

Remain In Touch

Freedom Through Vigilance Association Newsletter



June 2026

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 Vacant, Vice President
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William "Bill" Brockmiller, Past President

The President's Corner

Joseph 'Pepito' Figueroa
President, FTVA

Contact: joseph.figueroa361@gmail.com



Greetings FTVA members! My previous letters have focused on the processes and tools required to meet members' existing and emerging needs. However, to paraphrase the *Soylent Green* movie: "It's people!" That's what this newsletter is about...people.

Member Outreach: During the first five months, we've had some very successful outreach efforts. As General Broadwell, 16 AF Deputy Commander, stated "a key to leading is being there" Similarly a key to advocating for FTVA members is being there. Examples of outreach include FTVA donating funds and attending the 16 AF SMSgt pin-on celebration at Joint Base San Antonio, Texas. We were recognized by the Cyber Wing Top Three for our support.

In addition, we had a great presence at the ceremony honoring Vietnam and Desert Shield/Storm Veterans and their families hosted by the Heritage Chapter at Goodfellow Air Force Base. Had great discussions with 17th Training Wing Commander about supporting a monument that rivals the firefighters' monument at Goodfellow Air Force Base. Also, planting a seed...want to host one of our annual reunion events at Goodfellow. Imagine how special it would be to have Hall of Honor nominees being honored in a room full of the next generation of our Airmen at Goodbuddy.

Road Ahead: Visibility is important, but next step is to show how we're imparting to current/potential members why they should care about joining the FTVA. *This is going to be the key to determining if we're a nonprofit that survives into the future or if we become like the Doolittle Raiders; the organization is no more once the last goblet was turned upside down.*

Volunteers: I was going to subtitle this section, "was it something I said?". In all seriousness, the reality of any organization, especially a volunteer organization, is that change happens. Ted Colquhoun's farewell represents this change. He has moved on to the East Coast. Overall, we're in need of the following positions in the FTVA. Be on the lookout for details via email and social media.

- o Positions Currently Open
 - o Vice President (doesn't have to be person in San Antonio)
 - o Vigilant Partners
 - o Social Coordinator
- o Positions Opening in late summer/early fall
 - o Treasurer



16 AF SMSgt Pin-On Celebration March 19, 2026



Col Norton (17 TRW/CC), Ron and Kathy Haygood, AJ and Ginny Harrison, Joseph “Pepito” Figueroa, and CMSgt Neill (17TRWCommand Chief)



Love this picture. Smile represents how much fun we had at Goodfellow.



AJ Harrison, Col Norton (17TRW/CC), Joseph “Pepito” Figueroa



**Left: Chiefs in da house at Goodfellow AFB!
(Left to Right) Joseph "Pepito" Figueroa, Ron "JJ" Graham, Susan Douglas, AJ Harrison**



Left: Farewell to an Amazing Leader, CMSgt (ret) Ted Colquhoun (left) and, Ron "JJ" Graham. ABOVE (left to right) Joseph "Pepito" Figueroa, Ted Colquhoun, and Roy Burnett



FTVA Board Meeting



Left to Right: Bill Brockmiller (Past FTVA President); Joseph "Pepito" Figueroa" (Current FTVA President); Roy Burnett (FTVA Secretary); Ted Colquhoun (Past FTVA President); Andy Smith (FTVA Treasurer); Gregory Radabaugh (FTVA Hall of Honor); Ron JJ Graham (FTVA San Angelo Heritage Chapter)



Left to Right: Bill Brockmiller (Past FTVA President); Daniel Martin (FTVA Historian); Roy Burnett (FTVA Secretary); Ted Colquhoun (Past FTVA President); Andy Smith (FTVA Treasurer); Gregory Radabaugh (FTVA Hall of Honor); Ron JJ Graham (FTVA San Angelo Heritage Chapter)

Ted's last board meeting

Also, while I was visiting Goodfellow Air Force Base (GAFB) to honor Vietnam and Desert Shield/Desert Storm Veterans, I had the pleasure of reconnecting with one of my Veterans Affairs teammates. I was proud to be able to hire David Bowers (former Navy Linguist/Current Military Spouse) as a Program Analyst, Data Science. His wife, Deborah Bowers, is a Navy Linguist assigned to the 316th Training Squadron at GAFB. She is retiring and they are relocating to the Ft Meade area. She thanked me because her husband gets to keep his job despite moving across the country. I told Deborah employment challenges is a sacrifice I personally saw my wife make during our military service. Every time we PCS'd she was disheartened to have to start all over in the job search arena. I make it a point to hire qualified military spouses and Veterans if they meet all Program Analyst, Data Science qualifications. David and Deborah attended the ceremonies honoring Veterans and visited the EC-47 Memorial at GAFB.



Joseph “Pepito” Figueroa, David Bowers, Deborah Bowers



**Col Norton (17TRW/CC), Deborah Bowers,
David Bowers,
Joseph “Pepito” Figueroa, CMSgt Neill (17TRW
Command Chief)**



Newsletter Staff

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Ken Maynard, Associate Editor, 16th AF News

Dan Martin, Associate Editor

Roy Burnett, Circulation Manager and Member Support



The traditionally hot south Texas summer is knocking at the door as of this writing and we at RIT are wishing you and yours a pleasant summer season. Things are slow all over as schools are out and vacations go into high gear. Planning is in progress for this year's reunion; however, details are yet to be firmed up. Until more details emerge and communicated via this publication and other means, enjoy this read and as always, be sure to send in your articles, comments, critiques and other correspondence to newsletter@ftva.us or direct to me at dennis.buxton@me.com.

Remain In Touch,

Dennis Buxton
Your Newsletter Editor



FTVA Hall of Honor

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



Remembering Our Past Honorees

Colonel Margaret (Meg) Czapiewski, USAF (Ret), FTVA Hall of Honor 2015



As the 94 IS Director of Operations, Col Czapiewski brought an entirely new, advanced sensor, U-2 downlink mission on-line, and executed a deliberate marketing campaign with EUCOM customers, convincing skeptical flag officers to overturn standing policy to allow the 94 IS to perform direct reporting. She shattered the "U-2s are for strategic intel" paradigm, and as the Commander, Air Intelligence Agency stated, based upon her requirements package, "The U-2 will now mirror the RJ in its ability to provide direct support to simultaneous information tactical ops."

In addition, Col Czapiewski developed the complex distributed operations on three continents thousands of miles apart, manned by 30+ multi-national/multi-service operators working as one team. She led the intelligence revolution in bringing signals to analysts, which saved money, reduced operations tempo, and improved the quality of life. She gave USAFE the first U-2/Global Hawk/ Predator SIGINT processing node, resulting in huge EUCOM/AFRICOM gains.

She was the first female commander of a USAFSS-AIA airborne unit, the 488 IS. She took a demoralized squadron, due to a lack of aircraft for over 11 months, and made it shine with crews ready to deploy when Operation Iraqi Freedom began.

2026 Nominations Due Tuesday, 30 June

Since the standup of the United States Air Force Security Service in 1948 to today, over the past 77 years we estimate that at least over 700,000 people have served in 16th Air Force and its heritage organizations. Our members were considered to be in the top 1 percent of the Air Force. Our missions and challenges required the highest skill, intelligence, and perseverance of all who served in peacetime and war. In all that time only 226 individuals have been chosen to be part of the Hall of Honor. It is with great pleasure that we highlight Colonel Czapiewski as one of those recognized as the 'Best of the Best.' Nominations for the 2026 Hall of Honor may be made by following the link <https://ftva.us/the-hall-of-honor/> to the Hall of Honor page on the FTVA website. Please use the embedded form (single page, double sided, 12 pitch font, 1-inch margins)

to submit your nomination. Nomination packages not meeting these criteria will be returned to the individual submitting the nomination. Nominations for the 2026 Hall selection are due by Tuesday, 30 June 2026.

FTVA Member Support

Roy Burnett, Member Support Chair

Contact: membersupport@ftva.us

210-473-4921

New/Renewed Members

Lee Telfer (Spring, TX)

Lisa Bellamy (San Antonio, TX)

Karen Prendergast (San Antonio, TX)

Rick Renshaw (Ft Worth, TX)

Richard Spicer (Cameron Park, CA)

Jeff Rogers (Somerville, TX)

King Rogers

New Lifetime Members

Richard Baxter (Orlando, FL)

Steve Simpkins (Rineyville, KY)

Richard Osborne (Gainesville, GA)

Please address any and all 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

Contact: spitfiresa@me.com

FTVA SUPPORTS 16 AF PHOENIX GAMES

Submitted by Pepito Figueroa

FTVA President

On 27 April at Stapleton Park on Security Hill, your FTVA supported the recent Phoenix Warrior Games at 16 AF in very tangible and appreciated ways. The FTVA purchased the food for the cookout and Daniel Martin (FTVA Historian) and I wore our FTVA name tags to help with visibility/outreach. Roy Burnett (Membership Support) and I also brought trifolds and business cards.

