

Remain

In

Touch

*FREEDOM THROUGH VIGILANCE ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER*



June 2023



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The President's Corner

By Ted Colquhoun
President, FTVA

Howdy Y'all,

Hope everyone is doing great, wherever you are. Memorial Day just passed, and we are into our 101 Critical Days of Summer. Those of you that were active duty in the last several decades will remember that phrase from our safety offices to tell our Airmen to be mindful of the dangers summer can bring on. Some of us did some crazy things during that time, but those are stories to be told over a beer or two.

Well, it has been a busy few months since we last talked, and we are starting to ramp up our efforts for the Anniversary Week festivities in October. We just sent our invitation for a guest speaker at the banquet. By the next newsletter we should have that speaker identified.

During the May Board of Directors meeting, we were all busy at different locations in the city and the Gateway Club was closed, so we had a Zoom meeting. While we were unsuccessful in getting our secretary, Evan Smith, on the call (he was fishing out at Braun Lake), we did get Lee Anthony, our Hall of Honor (HoH) Committee lead, to "zoom" in from down in Panama. This was a first for us and opens a whole lot of possibilities for other chapters or members to dial in as well. If you are interested, send an email to me, ted.colquhoun13@gmail.com or Roy Burnett, rebyells@gmail.com and we will see about getting you dialed in, as long as the FTVA Charter allows it.

While we are talking about Lee Anthony and the HoH, I would like to put a shameless plug out there for him. I am sure there are a lot of former members of our command that are worthy of consideration for the HoH. If you know of anyone that you deem so, please send in their name and a write-up to Lee Anthony. If the write-up needs work, he or one of the other members of the selection committee will reach out to you to try to help you out. However, just passing us a name will not suffice. We need a write-up and justification.

We also had a great Spring Social here in San Antonio on 25 March 2023. Our guest speaker was Lt Gen Kennedy, 16 AF/CC, and he did a great job talking about our Airmen and what they are doing for our country. The Q&A period was especially enlightening, with the late Brig Gen Bishop asking some

very pointed and insightful questions that enabled the General to go into some detail that I'm sure the members in attendance enjoyed. Suffice it to say, our Airmen are prosecuting the mission to protect the United States and her allies around the world. When they say Anytime, Anywhere...they mean it.

Finally, I want to remind you again about our Anniversary/Reunion events, 19-21 October 2023. Yes, it says October. These dates line us up perfectly with the anniversary of both the USAF Security Service (USAFSS), activated - 20 Oct 1948, and 16 AF, reactivated - 11 Oct 2019. This will be the 75th anniversary of the command and we want to celebrate in style. If you have any suggestions, please send them to the FTVA Board of Directors. The events are as follows:

19 Oct 2023

5K and Golf Tournament

20 Oct 2023

Hall of Honor, Remembrance Ceremony, and Picnic

21 Oct 2023

General Membership Meeting and Anniversary Banquet

(Vietnam Memorial Pin Ceremony)

You may have noticed an additional event on 21 Oct 23. That event will happen during the banquet where we will recognize all our Vietnam War Veterans. This year is the 50th anniversary of the end of hostilities for US Armed Forces (Paris Peace Accords – Jan 1973) and it would be fitting to recognize our fellow Airmen who spent many days and nights keeping watch and enabling our combined operations in and around Vietnam.

Our POCs for the recognition ceremony will be Mr. Tom Nurre from the Heritage Chapter (San Angelo, TX) and Mr. Bill Brockmiller, FTVA Vice-President and Alamo Chapter member. You should see some additional documents in the Remain-In-Touch giving you guidance on how to sign up for the ceremony and we will also post the information on the website. If you can't make the banquet, we will have an earlier ceremony that Friday, 20 Oct 23.

Finally, thank you! Thank you for supporting our men and women in all the services, but especially those in 16 AF. Sleep well at night, these Airmen are good, and they are keeping our nation safe.

Thanks for your support, friendship, and prayers, and more importantly thanks for maintaining contact with each other and ensuring what we do best...Remaining in Touch.

Until next time

Ted Colquhoun

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Hi Readers!

We love hearing from you and a highlight for this month's issue was the following:

Ted, Dan, Denny, Ken and Dennis,

I logged on today to check the last RIT. What a great job ya'll have done with the newsletter. I especially liked the restatement of our values, which need to remain in line with those of the larger Air Force. The piece about Mike Minihan is scary, but not surprising. I was saddened to hear about Danny Hartnett. Lots of memories there.

Thanks for all you do to keep the FTVA going.

Very Respectfully,

Sue (Douglas)

The next issue of RIT will be compiled and posted in September 2023. Please be sure to send your inputs to newsletter@ftva.us or dennis.buxton@me.com (or to my attention at 8847 Breanna Oaks, S.A., TX 78254) by September 1, 2023.

***Remain In Touch,
Dennis Buxton
Newsletter Editor***

FTVA Value Statement

Many Air Force senior leaders have released statements that should resonate with every member of the Freedom Through Vigilance Association (FTVA). They stated, “It is time for every one of us to strive for understanding and a culture of inclusiveness and belonging across our Air Force,” and “It is our very own General Benjamin O. Davis, Tuskegee Airman, who said, ‘The privileges of being an American belong to those brave enough to fight for them’.” These sentiments were recently echoed by the former Space Force Commander, General Jay Raymond, and [Chief Master Sergeant of the Space Force Roger Towberman](#), who said, “We have an opportunity to get this right from the beginning by making diversity and inclusion ‘one of the bedrock strengths’ of the Space Force. And our prior 16th Air Force Commander, Lt General Timothy Haugh and prior Command Chief, Summer Leifer, have both implored NAF members to embrace diversity, challenge our own biases, and treat everyone with dignity and respect.

Since the formation of the USAF Security Service (USAFSS) in October 1948, and in its various iterations since then to the present 16th Air Force, we recognize that the one constant and bedrock strength of our organization is the people. Throughout the years, our leaders have understood that if we take care of the people, the people will take care of the mission. Our people are as diverse as the missions we support. Yet, despite these differences, we train and fight as one. We value and understand the importance of respect and dignity for all, regardless of ethnic background, religion, gender, and/or sexual orientation.

The FTVA reaffirms our commitment to our country and the people we serve. Now is the time for reflection and listening to those that may not have had a voice at the table. Those voices need to be heard and be part of this national debate. We, as an organization, understand the sacrifices that have been made so that all Americans can enjoy the benefits of liberty, freedom, and justice for all. These benefits must encompass all Americans for we are greater in strength unified than in division. The FTVA thanks all who have served and sacrificed through the years and remains committed to the values we hold dear of dignity and respect for all and the Air Force’s Core Values of *Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence In All We Do*.



FTVA Hall of Honor



Lee Anthony
Hall of Honor Program Chair

The Selection Committee. It’s my pleasure to announce that we continue to maintain an incredible array of expertise, talent, judgement, and integrity on the Hall of Honor Selection Committee. This team spends an inordinate number of hours combing through nominations and ensuring our Hall recognizes truly deserving people, and I’d like to express my gratitude to the following 2023 committee members:

Marc Aldaz
Sue Douglas

AJ Harrison
Ken Maynard

Greg Radabaugh
Ken Williams

Thank You Bob Crabtree. We bid a fond farewell to one our greats, Bob Crabtree, who “retired” from the Selection Committee earlier this year. Bob served in a myriad of roles within the FTVA for over two decades, was inducted into the Hall of Honor in 2004, and has been integral to many, many organizational successes. We wish Bob and Donna the very best and look forward to seeing them at future reunions, socials, and Alamo Chapter meetings.

Nominations Now Due July 3, 2023. Due to team availability and the FTVA/16AF October reunion, we opted to move the nomination submission date to **Monday, July 3, 2023**. This is a change from the previously announced June 5, 2023 deadline and gives each of you an additional four weeks to submit nominations. All submissions should still be sent via e-mail to me (LeeAnthony@satx.rr.com) and/or AJ Harrison (chiefajh@gmail.com).

Nomination Package Assistance. We welcome your nominations and ensure each one receives fair and objective consideration within the eligibility construct of our charter. It goes without saying that the competition is often keen, and the quality of the nomination write-up is critical. Each member of the selection board is well-versed with the overall process and stands willing to assist anyone desiring to make a nomination. Feel free to contact me or anyone on the board directly with any questions regarding nominations.

HoH Charter Review. At the behest of the FTVA Executive Board, we were asked to review and update the existing Hall of Honor Charter with consideration for any FTVA and 16AF programmatic changes over the past 11 years. As such, we’re in the finishing stages and anticipate implementing an updated charter prior to publication of this *Remain In Touch*. This will **NOT** impact nominations already submitted under the current criteria. Please be on the lookout for the updated charter under the Hall of Honor section of the website.

Thanks again for your support – I look forward to hearing from you and seeing many of you at this year’s reunion!

16th Air Force News

Articles compiled and submitted by Ken Maynard
Associate Editor Extraordinaire

USINDOPACOM STATEMENT ON UNPROFESSIONAL INTERCEPT OF U.S. AIRCRAFT OVER SOUTH CHINA SEA

Adapted from an article by US INDO-PACIFIC COMMAND/PA, 30 May 2023

SOUTH CHINA SEA -- A People's Republic of China J-16 fighter pilot performed an unnecessarily aggressive maneuver during the intercept of a U.S. Air Force RC-135 aircraft, May 26, 2023. The PRC pilot flew directly in front of the nose of the RC-135, forcing the U.S. aircraft to fly through its wake turbulence. The RC-135 was conducting safe and routine operations over the South China Sea in international airspace, in accordance with international law.

The United States will continue to fly, sail, and operate – safely and responsibly – wherever international law allows, and the U.S. Indo-Pacific Joint Force will continue to fly in international airspace with due regard for the safety of all vessels and aircraft under international law. We expect all countries in the Indo-Pacific region to use international airspace safely and in accordance with international law.

**See the video
of the intercept by clicking on
[HERE.](#)**

2023 BATAAN DEATH MARCH, MEMORIAL, AND INSPIRATION

Adapted from an article by SrA Tabitha Jackson and TSgt Noelle Skinner, 451 IS

WHITE SANDS, NM -- After the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1942, Japanese forces invaded the Philippines. Due to exposure to the elements, disease, and lack of necessary supplies, tens of thousands of U.S and Filipino soldiers on the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines were forced to



SrA Alexis Cassidy, TSgt Joshua Hurt, SSgt Misty Younce, Lt. Col. William Selber, TSgt David Eckstein, current and former members of the 451st Intelligence Squadron finishing a training ruck.

surrender after seven months and were taken as prisoners of war. In addition to being deprived of food, water, and medical supplies, they were forced marched 65 miles to confinement camps through the sweltering jungles. During the Bataan Death March, 1,000 Americans and 9,000 Filipino soldiers died. This event impacted New Mexico families in a big way. Out of their 1,816 Coast Artillery men, 829 never returned home.

