

Remain In Touch

Freedom Through Vigilance Association Newsletter



September 2026

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The President's Corner

Joseph 'Pepito' Figueroa

President, FTVA

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Greetings FTVA members! Hard to believe it, but the reunion events are already here. I won't step on any fellow board members' updates, or spoil my own presentation at the General Membership Meeting, but here's the quick rundown of what's coming up:

- Sep 24: Golf Tournament – Golf Club of Texas
- Sep 25: Hall of Honor Induction Ceremony – Bernard A. Larger Auditorium, JBSA-Lackland (Security Hill). *Be sure to follow the security instructions Roy Burnett sent; like leaving your phone in the car.*
- Sep 25: Remembrance Ceremony – EC-47 Aircraft, HQ 16 AF
- Sep 25: Picnic – Stapleton Park
- Sep 26: General Membership Meeting – Courtyard Marriott Seaworld
- Sep 26: Banquet – Lackland AFB Club

Why We Shifted to Late September

You might remember that last year's government shutdown required adjusting events. Sixteenth Air Force members couldn't attend, we couldn't use their facilities, the picnic was cancelled, the Remembrance Ceremony didn't happen, and we had to merge the Hall of Honor induction with the Banquet. To avoid that happening again, we moved the reunion to before the end of the fiscal year. This strategy is bearing fruit. Sixteenth Air Force is fully engaged: providing General Officer speakers, protocol and audio-visual support, and hosting several events. Our board has also been welcomed into their facilities multiple times to meet with staff across the organization, including the Chief of Staff, Protocol, Senior Enlisted Leader, and Security.

The Tradeoff

Our internal clocks still think the reunion happens in late October. We've got to mentally shift everything forward a month; meaning the "go time" feeling needs to kick in around July now. And with today's documentation requirements being much more involved than they used to be, that earlier start really matters. I joke that we need a paralegal on the team. Years ago, we'd ask for

support, they'd say yes, assign POCs, and things just happened. Now the rules are different, and we have to follow them. For this year alone, I've had to submit:

- Detailed event lists and support requests for multiple legal/ethical reviews
- Public Affairs Community Engagement Forms for each event, including what support we need and how we want to advertise
- Coordination for nonprofit communication limits, since none of us can email all 16 AF staff directly

One story really shows how things have changed: When 16 AF asked us to support a Phoenix Games burger burn, I couldn't just hand them money.

- I had to submit an MFR to legal explaining the support came with no encumbrance on the Air Force
- Roy Burnett had to endorse it, confirming I'm the FTVA President
- And an FTVA rep had to physically meet 16 AF staff at the moment they bought the food so we could pay in person; we couldn't give them the money to pay for food themselves

All of that...for hamburgers and hotdogs. Now imagine the paperwork for every reunion event.

The Bottom Line

Your board is proud and honestly humbled to do whatever it takes to make these events successful. That includes all the documenting, reviewing, and coordinating needed to work alongside our 16 AF partners. This isn't criticism; they're following the same rules we have to follow. I'm sharing this simply to be transparent about the new normal. Sixteenth Air Force leadership is incredibly supportive. We just need to make their support easier by mastering these documentation requirements and getting everything submitted on time. Looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible. Staying connected, honoring our Hall of Honor inductees, and remembering our fallen are traditions that bring real credit to the FTVA family.



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The reunion is once again upon us and it's time to send us your stories about your reunion experiences past and present. When you submit it (to newsletter@ftva.us or dennis.buxton@me.com, please remember what you write will be published within these pages so compose accordingly. Let me know what kind of pics and stories you would like to read here. Once it's printed here, it's pretty much forever, unless of course, until the Internet disappears.

See you at the reunion events beginning with the Golf Tourney.

Remain In Touch,

Dennis Buxton
Your Newsletter Editor



FTVA Hall of Honor

Greg Radabaugh, Program Chair
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REMEMBERING OUR PAST HONOREES

CMSgt Kevin G. Slater, USAF (Ret), FTVA Hall of Honor 2015



In this issue we highlight another member of the Hall of Honor. The following is a summary of CMSgt Slater's accomplishments supporting his induction into the Hall.

CMSgt Slater was "1 of only 18" NSA military professional translators (Russian). As a Chief, he instituted the first-ever Chief's Charge Book, drove the standup of the first Information Operations Aggressor Squadron at Nellis AFB, NV, and integrated ANG associate units into the then AIA Award programs. As Command Chief, 480th Intelligence Wing, he built a leadership course based on Robert Heinlein's Starship Troopers. He was selected as the 380th Air Expeditionary Wing Command Chief in the UAE and excelled as the Senior Enlisted Advisor for 8,000 deployed airmen. He became the first-ever and only Intelligence Chief selected as Air Combat Command's 1st Fighter Wing Command Chief and quickly set the benchmark for all

airmen.

He was selected as the first-ever Command Chief for the USAF's 1st Cyberspace Numbered Air Force – 24AF – and led 24AF to 18 MAJCOM/3 AF-level awards. He was instrumental in the rise of senior NCO education, resulting in 90% of MSgts/100% of MSgt selects achieving CCAF degrees when the Air Force average was only 70%.

He was handpicked to be the first US CYBERCOM Air Force Senior Enlisted Advisor, serving both General Alexander and ADM Rogers. He broadened the impact of career advancement programs and secured a position for the first-ever USAF enlisted intern at the FBI. Chief Slater served his country for nearly 32 years and left an indelible legacy—earning him the induction into the Hall of Honor in 2015.

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 Chief Slater as one of those recognized as the 'Best of the Best.'

Nominations for the 2027 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 are due by Friday, 4 June 2027.

THE FTVA HALL OF HONOR CLASS OF 2026

By Greg Radabaugh, Chairman, Hall of Honor Selection Committee

It is my great honor and privilege to introduce the Hall of Honor Class of 2026. These individuals faced a rigorous selection process conducted by a committee composed of current members of the Hall and were judged to be among “the best of the best.” The induction ceremony will take place on Friday, 25 September, at 0730 in the Bernard A. Larger Auditorium in Building 2007, Security Hill, JBSA Lackland, San Antonio TX. The FTVA Memorial Service will take place in front of the EC-47 at 1000. The banquet honoring our inductees will take place at the Gateway Club on Saturday 26 September. Cocktail hour begins at 1700.

COLONEL GORDON B. HENDRICKSON (DECEASED)

Throughout his career, Col Gordon B. Hendrickson served at the forefront, shaping modern cryptologic warfare, intelligence operations, and international security strategy. On the battlefield, he directed NSA’s cryptologic efforts in Afghanistan and then ensured USAF intelligence forces across Europe and Africa stood ready for conflicts around the globe. As Assistant Air Attache, Moscow, he led step-by-step execution of the agreement reached at the 2000 US-Russian Presidential Summit through the Theater Missile Defense Exercise and was named a permanent member of the Russian delegation, a role rarely extended to a US military officer. As Air Attache, he singlehandedly enabled a massive Russian air bridge for over 150 US combat supply flights to Afghanistan following the 9/11 attacks in support of OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM. Based on his performance, the Vice President of the United States then selected him for his personal staff at the White House. As the NSA Deputy National Cryptologic Representative at Bagram AB, Afghanistan, he oversaw NSA's day-to-day cryptologic operations throughout Afghanistan. As Commander, Texas Cryptologic Center (NSA-T)/543 ISRG, he led a \$1.3B site renovation and stand-up of NSA’s flagship field site, doubling the workspace and delivering on the Director NSA’s charge to attain IOC capability in 3 months. Upon retirement from active duty, he served in civil service at Headquarters Air Force, ISR & Cyber Effects Operations (HAF A2/6) as a trusted advisor to the SECAF, CSAF, and DCS senior leaders.



