of service to his country

He is survived by his Sons, William L. Taylor and Michael Taylor; Daughter, Jill M. Parham; Stepdaughter, Kimberly Guzman. //Obit – Villages News//

Billy D. was "the AMS" in Athens - never heard a negative word about him from anyone. He was in Greenville on the RJ program for years. //Lee Anthony//



Thomas, William Dennis Jr., A1C, 95, passed away April 23, 2025. On November 11, 1950, Dennis enlisted in the United States Air Force and served for three years in Darmstadt and Landsberg, Germany, as a Cryptographic Operator with the 6910th Air Force Security Group, where he was the last surviving member. He was part of the team that helped establish the United States Air Force Security Service in 1951 during the early years of the Cold War. He was honorably discharged on September 1, 1954. Those left behind to cherish Dennis's memories are the love of his life of 70 years, Jean Knight Thomas; daughter, Linda Morgan & her husband Todd of [Ferriday, LA](#); son, Jimmy Thomas of Poncha Springs, CO. //Obit – Young’s Funeral Home//



Thornhill, Stephen Dwight, MSgt (ret), 68, passed away April 10, 2025. His mother Bonnie was a registered nurse, earning her degree via a WWII program that paid for her degree in exchange for being “drafted”. In November 1974, Steve enlisted in the USAF. After completing basic training at Lackland AFB TX, Steve was assigned to USAF Security Service, Kelly AFB TX, as a personnel specialist. His job required a Top Secret-SSIR clearance. This required a background check going back 20 years. Thanks to his mom, after numerous calls wondering what Stephen had done, his DD Form 398 was completed. Steve spent the majority of his career in San Antonio TX. Other assignments were San Vito AB Italy, where Stephen Jr.

was born, Maxwell AFB AL, where Michael was born, Randolph AFB TX, Kunsan AB Korea, and back to Randolph AFB TX, where he retired. While at Randolph AFB, he was assigned to HQ Air Force Personnel Center where he was instrumental in the development/deployment of personnel systems, APDS-II, PHASE IV, and PC-III. He was also the Air Force functional manager for the Personnel Systems Managers career field. Steve retired from the Air Force November 1994. He

then became a contractor working on the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS) until 2000 when he went to Lockheed Martin as Operations Manager for DCPDS, where he retired in March 2013. He is survived by his wife Karen; sons Stephen Jr (Jeong) Thornhill and Michael (Natalie) Thornhill; daughters Melissa (Aaron) Teeler and Jennifer Welch. **//Obit – Schertz Funeral Home and Crematory//**

Joyce and I are stunned by Steve's passing. We are so sorry this tragedy has happened. Our thoughts and prayers are with Karen and the family. Steve was always a very positive influence in the Chief's Lounge at Kunsan. His positive attitude, laugh and sense of humor will always stay with us. God Bless all. //Van Ray (Kunsan Ammo Chief)//



Throckmorton, Robert Wayne, Colonel (ret), 95, passed away April 22, 2025. After graduating from the University of Colorado, Class of 1951, Bob enlisted in the Air Force and entered Aviation Pilot Cadet Training. He earned his wings and 2nd Lieutenant's bars and was assigned to the Far East. "Throck" (another nickname) flew the Curtiss C-46 Commando in transport of military cargo and troops throughout the region, primarily in Korea and Japan. After the Korean War, he was assigned further flying duties in the theater and flew C-119s, C-47s and the DC-3 Dakota until he returned to the US. During the years after Korea, he served in unique roles, as a Personnel Psychologist in Detroit and a Military Intelligence Officer in Thule, Greenland and Langley AFB, Virginia. He was then selected to attend Yale University Institute of Far Eastern Languages as a full-time student of Mandarin Chinese. Upon completion of language studies, he returned to Asia, stationed in Japan, Taiwan and later in Okinawa as Commander of the 6990 Security Group. In periods between these duties, he was twice assigned to South Vietnam, as advisor to 7th Air Force and MACV and last as "out-country" commander of several "in-country" units. Bob was in Saigon during the North Vietnamese TET offensive in 1968. He flew reconnaissance missions throughout Southeast Asia in c-130 and RC-135 aircraft over friendly and hostile territory during the 1960s and '70s. After 12 years in Asia, Bob was chosen to command the US Air Force School of Applied Cryptologic Sciences at Goodfellow AFB, San Angelo, TX. Subsequently he was appointed Chief, Field Management and Evaluation at the National Security Agency (NSA) at Ft. Meade, MD. His final assignment was as Commander, 6944 Security Wing at Offutt AFB, Omaha, NE, where he served until his retirement in 1979. During his 28-year active-duty military career, Bob was twice-awarded the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Air Medal, twice-awarded the Meritorious Service Medal and awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal three times along with various lesser awards and service ribbons. Bob is survived by his wife, Karen Joy Throckmorton and his three sons and their families – Gregory Throckmorton of San Antonio, TX; Douglas Throckmorton and his wife Sheryl Bailey Throckmorton of Highland Village, TX; and Bradley Throckmorton of Durango, CO. **//Porter Loring Mortuary West//**

Chinese linguist. (IFEL 1961-01). //Bert Turner//



Underwood, James Riley, 81, passed away August 11, 2023. James attended Eldon High School and graduated from the class of 1960. James then began his career in the Air Force as a Chinese Linguist. James was a proud veteran. Left to cherish James' memory are his daughters, Teri S. Smith, Sandy Vest, and Christin and Darron Miller, all of San Angelo. **//Obit - Johnson's Funeral Home//**

Chinese linguist. (IFEL 1961-04, 1964-01). //Bert Turner//



Verti, James Peter, 78, passed away February 9, 2025. He enlisted in the United States Air Force, where he served in the elite Security Service division in Cold War Berlin, monitoring communications and helping ensure the safety of his country. Jim and Kathy raised four sons-Mike, Matt, Mark, and Chris-who were the pride of his life. Kathy passed away 16 years ago. **//Obit – Legacy Remembers//**



Wilhelm, Robert B. "Bob", Sgt, 75, passed away February 20, 2025. Bob enlisted in the United States Air Force in 1970 and attained the rank of Sergeant during the Vietnam War

He was a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, the American Legion, VFW, and VFW Honor Guard, the Smoky Hill Trail Association, Vietnam Veterans of America, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia Brotherhood, and the Distinguished Flying Cross Society. As an author he wrote for various newsletters and published a historical fiction book series titled, “Tales of the Sergeant Major” by Bob Wilhelm.

Survivors include his wife Joan, of the home in Hays, stepchildren, Merle Tippy (Toni Jensen) of Ellis, Christina Tippy (David Bodine) of Norman, OK, Jarod Tippy (Amanda) of Hays, and Brandon Tippy of Ellis. **//Obit – Hays Memorial Funeral Home//**

Listed in Our Losses section of 6994th Security Squadron web site <https://6994th.com/our-losses/>
//Joseph “Pepito” Figueroa//



Wittenberg, Gerald Lee, 85, passed away January 9, 2025. In December of 1961, Jerry joined the United States Air Force, enlisting in the electronics field where He learned Morse Code. In the fall of 1962, He was assigned to a communications base in Peshawar, Pakistan spending 15 months there listening to the Russians as a Morse Code Intercept Operator. After his return back to the United States he was stationed at Forbes AFB in Topeka, Kansas. In 1964, while still in Topeka, he met Maxine Morgan, who was a Kansas City, Kansas Bethany Hospital Nursing Student. completing a 3-month rotation also in Topeka. After Jerry’s Honorable Discharge from the Air Force in 1965, he returned to Kansas City. //Obit – Carlson Kirby Morris Funeral

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