The Bataan Memorial Death March began in 1989, sponsored by the Army ROTC at New Mexico State University.

The march eventually joined the

White Sands Missile Range and New Mexico National Guard in 1992 and moved to the White Sands Missile Range. Since its beginning, participation in the Bataan Memorial Death March has grown from 100 to 9,600 marchers, civilian and military, from all across the United States, as well as several foreign countries.

Captain Holly Ziegler and her husband Ben Ziegler participated in the grueling event in 2019 and found the experience rewarding.

"As we walked, it was so inspiring and motivating to see people of all ages, from all walks of life, gathered together to complete a grueling challenge. It was so great to see all of the encouragement from everyone participating in the event and the countless volunteers who offered their time to provide support to the runners, marchers, and walkers."—SrA Alexis Cassidy

"On a whim, my husband and I participated in the march in 2019 and the experience changed my perspective on enduring hardship and challenges. We set off to complete the marathon just the two of us, but along the nearly 8-hour journey, we spoke with and observed countless people going through the same struggle and the challenge morphed into an experience of a lifetime that changed my outlook on overcoming obstacles as a collective," said Ziegler. "My goal in setting

up a 451st Intelligence Squadron team to participate in the 2023 Bataan Memorial Death March was to hopefully impart the same inspiration with my 451 IS family, to share the lesson that overcoming adversity is made easier when you're surrounded by your comrades, friends, or family."

She pitched the idea to create a team that would participate in the 26.2-mile ruck to her commander, Lt. Col. William Selber, in June 2022. Selber greatly supported Ziegler's initiative, remembering how when he was a young, second lieutenant assigned to the 820th Security Forces Group, rucking was a part of the culture and occurred regularly.

When asked why he agreed to participate, Selber stated, "This race is a great way to establish culture and identity, sharing struggles and going through stuff together as a close-knit unit, supporting each other." He added that rucking is "one of the best workouts you can do. It's cardio, a complete body-strength workout, and very challenging."

Subsequently, the Rucking Reapers, a five-member team, formed and prepared to participate in the 2023 Bataan Memorial Death March at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico on March 19.

Selber wasn't the only one Ziegler inspired to join. Tech. Sgt. Eckstein, who had lived in New Mexico for 10 years, always wanted to try rucking, and when he heard a group was being put together for this march, he joined up. Tech. Sgt. Hurt, fresh from a deployment, was pitched the idea by Ziegler and jumped at the challenge.

Hurt said, "After I got back, Capt Z got me into rucking and told me about the Bataan Death March. I came up with my master plan of getting my girlfriend on the team, training 6-mo together, finishing, and after the race, I would propose. Long story short, it happened, she said yes, and we're currently engaged. So, you could say the whole reason I did it was so that I could propose."

Some participants, such as SrA Allexis Cassidy, joined because of the unique history and deep meaning behind the Bataan Death March, while others, such as Staff Sgt. Misty Younce, wanted to take the opportunity to travel and to ruck with others as a group.

No matter the motivations behind joining the Bataan Death March, a mutual interest in rucking inspired members from the 3rd IS, 31st IS, and 451st IS to step up to the challenge. Younce, Cassidy, Hurt, Eckstein, Selber, and even while deployed, Ziegler, formed the team Rucking Reapers, a "co-ed, heavyweight military division" team.

"Rucking was one of the few athletic things I was good at, said Selber "Military should always have that competitive streak because we fight wars. Competition is important. As long as it's done in a team environment, I think it's a great thing for everybody."

For Eckstein, rucking came up often, first when he was interested in Pararescue and then periodically throughout his career in a different AFSC. He would tell himself, “If they can do it, so can I.”

Cassidy saw rucking an opportunity to spend time with friends outside of work and she stated, “I’ve loved it ever since. It’s a great way to get in cardio on days I don’t feel like running.”

Preparing for the 26.2-mile race, while carrying an extra 35 lbs. and navigating a challenging terrain that includes an elevation climb of approximately 1,315 ft, was no easy feat. Each member of the five-person team had to put in 28 weeks of intense training, including regularly running and rucking throughout the week and rucking on the weekends, gradually increasing the distance each week leading up to the march.

Everyone invested their personal time and discipline to conquer the training program for the competition. According to Eckstein, “There is no quick and easy solution, and the team has to put in the hard work.”

Despite the amount of effort needed to train for this event, Selber said, “We’ve come a long way from where we first started. I’m very proud.”

While training was long and difficult, it inspired those involved.

Eckstein stated that “The team was able to see their hard work pay off when they reached mile 18 and found they were keeping the same pace they had at the start of the ruck.” A milestone that assured them they were ready for the upcoming Bataan ruck march.

During the training period, an opportunity to test the Rucking Reapers’ progress and performance presented itself through the Norwegian Foot March, an 18-mile ruck. By watching people ruck for the first time, and watching his teammates learn, Selber was inspired. He was also motivated by SrA Valeria Nunez from the 3rd IS, who “set the fastest female time, and even qualified under the men’s time.”

Hurt, explained that training and going on rucks has only made him want to do it more.

Cassidy learned that she is capable of more than she thought.

“Training for this race has helped me realize that I can push myself a lot further than I ever would have imagined,” said Cassidy. “When I began training for the Bataan, I hoped to stick to the training and be consistent with rucking. My hopes are now just to complete the race with the team and finish it together.”

Hurt also learned that even “at the pace we go, I’m a lot better than I thought I would be.” He shared, “I was eager to start but nervous if I would be able to perform. The long training plan actually calmed my nerves and after doing long mileage, I’m 100% confident that I’ll finish with the team.”

On the other hand, Eckstein had complete confidence in the team's ability to complete the Bataan Death March, despite the intense training. His mantra to the team throughout the process was, "putting one foot in front of the other."

"The entire experience, so far, has been good due to the team's good camaraderie," Eckstein said. "The team is ready to get the ruck march conquered."

On March 19, 2023, the Rucking Reapers finally faced their competition in the co-ed military heavy division category and crossed the finish line. In preparation for the 2023 Bataan Death March, the dedicated team of Airmen spent 262 hours and marched 1,049 miles. That equals the approximate distance between Augusta, Georgia to San Antonio, Texas.

"As a team, we put in countless hours to train for the Bataan Death March. To finally make it to the day where we completed the event was a surreal moment for me. Not only did our hard work and dedication lead us to the finish line, but also it prepared us for all of the challenges we faced along the way. Blisters, sore muscles, fatigue... you name it- we pretty much experienced it all at some point during those 26 miles," Cassidy said. "As we walked, it was so inspiring and motivating to see people of all ages, from all walks of life, gathered together to complete a grueling challenge. It was so great to see all of the encouragement from everyone participating in the event and the countless volunteers who offered their time to provide support to the runners, marchers, and walkers."

Cassidy said during the march they took "... time along the way to remember the tens of thousands of U.S. and Filipino soldiers who were forced to become prisoners of war and take on the feat of marching 65 miles-under the most un-ideal and horrifying conditions imaginable over a stretch of a few days. For those that survived the march, it only meant an even harsher reality was waiting for them once they arrived at the POW confinement camps."

Their dedication memorialized the souls lost in the original Bataan Death March, 81 years prior.

COMACC PRESENTS DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS TO 363 ISRW AIRMAN FOR EXTRAORDINARY EFFORTS



Adapted from an article by TSgt AJ Hyatt,
363 ISRW—7 April 2023

JOINT BASE LANGLEY-EUSTIS, VA -- U.S. Air Force Gen. Mark Kelly, commander of Air Combat Command, participated in the 363d Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Wing Spring Commander's Leadership Summit as a keynote speaker, March 28, 2023, and took the time to present the Distinguished Flying Cross to an Airman for his actions during a force protection patrol clearing operation against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda presence in the Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

363d ISR Wing commanders, incoming commanders, senior enlisted leaders, first sergeants, co-

workers, friends, and family were in attendance as Kelly presented the Distinguished Flying Cross to Master Sgt. Zachary Cooper, a Tactical Systems Operator who was deployed to Afghanistan in February 2019.

"What a great day as we celebrate and recognize Master Sergeant Cooper with the presentation of the Distinguished Flying Cross," said Kelly. "Equally important, we were able to open this gathering to family and friends. With Coop being a Tactical Systems Operator – because there's a lot of information our TSOs can't share – you are going to hear just a little about Coop's heroic efforts when they read his citation. Keep in mind, DFCs are not handed out for routine sorties. You have to display heroic efforts. In fact, this is the fourth highest award for extraordinary achievement and the highest award for heroism while participating in aerial flight."

Cooper distinguished himself by his actions when he displayed his knowledge and outstanding airmanship under hazardous conditions culminated in the survival of more than 180 United States and partner ground forces, who were under intense and effective enemy fire.

U.S. Air Force Gen. Mark Kelly, commander of Air Combat Command, pins the Distinguished Flying Cross on Master Sgt. Zachary Cooper, during the 363d Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Wing Commander's Leadership Summit, March 28, 2023 at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va. Cooper was recognized for his actions during a force protection patrol clearing operations against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda presence in the Helmand Province, Afghanistan in February 2019. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. AJ Hyatt)

While serving as the sole armed overhead asset, Cooper's crew engaged in combat operations providing intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, airborne command and control, casualty evacuation, and armed overwatch.

Cooper was pivotal in troubleshooting and resolving a malfunction with the aircraft's weapon release system. Due to Cooper's efforts, his crew was able to conduct multiple kinetic strikes, several of which were dangerously close to friendly forces.

He expertly contacted tactical C2 elements early in the sortie, alerting them of the dire and deteriorating ground situation and requested additional close air support assets. The reallocation of F-16s and rapid battlefield situational awareness built by the crew prior to their arrival on station, led to the immediate suppression of enemy fire and destruction of multiple buildings.

Finally, Cooper's crucial initial communication and coordination initiated rescue forces for an urgent casualty evacuation of two partner force members enabling rescue forces to reach the patients within the most critical time known as the "Golden Hour."

"As an Air Combat Command Airman in direct support of Air Force Special Operations Command, I am honored and humbled to be recognized with my crew for the support we were able to provide to the Assault Force that night," Cooper said. "It was one of those nights, like many others, where things just clicked for us as a team and we were able to do the right things, at the right times. It really was a team effort and the professionalism of all involved was second to none."

Cooper, who originally joined the Air Force in 2005 as an F-15 Tactical Aircraft Maintenance apprentice, knows the importance of teamwork, as he quickly learned about trust and daily teaming between pilot and maintenance crews.