CMSGT/GS-11 RONALD G. “JJ” GRAHAM

Chief Master Sergeant Ronald G. “JJ” Graham is rightfully known as the ‘Godfather’ of the 1N4 career field. He devoted 50 years to Air Force intelligence, whether it was by conducting critical operations or by training thousands of multiservice officers and enlisted in the arcane art of intelligence analysis. No one had a greater impact on the quality of intelligence operatives reaching the field. He was responsible for establishing, revalidating, and revising cryptologic training for all military services and the National Security Agency (NSA). He revalidated a long-neglected test for command-wide career field competition for 1,348 analysts worldwide. The Commander, 17th Training Wing stated, “He won us the National Intelligence Meritorious Unit Award from all units in DoD, CIA—best in US!” The Commander, Air Force Information Warfare Center said, “Major impact on war effort in response to 9/11 terrorist attack. Led division program to identify, train, and deploy personnel in multiple AFSCs to support contingency operations worldwide.” After 30 years in uniform, Chief Graham gave another 20 years as the Air Force civilian 1N4 subject matter expert. As a DAF civilian, JJ continued to mold and shape thousands of student analysts. He finalized the integration of 13-day Intelligence Fundamentals Course with Analysis & Reporting, reducing AF training by 7 days and saved the Air Force \$150,000/year. Everywhere he has served, from Airman to Chief, Chief Graham has been recognized as the best of the best. The outstanding success of Air Force cryptologic operations is directly due to his exceptional performance and dedication to duty.

CMSGT/GG-13 RONALD M. WEAVER

CMSgt/GG-13 Ronald M. Weaver was known throughout the Air Force and DoD intelligence community as THE expert in the field of Communications-Electronics. He personally managed and orchestrated a multi-billion-dollar enterprise composed of nine wings, two intelligence centers, and numerous groups and squadrons with over 14,000 cyber professionals--driving unrivaled strategic combat advantage and ensuring the success of the worldwide complex of ISR forces. He was the lead project manager upgrading USAFSS cryptologic systems in all Critical Comm (CRITICOMM) Centers throughout the world, including upgrading secure air/ground voice systems. He planned and implemented the CRITICOMM system that automated mission comms for all AN/FLR-9 systems around the world, enhancing their High Frequency Direction Finding mission. A futurist thinker, he planned for the evolvement of cyber within the comm-electronics world and postured the command to meld ISR, comm capabilities, with cyber effects supporting the warfighter. He planned for packeting audio and video data streams to enhance comm capabilities using speed of light transmission facets to gather raw information and securely communicate it to proper authorities where it is analyzed and then becomes intelligence that supports a decision maker or warfighter. His commitment to excellence, integrity, and professionalism throughout over 45+ years of service ensured the U.S. communication-electronics capabilities remained innovative and decades ahead of any adversary's. He is truly "the best of the best" in the communications and intelligence arena.



SMSGT MICHAEL A. GETHING

SMSgt Michael A. Gething distinguished himself not only as an exceptional analyst, leader, and educator, but also as a builder of enduring intelligence capabilities. He repeatedly created organizations, missions, training programs, and operational processes that did not previously exist, then transformed them into lasting institutions that strengthened Air Force/National intelligence operations. In one of many firsts, he led the initial activation and directed operations of a 32-person Information Warfare Flight, one of only seven worldwide. He was one of only two analysts chosen for a TDY to Key West to stand up the Surveillance & Warning Center, and significantly was the first person to recognize and report that an unidentified inbound plane from Cuba was carrying Air Defense Commander, BG Rafael del Pino Diaz, the highest-ranking Cuban ever to defect. During critical mission transitions after the USSR fell, he designed/implemented the DoD Signals Analyst Training program, consolidating priority training for all services. He led the Signals Training Advisory Committee, steering military/national agency members to address their needs, earning trust from all. He superbly managed 10 USAF courses that prepared 1,700 airmen for work in three specialties. His innovations, leadership, and commitment to developing Airmen left a legacy that continued to shape intelligence operations long after his assignments ended. SMSgt Gething, one of the most influential intelligence professionals of his generation, exemplifies the highest traditions of Air Force Intelligence. As Maj Gen O'Shaughnessy once observed, "Every unit should be as lucky to have an individual of Gething's caliber."

MSGT THOMAS C. RICE

MSgt Thomas C. Rice's encyclopedic knowledge of multidisciplinary intelligence collection, adversary weapons systems, varied theaters of operations and technological advances across decades made him one of the most distinguished analysts/reporters in 16AF history. He was called upon for multiple sensitive special access foreign material exploitation (FME) of adversary command & control systems projects, directly contributing to design/implementation of special intelligence collection equipment on Rivet Joint/Guardrail aircraft. Due to his national reputation for proforma/FME special access programs work, a special duty assignment program by name requested MSgt Rice to join 15 other command personnel selected for the F-117/Stealth Fighter program, Tonopah Test Range, NV. At Osan AB, he was charged to lead integration of SENIOR RUBY's ELINT capability into the unit's collection/reporting mission, providing the first fused reporting of COMINT/ELINT to theater/national level consumers in the Korean AOR. Assigned to Cold War operations in Berlin as Complex Systems Supervisor, he was responsible for the unit's first reporting of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. A highly respected expert on the North Korean Air Force, he was by-name requested by NSA to review unusual message traffic. He discovered a previously unknown mode of aircraft communications being used by North Korean Air Force elements supporting special operations troops whose mission was to insert paratroops behind enemy lines. He is a visionary pioneer in the collection/exploitation of special signal communications during a historic global shift in communications technology.



MSGT/GS-14 WILSON SOTO-ADAMES

MSgt/GS-14 Wilson Soto-Adames was the Air Force's premier Spanish linguist who served his country as an airman, civilian, and Foreign Service Officer for a tumultuous 42-year period during every military and counter narcotics crisis in Latin America, operating discretely within hazardous environments. He was the first person to PCS to then-ESC's new Detachment in the Republic of Panama (Det 1, 6994 ESS). From there, he directly supported joint forces during Operation URGENT FURY and Operation JUST CAUSE. Additionally, he deployed as an Airborne Mission Supervisor for the first RC-135 deployment in support of DESERT

SHIELD, which transitioned to DESERT STORM upon initiation of hostilities. He served as the unit's staff AMS and RC-135 representative to USCENTCOM, achieving over 10,000 flight hours with 28 Air Medals and 7 Aerial Achievement Medals. Afterwards, he transitioned to the NSA. There he provided signals intelligence to US law enforcement agencies, resulting in multiple international interdictions and the subsequent capture of significant illicit drugs. He then transitioned to the US State Department and performed similar intelligence roles at US Embassies throughout Latin America. He directly supervised USAF linguists deployed to these locations, and their additional duties often entailed Presidential/Executive Security, such as President Carter's visit to Cuba and President George W. Bush's visits to Mexico and Peru. In July 2015, Wilson's team received its payoff for months of painstaking collection/analysis as its contributions directly led to the recapture and extradition of Mexican narcotics trafficker Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman.

FTVA Member Support

Roy Burnett, Member Support Chair

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210-473-4921

New/Renewed Members

Linda Hull
(Los Alamos, NM)
Charlie Hall
(Saint Stephen, SC)
Brian Hendrix
(Fairview, TN)
Tom Besterfeldt
(Fredericksburg, VA)
Tom Weir
(Las Vegas, NV)
James Chappelar
(Colorado Springs, CO)
Margaret Hancock
(Frostproof, FL)
Richard Hilde
(San Juan Capistrano, CA)
Reagan Cartwright, JR
(Dallas, TX)
George Kramer
(Colorado Springs, CO)
David Garza
(San Angelo, TX)

New Lifetime Members

David Williams
(Stafford, VA)
Chris Callan
(San Antonio, TX)

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

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16TH AIR FORCE AND NETHERLAND DEFENSE CYBER COMMAND ACCELERATE CYBER INTEGRATION

Adapted from an article by 16AF (Air Forces Cyber)/PA, published 12 August 2026



JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO - LACKLAND, TX -- Modern conflict transcends traditional boundaries. To meet this challenge, leadership from the 16th Air Force and the Netherlands Defence Cyber Command met during a Key Leader Engagement to accelerate bilateral cyber integration, Aug 4.

Building upon the existing operational relationship, U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Thomas Hensley, commander, 16th Air Force (Air Forces Cyber), and Maj. Gen. Van Den Berg, commander of the Netherlands Defence

Cyber Command, emphasized that collaboration in cyberspace delivers an asymmetric advantage and serves as a strategic force multiplier that adversaries cannot match.