However, the most effective outreach was just mingling with the Airmen. Ken Williams (Alamo Chapter President), Daniel Martin, and Roy Burnett did a great job of working the room. I even pointed out Ken Williams to the Command Chief to note he has a room named after him

Steve Staycoff was officially there as 16 AF...that's why he wore a tie....but (JA don't read this part), we know Steve advocates for us also. We had a very nice conversation with the 16 AF Command Chief...he wants to join FTVA...Roy and I will get him and the CC membership through their teams. The 16 AF Commander, 16 AF Chief of Staff, and 16 AF Command Chief personally thanked us for our support.

16 AF Protocol even ensured FTVA attendees were included in the group photo. One important message we imparted to the Command Chief was that the BALA plaques are sacred to us...along

16th Air Force Phoenix Game Group Picture



Joseph "Pepito" Figueroa

16th AF Command Team

Steve Staycoff,
Ken Williams, Daniel Martin,
Roy Burnett

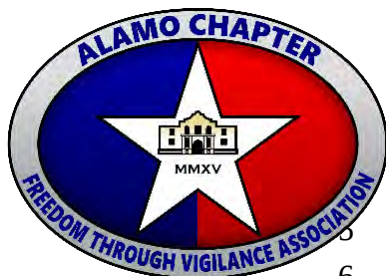
with all heritage materials. We stressed to the Command Chief to let us know if he needs help caring for them. More photos of the festivities follow.

The axe throwing contest booth to the right and participants mingling below.



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 Submissions and Photos by Ken Williams

Chapter Meeting, 19 March 2026

The San Antonio Chapter of the FTVA held their monthly meeting at the Alamo Café Restaurant on 19 March 2026. Nineteen members and spouses enjoyed lunch and fellowship. Members present included:

Ken Williams	17	Leroy and Hilda Rogers
Ted Colquhoun	18	Bill and Shirley Francis
Ken and AJ Maynard	19	Dan Martin
Bob and Donna Crabtree	20	Bill Sheck
Doug and Anne Williams	21	Al Daugherty
Vince and Elise Colacicco	22	Dennis Rassmussen

- This was Ted Colquhoun's last meeting as he and Shari will be moving to North Carolina next month.
- It is sad to report that our long-time member, John Lopes, passed away a few days ago. Funeral arrangements are pending. I'll put out an email once arrangements are known.
- The next meeting will be at the Spring Fling next month (date TBD at tomorrow's monthly FTVA Board of Director's meeting.) If not held for some unknown reason, we will meet at the Alamo Café for our usual noon monthly meeting on 16 April.
- There being no other business, we adjourned at 1400 after a lot of visitation and sharing of war stories.



Left to right, front to back: Shirley Francis, Hilda Rogers. Leroy Rogers, Bill Francis, Elise Colacicco, Vince Colacicco, Dan Martin. Photo courtesy of Ken Williams.

19



Bill Sheck (left) and Al Daugherty. Photo courtesy of Ken Williams.



Left to right, front to back: Dennis Rassmussen, Anne Williams, Bob Crabtree, Doug Williams, AJ Maynard, Donna Crabtree, Ted Colquhoun, Ken Maynard, Ed Barnes. Photo courtesy of Ken Williams.

Chapter Meeting, 16 April 2026

The San Antonio Chapter of the FTVA held their monthly meeting at the Alamo Café Restaurant on 16 April 2026. Nineteen members and spouses enjoyed lunch and fellowship.

Ken and Shiela Williams	11	Dan Martin
Bob and Donna Crabtree	12	Al Daugherty
Doug and Anne Williams	13	Ed Barnes
Vince and Elise Colacicco	14	Pete Siegel
AJ and Ginny Harrison	15	Chris Cook
Leroy Rogers	16	Gilbert Cadena
Bill Francis	17	Mike Berning

- Due to the ongoing Iran War, it is uncertain whether 16AF will be able to participate in the Spring Social picnic as part of their “warrior day” activities. The Spring Social is on hold for now. Also, Security Forces have implemented a 100% identification check for all visitors. Those without a government ID card must obtain a visitor pass to access any base activities.
- The next meeting will be on 21 May.
- There being no other business, we adjourned at 1400 after visiting and sharing war stories.



Left to Right, front to back: Donna Crabtree, Bob Crabtree, Ginny Harrison, AJ Harrison, Chris Cook, Bill Francis, Gil Cadena, Mike Berning, Al Daugherty, and Ed Barnes. Photo courtesy of Ken Williams.



Shiela Williams (front right) and then left to right, front to back: Pete Siegel, Elise Colacicco, Doug Williams, Vince Colacicco, Anne Williams, Dan Martin, and Leroy Rogers. Photo courtesy of Ken Williams.

Chapter Meeting, 18 June 2026

The San Antonio Chapter of the FTVVA held their monthly meeting at the Alamo Café Restaurant on 18 June 2026. Twelve members and spouses enjoyed lunch and fellowship.

Ken and Shiela Williams
Doug and Anne Williams
Leroy & Hilda Rogers
Jesse & Clara Coultrap

Dan Martin
Al Daugherty
Pete Siegel
Bill Sheck

Due to the ongoing Iran War, it is uncertain whether 16AF will be able to participate in the Spring Social picnic as part of their “warrior day” activities. The Spring Social is on hold for now. Also, Security Forces have implemented a 100% identification check for all visitors. Those without a government ID card must obtain a visitor pass to access any base activities.

Many members are off on vacation or doctor appointments, so our normally robust attendance was lighter than usual. We still had a great time visiting and took a few moments of silence to our recent losses - John Lopes and Tatsuko Rassmussen - and sent out prayers to their families.

The next meeting will be on 16 July 2026 and there being no other business, we adjourned at 1300 after visiting and sharing war stories.



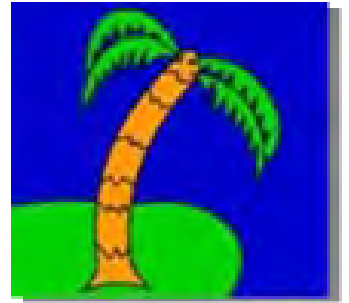
ABOVE LEFT: (right to left, front to back) Shiela Williams, Doug Williams, Anne Williams, Bill Sheck, Pete Siegel, Dan Martin, and Al Daugherty. ABOVE RIGHT: Leroy and Hilda Rogers in foreground with Jesse and Clara Coultrap.

Aloha Chapter

Honolulu, HI

John "Tilly" Toillion, President

Chapter Contact: alohatilly@hawaii.rr.com



Aloha All

The Aloha Chapter held its latest social get-together at our local Zippy's. Unfortunately it was just Ken Een and myself as member Fred Romeo was unable to attend. Topics of the day include our usual health updates (LOL) and what's going on in the world today. As always – the Hawaiian Welcome Mat (with slippas) is here to receive any of you headed this way.

"Aloha ā hui hou" – (until we meet again).



On a personal note, I underwent open heart surgery on 9 June and everything went really well and I will be released to go back home on June 16 and start the 6-7 months recovery. Mahalo to everyone who contacted me and said prayers and well wishes. - Tilly



Gold Country Chapter
Yuba City, CA
John Aurelius, President
Chapter Contact: jaurelius@mikodi.com

NTR: Check Back in September



Heritage Chapter

San Angelo, TX

Ronald 'JJ' Graham, President

Chapter Contact: waynebascom@gmail.com

Welcome Home Veterans

Story by Wayne Bascom and Tom Nurre

The Heritage Chapter and the EC-47 History Site once again had the honor of welcoming a special gathering that honored the service and sacrifice of our Vietnam War and Persian Gulf War veterans. Since 2015, we have hosted more than 75 events recognizing Vietnam War veterans, their surviving spouses, and their families. That official program ended on Veterans Day of 2025. While the brass in Washington are working on the next program of veteran recognition, we here at the Heritage Chapter are not waiting.

On March 27th, Vietnam veterans were invited to “pass the torch” by welcoming home service members who served in the Persian Gulf War. Veterans and surviving spouses received special



Heritage Chapter Designed Persian Gulf War Pins

lapel pins and certificates in recognition of their service and sacrifice. The centerpiece of this event is the row upon row of engraved pavers in the Weyandt-Eddy Memorial Plaza. Each paver stands as a permanent tribute—etched in bronze—to the

service, sacrifice, and legacy of those who answered our nation's call. We plan for this plaza to serve as a lasting place of remembrance for generations to come.

The following is an after-action report by Tom Nurre. All photos are courtesy of Carl Bradley, Faith in a Flash Photography.