"I am proud to have been part of such an amazing team," he said. "The way we worked together still gets me. When I think back on the professional acumen in each crew position and fantastic Crew Resource Management exhibited through the multiple troops in contact situations, weapons malfunctions, and airborne C2 coordination - I feel very privileged to have flown with those guys. The way the pilots flew the aircraft at the edge of its envelope to ensure overwatch coverage throughout the entire period of darkness was phenomenal."

A little more than a decade ago, Cooper made the decision to retrain into the (at the time "new") Air Force Specialty Code 1A8X2 Airborne ISR Operator and has embraced it all.

"Senior Airman Zach Cooper didn't imagine in his wildest dreams he would have the opportunity to do such interesting things, with amazing people, in unique places furthering our nation and its partners interests as a 1A8X2," Cooper said.

55th Wing Urschler Theater Opens to Visitors

Submission and Photos by Evan Smith
FTVA BOD Secretary and Past President

Offutt AFB, Nebraska - The 55 Wing HQ is now up and running in building 500, formerly STRATCOM HQ, on Offutt AFB. Entering through the north entrance to the building is the Urschler Theater, named after Brig Gen Regis Urschler, a well-endowed history museum commemorating the legacy of the 55th Wing. Brig Gen Urschler served, among other assignments, as the Vice Commander of Electronic Security Command (ESC) in 1982, his final duty station prior to retirement.

Following the great flood of 2019, most of the heritage items that adorned the 97 IS Heritage Room were saved, including all of Brig Gen Regis Urschler's Order of the Sword.

The Urschler Theater is open to all visitors to Offutt AFB, Monday-Friday during normal business hours. In the Urschler Theater you'll find numerous displays and aircraft models capturing the enduring legacy of the fighting 55th. Next time you're at Offutt, check it out. Below are some of the artifacts and other displays of commemoration.



ENTRANCE TO URSCHLER THEATER



ORDER OF THE SWORD HONORS





CHOW'S UP! AT THULE, GREENLAND. LACKLAND CADET OPEN MESS



POST-USAF MAGAZINE ARTICLE



MORE THEATER DISPLAYS



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



Heritage Chapter San Angelo, TX

Ronald 'JJ' Graham, President

CHAPTER MEMORIAL DAY ACTIVITIES



Col Matthew Reilman, 17th TRW/CC, pinning his mother, Barbara Reilman, with the Vietnam War Surviving Spouse pin.

Honoring Vietnam Vets and Surviving Spouses: The Heritage Chapter joined in the recognition of Barbara Reilman, mother of the current 17th Training Wing Commander Matthew Reilman, as a Vietnam Veteran Surviving Spouse. Her husband Mark Reilman served in the Navy from 1967 to 1973. He was trained as a Fire Control Technician and was promoted to Petty Officer 2nd Class. JJ Graham, Wayne Bascom, and Tom Nurre represented the chapter, assisting Luis Martinez, Chairman the All Veterans Council of Tom Green County and of the San Angelo Vietnam War Commemorative Partner Program Committee. Also recognized were the Wing Commander himself, as well as his wife and son. *(Story by Wayne Bascom, Photo by JJ Graham).*

In another tribute event for Memorial Day, the Heritage Chapter paid tribute to a local minister, Rev. Joni Lancaster. Rev. Lancaster lost her Vietnam Veteran husband in a trucking accident earlier this year. A caravan of veterans including JJ Graham, Tom Nurre, Larry Miller, and Wayne Bascom from the Heritage Chapter joined with Luis Martinez, San Angelo Vietnam War Commemorative Partner Program Committee chairman, in honoring the memory of Army Cpl Rick Lancaster at the Church Service. The following day the caravan moved onto her home where she was presented the surviving spouse pin and certificate in the presence of her many friends and neighbors. *(Story by Wayne Bascom)*



Rev Joni Lancaster stands behind the "In Memory Of" sign for her husband, Cpl Rick Lancaster, surrounded by family and friends. Photo by JJ Graham.

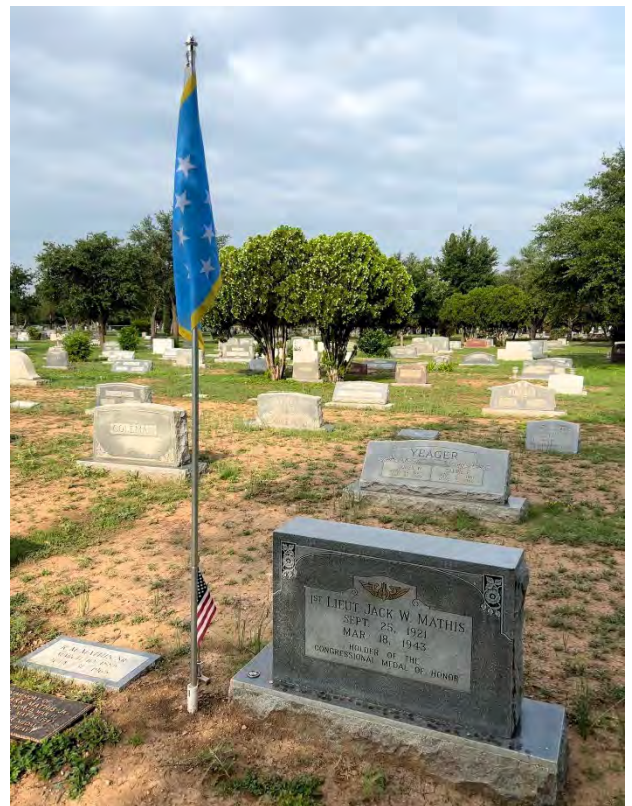
Tribute to Local MoH Awardees: San Angelo is the final resting place for two hometown heroes that were awarded the Medal of Honor (MoH) by our nation – First Lieutenant Jack Mathis, who is buried at Fairmount Cemetery, and Sergeant First Class Finnis McCleery, who is interred at Belvedere Cemetery. While involved in a previous ceremony at Fairmount, Heritage Chapter members noticed that the Medal of Honor flag at Lieutenant Mathis’ grave was very tiny, measuring approximately six-by-four inches - virtually invisible to anyone visiting the cemetery. We elected to install a permanent fixture at both grave sites to properly display a four-foot by three-foot

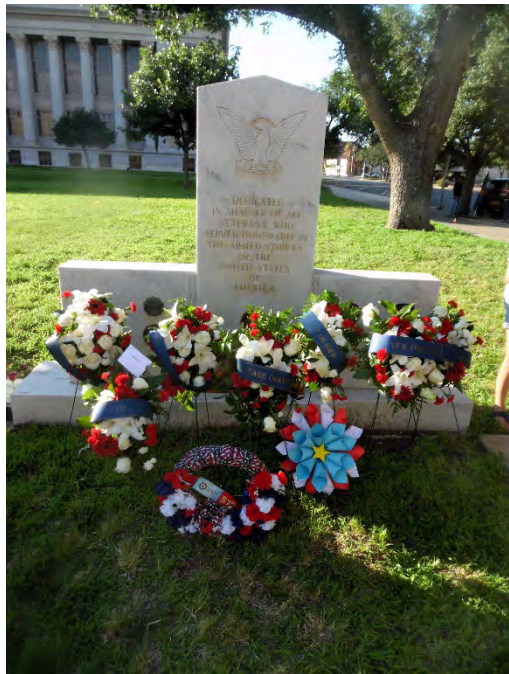


Left: Holding Lt Jack Mathis’ Medal of Honor flag are, from left to right, Heritage Chapter President “JJ” Graham, John Frost, Ed Bendinelli, Secretary Wayne Bascom, Vice-President Larry Miller, and Tom Nurre. (Photo courtesy FTVA Heritage Chapter). Below: Newly installed Medal of Honor Flag to honor 1st Lieutenant Jack W. Mathis - Photo by Larry Miller).

flag to fly over this hallowed ground during all national and military holidays.

The Chapter purchased two MoH flags and ten-foot flagpoles and, with permission from both cemeteries, installed ground sleeves to mount the two flagpoles. Chapter representatives joined San Angelo East Side Lion's Club in placing United States flags at veteran plots at Belvedere and Fairmount cemeteries, flying these Medal of Honor flags over the graves of these two brave Americans. **(Story by Wayne Bascom)**





Memorial Day Courthouse Ceremony. The Heritage Chapter joined with other local veterans’ organizations to hold a ceremony at the San Angelo Courthouse. Each veteran service organization placed a wreath at the war monument. This year the guest speaker was 17th TRW/CC Col Reilman. A special remembrance was made to the 15 victims of the B-36 crash a bit north of San Angelo on 25 May 1955.

The Heritage Chapter, along with other local veteran service organizations, placed wreaths at a recently refurbished veterans’ monument at the San Angelo courthouse grounds. Photo by JJ Graham.

CHAPTER SPEARHEADS VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATION CEREMONY

Submitted by Wayne Bascom, Heritage Chapter Secretary

The Heritage Chapter spearheaded this event in support of the EC-47 History Site, an official Commemorative Partner of the Pentagon program, and Goodfellow's Heritage Committee. The Chapter registered guests, provided for their transportation, and subsidized the dinner meal. As an official Commemorative Partner, the EC-47 History site was required to provide an after-action report

to the Pentagon. Tom Nurre provided that report which follows:



JJ Graham and Tom Nurre make a presentation of 17th TRW CC Col Matthew Reilman. Photo by Carl Bradley, Faith in a Flash Photography

The second annual Vietnam War Commemoration Ceremony at the Weyandt-Eddy Memorial Plaza was held at the Goodfellow Air Force Base static EC-47 aircraft display on Wednesday, March 29, 2023. This event started with a welcome home social mixer/reception on Tuesday evening at the San Angelo Clarion Hotel. Out-of-town attendees from 10 states and 15 Texas cities were Welcomed Home by the EC-47 History Site and Heritage Chapter – Freedom Through Vigilance Association members. Free food and happy-hour refreshments were available in the hospitality suite.

Posters depicting Vietnam War timeline articles from 1973 highlighting the signing of the Paris peace accords, the withdrawal of troops from Vietnam, and the end of the draft were displayed throughout the suite.

The Wednesday morning Commemoration ceremony was hosted by the Goodfellow AFB Heritage Committee. This committee was organized and is overseen by the 17th Training Wing historian, Mr. Mark Howell. The committee arranged seating, public affairs, and local news coverage as well as invitations and VIP participation. The estimated 200 attendees included nearly 50 Vietnam veterans and 22 deceased Vietnam veteran surviving spouses. Twenty-three veterans were individually introduced and called forward to be presented the Commemoration lapel pin along with the EC-47 History Site Certificate of Appreciation and a packet of Commemoration materials (brochure, fact sheets, presidential proclamations, tin pins, and bumper stickers). The presentations were made by the senior Air Force, Army, and Navy commanders. Twelve surviving spouses were also introduced with a thumb-nail sketch of their deceased veteran spouses and their family dynamics. These widows were presented with the Blue Star lapel pin, Certificate of Honor, and the Commemoration packet of materials.