“Dominating the modern battlespace requires that collective cyber resilience be our foundation,” said Hensley. “We are actively accelerating our joint cyber integration with trusted allies like the Netherlands to disrupt adversary operations before they can threaten our networks.”

Maj. Gen. Van Den Berg agreed, noting that traditional boundaries no longer apply to modern digital conflict.

“Cyberspace demands that we move past passive deterrence toward an active, persistent defense forward,” said Van Den Berg. “By integrating our capabilities with trusted partners like the 16th Air Force, we cultivate cyber as a unified operational domain capable of securing our alliance against threats.”

The engagement focused heavily on coalition resilience, information sharing, and the cyber partnerships that underpin national defense and mission assurance. The leaders agreed that to counter rapidly evolving global threats, maintaining an information advantage requires constant vigilance and continuous international collaboration.

The commanders addressed key areas for future collaboration, setting the stage for deeper strategic and tactical alignment between the two nations.

Hensley emphasized that collaborating with highly capable NATO allies like the Netherlands enables continuous synchronization allowing the joint forces to disrupt the adversary's long-range kill chain. He further noted that the integration of robust cyber architectures, shared intelligence on adversarial tactics, techniques, and procedures, and joint operational concepts serve as critical components for both survival and dominance on the modern battlefield.

Both commands maintain a clear priority: own the cyber battlespace.

Established in 2014, the Netherlands Defence Cyber Command (Defensie Cyber Commando) integrates digital capabilities into the broader operational framework of the Dutch Armed Forces. The command is responsible for defending the networks and weapon systems of the Netherlands Ministry of Defence, conducting intelligence operations in the digital domain, and executing offensive cyber operations to neutralize adversarial threats. By operating seamlessly across land, sea, air, and space domains, the DCC ensures the digital resilience and operational effectiveness of the Netherlands and its NATO allies.

NETWORK SECURITY TO BLOCK FAST-MOVING THREATS

Adapted from an article by 16AF/PA, published 30 July 2026



JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, TX—The 688th Cyberspace Wing, part of the 16th Air Force, is strengthening the Department of the Air Force's computer networks to block cyber threat actors who are launching attacks faster than ever.

“As Artificial intelligence rapidly shapes the threat landscape at remarkable speed, we must proactively adapt our defenses to stay

ahead of emerging threats,” said Col. Chantel Booker, commander, 688th Cyberspace Wing. “Our cyber warriors are in the fight every day, ensuring lethality, defending the vital infrastructure that our force projection depends on.”

The wing continues to make the necessary ‘hardening’ efforts to protect Air Force computer networks.

Phase One: Security Checks Before Connecting

On July 8, the wing rolled out the first phase of the security system called Comply-to-Connect (C2C), a U.S. Department of War (DoW)–driven cybersecurity framework that verifies devices meet security standards before allowing it to access military networks. The system functions as a digital gatekeeper, ensuring only compliant devices can authenticate to and operate on the DoW Information Network (DoWIN).

During this initial rollout, cyber operators checked computers against five critical security pillars depicted in the graphic.

Devices that did not meet the standards were quarantined and flagged for hands-on remediation from local communications squadrons to restore compliance and strengthen overall network security.

Phase Two: Approved Software Only

The next major step, scheduled for August, is the rollout of automated application whitelisting. This automated system identifies and removes unapproved software and prevents unauthorized applications from operating. To support operations, local communications squadrons are compiling unit-specific lists of mission-essential, approved software.

While no network is entirely risk-free, pairing the C2C framework with application whitelisting strengthens the 688th CW's efforts to harden Air Force networks into a more resilient foundation for modern warfighting and for sustaining the long-range kill chain.

The 688 Cyber Wing is the Air Force's premier cyberspace warfighting organization dedicated to delivering actionable intelligence and tactics, techniques, and procedures; deployable warfighter communications; engineering and installation capabilities; defensive cyber operations; and network security operations across the Air Force

OUTPACING, NOT CHASING: CYBER WARRIORS FORGE READINESS THROUGH CMSAF HERITAGE WORKOUT

Adapted from an article by Lt Col Dylan Slagle

HWO #1
BIRTH OF THE AIR FORCE

★

THE WORKOUT	THE TARGET
9 ROUNDS	
AIR SQUATS x18	GOLD (EXCEEDING) < 13:00
PUSH-UPS x19	SILVER (MEETING) 13:01 - 15:45
JUMPING JACKS x47	BRONZE (KEEP IMPROVING) > 15:46

★ **LET'S SEE WHAT YOU'VE GOT!**

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND — More than 270 offensive cyber operators traded their keyboards for physical training gear July 31, tackling a new fitness challenge tied to Air Force history. The workout gave Airmen from the 375th Cyberspace Operations Squadron--known operationally as Task Force Falcon--a different kind of test than the one they face daily dominating the digital battlespace.

During their monthly Commander's Call, a dedicated day for unit fitness, promotions, recognition, and policy updates, the squadron executed the newly introduced Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Heritage Workout #1: "Birth of the Air Force.

Designed by Master Fitness Trainers, the CMSAF Heritage Workouts are built to improve physical readiness while deeply connecting Airmen to the foundational stories that shaped the service. The initiative directly supports CMSAF Wolfe's vision to increase the frequency, intensity, and realism of

training. In a recent social media post introducing the workout series, Wolfe challenged the force: "My goal was gold, my time was 14:40. I'm working on it. Let's see what you've got!"

For a unit that operates around the clock to execute offensive cyberspace operations for U.S. Cyber Command, physical fitness is central to their overall combat readiness.

“One of our squadron mottos is ‘*Outpacing, not chasing.*’ As a pack, we are working to stay ahead of the renewed emphasis on fitness across the Department,” said Tech. Sgt. Michael Clark, 375th COS first sergeant. “Pushing through these Heritage Workouts together builds camaraderie and is a great way to challenge ourselves physically while reflecting on how our service’s history is fundamentally tied to warfighter readiness as a team.”

The high-tempo nature of the cyber domain can take a hidden toll on operators. Squadron leadership combated this with holistic support, such as embedded religious affairs teams and rigorous physical training to build mental and physical stamina.

Capt. Regan Jones, Combat Support Team intelligence chief assigned to the task force, noted the immediate team-building benefits of the session.

“Squadron PT creates a genuine sense of connection across our team,” Jones said. “Tackling this specific CMSAF Heritage Workout really broadened our perspective on what fitness means in today’s Air Force. It was tough, but it was exactly the kind of shared challenge we needed.”

As the Air Force continues to sharpen its focus on readiness and lethality, the 375th COS proved that readiness is built both on the keyboard and on the track. By fusing physical, mental, spiritual, and social fitness into their regular battle rhythm, the squadron is ensuring its operators remain sharp and prepared to dominate the cyberspace domain in crisis and conflict.

CMSAF Heritage Workouts post weekly on the official CMSAF Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/OfficialCMSAF/>.

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, 16 July 2026

The San Antonio Chapter of the FTVA held their monthly meeting at the Alamo Café Restaurant on 16 July 2026. Ten members and spouses enjoyed lunch and fellowship. Many are on vacation



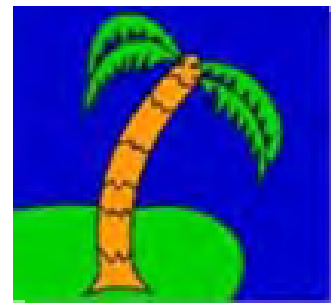
Pictured left-to-right, front to back: Dennis Rassmussen, Ken Maynard, Anne Williams, Judy Maynard, Doug Williams, Shiela Williams, Ken Williams (not pictured), Pete Siegel, Dan Martin, Al Daugherty, and standing, Richard, our Alamo Cafe server.

this month, or unable to attend due to the torrential rains hitting San Antonio this week. Attendees shared war stories and had a great time.

We discussed the upcoming Anniversary Events and dates (Golf Tournament, Thursday, 24 Sep; Hall of Honor, Remembrance Ceremony, and Picnic, Friday, 25 Sep, and the Annual Meeting and Banquet, Saturday, 26 Sep. More details to follow as events get closer. Due to summer vacation(s) and the upcoming anniversary events, we decided to cancel the August and September get togethers. The next meeting will

be on Thursday, 15 October, at the Alamo Café on IH10, at noon. There being no other business, we adjourned at 1300.