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 six states and 15 Texas cities with free snacks and refreshments. The hosts displayed posters throughout the reception area featuring Vietnam War articles from the 1970s timeline. These included the signing of the Paris peace accords, the withdrawal of troops from Vietnam, and the end of the war evacuations from Saigon



Tom Nurre Addresses Attendees as JJ Graham looks on.

fifty years ago. Chapter minion Larry Miller set up the Don Goff Memorial Missing Man table. Air Force veteran Dave Vargo presented several tables loaded with Vietnam War and Persian Gulf War artifacts and memorabilia. He included a bottle of Seagram’s VO (with short timer ribbon) that he won in the 2024

raffle. Community and Heritage Chapter members donated EC-47 and Black Hawk models, engraved and wood-burned art plaques, books and t-shirts. All items were available for the silent auction and raffle that generated \$1,000 in fundraising for the annual ceremonies fund. The Freedom Through Vigilance Association president, CMSgt (R) Joe “Pepito” Figueroa, was welcomed to the events and made a meaningful presentation about the strength of the Heritage Chapter in the San Angelo and Goodfellow AFB communities.

Friday morning, led by senior member JJ Graham, the Goodfellow Air Force Base Heritage Committee hosted the fifth annual Vietnam War Commemoration Ceremony at the Goodfellow AFB Powell Event Center due to gusty winds and threatening severe weather at the Weyandt-Eddy Memorial Plaza. The estimated 120 attendees included 2 Gold Star family members, Vietnam and Persian Gulf War veterans, the Goodfellow AFB 17th Training Wing Commander and staff, President of Angelo State University, 344 Military Intelligence Battalion Historian, former EC-47 aircrew members, and local government officials.

Following opening comments by 17TRW/CC Colonel Norton and ASU President Lt Gen (R) Ronnie Hawkins, the 344th MIB Historian, Major Hallgren, presented a tribute to U.S. Army Aviators killed in action during Operation Desert Storm. The tribute highlighted the career of Goodfellow AFB graduate Sgt Lee Belas and the crew of Army Black Hawk UH-60A helicopter tail number 78-23015. After that, former EC-47 ARDF operator and Commemoration Partner Program (CPP) Committee Coordinator, Tom Nurre, completed the dedication of plaza pavers with the words, “By the end of today’s ceremony, 960 names will be inscribed in the Weyandt-Eddy Memorial plaza. Each one reflects a life of service. Each one reinforces



JJ Graham Presents Memorial Gift to Guest Speaker US Army Major Hallgren



FTVA President Joe “Pepito” Figueroa Addresses Banquet Attendees

not only to those named here, but to all who served—and to those who will serve. We carry forward an unbroken line of duty, sacrifice, and national purpose. And we do so with confidence in that enduring American spirit—resilient, grateful, and united.”

The pinning segment began with a warm "Welcome Home" and the introduction of attending Vietnam and Persian Gulf War veterans. For the first time, the ceremony recognized Persian Gulf War veterans and their families as part of the Welcome Home tribute. The Heritage Chapter

a simple truth—we do not stand alone in our history...and we do not remember alone. What began locally in 2014 as a simple exhibit—Vietnam: Through the lens—has grown into something enduring. It brought veterans together, educated a new generation, and reminded us all of the Americanism that unites us—service, respect, and shared remembrance. So today, we dedicate these pavers

created special lapel pins for veterans, surviving spouses, and family members. Attendees greatly appreciated this meaningful expansion of the annual Vietnam War Veterans Day celebration.

On Friday evening, over fifty guests enjoyed the meal and participation in the raffles, silent auction, and storytelling during dinner catered by Chef Terry and the Arc Light Saloon and Grill staff. Larry Miller won the vintage bottle of Seagram's VO and donated it to the attendees whereby it was promptly opened and consumed. Col Bob Andress presented the Short-Timer Ribbon to Larry Miller to close that part of the event.

(Additional Photos from Faith in a Flash Photography can be found here (All Rights Reserved): [Vietnam Photo Galleries](#).)

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF)

Story by Wayne Bascom

The Heritage Chapter has worked closely with this organization for many years. The VVMF is the nonprofit organization that built the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (The Wall) in Washington, D.C. in 1982. In 2007 and 2017 the Heritage Chapter was instrumental in getting The Wall to San Angelo. As we were beginning to work on another visit by The Wall Larry Miller found out in January that the VVMF had announced a brand-new recognition program. The "Service Beyond Service Award" will recognize the accomplishments of living Vietnam veterans who served in the U.S. military honorably and then continued to serve their communities through volunteerism, advocacy, professional distinction, public service and philanthropy.



Tom Nurre Receives VVMF Award from Major General (Dr.), U.S. Air Force (Ret.) Sharon Bannister (Photo courtesy of VVMF).

The Heritage Chapter went into overdrive to submit a package to the VVMF to recognize our very own Tom Nurre. As a result Tom was chosen along with 48 others nationwide as the first recipients of this award. Each

individual received an award certificate and a tribute page on VVMF's Registry of Vietnam and Vietnam Era Veterans. Read Tom's tribute at [TRIBUTE](#).

When Tom was notified of his selection, we were busy with our "Welcome Home" preparation and execution. Tom wanted to be there in person to be recognized. The recognition in Washington was scheduled for Sunday the 29th. Our Welcome Home banquet was over the previous late Friday night. Despite the extremely tight schedule Tom arrived on time to be recognized.

Upon his return Tom said "I was honored indeed to be selected and able to participate. Quite an honor for an old Vietnam veteran. It was great to attend and represent all the wonderful people that were integral to the success of our efforts."

The next step for the Heritage Chapter was to prepare an application to get The Wall in San Angelo in 2027 (fitting since it would be here in 10-year intervals). However we found there were new requirements and prerequisites. The first was the need to have a "Host Tour" from the VVMF while they are visiting another site. We quickly checked the schedule and found that The Wall was going to be in Del Rio, and then Ranger, Texas. JJ Graham visited Del Rio but was unable to get a Host Tour. Tom Nurre and Gary Taylor then drove up to Ranger, Texas and secured such a tour. The next requirement was to have an online video call with VVMF to go over all requirements. Once completed all that was left is for the Heritage Chapter to complete the application. This means we needed to establish committees, develop marketing, and coordinate for an appropriate location. The Chapter met at Tom's Tavern to go over all these requirements and we hope to have the application package completed prior to the Fall deadline.

Memorial Day Activities

Story by Larry Miller and JJ Graham

Once again Larry Miller was instrumental in putting together a proclamation to be read into the San Angelo City Council Minutes. This proclamation was the first step this Memorial Day for the Heritage Chapter to recognize those who have fallen while in service to the country.



Wreath next to the bronze Battlefield Cross Veteran's Memorial that will soon be permanently placed on the lawn of the Tom Green County Courthouse.

Heritage Chapter members then participated in several other Memorial Day activities over the holiday weekend. Actually, on the weekend before Memorial Day, the Chapter placed its "In Memory Of" signs in front of both San Angelo City Hall and the Tom Green County Courthouse to be displayed throughout the upcoming three-day weekend. Among the veterans honored on these signs are Dale Brandenburg; Medal Of Honor recipient John Levitow; Major General Doyle Larson; and many deceased members of the Heritage Chapter.

On Saturday, May 23rd, the Chapter assisted our friends at American Legion Post 572 in placing memorial flags on hundreds of veterans' graves at the Belvedere Cemetery in San Angelo. Chapter President JJ Graham also took a group of student volunteers from Goodfellow AFB to place flags on the graves of veterans at Johnson's Lawnhaven Gardens. They were part of over 50 volunteers who placed flags on over 1500 veterans' graves. This group included A1C Patrick Doyle, who is the great nephew of Sgt Dale Brandenburg, who was killed in action 5 February 1973, when the EC-47 aircraft call-sign BARON 52, on which he was serving as an Airborne Electronic Warfare Systems Specialist, was

downed by enemy fire over southern Laos. A1C Doyle joined the Air Force as an intelligence specialist in hopes of following the footsteps of his great uncle, Sgt Dale Brandenburg. The 17th Training Group headquarters building has been dedicated in 2014 as Brandenburg Hall in honor of Sgt Brandenburg.

Chapter members also participated in the Annual All-Veterans Council (AVC) sponsored Memorial Day event. This event is normally held on the grounds of the Tom Green County Courthouse; however, due to concerns over inclement weather, the ceremony was moved to the VFW Post 1815 Hall. The ceremony consisted of more than a dozen members of the AVC placing wreaths which will soon be moved to the Veterans Memorial situated on the courthouse lawn for display through the Saturday after Memorial Day. See photos from the Chapter on following pages.



Memorial Day: Heritage Chapter Honors the Fallen with "In Memory Of" Yard Signs at City Hall, San Angelo, Texas.