The Wing commander delivered a localized version of the Commemoration provided speech. It was very well received and appreciated. Vietnam veteran Larry Miller, USAF Major retired Vietnamese linguist and incumbent City Council Member, made fitting comments about the changes in history over the past 50 years, the role and sacrifices of spouses and family members during the Vietnam war, and a heartfelt recap of the release of the 591 POWs repatriated in the Spring of 1973.



Master of Ceremonies and Heritage Chapter President JJ Graham addresses the crowd. Photo by Carl Bradley, Faith in a Flash Photography



Many of the attendees also received engraved plastic Keepsake replicas of bronze plate inscriptions placed in the Weyandt-Eddy Memorial Plaza in tribute to their own service and the service of deceased spouses and/or family members. The final part of the Goodfellow AFB ceremony invited all attendees to view the more than 600 engraved plates in the plaza...and pose for pictures.

Nearly 80 attendees enjoyed a catered buffet dinner and Welcome Home party at the Clarion Hotel Wednesday evening. The dining area was set up with the Missing Man Table and again with more than a dozen 3'x4' posters filled with pictures and information about local community events that the Heritage Chapter and EC-47 History Site are involved with. Attendees participated in a raffle and silent auction of EC-47 models. The sound system and music were provided by American Legion Post 572. A great time was had by all attendees. We appreciate the great support from the Commemoration staff.

Left, Janelle Nolan paying respect to paver of TSgt Ludwig A Havlak. Photo by Carl Bradley, Faith in a Flash Photography

More Event Coverage on Next Page

More Event Coverage



Left, Henry Cislo of Leave Your Mark responsible for all engraving in the plaza. Photo Carl Bradley, Faith in a Flash Photography Below, Intelligence Training Student Volunteers. Photo by Wayne Bascom.



[YouTube Video - Goodfellow Air Force Base Vietnam War Commemoration Ceremony | Mar 29, 2023](#)

[Complete Photo Coverage](#)

[KLST San Angelo Event News Coverage](#)

BRANDENBURG HALL REDEDICATION

Brandenburg Hall, on Goodfellow AFB, was originally dedicated on 27 October 2014 [Brandenburg Hall Dedication](#). That memorialization was the result of years of hard work by the Heritage Chapter.

Sgt Dale Brandenburg was an airborne radio maintenance technician who was lost to hostile action aboard an EC-47 ARDF mission over Laos on 5 February 1973. The original dedication mainly renamed the building and included a small portrait and biography hung near the entrance.

The 17th Training Group recently completed an extensive remodeling of the interior of the building to include a huge mural honoring Sgt Brandenburg, as well as including a display case of artifacts from that timeframe. Family members from the East Coast were invited to the rededication. We were honored to have his sister-in-law, Amelia Brandenburg, and niece, Andrea (Brandenburg) Doyle present for the event. Attendees included the 17th TRW/CC, Col Reilman, the host 17th TRG/CC, Col Kulchar, as well as students and support personnel from within the Training Group. *(Story by Wayne Bascom. All photos below credited to Eric Camil, 17th TRW/ITU).*

THE NEW MURAL DEPICTING DALE BRANDENBURG'S ASSIGNMENTS

NOV 11, 1948
BORN IN CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA.

APR 21, 1968
ENLISTED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE.

MAY 31, 1972
COMPLETED TRAINING AT GOODFELLOW AFB.

DEC 1972
REASSIGNED TO DET. 3 699TH THAILAND.

JAN 27, 1972
PARIS PEACE ACCORD SIGNED.

FEB 5, 1973
LAST TRAM MISSION FROM BARON 52.

FEB 7, 1973
DOWNED BARON 52 BE-47D1 DISCOVERED.

FEB 4, 1973
Their target orbit was in the Steel Tiger area of southern Laos where they were to electronically observe North Vietnamese tank movements near the Ho Chi Minh trail as they traveled through Laos into Cambodia. At 0125 hours on the morning of February 5th, BARON 52 reported that it was taking 37mm anti-aircraft fire. Five minutes later, the pilot reported "All Clear." That was Baron 52's last transmission.

SGT DALE BRANDENBURG
LACKLAND AFB • KEESLER AFB • PEASE AFB • GOODFELLOW AFB • DANANG AB • UBON ROYAL THAI AFB

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS • THE PURPLE HEART • THE AIR MEDAL • THE AIR FORCE OUTSTANDING UNIT AWARD WITH "V" DEVICE • THE NATIONAL DEFENSE SERVICE MEDAL • THE VIETNAM SERVICE MEDAL • THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM CROSS OF GALLANTRY W/PALM • THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM CAMPAIGN MEDAL



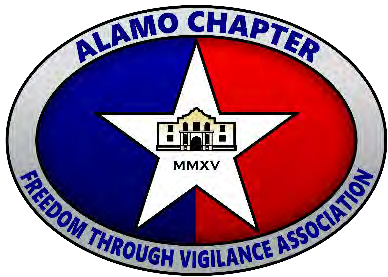
Left, Dale Brandenburg's sister-in-law, Amelia Brandenburg, is pinned by JJ Graham



Above: Ed Bendinelli greeting Andrea (Brandenburg) Doyle, niece, and Amelia Brandenburg, Sister-in-law of Dale Brandenburg.



Left: New display case with Brandenburg artifact from the Vietnam War Era.



Alamo Chapter San Antonio, TX

Ken Williams, President
Dennis "Rass" Rasmussen, Vice President
Ken Maynard, Secretary/Treasurer



Alamo Chapter Members (l-r) around the table: Doug Williams, Anne Williams, John Lopes, Hilda Rogers, Leroy Rogers, Dennis Rasmussen

The San Antonio Chapter of the FTVA held their monthly April meeting at the Alamo Café Restaurant on the 20th. Fellowship and dinner were enjoyed by the 14 members and spouses on a stormy and rainy evening. FTVA Members present were:

- Ken and Shiela Williams**
- Leroy and Hilda Rogers**
- Ron and Kay Weaver**
- Doug and Anne Williams**
- Jim McLendon**
- Dennis Rasmussen**
- Ron Haygood**
- Dan Martin**
- John Lopes**
- Tommy Smart (Goodfellow Chapter)**

President Ken Williams called the meeting to order at 1800 and the membership discussed the Spring Social held on 25 March. With an eye on the weather, the length of the meeting was shortened, and all departed by 7 pm.

At the 20 April Alamo Chapter Meeting. From left to right around the table: Jim McLendon, Shiela Williams, Ron Haygood, Dan Martin, Kay Weaver, Ron Weaver, Tommy Smart



ALAMO CHAPTER MONTHLY MEETING MAY 18, 2023

Our Chapter Vice President, Dennis 'Rass' Rasmussen, began our monthly gathering with a short remembrance of one of our esteemed Alamo Chapter and FTVA members, Brig Gen (ret) Charles Bishop, who passed away on May 9th. Rass briefly described the emotions he felt while attending Charlie Bishop's memorial service held May 18th, at the Parkhills Baptist Church here in San Antonio. Following Rass' opening remarks, our FTVA President, Ted Colquhoun, read aloud a letter to the FTVA membership at large from Lt Gen Kevin Kennedy, 16 AF Commander, honoring Brig Gen Bishop's legacy and accomplishments. That same letter was also sent worldwide to all 16 AF personnel by Lt Gen Kennedy.

After Ted finished reading the letter to our group, Rass went around the room, asking anyone who had served under or alongside Charlie Bishop to share, if they wished, some of their memories and thoughts of him. Several did so, and a number of poignant stories were offered from those who served with Charlie, particularly during his years on the ESC IG team and their travels around the world from unit to unit, and later as the commander of the 6912th at Berlin.

There was a total of 14 attendees at tonight's meeting, to include:

Dennis Rasmussen

Darby Stacey

Ted Colquhoun

Grady Robinson & Terry Robinson

Dan Martin

Gene Sloat

Doug Williams & Anne Williams

Bill Sheck

Bob Crabtree & Donna Crabtree

Leroy Rogers & Hilda Rogers

Left to Right: Bill Sheck, Bob Crabtree, Donna Crabtree.

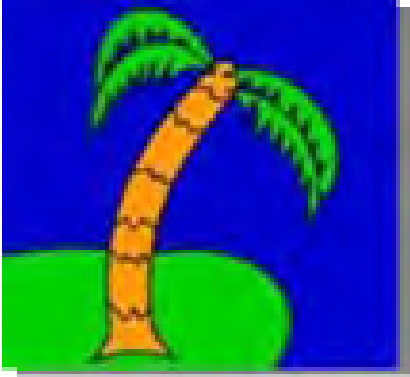


Left to Right: Leroy Rogers, Anne Williams, Hilda Rogers

Left to Right: Gene Sloat, Hilda Rogers, Dan Martin, and Ted Colquhoun



Left to Right: Darby Stacey, Grady Robinson, Terry Robinson, Doug Williams



Aloha Chapter Honolulu, HI

John “Tilly” Toillion, President

Aloha All –

No meeting this quarter; however, we’ll be meeting later this month.

One of the of the reasons for not meeting this time around was that this “old” USAFSS airman was spending a week here in Paradise, CA. You may recall back on November 8, 2018, Paradise experienced, at the time, the deadliest fire in California history. Over 18,000 structures burned to the ground and 85 lives were lost – most stuck in traffic. Since then, there’s been a lot of rebuilding in this community where 70 percent of the residents are, like many of us, over the age of 65. I’m with a group of five other team members helping rebuild two houses.

The picture is of me trying to find out how to get down from this scaffold after some painting.

I highly recommend you check out the YOUTUBE video “*Fire in Paradise*” for a summary of this devastating event. There are several agencies looking for volunteers to come help with the rebuilding. Contact me if you’re interested in finding out more. We all have been given many gifts and giving back is at the top of the list.

That be it for Aloha Chapter. Always remember that the welcome mat is opened to any of you traveling in this direction.

--Tilly





Rocky Mountain Chapter Colorado Springs, CO

Greg Roman and Stan Cook Co-Presidents

[Rocky Mountain Chapter Website](#)

Rocky Mountain Happenings

The Rocky Mountain Chapter (RMC) held our May Meeting on Wednesday 17 May 2023.

The meeting began with Ike Eichelberger giving a recap of the 2022 annual finance report; beginning and ending balances as well as an accounting of expenses incurred during the year and donations made to the Chapter. As a follow-up to our Vietnam Veteran's Commemoration Ceremony at the Spanish Peaks Veteran's Home, Mike Click was owed money for the cake and two more Spouses Pins need to be ordered.