Aloha Chapter
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NTR: Check Back in December



Gold Country Chapter
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John Aurelius, President
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NTR: Check Back in December



Heritage Chapter

San Angelo, TX

Ronald 'JJ' Graham, President

Chapter Contact: waynebascom@gmail.com

Heritage Chapter Elects Board - Again

Story and photo by Wayne Bascom and AI

After two months of (minimal) campaigning and electioneering, the minions of the Heritage Chapter re-elected the current slate of officers by acclamation in our August meeting. Once again JJ Graham will hold the mantle of President, with Scott Dickson as Vice-President, Wayne Bascom as Secretary, and Rick Premo as Treasurer. This slate of officers will serve for a two-year term ending in 2028.



2026 Chapter Officers

(L-R) JJ Graham, Rick Premo, Scott Dickson, and Wayne Bascom

Heritage Chapter's Outreach Program

Tribute to Cruising Veterans

Photos and Story by Larry Miller

As part of the Heritage Chapter's Outreach Program, one of our mighty “minions”, Larry Miller, brings a "pocket full" of Vietnam and Persian Gulf War veteran lapel pins and certificates along with him when he travels with his family on cruises that they occasionally take.

Knowing that the cruise lines that they generally sail with have regular veteran get-togethers during sailing days that don't stop in a port, these times afford a great opportunity to honor some of our Country's finest with one of these pins.

During his family's latest trip in the Mexican Caribbean, Larry was able to honor eight veterans with Heritage Chapter pins and certificates - five for their service during the Vietnam War and three who served in Desert Shield/Storm.



Military Veterans on the Cruise

As an additional very special tribute, the 50th Commemoration of the Vietnam War Surviving Spouse pin and certificate was presented to Mrs. Gale Garcia for her service and sacrifice in supporting her first husband who perished due to exposure to Agent Orange. Curiously, Gale also served a tour in Vietnam as a Marine Corps PFC.

As you can imagine, everyone in the audience attending these functions was pleasantly surprised to be a part of honoring these veterans for their steadfast duty to America. Heritage Chapter is extremely proud and privileged to be able to honor and make these cruise presentations as well as

those to veterans throughout the United States and as far as the Philippines, Japan, and Germany through our mail-out program.



LEFT: Gale Garcia (right) and spouse Andrew. Also a veteran, Andrew served for a total of 37 years in the Army and Air Force. Gale, as mentioned above, is a Vietnam Veteran and surviving spouse of a Vietnam Veteran.

RIGHT: Larry Miller (left) presents certificate and pin to Desert Shield/Storm veteran Randy Hall.



Korean War Veteran Commemoration

Story and Photos by JJ Graham

A commemoration ceremony honoring Korean War veterans, surviving spouses, and family members was held in San Angelo on 25 July 2026. The event was the brainchild of Air Force Capt. Jina Miller, assigned to the 316th Training Squadron at Goodfellow AFB. Capt. Miller is very passionate about recognizing and celebrating those U.S. servicemen and servicewomen who served during the Korean War. Born and raised in South Korea, she knows first-hand how the two allies fought against communist aggression, and how much South Korea has since prospered because of that alliance.

Capt. Miller put together a team to organize the ceremony, consisting of MSgt Devin Snell, TSgt Aaron Nelson, Army veteran Mr. Jose Duran – all members of the 316th – and retired CMSgt JJ Graham, currently the Director of the Goodfellow Retiree Activities Office and Heritage Chapter president. Capt. Miller had seen the March 2026 Vietnam War Veterans Day Welcome Home



Members of Hope Korean Baptist Church Choir gave a heartfelt presentation – in words and song – expressing their thanks for the veterans' service and sacrifices.

Ceremony and wanted to do something similar for Korean War veterans. Veterans of what is known as “The Forgotten War” are often unintentionally overlooked by the public, as the conflict fell between two massive historical events – World War II and the Vietnam War.

The ceremony was a huge success! Three local Korean War veterans were in attendance, as were many of their family members, as well as many others who had relatives who served during the Korean War. Close to 100 people turned out to honor these veterans and learn a little about the history of the Korean War. A highlight of the event was the participation of local South Korean citizens living in the San Angelo area. A group of South Korean students attending Angelo State University also expressed their thanks and spoke about how U.S. support during the Korean War was critical to South Korea evolving into the prominent high-tech global leader it is today. Additionally, current



Captain Miller addresses the attendees.

Army and Air Force service members from Goodfellow AFB read testimonies from U.S. servicemen who fought in the Korean War, highlighting their unique experiences during battle.

To make the event even more significant, Capt. Miller arranged for a live video feed from a member of the U.S. Consulate in Pusan, South Korea, who presented opening remarks and praised the veterans and their families – and the fact they were being recognized on this special day. Videos about the Korean War, in both English and Korean, were shown throughout the ceremony. Capt. Miller also arranged for Letters of Appreciation and Gratitude to be presented to each veteran. These letters were prepared by Mr. Park Yeon-hee, Curator, UN Forces First Battle Memorial Hall, Osan, Republic of Korea. The veterans were also presented with an All-Wars pin, provided by Heritage Chapter member Tom Nurre, and a specially designed wooden display shaped like the Korean Peninsula, handcrafted by Mr. Duran.

On display at the event were photos showcasing the Korean War Memorial in Osan, Republic of Korea, and artifacts of the Korean War brought in by family members of those who served during

the conflict. Some of these family heirlooms will soon be donated to the UN Forces First Battle Memorial Hall for permanent display.

Special thanks go out to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1815 for providing the use of their building for the ceremony, and to Wayne Bascom, Heritage Chapter Secretary and technical whiz, for his help in converting numerous large files sent from South Korea to a more usable format for the ceremony.

Capt. Miller did a remarkable job of getting this ceremony together in only a few weeks. By the reactions of the veterans and those in attendance, it was clear she achieved her goal of commemorating the service of these gentlemen. It was truly an honor to be a part of this ceremony, which now may become an annual event.



Event attendees view a video presentation of the Korean War.

San Angelo Holds Third Annual Fess-Tival

Submission courtesy of Heritage Chapter

The Heritage Chapter sprang into action to support Fort Concho in celebrating our local boy, Fess Parker. Once again Larry Miller led the way with local radio and TV promotions. JJ Graham procured Fess Parker memorabilia from his trip to Chicago and had it on hand for display. Rick Premo and Wayne Bascom donned their coon-skin hats and performed their docent activities flawlessly. Associate member Evi Shaw dressed in authentic Native American garb.

One of Fess Parker's movies was shown and everyone enjoyed the refreshments provided, including a large cake with Fess Parker's likeness courtesy of Larry Miller. According to Bob Bluthardt, Site Manager at Fort Concho National Historic Landmark, about 100 visitors attended the event in a crowded weekend of other area programs scheduled. In one of the many events and contests that day, two young brothers won the Fess Parker look-alike contest.

RIGHT: Chapter Fess Parker Team Entry:
(L-R) JJ Graham, Larry Miller, Bob Bluthardt, (Fess Parker), Evi Shaw, Wayne Bascom, Rick Premo



LEFT: And the contest winners are.... The two Young'uns dressed in period buckskin shirts and coonskin caps. Chapter members Rick Premo (far left) and Larry Miller (far right) congratulate the two 'Look-alike' winners.

The Service Beyond Service Award

As you know from our last *Remain in Touch*, Tom Nurre was one of the very first individuals to be recognized nationally with the Service Beyond Service Award. Right now we are working on another nomination for a Chapter Vietnam Veteran. This is a brand-new recognition and probably many of you have not heard of it. Here is some background on this award:

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund wants to collect the stories of the nominee's Vietnam service AND award them for their efforts beyond their military service. The Service Beyond Service Award recognizes the post-military efforts of outstanding LIVING Vietnam veterans who contribute to their communities. Eligibility is as follows:

1. CANNOT self-nominate
2. Must be LIVING at the time of nomination
3. Must have government form DD 214 that shows service in Vietnam or the area of operations eligible for the Vietnam Service Medal
4. Must have received an honorable military discharge, with no civilian felony convictions
5. Must be of good moral character
6. Must include a summary of the veteran's "story" of their Vietnam service
7. Must include a summary or bullet points outlining the veteran's post-military service
8. And, must have either:
 - a) made significant community contributions at the local, state, or national level by achieving excellence in their selected field or professions, or
 - b) made significant community contributions through volunteer work, donations, or other philanthropic means

All the information concerning this award and the requirements can be found HERE (<https://www.vvmf.org/Service-Beyond-Service-Award/>). This page also has links to past winners which includes their photos and biography.