ABOVE: (L-R) Amn Christopher Freisy, A1C Patrick Doyle, A1C Samuel Pavil, AB Samantha Heredia, and unidentified child.

Right: Wreath Placed by Heritage Chapter



Memorial Day Proclamation - (L-R) Mayor Tom Thompson, JJ Graham, American Legion Post 572 Vice-Commander Kyle Mantel, American Legion Post 572 Adjutant Kristie Young, Mary Frentz, Larry Miller, Carl Frentz, Councilman Harry Thomas, City Manager Daniel Valenzuela. Photo Courtesy San Angelo City Council.

Heritage Chapter Tidbits

(By Wayne Bascom)

The Clydesdales Visit San Angelo

San Angelo welcomed the iconic Budweiser Clydesdales who trotted onto Goodfellow AFB for a visit. Several Chapter members visited the eight-horse hitch and classic red beer wagon along with hundreds of military members and their families.



Horses: Wayne Bascom points to the most important part of the wagon, the cases of beer! (Photo by Heritage Chapter)

Spring Social

The Heritage Chapter held its annual Spring Social in May. Seven members and five guests enjoyed getting together once again at Alejandro's. Unfortunately, Wayne forgot to take a photo of the get together. Wayne blames it squarely on the fact that JJ was out of town and left the meeting duties to Chapter Vice-President Scott Dickson. However, others present think his large margarita had something to do with it.



Mid-Atlantic Region Chapter

Fort George G. Meade, MD

Jerry Gething, President

Chapter Contact: sharong@thefrizzellhome.us

FTVA MARC News

Submitted by Jerry Gething

The Mid-Atlantic Region Chapter (MARC) tweaked its meeting schedule a bit. Instead of holding monthly Executive Council meetings via ZOOM, we've shifted to monthly get-togethers at local establishments and are holding quarterly Executive Council meetings. The shift in meeting schedule was met with great success with our first get-together held at "The Hideaway" in Odenton, Maryland, on April 23rd. The Hideaway used to be "Jim's Hideaway" (where many an unofficial 'after last day watch or swing shift roll call' would be held – but those stories remain highly classified). That includes the time we were asked to leave following a semi-rowdy Team 2 (NSOC) Christmas party.

In any event, on April 23rd, we had a great turnout of folks we hadn't seen or heard from in years. We had some new FTVA hats and lapel pins for sale, signed up some new members, but most importantly, it was great to reconnect!

Our next get-together is scheduled for **June 19th, at Noon, also at The Hideaway.** Looking forward to gathering even more former USAFSS/ESC/AIA/AFIC alumni together for that one!



Check out the pictures below but please do note that these photos do not include one Bill "Pee Wee" Reece – he was late. No surprise to anyone who knows him!

Left to Right: Bob Bastian (outgoing MARC Treasurer), Raquel Knight, Bob Welenc, Frank Sopato (USAFSS Pioneer), and Lee Wofford (incoming MARC Treasurer)



Left to Right: Dennis Mitzel, Stephanie Gething, Trish Gething, Shawn Toole, Andy Kirkham, Shawn Toole, Sharon Frizzell, Stu Labovitz, Dick Smith, and Tim Fennema



Left to Right: Shawn Toole, Andy Kirkham, and yes, Shawn Toole (not a typo)



ABOVE: Left to Right:
Sharon Frizzell (MARC
Administration), Chad (our
server), and Stu Labovitz

RIGHT: Left to Right:
Mike Johnson and, Larry
Richmond





Rocky Mountain Chapter

Colorado Springs, CO

Greg Roman and Stan Cook Co-Presidents

Chapter Contact: g.eichelberger08@yahoo.com

Raising Funds for Veterans' Causes

Chapter to Sponsor July Golf Tournament

Submitted by George "Ike" Eichelberger

As many folks know, our Chapter regularly meets at Rhinos Sports Bar in Colorado Springs (one of the benefits of having two FTVA alumni as owners!). But we have also benefited from the gracious support Rhinos provides to the Military and Veterans community. Every year they sponsor a golf tournament to raise funds for Wounded Warrior Project, Home Front Cares, along with other Veteran related programs such as the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the FTVA. This year's tournament is scheduled for July 31 at Fort Carson Mountain Shadows Golf Course; so if anyone is looking for an excuse to come to colorful Colorado in July, I'm sure they could find room for you in a foursome or at least ride along in the beer cart!

In membership news, the Rocky Mountain Chapter welcomes John Hladky as a new FTVA Life Member.



Wasatch Chapter

Salt Lake City, UT

Jacob Scheid, President

Chapter Contact: lawson.scott1@gmail.com

Wasatch Members Reconnect

Submitted by Scott Lawson

FTVA-Wasatch met on 4 June at Legends Sports Grill for our first in-person gathering in some time. It was a good opportunity to reconnect, share a few stories, talk through upcoming activities, and start rebuilding momentum for more regular chapter gatherings.



Wasatch chapter members and families gathered at Legends Sports Grill on 4 June for an evening of fellowship, shared stories, and chapter planning. Pictured left to right around the table: Shawn Heckman, Scott Lawson, Shawn Heckman, Nick Batura, Elisha Batura, Audrey Lawson, Jake Scheid, and Roland Smith.

One of the highlights of the evening was meeting Roland Smith, an 81-year-old fellow alumnus whose Air Force service included time with the United States Air Force Security Service and the 6988th Security Squadron at Yokota Air Base, Japan. Roland served as a Chinese linguist and

flew airborne intelligence missions during the Vietnam era, with deployments and rotations connected to operations in the Pacific and Southeast Asia.

Roland shared a few memories from that period, including the tension surrounding the mission environment at the time. His service with the 6988th came during a significant period in Cold War and Vietnam-era history, including the escalation of the war in Southeast Asia and the Pueblo incident in 1968. The aircraft, locations, and mission details are part of a larger story we hope to capture more fully in a future spotlight, but even hearing a small part of Roland's experience was a treat and a reminder of why FTVA exists.

We also discussed several ways FTVA Wasatch can support current and future activities. This includes support for the 169th Intelligence Squadron Family Day on 1 August, as well as working with the 169 IS planning committee as they prepare to celebrate the squadron's 40th anniversary next summer.

Overall, it was a great evening and a positive step toward getting the chapter together more regularly. Thanks to everyone who came out, shared stories, and helped keep the conversation going.



EC-47 History Site News

Submitted by Tom Nurre

2026 Vietnam Veterans Day - Goodfellow AFB

Another great ceremony in the books. Thanks to all who attended and otherwise supported this annual event. The inclusion of the Persian Gulf War veterans tribute with the dwindling Vietnam Veterans proved interesting and heartwarming.

The weather kicked up a bit with swirling winds so we moved inside the Goodfellow AFB Event Center for the Friday Welcome Home ceremony.

The Weyandt-Eddy Memorial Plaza was open to visitors and now boasts more than 950 inscribed pavers.

Here is the URL for pictures from all three events: the reception, Goodfellow AFB ceremony, and the Friday evening dinner. [2026 Vietnam Veterans Day](#).

Other links to pictures and video coverage: [Goodfellow AFB Hosts a Vietnam Veterans Ceremony](#) and [Vietnam Veterans Ceremony B Roll Goodfellow Air Force Base March 2026](#)

Hope to see everyone again next year.

Vietnam War Veterans Day

Welcome Home Ceremony

at the Weyandt-Eddy Memorial Plaza

351 Kearney Blvd
Goodfellow AFB, Texas

FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2026
11:00 AM

**WELCOME HOME VIETNAM WAR &
PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS AND FAMILIES**



Originated in 1997

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THURSDAY, MARCH 26TH

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 VETERANS & FAMILY INVITED

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FRIDAY, MARCH 27TH

Reception @ 5pm - Dinner @ 6pm

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REUNIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tell a Story

This new FTVA website enables one and all to "Tell A Story." Members can enter a story at <https://ftva.us/TellAStory> and see other posted stories at <https://ftva.us/stories>. This is meant to be a way to share stories of the adventures all of us had during our careers. Again, both are on the secure side of the site and require members to log in.

Misawa Project to Hold 22nd Annual Reunion

Submitted by Waco Wetterman
Misawa Site Administrator

The Misawa Project's 22nd Annual Reunion is scheduled to take place from August 13th through August 16th 2026 in Nashville Tennessee and it is NOT just for those who were stationed at Misawa.

Attendance is open to ALL former members of USAFSS, ESC and ALL subsequent units to include those currently on active duty, regardless of where they were/are stationed.

Please visit the Misawa Project's "Public Site" at usafssmisawahill.com and click on "Reunions" for registration and attendance details as they become available. Alternately you may contact the Misawa Site Administrator at waynew511@aol.com with any questions you may have about the reunion.