Following the late arrival of a couple of new guests, introductions were made all around. We were joined this evening by Lt Gen (ret) B.J. Shwedo and MGen (ret) Aaron Prupas, both alumni of multiple intelligence unit assignments/commands. Gen Shwedo shared with the group, some of his experiences working with USAFA Cadets and the Leadership Development Program. The next RMC meeting is scheduled for 14 June.



L-R: Mike Click, Ike Eichelberger, Dennis Daniels, Lt Gen (ret) B.J. Schwedo, MGen (ret) Aaron Prupas, Stan Cook and Greg Roman.



Wasatch Chapter Salt Lake City, UT

Jacob Scheid, President
Shawn Heckman, Vice President
Scott Lawson, Treasurer

Submitted by Scott Lawson

FTVA Wasatch members and families gathered together last December to place veterans' wreaths on the headstones of America's Heroes as part of National Wreaths Across America Day last December 17th at the Utah State VA Cemetery in Bluffdale, UT.

Below are a few photos depicting Wasatch Chapter members participating (several more participated but are not shown). It was a tiny gesture on our part to show respect and remember our fellow veterans. As we laid each wreath, we took our time to clear the snow from the markers and read their names aloud. Unfortunately, there weren't enough wreaths donated to cover all the veterans, so we have a goal to help change that in the future. It was a memorable and meaningful

experience, and we plan to continue supporting this worthwhile event. If you're ever in town visiting, we'd love to see you join us.



Jake Scheid with his children. The local news took interests in what he was saying to his kids to explain the significance of why we do this. Check out the short interview with Jake [here](#).

See our [Wasatch Chapter Facebook Page](#) for more information and announcements.



Chapter volunteers Nick Batura (left) and Scott Loveless (above) do their part supporting Wreaths Across America honoring our veterans.



A few of us came out for dinner on March 30th, at Legends Pub & Grill in Sandy, UT. From left to right around the table: Elisha Batura, Angela and Scott Lawson, Eric Rasmussen, Nick Batura, Shawn and Jennifer Heckman.



Gold Country Chapter Yuba City, CA

John Aurelius, President
jaurelius@mikodi.com



Check back in September.

Mid-Atlantic Region Chapter

Bob Bastian, Acting President, Treasurer

Check back in September.



**REUNIONS &
ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**FTVA Annual Reunion
19-21 October 2023
San Antonio, Texas**

19 Oct 2023

5K and Golf Tournament

20 Oct 2023

Hall of Honor, Remembrance Ceremony, and Picnic

21 Oct 2023

*General Membership Meeting and Anniversary
Banquet*

(Vietnam Memorial Pin Ceremony)

FTVA VIGILANT PARTNERS

**P.O. BOX 691616
San Antonio, TX 78269**

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)**



SILVER PARTNERS

**Anthony F. Jensen
Grover Jackson
William F. Sheck
Bob & Debbie Cope
"Picnic Partners"
Donald Bundy
Greg Radabaugh**





BRONZE PARTNERS

Mark and Amy Hess

Ronald Hentz

(IHO Col Bob Cope)

Jack V. Brewer

E.W. Forbess



PATRON PARTNERS

CMSgt Roger Towberman

James Mayer

Charles Bishop

Edward Sellmeyer



Thank You VPs! Your continued support is vital in helping us continue the FTVA mission.



FALLEN EAGLES

Compiled by Joe Figueroa, Associate Editor



Received word of the following losses from caring relatives, friends or obituaries and offer prayers and sympathy to loved ones.

“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

Bidus, Michael J., Lt Col (ret), USAFSS

Bishop, Charles L., Brig Gen (ret), USAFSS *****FTVA Hall of Honor 2011 & FTVA Lifetime Member**

Bradley, Ertis J., USAFSS

Brendell, James B., SMSgt (ret), USAFSS *****FTVA Lifetime Member**

Bruha, Harlan L., Col (ret), USAFSS *****FTVA Lifetime Member**

Chiavacci, Oliver G., USAFSS

Clapper, Susan T., Civ, **Spouse of Lt Gen (ret) James R. Clapper Jr. (FTVA Hall of Honor Inductee 1993)**

Drever, Donald B., USAFSS

Fisk, Richard C., USAFSS

Gulbrandsen, Leif Fontaine, USAFSS

Hearne, Sheila M., Electronic Security Command

Holte, Charles W., Lt Col (ret), USAF

Idzik, Brian Joseph, MSgt (ret), USAFSS

Kaiser, Joseph R., TSgt (ret), USAFSS

Larson, James R., MSgt (ret), USAFSS

McConnell, Michael A., Sgt, USAFSS

Miller, James M., SMSgt (ret), USAFSS *****FTVA Lifetime Member**

Nolander, John D., Capt (ret), USAFSS *****FTVA Member**

- Penton, Leonard W., Maj (ret), USAFSS *****FTVA Lifetime Member**
- Peters, Joe F., USAFSS
- Price, William D., TSgt (ret), USAFSS
- Rapier, Hughwill, A1C, USAFSS
- Reed, James Randall, USAFSS
- Ritter, Walter A., CMSgt (ret), USAFSS *****FTVA Lifetime Member**
- Ross, Larry T., SMSgt (ret), *****FTVA Lifetime Member**
- Siedling, David J., SMSgt (ret), USAF
- Simmons, Ray C. "Sonny", SSgt, USAFSS
- Slater, Marshall "Tip", Col (ret), USAFSS
- Smith, Welda Anne, Lt Col (ret), USAFSS
- Stineburg, Jeffrey, A1C, USAFSS
- Tingley, William, TSgt, USAFSS
- Todd, Richard T., USAFSS
- Wachs, Joseph V., MSgt (ret), USAFSS
- Wagner, John T., CMSgt (ret), USAFSS
- Walker, Benny E., USAFSS
- Woods, Ernest R. CMSgt (ret), USAFSS



Bidus, Michael J., Lt Col (ret), 77, passed away March 14, 2023. He served 22 years as a USAF Intelligence Officer. His assignments included San Angelo and San Antonio, TX; Ft. Meade, MD; Hof and Berlin, Germany; RAF Chicksands, England; and Redlands, CA. His post-military service included 12 years as the first Executive Director of the Lackland AFB Fisher Houses, which provide free housing for family members of patients hospitalized at Wilford Hall Medical Center. Mike is survived by his wife of 57 years and four children - Kimberly Finnegan (Tom), Michael Bidus (Elizabeth), Brent Bidus (Tracy), and Lara Rhyner (Ted). **//Obit – Heart of**

Texas Cremation//



Bishop, Charles L., Brigadier General (ret), 84, passed away, May 9, 2023. He joined the US Air Force as a Russian linguist, serving at the National Security Agency and later in Peshawar, Pakistan. When the Berlin Wall was erected, he was ordered back to the states to attend Officer Candidate School.

Specializing in computer programming, he developed methods to organize vast amounts of intelligence information being collected throughout the European and Asiatic theaters. He was soon assigned to a position flying on the EC-121R reconnaissance aircraft in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. Follow-on assignments included the Pentagon; the Air

Force Military Personnel Center and the North American Air Defense Command where he was director of special security and served as special adviser for space systems to the commander in chief of NORAD; He then attended the National War College and upon graduating, received the first Air Force Association Award for excellence in research and writing.

In July 1978, General Bishop returned to U.S. Air Force Security Service headquarters as director of Inspection, Office of the Inspector General. He assumed command of the 6993rd Electronic Security Squadron in September 1979 and served as chief of the Consolidated Security Operations Center, both located at Medina Annex, Lackland AFB, Texas.

From 1980 to 1982 General Bishop was assigned as the inspector general for Electronic Security Command. He then became commander of the 6912th Electronic Security Group, Tempelhof Central Airport, Berlin, with units throughout Berlin and West Germany.

He was assigned to Hickam AFB, Hawaii in June 1983 and served as commander of Headquarters Electronic Security Command Pacific and Electronic Combat Director, Pacific. He transferred to Headquarters Tactical Air Command, Langley AB, VA. In November 1984 as deputy chief of staff for intelligence. In June 1987, the general became deputy chief of staff for intelligence (12), U.S. Forces Korea/United Nations Command, and deputy assistant chief of staff for intelligence (C-2), Combined Forces Command, Seoul, Korea and finally United States Air Forces, Europe, at Ramstein AFB, Germany.

The general has more than 1,200 flying hours in the EC-121, EC-130, RC-135 and E3A. He retired in 1992. His military awards and decorations include the Air Force Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Air Medal with oak leaf cluster, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, Air Force Organizational Excellence Award, Good Conduct Medal, Army of Occupation Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with three service stars. Humanitarian Service Medal, Air Force Overseas Ribbon-Short with oak

leaf cluster, Air Force Overseas Ribbon-Short with three oak leaf clusters, Air Force Longevity Service.

During their 60 years of marriage, they were blessed with two sons, Troy, and Lane Bishop. Two granddaughters, Elle, and Lexie. Two grandsons, Austin, and Landon. Additionally, they have three great-grandchildren, Wanda, Adrian, Matthew and one more on the way.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Earla; son, Troy and wife, Valerie, son, Lane and wife, Jennifer. //Obit – Porter Loring Mortuaries//

Also see: [Legacy.Com](https://www.legacy.com)

General Bishop was inducted into FTVA Hall of Honor in 2011. His biography can be found at the following link: [Charles Bishop](#). //Joseph “Pepito” Figueroa//



Sixteenth Air Force

2 Hall Boulevard Suite 20I

Joint Base-Lackland Texas 78243-7072 18 May 2023

Dear Freedom Through Vigilance Association Members

Today we honor the legacy of the late Brig Gen (retired) Charles L. Bishop. A pioneer of Sixteenth Air Force history, Brig Gen Bishop joined the Air Force as an enlisted Russian linguist, and later commissioned as the Berlin Wall went up. During the Cold War, he used his computer programming skills to streamline intelligence collection for both the European and Asiatic theaters.

His leadership assignments in our precursor organizations include command tours at the 6993rd Electronic Security Squadron, the 6912th Electronic Security Group, and the Headquarters Electronic Security Command Pacific. Brig Gen Bishop also had more than 1,200 flying hours in the EC-121, EC-130, and RC-135 platforms.

There are many people in the Freedom Through Vigilance Association who have had the privilege of serving alongside Brig Gen Bishop, and I would like to extend my gratitude to those, like Bishop, who have paved the way for us.