Mid-Atlantic Region Chapter

Fort George G. Meade, MD

Jerry Gething, President

Chapter Contact: sharong@thefrizzellhome.us

Chapter Get Together

Submitted by Bob Bastian

Photos Courtesy of Mike Summers

On 19 June 2026, 13 members of the Mid-Atlantic Region Chapter (MARC) of the Freedom Through Vigilance Association met at The Hideaway “somewhere in Odenton, MD” (per the receipt!) for lunch, reminiscing, and renewing of friendships. Several individuals recounted their times at San Vito dei Normanni Air Station; others discussed their times at RAF Chicksands or Weisbaden, while others described great times at Kunia, Hawaii.

For those of you farther south of the District of Columbia that would like to participate in a future social gathering but don’t wish to make a trip around or through the DC area, please contact MARC leadership and help us identify a location between Richmond and Hampton, VA. We’d love to host a get-together down your way!



L-R: Greg Burns, Jerry Gething, and Andy Alexander



LEFT: (L-R): Timothy Fennema, Dennis Mitzel, Dick Smith, and Clarence “Sparky” Sparks).

BELOW: (L-R): Tom Besterfeldt and Lee Wofford



Greg Burns and Jerry Gething (backs to camera) with (L-R) Andy Alexander, Lew Call and Andy Kirkham



Rocky Mountain Chapter

Colorado Springs, CO

Greg Roman and Stan Cook Co-Presidents

Chapter Contact: g.eichelberger08@yahoo.com

Chapter Activities

Submitted by Greg Roman

The FTVA Rocky Mountain Chapter continued to hold monthly meetings at Rhinos Sports and Spirits. Membership has held steady.

RM Chapter members participated in the annual Rhinos Golf Tournament in July, helping raise funds for various veterans and wounded warrior programs. With about 110 golfers, the tournament helped raise over \$6000 in much-needed funds.

RM Chapter has started planning to support Wreaths Across America program on 14 December at the US Air Force Academy cemetery. There are approximately 3000 gravesites that will be supported.



Wasatch Chapter

Salt Lake City, UT

Jacob Scheid, President

Chapter Contact: lawson.scott1@gmail.com

NTR: Check Back in December



Originated in 1997

EC-47 History Site News

Submitted by Tom Nurre

NTR: Check Back in December



REUNIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

2026 Annual Reunion Information

September 24-26

San Antonio, Texas

Thursday, 24 September

0900: Golf Tournament, 0900 check-in, 1000 shotgun start @ the Golf Club of Texas
https://ftva.us/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/2026_Golf_Registration.pdf>registration. Or print
and fill out the form below.

Friday, 25 September

0730: Hall of Honor Induction, Bernard A. Larger Auditorium – Honoring:

**Colonel (ret) Gordon B. Hendrickson

CMSgt/GS-11 (ret) Ronald G. “JJ” Graham

CMSgt/GS-13 (ret) Ronald M. Weaver

SMSgt (ret) Michael A. Gething

MSgt (ret) Thomas C. Rice

MSgt/GS-14 (ret) Wilson Soto-Adames

** Indicates deceased at time of selection

1000: Remembrance Ceremony, at the EC-47 static display in front of Building 2000

1130: Reunion Picnic, at Stapleton Park (the park on Security Hill)

1630: Mimi Call, Big’z Burger Joint #2 10106 Texas Highway 151

Saturday, 26 September

1000: Annual Membership Meeting, at the Courtyard by Marriott SeaWorld Westover Hills (11605 State Highway 151) in the Concepcion room. We also have the meeting connected via Zoom (details below).

Topic: FTVA Annual Membership Meeting

Time: Sep 26, 2026 10:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87651235239?pwd=NGO5W1Ft0ZEtKRt5sa8bwMjKMlXgbS.1>

Meeting chat link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/jc/87651235239>

Meeting ID: 876 5123 5239

Passcode: 813220

One tap mobile

+13462487799,,87651235239#,,,,*813220# US (Houston)

Join by SIP

- 87651235239@zoomcrc.com

Join instructions

https://us02web.zoom.us/join/87651235239?signature=ujl5VhWxNf67NIK6sl8_taiOq93XZ99oMgVAf0VgJN0

1700: Reunion Banquet, at the Gateway Club on Lackland (if access to on-base is an issue, please email us at membersupftva@gmail.com).

COST: \$40 per Person

Make Check Payable to:

FREEDOM THROUGH VIGILANCE ASSOCIATION

Mail to: Ken Williams, 10118 Remuda View, San Antonio, TX 78254

(210) 827-9518

NOTE: Reservations **must** be received NLT 17 September 2026 for the banquet.

FTVA Reunion Golf Tournament Entry Form

WHEN: Thursday, 24 Sep, 1000 shotgun start; check-in begins at 0900.

WHERE: The Golf Club of Texas (GCoT); 13600 Briggs Ranch, San Antonio, TX 78245; (210) 504-2550

DIRECTIONS: See Map/Directions Below



ENTRY INFO: The entry fee is **\$75 per person** and includes green fees, range balls, carts, prizes, and the meal to be served after the tournament. **Entry fees are due NLT 17 Sep 2026.**

All former members of USAFSS, ESC, AFIC, AIA, AFISRA, 25AF, 24AF and current/former members of the 16AF and associated units, and guests, may participate. Entries will be limited to the **first 144 paid players** to sign up, and **the entry fee must be paid on or before the deadline of 17 Sep 2026.** Please note that the field frequently fills up well before the deadline. Cancellations/registration fees received **AFTER 17 Sep 2026 will not** be returned as final player count is due to GCoT 17 Sep 2026.

FORMAT: 4-PERSON FLORIDA SCRAMBLE. Each player hits a tee shot, the best ball is selected and all players play from that spot, and so on until the hole is completed. Rule sheet and other information provided at the tournament. Enter as a single, two-some or field a full team of 4. I will create teams of 4 from singles and 2-somes.

ADDITIONAL INFO

Rental Clubs. Please note that the golf course has only a **limited number** of rental clubs available. If needed, please let me know ASAP and whether you need right-handed or left-handed men's or women's clubs.

Cash or Check Only. Also please note that FTVA does not have the ability to accept credit or debit cards. The only acceptable payments are **checks or cash only**. Checks will be deposited shortly after the tournament in case we must cancel due to weather or other circumstances.

Charlie Copy. If you include an e-mail address on your entry form, I will acknowledge receipt.