FTVA VIGILANT PARTNERS

POC: Currently Vacant

To apply for this position please email: joseph.figueroa361@gmail.com

On 17 January 1991, service members across the military were called to apply years of rigorous training to a singular purpose. Pilots stepped to their jets, airborne linguists donned their headsets, and analysts prepared to receive, translate, and report. Whether in the cockpit or at a workstation, the mission was the priority.

This past week, history repeated itself against a new generation of adversaries. Today, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) operators process and exploit unmanned aerial systems in complex deconfliction with naval air and sea operations. While the technology has evolved—with the 16th Air Force cyber warfare wing now “making the magic happen” from their keyboards—the core mission remains unchanged.

War evolves, but the dedication of those who wage it does not.

The Freedom Through Vigilance Association (FTVA) represents those who answered the call with unrivaled expertise. We are the legacy that builds the future, but we cannot sustain this mission alone.

Our 2026 Goal

In 2025, the **Vigilant Partner Program** raised approximately \$8,000 to support our Reunion and Ceremonial Week. It was a success, but I am confident we can achieve even more in 2026.

Our members have always given generously to this association. Today, I am asking you to renew that commitment by becoming a **Vigilant Partner**. Your contribution paves the way for us to celebrate today’s Airmen and honor the legendary predecessors whose shoulders they stand upon.

Continue our legacy and become a Vigilant Partner.

Member Benefits

Your partnership includes more than just a donation; it grants you a front-row seat to our community’s future:

- **Exclusive Access:** Special invitations to Association and Command-sponsored events.
- **Recognition:** By-name listing at all FTVA events and within our official newsletter.

Honorary Status: Continued honorary membership in the FTVA, including all Association publications.

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

**Engrave-Tech and Graphics
(Jen and Lee Anthony)**



GOLD PARTNERS

**Security Services Federal Credit Union
Anthony F. Jensen
Greg Radabaugh**



SILVER PARTNERS

**City of San Antonio
(Military and Veteran Directorate)
Bexar County
(Military and Veteran Service Center)
Centurian Military Alliance**



BRONZE PARTNERS

**Andy Smith
Bill Brockmiller
Ted and Shari Colquhoun
Joseph Figueroa**



PATRON PARTNERS

**Randolph/Brooks Federal Credit Union
John "Tilly" Toillion**



Annual Partner Levels

Platinum: \$2,500+
Gold: \$1,000 – \$2,499
Silver: \$500 – \$999
Bronze: \$250 – \$499
Patron: \$100 – \$249



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

Bak, Roger Alfred, USAFSS

Brown, Donald Leroy, USAFSS

Ceruti, Franklin Delano, Lt Col (ret), USAFSS

Condra, Juanita “Bitsy”, USAFSS

Dods, John, USAFSS

Doherty, Charles Edward, Electronic Security Command

Dohrer, Donald B., USAFSS

Gossett, Jack, USAFSS

Henry, James Edward, USAF

Honore, Ronald Anthony, USAFSS

Hutton, Lucia Cruz, USAFSS

Kinard, Robert David, Sgt, USAFSS

Knister, Steven Lewis, USAF

Kovac, Edward F., USAFSS

Laschanzky, Darrell Dean, USAFSS

Lopes John T., CMSgt (ret), USAFSS *FTVA Member**

Maus, Edwin Richard, A1C, USAFSS

Meyers, Ronald, USAFSS

Morrow, Robert Bronaugh Jr., USAFSS

Nagle, James, USAFSS

Nelson, Dale L., USAFSS

Pederson, Richard H., SSgt, USAFSS

Pleak, Robert George, Sgt, USAFSS *FTVA Member**

Rasmussen, Tatsuko Tomono, *spouse of CMSgt (ret) Dennis Rasmussen FTVA Hall of Honor**

Rowlett, James Paul “P-Row”, Brig Gen (Ret), USAF

Russell, James Huerlan, TSgt (ret), USAFSS

Seals, Wanda Hortense, Major (ret), USAFSS *FTVA Member**

Stidinger, Stephen, USAFSS

Wells, Julian Buchanan, USAFSS

Woodward, Blayne W., USAFSS



Bak, Roger Alfred, 80, passed away March 25, 2026. He graduated from Swanton High School in 1963. Roger served in the United States Air Force for four years during the Vietnam War. During his time in the service, he spent two years in Chicksands, England, where he had the opportunity to travel in Europe, Paris, France, and Germany with friends. He volunteered and moved to a base in Peshawar, Pakistan for two years where he worked as a Morse Code Intercept Operator until 1968. Roger is survived by his loving wife, Jeanette Bak; son, Lance Duron. //Obit – Weige Funeral Homes//



Brown, Donald Leroy, 84, passed away March 18, 2026. He graduated from Greenfield High School in 1959. After high school, he proudly served in the United States Air Force as a Morse Intercept Operator aboard a C-130 aircraft. Following his military service, he attended Purdue University. He earned a bachelor's degree in computer science and later went on to receive a master's degree from Ball State University. Don spent the majority of his professional career as a Database Administrator with the Department of Defense. Don is survived by his beloved wife of 55 years, Roxy; his children, Tony (Kristi), Libby (Seth), and Ben (Stephanie). //Obit – Leppert Mortuaries//



Ceruti, Franklin Delano, Lt Col (ret), 90, passed away October 13, 2025. He was a Vietnam veteran and 20-year career Air Force officer. In 1961, he was selected to attend the Air Force Officer Training School and upon graduation, was commissioned as a second lieutenant. He spent more than a year in technical training at Keesler AFB in Biloxi, Mississippi to become a communications maintenance officer. His first duty assignment was to Strategic Air Command (SAC) headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska, where he led a team of computer programmers in developing communications interface software for the 465L Command & Control System. It was at SAC that he met Lieutenant Rolf Smith, who was assigned to the same software

development group. In 1967, the Air Force selected Frank and Rolf, now both captains, for an Air Force Institute of Technology program to pursue master's degrees in computer science at Texas A&M University. As a joint thesis project, Frank and Rolf co-authored one of the first mainframe chess programs, SCHACH (Smith-Ceruti Heuristic-Algorithmic Chess), which means "chess" in German. The two quickly became best friends. SCHACH played in the first-ever computer-vs.-computer match with the Greenblatt program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1969. Ceruti earned a Master of Computer Science degree on the topic of computer chess (artificial intelligence) under advisors Dr. A.W. Wortham and Dr. Udo Pooch. He also completed post-master's degree work in industrial engineering at Texas A&M. A Vietnam veteran, Frank served at Tan San Nhut Air Base from 1969 to 1970. He was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, a wartime decoration, for his service. In 1971, he served as the first military member of the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET) protocol committee. ARPANET was the precursor to the Internet. He consulted with Steve Crocker, an American internet pioneer, to design and develop a software interface between an ARPANET Interface Message Processor and an Air Force Univac 418 computer, making it possible for programs running on the computer to send large bulk data files over the network. Crocker tells the story of Frank picking him up from the airport and starting a conversation about artificial intelligence (AI was still obscure in 1971) and SCHACH. "I was glad I was not driving. I would have run off the road," Crocker said of the encounter. Frank was assigned to installations across the country, including an assignment with the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington, D.C., and two later assignments in Europe. After serving for more than 20 years, he retired from the U.S. Air Force with the rank of lieutenant colonel. He returned to Texas and in 1985 entered the Department of Defense civil service as an artificial intelligence software developer. There, he once again joined Rolf, now a colonel and director of long-range planning in the Electronic Security Command in San Antonio. He is survived by his loving wife of more than 40 years, Monica Allison-Ceruti, and their sons, Mychal and John-Anthony; daughters from previous relationships: Francine D. Ellison and Gwendolyn Ceruti; daughters from his first marriage: Monique Ceruti, Tracey Bennett and Kimberly Hall; sons-in-law, Shedrick L. Bennett, Jr. and Anthony Hall. //Obit – Lewis Funeral Home//



Condra, Juanita "Bitsy", 87, passed away March 15, 2026. Bitsy graduated from Burbank High School in 1958. She married Earl Wayne Condra Sr. on August 2, 1958 and they were married for 62 years before he passed away on July 8, 2020. Bitsy was a devoted Civil Service employee, serving for 35 years. She retired in 1994 from the Air Force Security Service as Director of Contracting. When she retired, Bitsy was awarded the Air Force Outstanding Civilian Career Service Award. That service award applied to her personal life as well. Bitsy certainly was most fulfilled when she was serving others with joy! She is survived by her children, daughter Luci Condra and husband Charles Saenz of San Antonio, and son Wayne Condra and wife Jackie of Hallettsville. //Obit - **Sunset Funeral Home**//