**KEVIN B. KENNEDY
Lieutenant General, USAF
Commander**

I first met Gen Bishop when he was USAFE/IN and I was assigned to the 690ESW in Berlin. He immediately struck me as a personable man of exceptional character -- and very well respected (even liked) by all at the station. I later found out he and my father were friends and shared a

southeast redneck (or technically "hillbilly") legacy. Last saw him here at the HHQ while we were standing up 25 AF -- and he was the same bright personable man I remembered. Sadly, Dad passed several years ago; so on his behalf and on behalf of the entire Oldham family, I'd like you to know "Chargin' Charlie Bishop" is already missed -- and we are all a bit poorer at his passing. **//Robert Oldham//**

My deepest sympathies to the Bishop family. I was privileged to have known and worked with the General over several years, both in the military and as civilians in San Antonio. He was always upbeat and friendly, yet professional, and I enjoyed working with him. RIP old comrade. **//Greg Mahoney//**

General Bishop held the respect of the enlisted women and men who had the good fortune to know and work for him. I am forever grateful for his kindness to me. Sending prayers to Earla and their family. May the General rest in peace in God's eternal time. Very Respectfully. **//Susan Douglas, CMSgt (ret)//**



Bradley Ertis J., 78, passed away March 11, 2023. Bud was a veteran of the USAF and completed two tours in Vietnam. Bud was a force to be reckoned with. He was a big man with a big personality, ready smile, and enthusiasm for life. After many years of cruising in the beautiful waters of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, Bud and the true love of his life, Meredith, retired to Edinburg, TX. They enjoyed 14 years of "land cruising" in their motorhome and traveled to almost every state in the union. Bud is survived by his devoted wife, Meredith. **//Obit – Memorial Funeral Home//**

Bud Bradley, one of my Vietnamese classmates, passed away March 11. He was one of the groups who started flying C-130 Silver Dawn missions over the Gulf of Tonkin in 1965 without benefit of aeronautical training, orders, or equipment. **//Mick Cole//**



Brendell, James B., SMSgt (ret), 85, passed away April 8, 2022. He proudly served in the USAF for 24 years. He was trained as a Russian linguist at Syracuse University and was first miserably stationed for 14 months on Shemya Island, Alaska, a place to which he would always refer with a shiver of loathing. He later enjoyed more pleasant assignments in locations abroad including Germany, Japan, and Okinawa. He absolutely loved the hours he spent flying in RC-130s doing his level best to give the Soviets hell. After retiring from the Air Force, Jim continued serving his country at the National Security Agency. He retired after 14 years at the NSA. Jim is survived by his wife

of 62 years, Carol; daughters, Laura Kennedy (husband Mike) and Carrie Bryan (husband Scott).
//Obit – Cavin Cool Funeral Home//

I flew on a number of missions with Jim in Okinawa. He was my favorite AMS (Airborne Mission Supervisor). //Jim Chandler//

Worked for Jim in Okinawa and flew with him many times. Great AMS, as Jim Chandler notes. He was my first flight commander and set me up for a fairly successful career. Great parties in his Quonset hut housing unit. //Peter Zahorodny, CMSgt, USAF, Ret.//

Jim was my flight commander at Mt Eckstein. //Glenn Miller//



Bruha, Harlan L., Col (ret), 92, passed away March 3, 2023. Harlan enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in lieu of being drafted for the Korean War and obtained the enlisted rank of Staff Sergeant. Commissioned as 2nd Lieutenant in 1954 after attending Officer Candidate School, Harlan went on to serve 25 years in the Air Force. He served in Japan, Guam, Korea, and Southeast Asia, and at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio, and many other stateside duty stations. Harlan received 12 decorations including the Legion of Merit and the Khmer Republics 2nd highest medal, the Khmer National Defense Medal Order of the Army. In 1958 Harlan was a member of the

advance party that established cryptologic training when it was brought to Goodfellow Air Force Base. When returning from Southeast Asia in 1974, as a Colonel, he was assigned to Goodfellow as the 6940 Technical Group Commander and Vice Commander of the wing. Harlan retired from the Air Force in 1977. He is survived by his wife Kathy Bruha, son Joe Bruha and his husband Ricky Dennis, son Mark and his wife Carla Bruha, two stepchildren Michael Alston and wife Kelly, and Brittany Alston and husband Kyle. //Obit - Harper Funeral Home//

I had the good fortune to serve under Colonel Bruha at Randolph AFB in the office from which he oversaw USAF intelligence technical training which included the multi-service Armed Forces Air Intelligence Training Center and the Department of Defense school for special photo interpretation. He was the best boss I ever had, no contest. He was instrumental in bringing about changes in intelligence training that responded to shortcomings that came to light in the Vietnam conflict. He was a man I will never forget. //John Page//

Goodfellow celebrates 60 years of intelligence training. Retired U.S. Air Force Col. Harlan Bruha, former Air Force School of Applied Cryptologic Sciences commander, receives an award from Lt. Col. Robert Kammerer, 316th Training Squadron commander, during the 60-year anniversary of intelligence training in the Piper Auditorium at Sebers Hall on Goodfellow Air Force Base, Oct. 19, 2018. Bruha received recognition for his contributions to the intelligence field and the 316th TRS. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Joshua Edwards/Released)





Chiavacci, Oliver G., 93, passed away February 23, 2023. He served 20 years in the USAF. His assignments included tours in France and Germany. He then became the Director of Data Processing at University Hospital for the next 23 years. He is survived by his loving wife of 72 years, Oleta Anderson Chiavacci; daughters, Cathy Byrd (Jeff), Cindy Shaw (Galen); sons, Richard Chiavacci (Christy), Anthony Chiavacci (Mary). //Obit-Mission Parks Funeral Home//



Clapper, Susan T., 78, passed away March 23, 2023. She worked for the National Security Agency and married James R. Clapper Jr., at the Ft. Meade Post Chapel on April 24, 1965. Jim and Sue served for over 32 years in the Air Force, retiring in September of 1995. They managed 23 moves during Jim’s career. Sue was a major contributor to the successes he enjoyed during his career. She was a dedicated volunteer wherever she was stationed, often spending her time working in schools or striving to improve family life for military families. Sue was the epitome of service to country, her community and Jim, which continued during his subsequent 16 years as a civilian in the government.

Sue is survived by her husband Jim, her two children, Jenni Coakley, Andy (Kim) Clapper. Funeral services and burial will be at Arlington National Cemetery at a date to be determined.

//Obit – Colonial Funeral Home//

Dear Jim and family, Heartbreaking news. We all benefited by knowing Sue. She was the epitome of an Air Force wife. The best to you and the family. You are in our thoughts and prayers....God Bless Ken and Barb

//Ken and Barb Minihan//



Drever, Donald B., 87, passed away May 10, 2023. He served in the U.S. Air Force between 1954 and 1958, where he worked in Security Services in the Philippines. Don is survived by his wife of 60 years, Marilynn S.; children, Carol (John) Sheffler, Suzanne (John) Haag and Ross (Sara) Drever. **//Obit – Friedrich-Jones Funeral Home//**



Fisk, Richard C., 94, passed away May 24, 2023. In July 1947, Richard enlisted into the US Navy serving until May of 1950. In January of 1951 Richard enlisted in the USAF until he retired in April 1968. Richard continued a “Military” career after retirement from active duty in the US Air Force by his employment as a US Government Federal civilian employee with the Department of the Army. When on active duty with the USAF he served three years overseas in the Far East during the Korean Conflict and in Europe for two tours totaling seven years during the “Cold War”. He also served seven years in the USAF Security Service during his tours in the Far East and Europe. Richard was proud of his combined 40 years of service with the Department of Defense either on active duty or as a civilian employee. Richard is survived by his wife, Shirley; two children, Jeff (Deb) Kessler, Cheri (Terry) Arens.

//Obit – Mankato Mortuary//



Gulbrandsen, Leif Fontaine, 77, passed away February 26, 2023. He joined the United States Air Force in 1966, serving in Wiesbaden, Germany. His studies took him to Wales for two years before Leif returned to Chestertown with his family in 1978. Leif is survived by his wife of 50 years, Marguerite, sons Quinten (Tracy) and Erik Gulbrandsen, daughter Kirsten Chandler (Chris). //Obit – Fellows Helfenbein, & Newman Funeral Home//

Leif and Meg hosted the Air Force Reunion a few years back. They were a wonderful host. Enjoyed talking to Leif. //Jerry & Edna Atkinson//

Leif and I served together at Det. 2, 6910 Security Wing from 1966 to 1969 where he introduced me to Phil Ochs, Esther, Abi Ofarim, Ian and Sylvia Tyson and others. We remained friends after the Air Force, meeting at our biennial reunions. He was one of the highlights of our 2009 reunion. My condolences to Meg and family. I shall miss Leif. //Bill Elliott//



Hearne, Sheila M., 59, passed away April 30, 2023. She enlisted in the USAF in 1981. She served as an Intelligence Analyst. Her first assignment was Clark Air Base on Luzon Island in the Philippines. She became the first fully flight-qualified female in the Electronic Security Command to fly missions aboard MC-130 aircraft in Southeast Asia. In the Philippines she met her future husband, who was also in the USAF stationed in Osan, Korea. In 1983, she was stationed at Nellis AFB in Las Vegas. They were married in 1984 and later that year, she transferred to the Air Force Reserve. In 1989, as the Berlin Wall was coming down, they moved to Stuttgart, Germany where Sheila worked for the Defense Information

Systems Agency at Patch Barracks. //Obit – A Life Tribute Funeral Care//



Holte, Charles W., Lt Col (ret), 77, passed away May 10, 2023. He served as a fuels supply specialist in the USAF from 1963 to 1967. He then received a commission in 1973. His assignments included Mather AFB, CA; Castle AFB, CA; as a B-52 Navigator and Electronic Warfare Officer (EWO). In 1979, Chuck transitioned to HQ Strategic Air Command, Offutt AFB, NE, as an EWO instructor. In 1982, he became a Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) Officer with the RC-135 at the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing at HQ SAC. From 1983 to 1986, Chuck served as a Special Operations EWO with SR-71, U-2R, and TR-1. In 1986, Chuck moved to

the Pentagon, with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as a Signals Intelligence Officer for the Joint Reconnaissance Center. In 1989, he moved to Beale AFB, CA, developing and testing new sensors and defensive systems for SR 71 and U-2. From 1990 to 1993, he was Chief of EWO for the US Pacific Command. Chuck’s final active-duty station was at Shaw AFB, SC as Chief, Weapons and Tactics division of 9th Air Force/US Central Command Air Forces (USCENTAF). There he wrote the Air Tasking Order for over two-hundred monthly Joint U.S., British and French reconnaissance missions in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the Persian Gulf. Chuck is survived by his wife Pat; daughter, Pam, and her husband Zack. //Obit – The Springs Funeral Services//



Idzik, Brian Joseph, MSgt (ret), 71, passed away April 26, 2023. He retired from the USAF in 1993 and from service with the State of Alaska in 2015. He is survived by his wife Helen of 30 years. //Molnar Funeral Home//