COMPLETE THE FORM BELOW, DETACH AND MAIL THE FORM AND CHECK

Make checks payable to "FTVA". Please mail entry form and check to:

Bob Benitez
11315 Mentmore
Helotes, TX 78023

ENTRIES & ENTRY FEES DUE NO LATER THAN 17 Sep 26

NAME _____ Phone #. (_____) _____

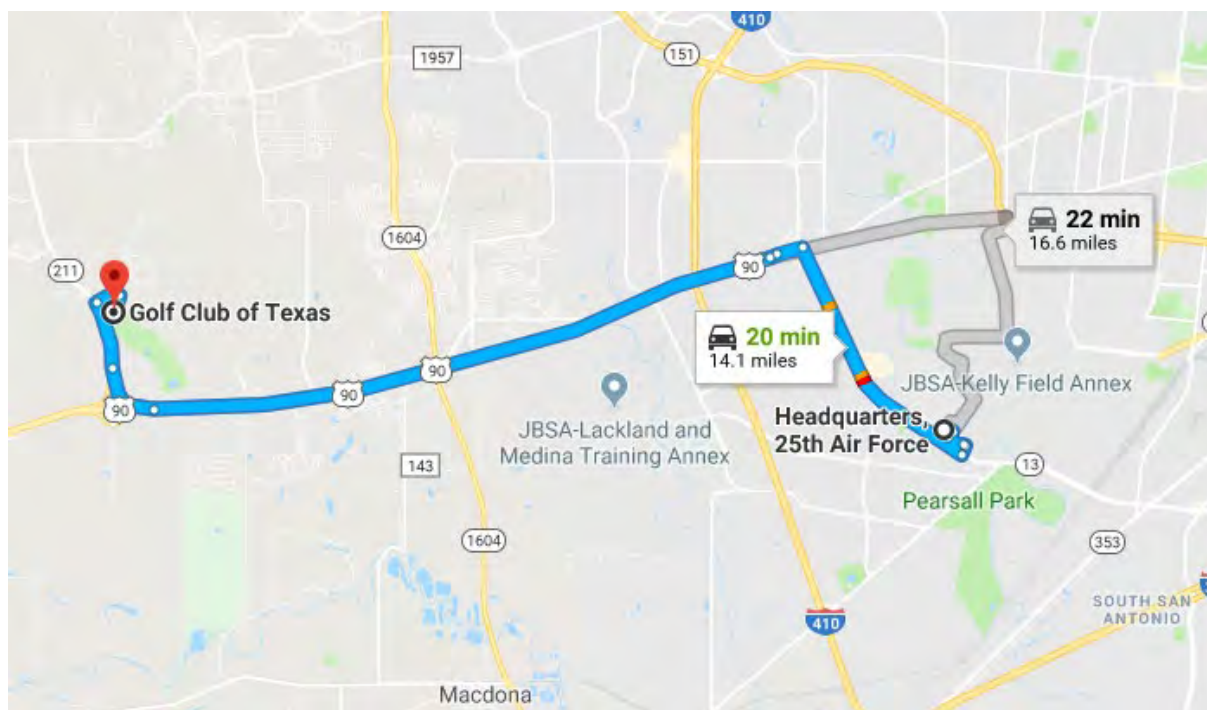
E-MAIL _____

Team Member: _____

Team Member: _____

Team Member: _____

The Golf Club of Texas
13600 Briggs Ranch
San Antonio, TX 78245
(210) 504-2550



Take Highway 90 West from San Antonio to Highway 211 North/Texas Research Parkway. Go approximately One (1) mile and turn right at Briggs Ranch. Go a short distance to a dead end (T intersection) and **turn right**. Follow the road to the parking lot.

If you're coming via Potranco Road from the east, turn left onto Highway 211 South and drive approximately two (2) miles and turn left onto Briggs Ranch.

2026 Bayi Bash Reunites Chinese Linguists

Submitted by John “Boneman” Oles

A reunion of Chinese Linguists was held in Denver from 30 July - 3 Aug 2026. Named the “Bayi Bash” in honor of the Peoples’ Liberation Army” which kept our linguists occupied for the past 99 years. Over 50 linguists, including several Doggers, a 205, and spouses attended. The reunion was organized by Yiming Tung, Jim Herman, Tom Houdek, Jim Hantke, and Todd Maston.

The first day’s event began with a no-host social in the Bayi Bash Lounge hospitality suite provided by the Doubletree by Hilton. The well-stocked room included beverages from Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. Once people started to recognize others through gray hair (or none), beards, and bellies, the war stories began.

The evening kicked off with a Killer Queen concert at Red Rocks Amphitheater where Yiming and Tom were available to review altitude sickness symptoms with Boneman Oles (*Note from Yiming: we were very close to gang-loading Boneman’s O2 regulator with the help of a medic, but he recovered nicely enough to enjoy the show*). Besides lots of rockin’ and rollin’, the crowd welcomed a full ‘bad moon’ arising.

On 31 July, after more hours in the lounge, a banquet was held at the Two Penguins Tap and Grill. Five guest speakers gave a run down on life as a Chinese linguist, including Judy Cocke’s hilarious memories of her time at Field Station Kunia as one of the first female linguists.



Front Row Seated (L to R): Jim Herman, Kristen Keene, Fred Gerkens, Yiming Tung, Angela Tirban, Dennis Harper, Axel Anaruk, Tom Houdek

Front Row Standing (L to R): Bill Christopherson, Stu Mangrum, Marty Stoecker, JP Hill, Scott Miller, Judy Cocke, Kelly Maston, Todd Maston, Susie Barber, Chong Anaruk, Chisheng Graham, Maya Graham, Mark Graham

Middle Row Standing (L to R): John and Linda Roberts, Dave Krueger, Jimmy Spinks, Sherrie Lundberg, Diane Pavelin, John Oles, Sandy Curry, Dave Ziegler, Juan Arocho, Tom Wheeler, Dave Roberts, Troy Goss, Emory Haynes, Linda Seitter, Sherry Kirner, Les Pfeffer

Back Row Standing (L to R): Scout Martin, Steve Staycoff, Jim Kinney, Jeff Lundberg, Bill Whitted, Lew Schnake, Jack Payne, Marc Kirner, Dave Duncan, Brad Hallett, Marty Barber, Jim Hantke, Randy Seitter



The Colorado Rockies and Kansas City Royals game at Coors Stadium highlighted the third day, with club-level seating, a Rockies victory, and post-game drone show celebrating Colorado's Sesquicentennial to boot.

Side trips during the reunion weekend included some local hikes, excursions to the Garden of the Gods and Denver museums, exploring local brewpubs, and even an international game of Pickleball.

Although Phil Beekley and his wife, Lisa, weren't able to join the banquet they were with us in Denver in spirit.

There's already talk of another reunion, so keep your ears pinned.



View the Reunion Video at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U21r4xqP_wA



为战友干杯！

Wèi zhàn yǒu gān bēi!

“Raise a glass to our comrades-in-arms.”

The Misawa Project 2026 Annual Reunion

The Misawa Project (inc) held their annual reunion in Nashville Tennessee August 13-16 with over 80 attendees. This year's reunion invited Veterans and their guests not only from USAFSS, but all subsequent Units/Commands as well, regardless of years served or geographical location.



The Misawa Reunion Veterans

The event commenced with attendees picking up their welcome packages at the Millennium Hotel's Hospitality room and then greeting old and new friends as they arrived.

On Friday, the day was open for individual pursuits but included an evening of fun beginning with group photos being taken, a full dinner followed by The Misawa Project's famous Raffle (with over 100 items) and ending the evening with entertainment from The Tunnel Rats Band.

On Saturday, the third day, attendees enjoyed the day with a guided tour of Nashville by trolley to include the Johnny Cash (Former Ditty Bopper) Museum. The evening activities were led by Master of Ceremonies Waco Wettermann and began with the presentation of The Colors by the 118th ISR Honor Guard, numerous patriotic presentations and ceremonies followed by dinner. After dinner, an Intelligence update was presented by our guest speaker - Major Timothy Amos, Commander of the 236th Intelligence Squadron of the Tennessee Air National Guard.



Misawa Reunion Spouses and Guests

The reunion concluded on Sunday with Farewells and goodbyes. Based on feedback from the attendees, it was a successful reunion and enjoyed by all. Everyone is looking forward to next year's reunion - location to be determined. Please visit us at our public website: usafssmisawahill.com. for future reunion news and other items of interest. Enjoy the reunion photos below.

RIGHT: (L-R): Phil Symmonds, incoming President of The Misawa Project; SMSgt Post, Operations Supe, 236th I.S., Guest Speaker Major Amos, Cmdr., 236th I.S., and Jim Lipa, outgoing President of the Misawa Project





LEFT: The U.S. Flag Folding Ceremony Team. (L-R): Former N.S.G. Petty Officer, 2nd Class, George Logan, Former USAFSS Sgt Jane Doolittle, Retired USAFSS MSgt J.J. Johnson, Former USAFSS TSgt Janelle Tucker and Former USAFSS SSgt Harold Holingshed.



POW/MIA Table - Jane Doolittle (left) and Janelle Tucker explain the significance of the table and the table items.



LEFT: Distinguished Guest Speaker - Major Amos. Commander of the 236th Intelligence Squadron, Tennessee Air National Guard.