Dod, John Bovee, 85, passed away March 5, 2026. He served in the United States Air Force from February of 1958 to June of 1961 as a Morse Code Intercept Operator and was mostly stationed in Japan. After his military service John married Bonnie Pearson in November of 1962 in Moab, Utah. Bonnie had three children who became John's stepchildren, Deborah Nielson, Shane Udell and Eddie Udell. Together John and Bonnie had a daughter, Johnnie (Gidget) Bovee Dods. John loved and helped raise all four children as his own. John and Bonnie later divorced. John is survived by his stepchildren, Deborah Nielson, Trina (Rob) McCleary, Debbie (Dave) Barnett, Troy Rowley, Rich (Duane) Peterson, and stepdaughter-in-law Sung Eun Rowley. //Obit - **Mountain View Memorial Estates**//



Doherty, Charles Edward, 61, passed away April 14, 2026. Chuck proudly served in the United States Air Force, retiring in 2003 as a Cryptologic Korean Linguist. Following his military service, he worked for the NSA, later as a software engineer for a genetics lab, and ultimately found joy as a professional private chef and pastry baker. Chuck met Dawn Showalter in 1981 at a Carl's Jr. restaurant. Though life circumstances—and their own stubbornness—kept them apart for many years, they reunited in 2004 and were married on January 15, 2005. Chuck is survived by his loving wife, Dawn Doherty; his sister, Donna Allison; his three stepchildren, Aurora Culver, Holly Long, and Charles Long. //Obit – **Chapel of the Roses**//

I first met Chuck in 1987 at Bad Aibling, Germany. We were on the Charlie flight after swings bowling team. He was almost shy, but smart, sweet, personable, interesting and always wore his big smile. He was taking computer programming classes and offered to write me a bowling program to save me time and we became fast friends. We had most of the same friends, we all had

similar interests, we went skiing, sledding, sightseeing, partying, and the conversation and laughter was continuous. I felt as though I knew him my whole life. He became one of the very few people I could trust and became the brother I never had. He became good friends with my then husband Kenny and was an uncle to our daughter Chelsea. We were later stationed at Ft. Meade together and often stopped by for dinner, conversation, play time with Chelsea and a movie. People like Chuck are rare gems and I was so happy for him when he found his true love Dawn. I miss knowing he is no longer here on earth. But I am comforted to know he is a faithful angel with almighty God. I love you eternally. //Linda Romanowiz//

I was stationed at Bad Aibling, Germany with Chuck. He was one of the nicest guys. We went snow skiing in the Bavarian Alps many times. It was an honor to serve with Chuck. Rest in Peace Silent Warrior! God Bless and fly high with the Angels. // Phil Garrett//



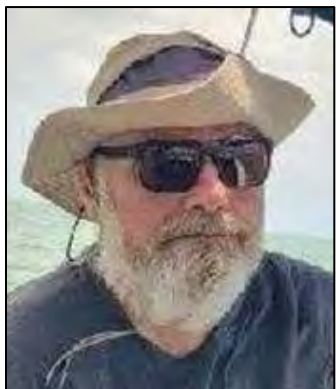
Dohrer, Donald B., 90, passed away March 20, 2026. He enlisted in the United States Air Force in 1955 and proudly served with the Air Force Security Service's 6921st Radio Group at Misawa and Wakkanai, Japan. Then he was transferred to the Missile Countermeasures Section at Holloman AFB, White Sands Missile Range, Alamogordo, New Mexico. He received a letter of commendation and was honorably discharged in 1959. Don was united in marriage with Sharon Olson on February 27, 1960 at Our Saviors Lutheran Church in Canby, Minnesota. This union of over 66 years was blessed with two daughters, Stefani and Kirstin. Don is survived by his wife Sharon Dohrer

of Waconia; daughters Stefani Braun and partner Chuck Notermann of Waconia, Kirstin Dohrer of Champaign, Illinois. //Obit – Johnson Funeral Home//



Gossett, Jack, 89, passed away January 29, 2026. I graduated from Dennison High School in 1954. My wife, the cellist Rebecca Evans, whom I was very lucky to meet and marry, survives me. As a young man, I attended a military training program studying the Russian language. For 5 years, during the height of the Cold War, I served with the US Air Force Security Service (USAFSS) as a Russian linguist, spending 2 of those years flying missions along the Soviet Union. I was part of America's secret "Air War in the Cold War", collecting intelligence on the then Soviet Union. After the military, I worked as a Russian linguist with the government in Washington

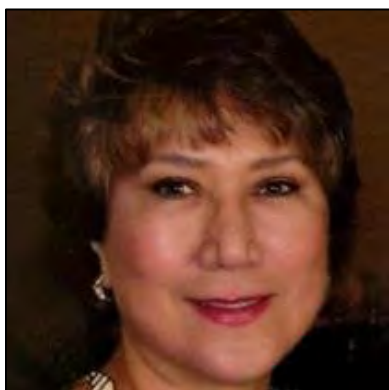
D.C. and worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a biologist. With the Corps I worked in Florida, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and ended my career in Seattle. //Obit – Funerals Coop//



Henry, James Edward, 71, passed away February 21, 2026. at home in Grove City, Ohio. He served in the U.S. Air Force as an Airborne Cryptologic Linguist and flew nearly 100 missions as a crewman on reconnaissance and electronic warfare aircraft. After successfully completing the Mandarin Chinese course at the Defense Language Institute, he served tours in Okinawa, South Korea and Arizona, and flew missions in support of Operation Desert Shield/Storm. His decorations included the Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters and the Air Force Commendation Medal. James (or Jimmy as he was affectionately known) was a pillar in the lives of the Bolin children (Kelsey (Brent) Cole, Bill (Meghan) Bolin, Kory (Jacob) Miller, Kacey (Luis) Barahona, Cole (Tessa) Bolin and he loved their children deeply Jayden and Bryson Cole, Weston, William, and Hank Bolin, Austin, Quinn, and Chloe Miller, and Salomon Barahona. //Obit - Newcomer Funeral Home//



Honore, Ronald Anthony, 82, passed away April 26, 2026. He entered the United States Air Force where he became a Morse Intercept Operator Specialist. He received an honorable discharge from the Air Force and returned home to Lake Charles and worked as an Operator at Firestone Petrochemical for a number of years before accepting employment at Occidental Petroleum from where he retired. In 1968 he fell in love and married the love of his life Jennie Ann Fontenette of St. Martinsville, Louisiana. To this union two children were born, Ronald A. Honore II and Stephanie Honore and their lifelong partnership of love and faith lasted for the next 57 years. Those left to share in his memories are his wife of 57 years, Jennie F. Honore, son Ronald A. Honore II, daughter, Stephanie Honore (Danny) Hull. //Obit – Combre Funeral Home//



Hutton, Lucia (Luci), 83, passed away January 4, 2026. After years of working with the USAF Security Service, she enrolled at the University of Texas San Antonio in her early forties. She strongly believed in the importance of education and was proud to graduate with a B.B.A. in Accounting. Her distinguished career as a CPA included the Internal Revenue Service, the FDIC, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the US Attorney's Office. She concluded her career as a compliance auditor with the US Department of Transportation, where she proudly retired after 31 years of federal service. She and her dear friend Don would sing at the American Legion, VFW, and various other places around town. She even purchased a karaoke machine and hosted karaoke

nights at her home. She is survived by her devoted friend, Don Girard; sister, Amelia (Emily) Moore; daughter, Meredith Combs (Ruben Leal); son, Greg Combs (Amanda). **//Obit - Mission Park Funeral Chapels Medical Center//**

Lucy and I worked and met at Security Hill almost 59 years ago. She was a very special friend to me for many years. I cherish the memories I have of having her in my circle of love. She always made it a point to show her caring, loving nature to all she came in contact with. Prayers to Lucy's family. She has a special place in my prayers and in my heart. //Margaret Martinez//



Kinard, Robert David, Sgt, 81, passed away April 2, 2026. Robert honorably served in the USAF from 1965 to 1969, attaining the rank of Sergeant (E-4). He worked as a radio operator and Morse intercept operator, including service connected to the Israeli Six-Day War. He continued his lifelong dedication to service as a member of the South Carolina State Guard from 2002 until the present and was very proud to have had the opportunity to serve at the 9/11 site with the SC State Guard. **//Obit – Living Waters Funeral Home//**



Knister, Steven Lewis, 68, passed away March 2, 2026. He was born in Muncie, Indiana, on March 20, 1957. A proud veteran of the United States Air Force, Steven dedicated 25 years to the defense of his nation. As an Airborne Cryptologic Linguist, he played a pivotal role in national security, providing critical intelligence during numerous global conflicts. Following his distinguished military retirement, he continued his mission as a civilian with the National Security Agency, where his expertise remained an invaluable asset to the country's safety. Following his marriage to Carole Smith in 1985, he became the proud father of four sons: Aaron (Kristina), Simon (Jacquelin), Ethan (Kelly), and Jason Knister.