Listed on the USAFSS Facebook Page. // Joseph “Pepito” Figueroa//



Kaiser, Joseph R., TSgt (ret), 88, passed away March 26, 2023. He served in the USAF from 1954 to 1974. His assignments included in Ashiya, Japan and at Osan Air Base, Korea including two tours of war-time duty in Korea. During the Cuban Missile Crisis Joseph was attached to MacDill AFB, Florida serving as a Spanish Linguist from 1962 to 1974, as well as an Airborne Mission Supervisor aboard a C-130 flying reconnaissance missions. He completed his career at the

Headquarters of the USAF Security Services Command at Kelly AFB here in San Antonio, Texas. Joseph was also a highly trained Morse Code Intercept Operator. Joseph’s survivors include: beloved wife, Aurora Garza Kaiser; children, Laura Olivarri (William), Edwin Roy Kaiser (Gina), Rebecca Pierro (Christopher), James Kaiser (Debra), and Matthew Xavier Kaiser (Melissa). //Obit – Mission Park Funeral Home//

Per posts on social media, he performed duties in Tampa FL; Homestead AFB, FL; and Omaha, NE. He was known as “Roca” among the Airmen he flew with during the Cuban Missile Crisis and was an Airborne Mission Supervisor trainer. //Joseph “Pepito” Figueroa//



Larson, James R., MSgt (ret), 80, passed away May 9, 2023. James is survived by his wife of 18 years, Sarah; children Vicky Turner (Larry), Paula Justice (Mark) and Susan Donald (Sean). He is interred at Alabama National Cemetery. //Obit – **Limestone Chapel Funeral Home**//

Russian and Serbo-Croat linguist. Assignments include Wakkanai, Hof, Berlin, Fort Meade, San Antonio, and Brindisi per USAFSS Facebook Site. //Joseph “Pepito” Figueroa//



McConnell, Michael Arthur, Sgt, 76, passed away March 25, 2023. He enlisted in the USAF and served as a Mandarin Chinese language specialist. He joined the 6990th Security Squadron flying on high altitude reconnaissance missions on RC-135's out of Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, logging over 1000 hours in the air. During his time in the service, Mike and Patti were stationed many places both domestic and abroad. Mike was discharged as a Sergeant and received many honors including an Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster. He leaves behind his adored wife, Patti, his children Kevin McConnell and his wife, Monique, Ryan McConnell and his wife, Megan, and Colin McConnell and his wife, Emery. //Obit – **Robertson**

Mueller Harper Funeral//

Mike was a Mandarin Chinese classmate in Monterey, California. Then we completed training in San Angelo and several survival schools and flew together on the RC-135’s at Kadena, Okinawa. He was a kind, quiet man, a few years older than me, and always had the time to help struggling classmates with the difficulties of learning Chinese. In Monterey I remember meeting Patti as they had a small apartment off base, and we occasionally found time on weekends to spend time together as friends. It has been fifty years since we last met but Mike has always remained in my memory as a gentleman despite being dropped among a band of heathen "Zoomies." We worked hard to earn those silver wings, my friend. Air Force veterans never really die, they just fly higher //John Frasca//



Miller, James M., SMSgt (ret), 72, passed away March 30, 2023. Jim served in the United States Air Force from 1970 to 1990, and was stationed in Texas, Japan, Alaska, and Nebraska. He met several of his lifelong friends in the Air Force and was known to share stories of his adventures from those years. With his great sense of humor, Jim formed many friendships with his colleagues, and created more memories traveling for work, golfing or just grabbing beers. He is survived by his wife, Donna, of Ocala, his son, Mike (Geri) and daughter, Mandy. //Obit – Roberts Funeral//

Jim served as a 20771 Morse Systems Operator. His first assignment out of tech school was the 6993rd Security Squadron (SS), Medina Annex, Lackland AFB. He performed aircrew duties at the subsequent assignments of the 6990th SS, 6985th SS, and 6949th SS. Upon his arrival at the 6990th, Jim also quickly earned the nickname “squirrel.” Those who knew Jim can verify the appropriateness of the well-earned title that followed him throughout his Air Force career. //Bill Francis//

Flew with the Squirrel at Eielson and at Omaha. He officiated at my final retirement and presented the MSM, that was in 1986, June as I recall. Remember he entertained the whole crew at times. God Keep you, Jim. //David and Trudy Dodson//

My deepest sympathies to the Miller family. Worked and flew with Jim in Omaha. He was very good at his specialty and his quick wit kept everybody loose during some trying missions. Also enjoyed playing golf with Jim, although sometimes I was laughing so hard, I couldn't swing a club. He was one of a kind. Rest in Peace old friend. //Greg Mahoney//



Nolander, John D., Capt (ret), 81, passed away March 14, 2023. He enlisted in the USAF and attended intensive language programs in Russian, Thai, and Vietnamese. He was assigned to an aerial reconnaissance unit in Okinawa, Japan where he spent over three years flying combat missions in RC-135 and EC-130 aircraft accruing more than 150 combat missions. He then returned to the States and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant. After graduating from the College of Artesia, he returned to Okinawa to continue flying combat missions as an Airborne Mission Supervisor. Serving 22 years and retiring as a Captain, John flew more than 4,000 hours of combat and combat support missions earning 15 Air Medals and 13 stars on his Vietnam campaign ribbon. On July 16, 1965, he was united in marriage to Mary Crandall in Pacific Grove, California and shared a 57-year blessed union. As an associate with the Wounded Warriors in Action Foundation programs he facilitated

outdoors adventures for Purple Heart Medal recipients. He is survived by his loving wife Mary, daughter Janice (Christopher Burtch) Nolander, Oriskany; son Eric Nolander, Utica. //Obit – Dimbleby Funeral Homes//

John D. Nolander - former Russian linguist; Shemya 62 -63; Wakkanai 63 - 64; Kelly 3 months 64, Thai language school @ Monterey, Goodfellow; Vietnamese Fam Course in 67; Last "fam" to get to Yokota, stayed about 3-4 mos & on to Kadena 6990th 68 - 70 (100+ Combat Apple msns & some C-130 msns out of Cam Ranh Bay). Bootstrap to College of Artesia; then OTS 2nd Lt in '72; more Goodfellow then back to Kadena 72-75; logged another 100 + combat missions (I think I may be the only one with 100 Apple msns as enlisted trash and 100 as officer trash). To Vandenberg to become ICBM Launch Officer, spent 4 yrs in Wyoming various crew and staff posns. Became AFSSO RADC in '79. Stayed in area 17 yrs. In July 95 went to work at Andersen Labs-maker of Surface Acoustic Wave devices. //Larry Tart//

I was sorry to read of John's passing. I worked with him when he was a Captain at Rome Air Development Center and then again with him as a civilian contractor. My condolences to John's family and friends during this most difficult time. //Keith Butters//



Penton, Leonard W., Maj (ret), 84, passed away December 18, 2022. He enlisted in the Air Force at 17, and subsequently spent 21 years serving his country, seeing much of the world, and attaining the rank of Major. In his time in the military, he learned Russian as part of the Security Service; earned three college degrees, including an MBA; was selected for officer; and became a navigator, primarily on C-130 aircraft. He is survived by his wife Fern; his children Roland, Thekla, Lorena, and Denver. //Obit - Galbreath Pickard Funeral Chapel//

Russian linguist at Misawa, Wakkanai, Yokota, Rhein-Main, & Incirlik (56-63). Via AECP became C-130 navigator (including flying as nav on 130B's fm Yokota & Cam Ranh Bay. Moved on to ASD/WPAFB--retiring in 77. //Larry Tart//



Peters, Joe F., 84, passed away May 17, 2023. He enlisted in the Air Force on May 30, 1956. After Basic Training he was assigned to US Air Force Security Service. He attended and graduated from Russian language school at Syracuse University and served overseas in Japan from 1957-58. From 1958-59 he attended USMA Prep School. In 1959 he won a competitive appointment to the USAF Academy, which he attended from 1959-63. He became a pilot. He retired from active duty on September 30, 1980. He served two tours in Vietnam. He and his

wife, Trudy, were married on Aug. 22, 1992. They have five children. //Obit – Agent Mallory Martin Funeral Service//



Price, William D., TSgt (ret), 80, passed away April 26, 2023. Bill served with honor for 20 years in the US Air Force Security Service where he was a Morse System Supervisor. Bill received a commendation for providing immediate action regarding a distress signal from a Spanish vessel in which nine lives were saved. He is survived by the love of his life Candy, sons Billy, Michael, and wife Patti. //Obit – San Antonio Express News//



Rapier, Hughwill, A1C, 92, passed away March 25, 2023. He served in the United States Air Force Security Service as a Crypto-linguist and Analyst from 1948 until 1952. He married Betty Yvonne Higginbotham in 1956. He is survived by his wife, Betty Rapier, daughter Vicky and son-in-law Jerry Robbins. //Obit - Dignity Memorial//



Reed, James R., 92, passed away May 1, 2023. He was assigned to Turkey (twice), England, Scotland, San Antonio, San Angelo, and Fort Meade. Twenty-two years after retiring, he finally talked about his Security Service duties. He was a cryptologist and was 'in tune' with cold war foes and recorded interesting coming and goings. When he enlisted in the USAF everyone was excited because they had pizza in the mess hall. He hadn't heard of pizza, so others explained to him it was bread topped with tomato sauce and cheese. He didn't get the appeal until he took his first bite. He is survived by wife Linda; daughter Teddi (Theodora, Teddy) Reed and husband Sandy Wylie. //Obit – Funeral

Alternatives Group Lewiston//



Ritter, Walter A., CMSgt (ret), 77, passed away March 21, 2023. He joined the Air Force in 1964 and served at Clinton-Sherman AFB, Oklahoma, Misawa AB, Japan, Pleiku AB and Danang AB, Vietnam, Loring AFB, Maine, Lackland AFB, Kelly AFB, Osan AFB, Korea and retired at Randolph AFB, TX in 1993. His decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal with four OLCs, Commendation Medal with two OLCs, and the Achievement with one OLC. During a large part of his career, he was assigned to USAFSS where he had met many friends who he had stayed in contact with for nearly fifty years. Walt was a member of the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Freedom

Through Vigilance Association and founding father of the Westside Chili Cookoff Association and the Westside 8 Ball Association. His loving wife, Lily, and stepdaughter, Liedy Harkness survive him. **//Obit – Castle Ridge Mortuary//**

Rest in peace fellow "Silent Sentinel"...I will always miss our talks and memories. **//Ezekiel "EZ" Allen//**

Rest in Peace Brother - You were a mainstay in supporting USAFSS troops over the years. Your friendship is a gift I have appreciated through the years. Rest in Peace Brother, you will be sorely missed. **//H.W. (Waco) Wetterman//**