BELOW: Misawa Reunion veterans, spouses and guests enjoying the final night's banquet.



RIGHT: NOT EXACTLY GREEN POLE ALLEY but these Misawa Veterans did find the Honky Tonk Bar. (L-R): Gary Laraway, Bob Price, Joyce Deal, Kathy Wood, Rick Deal, Debbie Catanzarite, Doug Wood, Lucy Price, and Wayne "Cat" Catanzarite.



DISTINGUISHED (sort of) GRADUATES: These former P'cola students proudly display a 50-year-old USAF Pensacola Florida jersey from Tech School. The 4 of them were in the USAFSS 6945th School Squadron for X2 tech school training at Corry Station from the Fall of 1975 to Spring 1976. (L-R): Doug Wood, Henry Akin, Wayne "Cat" Catanzarite, and Rick Deal.

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

Appel, Michael Carlton "Mike", TSgt, USAFSS
 Avram, Richard Joe, Sgt, USAFSS
 Brookie, James H., Colonel (ret), USAFSS
 Bruce, Calvin D., Electronic Security Command (ESC)
 Boese-Coakley, Harriet Pauline, USAFSS
 Cantwell, Kevin R., SSgt, USAFSS
 Castle, Francis "Frank", Lt Col (ret), USAFSS
 Champagne, Joseph Ernest, MSgt (ret), USAFSS
 Crabtree, Donna Lynne, *****Spouse of CMSgt Robert V. Crabtree FTVA Hall of Honor 2004**
 Craig, Lawrence Richard, USAFSS
 Fox, Susan Eileen, Lt Col (ret), USAFSS
 Gross, Nicholas Ralph Jr., SSgt, USAFSS
 Haney, Neil, USAFSS
 Igoe, Thomas W., MSgt (ret), USAFSS
 Martoncik, Robert "Bob" John, USAFSS
 McMahan, Richard S., A1C, USAFSS
 Morris, James Edward "Jim", SSgt, USAFSS
 Nicholson, Voy Joel, Colonel (ret), USAFSS
 Obert, William John, Sgt, USAFSS
 Owens, Ben Edward, USAFSS
 Owings, Guy Wilson II, USAFSS
 Parish, Patricia Ann, ESC
 Pederson, Ronald Leroy, A1C, USAFSS
 Pundt, Jerry Gordon, USAFSS
 Render, William Edward, USAFSS
 Ritter, Donald Henry, SMSgt (ret), USAFSS *****FTVA Lifetime Member**
 Salsbery, Jack Richard, MSgt (ret), USAFSS
 Segura, Raymond Louis, Jr., USAF
 Stringham, Edward E., Jr., CMSgt (ret), USAFSS

Stuart, Norman "Norm", USAFSS
Warren, Charles "Chuck" Luther Jr., USAFSS
Wilbert, Rand Michael, SrA, USAF
Wilkson, Joseph A., CMSgt (ret), USAFSS
Wood, Larry, MSgt (ret), USAFSS
Yost, George Albert III, USAFSS



Appel, Michael Carlton "Mike", TSgt, 83, passed away June 13, 2026. Mike proudly served his country in the United States Air Force from 1962 to 1966, attaining the rank of Technical Sergeant. As a Morse Intercept Operator, he was stationed in Scotland and later in the Bering Strait region. His military service remained a great source of pride throughout his life, and he never tired of sharing stories and conversations with fellow veterans. On March 20, 1971, He is survived by his beloved life partner, Mary Ann Starns; his two daughters whom he loved dearly, Laura (Matt) Doss of Jacksonville, Illinois, and Nancy Johnson (Therese) of Ashley, Ohio. //Obit - Snyder Funeral Home//



Avram, Richard Joe, Sgt, 76, passed away 7 June 2026. He met and married Donna Heiniger in 1970. Shortly after they were married, Richard entered Air Force service where he spent over 5 years as a Cryptologic Linguist, spending time in Monterey CA and Fairbanks, Alaska, and growing his family with the births of his daughter, Rebecca, and son, Jason. He is survived by his wife Patricia Avram, her children -- Courtney Sanders, Tara Turney, Ryan Sanders, and Erin Sanders--his children Rebecca (Avram) Rhinebolt and Jason Avram. //Obit - Steuernol & McLaren Funeral Home//



Brookie, James H., Colonel (ret), 87, passed away on June 19, 2026. In 1960, he entered the United States Air Force, embarking on a distinguished 26-year military career characterized by professional excellence. As a master Navigator and specialized Electronic Warfare Officer (EWO), Jim served on the front lines of national defense during the most critical windows of the Cold War and the Vietnam era. Flying thousands of hours aboard EB-47, RB-47, and RC-135 strategic reconnaissance aircraft, Jim's assignments spanned vital global stations, including Lockbourne AFB, Forbes AFB, Offutt AFB, and Kadena AB in Okinawa, followed by Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany, and the Pentagon. His combat service included extensive time in the skies over Vietnam and Thailand, where he completed 125 combat missions. He carried

out highly sensitive reconnaissance operations under exceptional flight conditions with calm, technical precision. His leadership culminated in senior command, serving as the Commander of the C3CM Joint Test Force in Albuquerque, New Mexico, until his retirement in 1987. For his decorated career, Jim was awarded the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Distinguished Flying Cross with First Oak Leaf Cluster, the Meritorious Service Medal with Two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Air Medal with 13 Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Air Force Commendation Medal. Jim is survived by his beloved wife of 64 years, Marilyn Brookie, and his youngest brother, Dean Brookie.

//Obit - Horan & McConaty Family Chapel//

My late husband, Bill Miller, served with Jim at Offutt AFB plus NKP in Thailand. We were neighborhood and church friends in Papillion, Nebraska. My sincere condolences to Marilyn, Dennis, Kevin and the family. **//Joyce Miller//**



Bruce, Calvin D., 93, passed away July 26, 2026. Calvin served his country as an aircraft mechanic. His dedication to service continued throughout his civilian career when he relocated to San Antonio, Texas, and worked as a civil servant with the Electronic Security Command at Kelly Air Force Base.

Calvin was first married to Martha Pierce, and together they welcomed two children. Their time together was cut tragically short when Martha passed away at the young age of 32. Later, Calvin found love again when he married Vivian Tucker. Through their nearly 52 years of marriage, he lovingly embraced her three sons as his own, creating a blended family

bound together by love, laughter, and unwavering devotion. Calvin is survived by his beloved wife, Vivian Bruce; his children, Craig Bruce and wife Lisa, Nonnie Hamer-Burrows, Randy Tucker and wife Lynn, Gary Tucker and wife Sue, and Chris Tucker. **//Obit - Cedarlawn Memorial Park//**



Boese-Coakley. Harriet Pauline, 101, passed away July 15, 2026. In February of 1950, she had a brief stint at KMAC Radio. The following year she began her career with USAFSS working on Kelly Field at Security Hill. She dedicated approximately 25 years to her career before fully retiring. Retirement gave her much more time with her husband of 60 years, Richard A. Coakley, and their daughter, Traci A Coakley-Held. She is survived by her daughter, Traci A. Coakley-Held and spouse, David H. Held. **//Obit – Mission Park Funeral Chapels and Cemetery Dominion//**



Kevin R. Cantwell, SSgt, 71, passed away October 21, 2025. He proudly served in the United States Air Force as a linguist, specializing in Mandarin and Arabic. Kevin is survived by his two daughters: Tina Esposito, her partner Anthony Benoit; Gianna Esposito and AJ Benoit of Northborough, Massachusetts; and Victoria Lunneborg. **//Obit – Community Advocate//**



Castle, Francis "Frank", Lt Col (ret), 91, passed away August 2, 2026. During his 22-year career, he was a Chinese linguist, computerized intelligence officer and missile launch officer; he retired with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel as the base executive officer at Vandenberg Air Force Base California in 1982. He is survived by their two children, Lori Cruz and Bill Castle. He is also survived by his wife Val of 46 years, stepdaughter Cyndi Haupt. **//Obit – Surprise Funeral Care//**



Champagne, Joseph Ernest, MSgt (ret), 80, passed away June 11, 2026. Joseph proudly served in the United States Air Force for more than 21 years, retiring with the rank of Master Sergeant. During his distinguished career he served as a Morse Intercept Operator, Administration Technician, and Security Specialist, including more than 10 years of overseas service. He served during the Vietnam War, and his deployments included Peshawar, Pakistan; Tehran, Iran; and Okinawa, Japan. His military honors included the Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, and numerous service and campaign awards. He is survived by his daughter Tamatha (Champagne) Cain (James), and sons Daniel Ernest Champagne (Dorothy), Neil Joseph Champagne, David Bijoy Champagne (Jody). **//Obit - Moloney-Hewell Funeral Home//**



Crabtree, Donna Lynne, 74, passed away on June 23, 2026. Donna leaves behind family members and others who acknowledge this loss. Leave a sympathy message to the family on the memorial page of Donna Lynne Crabtree to pay tribute. (Link: [Donna Lynne Crabtree Obituary \(1951-2026\) | San Antonio, TX](#)). Donna leaves behind cherished memories for friends, family, and all who had the privilege of knowing her. Donna's life was marked by connections and experiences that touched those around her.