//Obit - Pritts Funeral Home & Chapel P.A.//



Kovac, Edward F., passed away February 8, 2026. Ed proudly served in the USAF from 1961 to 1965. He was granted Top Secret cryptographic clearance and was stationed in Italy, where he served as a morse code intercept operator. He carried great pride in his military service throughout his life. Following his honorable discharge, Ed dedicated nearly 40 years of service to Kansas City Power & Light, working in the underground department. He is survived by his devoted wife of 57 years, Diana Branson Kovac, daughter Deborah Kovac Phan (Quoc) of Edgerton, MO., son Edward A. Kovac (Amelia) of Overland Park. //Obit – **Kansas City Funeral Directors**//



Laschanky, Darrell Dean, 95, passed away May 6, 2026. Darrell proudly served his country in the United States Air Force from 1952 to 1956 during the Korean War, earning top security clearance as a cryptographer. While stationed at Lowry Air Force Base, he played baseball and basketball on the base teams. During his service, he also sang with the USAF Security Service “Local Airs” men's vocal group, performing around the world. Darrell was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Joanne “Jody” Laschanky. Together, they built a life rooted in love, faith, and family. He is lovingly remembered by his four children: Becky Laschanky; Brian Laschanky and his spouse, Debra; Heidi Kunzek and her spouse, Artur; and Mark Laschanky and his spouse, Kendra. //Obit – **Horan and McConaty**//

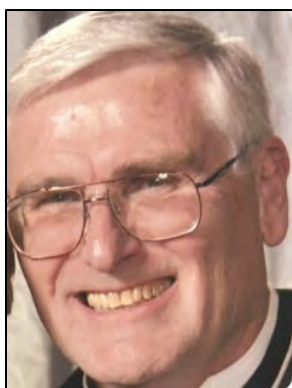


Lopes, John T., CMSgt (ret), 86, passed away on March 18, 2026. He was born on March 7, 1940. He proudly and honorably served in the United States Air Force for 29 and a half years, demonstrating unwavering dedication, strength, and commitment to his country throughout his distinguished career. He is survived by his loving wife, Linda Lopes; his daughter, Michelle Rocha and her husband, Ernesto Rocha; his granddaughter, Ashley Montanio; and his great-grandsons, Dylan Ender and Camden Winn. //Obit – **Castle Ridge Mortuary**//

John was the epitome of any person who had the respect and guidance for everyone. I have known John from the time I was in the Air Force until we both retired and he came to my retirement party. At that time, I knew I had to get into my new company. He had a fantastic career with command technologies Incorporated not only was he my 6 o'clock he also became one of the owners' favorite employees. John will surely be missed, but I know he's with his savior. Thanks, John, for all you have done in this life and I am sure you will continue it in your next life. //Lynn Kravitz//



Maus, Edwin Richard, A1C, 84, passed away April 18, 2026. He served with distinction in the USAF Security Service and went on to enjoy a highly successful career in banking. He served as CEO of Laurel Capital Group. Bud is reunited with his beloved wife of more than 60 years, Lorraine Maus. He is survived by his three children, Donna Doblick; Sheri Maus-Lichtman (Eric Lichtman); and Brian Maus (Christie Maus). //Obit – Schellhaas & Sons Funeral Home//



Meyers, Ronald "Ron", 77, passed away April 9, 2026. After graduating high school in 1968, Ron proudly enlisted in the United States Air Force, and completed training at Goodfellow Air Force Base, as an Intelligence Specialist. He maintained a TOP SECRET security clearance and was recognized as an expert marksman. He was stationed for 5 years in Brindisi, Italy (San Vito dei Normanni Air Station), where he served with the 6917th Electronic Security Command which monitored Soviet and Eastern bloc communications. He was honorably discharged in 1973. Ron is survived by his loving wife, Shirley; his children, Steve and Katie (nee Yock), Andy and Karen (nee Miranda), Sue, and Kelly. //Obit - Friedrich Jones Funeral

Home & Cremation Services//



Morrow, Robert Bronaugh Jr., 92, passed away March 5, 2026. He graduated with distinction from the United States Naval Academy in 1957. He served 13 years in the U S Air Force and retired from the U S Department of Energy with 33 years of federal service. His first duty assignment in 1957 in his Air Force career was at Craig AFB near Selma, AL as Assistant Base Engineer responsible for initiating the project to obtain Capehart family housing for the base. In 1959 he was reassigned to a remote site, TUSLOG in Turkey. From Turkey he was assigned to HQ USAF Security Service in San Antonio, TX as Utilities Engineer in 1960. He obtained an MS in Nuclear Engineering from the Air Force

Institute of Technology (AFIT) in 1963 and was elected to Tau Beta Pi. He started his research career in the Air Force Aero Propulsion Laboratory (AFAPL) at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. While there he became very interested in space nuclear power projects and was selected in 1966 for an assignment with the US Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) located in Germantown, MD. Bob resigned from the Air Force, effective in 1970, to become the AEC Manager of the Multi

Hundred-Watt Radioisotope Thermoelectric Generator (MHW-RTG) Program. These space nuclear isotope electrical sources were flown on the DOD's LES 8 & 9 and NASA's Voyager I & II spacecrafts in 1976 and 1977. Many other later NASA missions used the same technology such as Cassini, Galileo, and New Horizons. The Voyager I & II units are still generating electrical power in deep space and are expected to produce space power into the 2030s. He is survived by his devoted wife of over 68 years, Kay Kirkland Morrow and four children: Kenneth Robert Morrow (Betsy) Frederick, MD, Dr. Gregory Keith Morrow (Nicole) Gainesville, FL, Virginia Kay Morrow (Marilyn Bowman) Richmond, VA, Amy Morrow Funk (Dave Wike) Gamber, MD.
//Obit - Stauffer Funeral Home//



Nagle, James (Jim), 78, passed away March 25, 2026. Jim proudly served in the Air Force for four years, spending time in Turkey and on the island of Crete. Jim is survived by Eric and Mark (Anna). **//Obit - Schumacher-Kish Funeral and Cremation Services//**

From members of Charlie Flight USAFSS 6931st Security Group, Iraklion, Crete Jim was on Charlie Flight during his tour on Crete with the Air Force. Everyone liked him and we all got along well. Jim always attended our small reunions in St Louis. He was always proud of his Wisconsin cheese curds. Which he always brought along and shared with everyone.

He'll be sorely missed. (He was a "Proud "Silent Warrior"). **//Greg Matfey//**



Nelson, Dale L., 89, passed away on March 1, 2026. He enlisted in the U.S. Air Force where he served in the Air Force Security Service. Dale married his high school sweetheart, Peggy Nelson, on September 22, 1956. They settled in Ankeny, Iowa after returning overseas in 1958. He is survived by his children, Cindy Nelson, Randy Nelson (Barb Corey), and Cheri (Gary) Walljasper.
//Obit - Memorial Services of Iowa at Ankeny Memorial//



Pederson , Richard "Rich" H., SSgt, 81, passed away March 6, 2026. Rich enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and left for basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas. Then special training in Biloxi, Mississippi where Joan joined him. Next came San Angelo, Texas where they welcomed the birth of their daughter. Then San Vito dei Normanni Air Force Base in Italy. Rich was a Noncom Morse Code Intercept Operator. After 18 months in Italy the family returned to Texas. East Kelly Air Base in San Antonio where their son was born. In 1970, Rich had an honorable discharge with the rank of E-5, returned to Fort Dodge and employed at Fort Dodge Labs.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years: Joan Pederson of Fort Dodge; daughter: Tiffany (Rick) Carlson of Fort Dodge; son: Rich II (Tina) Pederson of Des Moines, IA.