Ross, Larry T., SMSgt (Ret), 81, passed away May 17, 2023. Larry enlisted in the USAF in 1960. He completed basic training in San Antonio, Texas. He studied Russian at the University of Indiana and at Syracuse University in New York, and completed Vietnamese language training in El Paso, Texas. He served as a Russian and Vietnamese linguist with various assignments in Okinawa, Japan, Germany, and the US. He served in the Security Service and dedicated a significant portion of his life to serving his country, until his retirement in 1981 with the distinguished rank of Senior Master Sergeant. Through his dedication and unwavering commitment, he made a lasting impact during his years of

service. Larry was a member of the Heritage Chapter of the Freedom Through Vigilance Association, a small but robust organization, in which he served as Secretary and Treasurer for many years. His legacy within the Air Force will forever be remembered. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Diane Ross, and two daughters, Kimberly McKee (Steve) and Laura Ross. **//Obit – Harper Funeral Home//**



Siedling, David Joseph, SMSgt (ret), 61, passed away May 2, 2023. David retired from the Air Force in 2005 following 23 years of honorable service to the nation. David embraced the opportunities to travel and live life to the fullest all over the world as he served. Upon retirement, David remained in Maryland and continued in honorable service to the nation with the National Security Agency. While in Maryland, David met the love of his life, Pam, as well as her son, Nick. A new family was born. David and Pam married then enjoyed their next assignment together in Hawaii before settling in South Carolina. David is survived by his beloved wife Pam, his son Nick. //Obit –

Shell House Funeral Home//

Dave was an MA and I believe he retired as a SMSgt. We flew together on RJ while assigned at Mildy in the late 80s-early 90s. //CMSgt (ret) Mike Dollar//



Simmons, Ray C. "Sonny", SSgt, 76, passed away April 1, 2023. He enlisted in the USAF in 1967. He was assigned to the U.S. Air Force Security Service during the Vietnam War and earned numerous air medals and the Bronze Star. Sonny worked for the National Security Agency in between tours in Southeast Asia. After 10 years of service, Sonny was honorably discharged from the military as a Staff Sergeant. He is survived by his wife Dede; his children Amanda and Jon D'Ercole and Jessie and Brandon Confer. //Obit - Burgess & Tedesco Funeral Home//



Slater, Marshall "Tip", Col (ret), 76, passed away February 25, 2023. He married Ann (Golen) Slater in Lowell, Massachusetts, on December 28, 1968. Tip had a distinguished 27-year career in the U.S. Air Force, retiring as a Colonel. He amassed over 5,000 hours of flying time as a KC-135 and RC-135 aircraft navigator and was involved in RC-135, U-2, and SR-71 operations. He was commander of the 9th Communications Squadron at Beale AFB, California. Before military retirement, he served as the chief of the Combat Systems Divisions, directing all combat planning and execution systems to all echelons of warfighters. His military decorations were many and included the Distinguished Flying Cross, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Air

Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Air

Medal with 12 Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Air Force Commendation Medal. He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Ann Slater; their children Marshall "Tony" Slater III and Scottie Ann (Erik) Visser. //Obit – National Funeral Home and Memorial Park//

Col Slater was an RC-135 navigator at Kadena from 1975 to 1976. //Joseph "Pepito" Figueroa//



Smith, Welda Anne, Lt Col (ret), 94, passed away April 23, 2023. In 1952, Welda was commissioned a second lieutenant at Lackland AFB. Her assignments took her to Europe, the Pacific, and the continental United States. She taught women ROTC students at Gettysburg College. She was stationed in Hawaii twice, once before it became a state. She also worked in the Pentagon. She served honorably in Vietnam as executive officer, Directorate of Personnel, Headquarters MACV. She then went to USSAG at Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, Thailand. Welda was the Director of Information for Headquarters, USAF Security Service at Kelly AFB. She retired in 1976 from the USAF as a Lieutenant Colonel. Welda received the

Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Services Commendation Medal, and the Air Force Commendation Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters. Welda is survived by her wife, Karen Vaught. //Obit – Porter Loring Mortuary//



Stineburg, Jeffrey, A1C, 80, passed away May 12, 2023. In 1961, at the age of 19 and in an act of youthful defiance, Jeff traded the cornfields of Indiana for olive drab fatigues when he joined the U.S. Air Force. He became a "crypto" nerd and likely did some government stuff while assigned to the U.S. Air Force Security Service. His time in Okinawa left an indelible mark on his memory because it was about the only thing he could recall in his later years. He was honorably discharged in 1965 at the rank of Airman First Class. Jeff is survived by his wife, Marcella; children, Carolyn (Steve) Horn, Jeff (Allison) Stineburg, Cheri (Jeff) Elderkin, Teri (Bill) Stoots, Anthony

Stineburg, Shannon (Carrie) Stineburg, Laurie (Lewis) Boykin, John Stineburg, and David (Vanessa) Stineburg, //Obit - Divine Mercy Funeral Home//



Tingley, William, TSgt, 62, passed away April 22, 2023. He enlisted in the USAF. He was stationed at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas during basic training. He then moved west to attend and graduate from the prestigious Department of Defense Language Institute in Monterey, CA. He did further Cryptologic Training at Goodfellow AFB in Texas He was eventually stationed overseas at RAF Mildenhall - Suffolk, United Kingdom. He proudly served his country for 6 years reaching the rank of Technical Sergeant Airborne Voice Processing Specialist also known as a Cryptologic Linguist Specialist - specifically in Russian. He routinely participated in hazardous aerial missions on the RC-135U/V/W aircraft reconnaissance variants. These missions were often dangerous, flown far from home base and off the coast of target nations. These missions were often referred to as "Alone, Unarmed and Unafraid". He received many ribbons and medals for the outstanding performance he made while in his combat role over the years. He made many lifelong friends in The Air Force - amazing fellow Air Force men and women and still stayed in touch with many after all these years. **//Obit – MKD Funeral Home//**



Todd, Richard T., 80, passed away April 3, 2023. He enlisted in the USAF in 1960. His four-year tour of duty took him to the Philippines and Vietnam, finishing out his military service at Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma City, OK. Dick was a voracious reader and was fluent in Mandarin Chinese. Dick leaves behind Pamela, his partner of 35 years, and his daughter Audrey. **//Obit - Starks Funeral Parlor//**
Chinese linguist. (IFEL 1960-10), Philippines, Vietnam, Oklahoma City **//Bert Turner//**



Wachs, Joseph V., MSgt (ret), 78, passed away February 23, 2023. He is survived by his lovely wife, Nancy; son, Joe; daughter, Lisa (Brian). He is a United States Air Force Veteran. **//Obit – Tribute Archive//**
I was so sorry to hear about the passing of Joe. I just learned of his death from our mutual friends (Frazier's). I was with Joe in the Philippines, Italy, and Taiwan. Joe was a pleasure to be around, so much energy and great ideas. **//Bill Conduff//**



Wagner, John T., CMSgt (ret), 77, passed away March 17, 2023. Jack to his family, he had an amazing 23-year career in the Air Force as a Russian Cryptologic Linguist. While serving, he was assigned four times to Goodfellow AFB, Texas, as an instructor and assignments to his HQ at Kelly AFB, TX; Hof, Germany; Sembach, Germany; Augsburg, Germany; West Berlin, Germany before the wall came down; and at a school at the National Security Agency at Fort Meade, Maryland. He completed his career at the distinguished rank of Chief Master Sergeant, E9, the highest enlisted grade, at Goodfellow AFB, where he was the Superintendent of the East European Language Training Division. He is survived by his wife

of 55 years, Cheryl Wagner; his two daughters and their spouses, Cheri Gray and Gary Merriman and Cindy and Corbin Elliott. //Obit – **Legacy.com**//

My most enduring memory of John occurred back in the early 80s when he attended the USAFSS/ESC NCO Academy at Goodfellow. I was an Academy instructor at the time. As an Academy student, John excelled in all areas, especially in the area of helping others. One of the students was having particular difficulty with the Academy academics. John took it upon himself to use virtually all his own free time to teach, mentor and motivate the man. He was bound and determined to see him graduate. It all came down to the final exam on the final day of the 5 1/2-week program. His friend failed to achieve the required grade to graduate. To this day, I remember walking back to my office and when I passed the exit door, I saw John outside. He was sitting under a tree out there in the back yard; he was crying. John had "fought the good fight." He may have lost this fight but, in return, he earned the genuine respect of each and every one of his Academy classmates and one instructor in particular. When I read of his passing, I was reminded about that day back at the Academy, him sitting all alone, under the tree, with tears flowing down his face. Back then, he earned the respect of all those around him. Today he sits with the angels in heaven, his eternal reward for the "Good Fight" he lived here on earth. RIP John. //Ed **Bendinelli**//



Walker, Benny Earl, 86, passed away April 28, 2023. He served in the United States Air Force in the 6981st Security Service Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage, Alaska. Benny is survived by sons Joseph Earl Walker (wife Pamela), Benjamin Andrew Walker (wife Angela), and Rev. John Franklin Walker (wife Anne). //Obit – **Gentru Griffey Funeral Chapel**//



Woods, Ernest R. CMSgt (ret), 78, passed away March 30, 2023. He served for 24 years. Ernest is survived by his wife of 57 years, Maureen (Jo) Woods, his four children and their spouses; Brett Lee Woods & Lourdes (Lou) Woods, Denise Michele Feldman & Brian Feldman, LeeAnne Marie Bernal & Ron Bernal, Robert Michael Woods & Giannina Woods. //Obit – Coral Ridge Funeral Home//

He was so loved in our house. We kept in touch with Jo and Ernie and shared fond memories of our days in the Air Force. Jo, we send our love to you and the children. I will always remember how he could cook those ribs and spread the barbecue sauce on, and the real enjoyment was watching Ernie eat those ribs! God rest his soul. //Tony and Margaret Pazik//

Woody and I became aircrew members together, and then friends, and then buddies, and then life-long family cohorts. I will miss him, his smile, his wry humor, and his patriotism. I will never forget him or his famous words to me on the NKP flightline during a Laos ARDF mission preflight check..."Get the tug!" //Thomas Nurre//



For Jo and the family, please know you're in our thoughts and prayers. It's never easy losing a loved one who was so large in life--Ernie was important and memorable to nearly all of us who knew him--and he's already missed! Speaking as only one man from just one of his many military assignments, he was well liked and an integral part of every place he served. He served at the 6918th twice and has friends from both tours who remember him fondly and who mourn his passing. He was always interested and involved--and his passing is already painful to those who knew him well especially. Remember him fondly and toast his manner and his smile and laugh--do that each time you're together--and he will never be gone. Rest in peace old friend! //Dave Bethard//

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