//Obit - Bruce Funeral Home of Fort Dodge//



Pleak, Robert George, Sgt, 78, passed away April 8, 2026. He graduated from Cameron County High School in 1966 and joined the United States Air Force in 1969. Bob served in the USAF Security Service Command until 1973, leaving with the rank of Sergeant. He received the Air Medal w/2 OLCs; Small Expert Marksmanship Ribbon; Vietnam Service Medal; Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal; Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. The Air Force discovered he had an ear for languages, and he spoke and wrote 4 dialects of Chinese, with a smattering of other Asian languages. He is survived by his wife Joanne. **//Obit - Struve &**

Laporte Funeral Home//



Rasmussen, Tatsuko "Tats" Tomono, 86, passed away May 5, 2026. Known affectionately as "Tats", Tatsuko was born in Fukuoka, Japan to Gunpachi and Kata Tomono on November 4th, 1939. She went to school in Fukuoka, Japan, and worked in her family's fish market for ten years before marriage. **She married Chief Master Sergeant Dennis Rasmussen on November 10th, 1970, in Fukuoka, Japan.** She was active in her own hobbies such as knitting, making punch pictures, sewing, and puzzle solving. Her favorite pastime was playing Bingo with her beloved friends on a weekly basis. Grandma Tats will be remembered and missed as generous, loving, and caring, and the selfless heart of her family's many gatherings around the world. Tatsuko

is preceded in death by her parents and adored sister Sumiko. She is survived by her husband of 55 years, Dennis, her son Ken, daughter-in-law Jennifer, and grandsons Lane, Brayden, and Chase. Tatsuko is a member of Soka Gakkai International Buddhist community. **//Obit - Sunset Northwest Funeral Home//**

Dear Rass - Heartbroken to hear of your loss ... and we send our prayers for healing and peace. May she now rest in the arms of God forever. Yours faithfully. //Marco Aldaz//

Tatsuko was such a gracious, gentle, caring woman, with immense pride and love for her family and friends. While my wife, now grown children, and I were stationed with Chief Rass (a “force of nature”) and Tats on Misawa Air Base too many years ago, we remember her generous, caring ways. We were blessed to know her. Olga and I offer our condolences to Rass, Ken and Jenn, Lane, Brayden and Chase (who we know she adored). May “Tats” memory be a blessing today and always. //Jim and Olga (Sullivan)//

Rass, deepest condolences on behalf of your FTVA family. I have fond memories of visiting your lovely home back when you were showing me how to do the obituaries section of the FTVA Remain in Touch Newsletter. Tatsuko was always so sweet and welcoming. Very Respectfully. //Joseph “Pepito” Figueroa//



Rowlett , James Paul “P-Row”, Brig Gen (ret), 55, passed away November 29, 2025. A 1993 graduate of the United States Air Force Academy, Paul began his career as an Intelligence Officer after completing Intelligence Technical Training at Goodfellow Air Force Base. He served at Moody AFB, Hurlburt Field, and later with the Arkansas Air National Guard. From 2001 to 2023, Brig. Gen. Rowlett held key leadership roles in the Arkansas ANG, including Director of Operations and Commander of the 123rd Intelligence Squadron; Director of Intelligence (J2) for the Arkansas National Guard; and ultimately Chief of Staff of the Arkansas ANG. In these positions, he guided strategic planning, supported global

ISR missions, strengthened cyber and space operations, and oversaw major personnel and readiness initiatives. Paul deployed on several occasions to serve his country. He retired honorably in January 2023, concluding a distinguished career marked by exceptional leadership, courage, and devotion to the mission. His civilian service reflected the same principles. Paul worked as an Intelligence Specialist with the U.S. Department of Justice, during which time he provided invaluable work on multiple high-profile cases such as the Jessica Chambers and Ally Kostial murder cases. He shaped future generations by serving as an Admissions Liaison Officer for the U.S. Air Force Academy. Paul’s work at SOFPREP (Special Operations Forces Planning, Rehearsal, Execution and Preparation) further defined him as a visionary whose contributions transformed how Special Operations Forces (SOF) prepared for missions. Paul brought both precision and personality to the mission, even naming each HPC after his beloved Arkansas teams: Razorback, Pig, Boar, Hog, and SOW. He is survived by his wife, Marisa Danielle Cubriel Rowlett; his children, Rachel Lauren Rowlett, Daniel Jackson Rowlett, and bonus son Jackson Wayne Darr, all of Dallas, Texas. //Obit – Barker Funeral Home//



Russell, James Huerlan, TSgt (ret), 88, passed away May 22, 2026. He retired from the United States Air Force in 1977 after nearly 22 years of service as a Technical Sergeant serving with the 6985th Security Squadron of the United States Air Force Security Service. He was a Morse Systems Supervisor charged with intercepting encrypted Soviet communications aboard EC-135 and EC-47 aircraft. Following his military service, he worked with Alltel as a telephone line installer and repairman where he retired after 15 years. He is survived by his daughters Anna Marie Russell Woods (Darrell Woods) of Comer, GA and Patricia Russell Akins (Joseph Akins) of Danielsville, GA. //Obit - Lord & Stephens Funeral Home//



Seals, Wanda Hortense (Truitt), Major (ret), 81, passed away May 8, 2026. Wanda began her military career as a communications officer at the rank of second lieutenant in July 1967 after completing Officer Candidate School (OCS) at Lackland AFB, Texas, and career training at Keesler AFB, Mississippi. Her first duty assignment was Wheeler AFB, Hawaii where she served as the officer-in-charge (OIC) of Maintenance Analysis for the Pacific Communications (PACOM) Area and later as the chief of maintenance for the 1891st Communications Squadron. In 1972, Major Seals was assigned to Randolph AFB near San Antonio where she coordinated the base level communications requirements for units of the

USAF's Recruiting Command and Air Training Command. After Randolph, Major Seals was assigned as the commander of the 2129th Communications Squadron at Ching Chang Kang Air Base at Taipei, Taiwan. Her responsibilities there included not only the squadron commander position, but also other communications operating locations throughout Taiwan. After Taiwan, Major Seals (then Captain) was assigned to the San Antonio area at the USAF's Communications Security Center at Kelly AFB. As the chief of the Communications Security Programs Branch, she coordinated the budget and requirements of communications equipment supplied by the Department of Defense, National Security Agency and the Electronic Security Command. Major Seals was next assigned to Ramstein AB, Germany with the Electronic Security Command. In this position, she coordinated the requirements, monitoring and surveillance of communications systems throughout Europe, on behalf of the USAF. Major Seals' last duty assignment sent her to Scott AFB, Illinois where she was assigned as the chief of the Maintenance Management Branch for Headquarters, Air Force Communications Command (AFCC). In this capacity, Major Seals developed and oversaw the overall policies for the maintenance of the Air Force's communications equipment and systems. Throughout her career, Major Seals was awarded medals for meritorious service, commendation, outstanding unit, national defense, overseas service and longevity. Additional special military education included the completion of the Air Command and Staff College, National Security Management, and a master's degree. After retirement, Wanda provided contract work for the US Department of State

for US embassies in Belgrade, Serbia, Yugoslavia and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. In 1995, Wanda served as a United Nations voting observer in Bishkek. Returning to the states, Wanda settled in her beloved city of San Antonio, Texas. Left to share her memories are her sisters Dorothy Bailey and Cindi Price and brothers Randy, Roger and Dudley Truitt. //Obit – **Holmes County Herald**//



Stidinger, Stephen, 81, passed away April 23, 2026. Stephen served in the United States Air Force Security Service from 1965-1968. He was stationed in Brindisi, Italy, a country he fell in love with, and returned to often. After his military duty, Stephen attended Millersville University in Pennsylvania. Stephen is survived by his brother Dennis Stidinger (Jamie) of Lebanon, PA; his grandson Austin Allwein of Kailua HI. //Obit – **Shikany Funeral Home**//



Wells, Julian Buchanan Jr., 88, passed away April 23, 2026. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 50 years, Zoë Forrest Leufkens Wells. Julian was a graduate of Columbia Military Academy in Columbia, TN. In 1959 he entered the United States Air Force and was selected to attend Yale University to become a Chinese linguist with the Air Force Security Service. He went on to receive his BA in Political Science from San Francisco State and became an Intelligence officer and then earned his MS in International Affairs from University of Southern Illinois. He served numerous tours in Vietnam, also served in Japan, Okinawa, Thailand, England, Germany, and many US States. During his time in Vietnam he earned the Bronze Star, while earning other medals of Commendation and honors throughout his Air Force career. Julian retired as a Major in 1979 declining a promotion to Lt. Colonel. He and Zoe then moved their family to Brentwood, TN. Julian is survived by his children, Catherine Zoë (Johnny) Ariemma of Dahlonga, GA, Julian B. Wells, III of Gulfport, Mississippi, Elizabeth Marie Wells of Los Angeles, CA, Richard Forrest (Kathy) Wells, Sr. of Brentwood, TN. //Obit – **Austin Funeral Service**//



Woodward, Blayne W., 93, passed away May 2, 2026. Blayne served in the U.S. Air Force from 1952 to 1956. He spoke very little about his service until his work for the U.S. Air Force Security Services (USAFSS) was significantly declassified in 1997. After that, he enjoyed attending reunions with those he served alongside and sharing many stories with others. He had a long career in financial services, ultimately retiring in 1998 from Dakota State Bank in Colman, South Dakota. He is survived by his loving wife of nearly 65 years, Glenda; his daughter, ReJean, and her husband, Brad; his son, Brad, and his wife, Gina; his grandchildren, Erika, Rachel, and Caden.

//Obit – Moody County Enterprise//

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