Though she is no longer with us, the moments shared, the laughter, and the support she offered will continue to resonate. All who knew Donna will carry forward her memory in their hearts. **//Obit – Echovita//**

Please accept our heartfelt condolences. We will always cherish the time we spent with Donna, Bob and Amy in Chicksands England. There are certain people who touch your heart and always remain there and that was Donna. She was a true lady, who was always kind, thoughtful and generous. Donna was a blessing in our lives and will remain in our hearts forever. With Love **//Mary Ann & Sam Schifano//**

BC, Amy and family, Praying for you all as you grieve Donna's passing. She was a stalwart Air Force wife, a committed woman of faith and as good a soul as I have ever met. May her soul rest in peace and may light eternal shine upon her. Sending love and peace to you. **//Susan Douglas//**

Donna was such a quiet, unassuming force in Bob's life. She will definitely be missed. My condolences to Bob and his family and all who knew her. **//Ted Colquhoun//**

Celebration of Life ceremony can be viewed at YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxC6-fgw7Ak> **//Joseph "Pepito" Figueroa//**

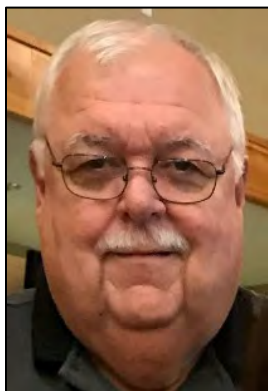


Craig, Lawrence Richard, 84, passed away May 18, 2026. While in the Air Force, he was stationed at a SAC Tanker Base in Plattsburg, NY, where he dispersed as a backup crew member on a KC-97 during the Cuban Missile Crisis, and completed a 15-month deployment to Peshawar Air Base in Peshawar, Pakistan, where he performed a variety of surveillance and courier duties throughout Southwest Asia, India, and as far east as Hong Kong as part of the Air Force Security Service. After returning to Portland in 1964, Larry met Sandra Huber, and they married in 1968. They enjoyed 49 years of marriage before Sandy's passing in 2017. He is survived by his daughter, Allison; his son, David; his daughter-in-law, Toni. **//Obit - Gethsemani**

Funeral Home//



Fox, Susan Eileen, Lt Col (ret), 79, passed away June 12, 2026. Susan joined the Air Force, graduated from Officers' Training School, was commissioned, and served her first tour at Bergstrom Air Force Base, TX, as a Personnel Officer. She was then transferred to Kelly Air Force Base, TX, to Headquarters Security Service in San Antonio, TX, also as a Personnel Officer. During these years, she earned her master's degree in business from Webster College. Susan was promoted regularly and was a Captain while at Kelly AFB. She met Captain John L. Fox while at Kelly, and they married on November 17, 1979. John had two young sons (Eric and Jarett) from a previous marriage; John and Susan raised the boys to adulthood as they continued their careers in the Air Force. They moved in succession to Altus AFB, OK, Ramstein Air Base, West Germany, and then to Pentagon, North Virginia. From there, they went to Osan Air Base, South Korea. Son Eric, graduated from Seoul American High School in 1992. John and Susan returned to the United States at Scott AFB, IL, where Jarett graduated from high school in 1994. They then decided to retire. Susan retired in the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. She is survived by her husband, John; two sons: Eric (Kristin) Fox; and Jarett (Sheila) Fox. // **Obit - Mundwiler Funeral Home**//



Gross, Nicholas Ralph Jr., SSgt, 81, passed away May 24, 2026. Nick proudly served his country in the United States Air Force during the Vietnam era as a Linguistic Specialist - a testament to his sharp mind and commitment to duty. Nick is survived by his beloved wife of 51 years, Brenda Smith Gross; his sons, Ryan Robert Gross (Shannon Gross) and Kyle Gross (Sarah Gross). // **Obit - Shives Funeral Home**//



Haney, Neil, 87, passed away July 27, 2026. During USAF service, Neil was stationed in Germany and Pakistan. Holding a high-level security clearance, he served in the Air Force Security Service, deciphering Morse code communications. He was honorably discharged July 1965; Neil returned to Abilene Christian College to complete his undergraduate degree in Education. It was there that he met Marsha while the two were working on a radio commercial together. They were married on June 3, 1966. Neil is survived by his wife, Marsha Haney; his children, Angie Urrea (Daniel) and Pierce Haney (Delana). // **Obit - Scanio-Harper Funeral**//



Igoe, Thomas W., MSgt (ret), 80, passed away June 30, 2026. Constantly on the move throughout his childhood, he graduated from Porter-Gaud Military Academy in Charleston, South Carolina. Following in his father's footsteps, Tom proudly served twenty-five years in the United States Air Force, retiring with the rank of Master Sergeant (E-7). As a Radio Communications Analysis Technician (AFSC 20270) serving in the Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) mission, his assignments took him to Osan, South Korea; Yokohama and Misawa, Japan; Okinawa; Fort Meade, Maryland; and San Antonio, Texas.

Throughout his distinguished military career, he exemplified the values of duty, integrity, humility, and faithful service to his country. He is survived by his daughter, Jennifer (Igoe) Rundle and her husband, David; his son, Douglas Igoe and his wife, Michelle. //Obit – **Barranco Funeral Home**//



Martoncik, Robert "Bob" John, 85, passed away August 4, 2026. Bob served four years in the United States Air Force Security Service, with duty assignments in Okinawa and Ent AFB Colorado Springs, CO. After completing training at Keesler Air Force Base, he served as a Morse Code Intercept Operator. His military technical experience paved the way for a successful 34-year career in information technology. He is survived by his loving wife of 56 years, Mary (Salay) Martoncik; his children, Leigh Anne (Robert) Sante of Norfolk, VA, Amy Martoncik (Mark) Harris of Ellijay, GA, Rob (Carolina) Martoncik of Woodstock, GA, and Scott (Diana) Martoncik of

Stafford, VA. //Obit - **Georgia Memorial Park Funeral Home & Cemetery**//



McMahon Richard S., A1C, 81, passed away August 1, 2026. He served as an Airman 1st Class Russian linguist and was highly regarded for his work ethic, precision, and professionalism. He later continued his service to his country with the New Hampshire National Guard. He will be deeply missed by his wife, Denise; his daughters, Judy (McMahon) Spigarelli and her husband Michael, Kelly (McMahon) Hall and her husband Alan, Nicole Michaud and her husband Hugh Kennedy, and Stacey Lyons, sister Joanne (McMahon) Hollen and her husband Joe. //Obit – **Cremation Society of New Hampshire**//



Morris, James Edward "Jim", SSgt, 91, passed away August 4, 2026. In September 1952, Jim enlisted in the United States Air Force. After graduating from Squadron 3726 at Lackland Air Force Base that November, he served in the United States Air Force Security Service (USAFSS) as a Radio Intercept Operator. He attained the rank of Staff Sergeant, completed an overseas tour during the Korean War era, and was honorably discharged in 1956. His service was recognized with the National Defense Service Medal and the Good Conduct Medal, honors that reflected the discipline and commitment he carried throughout his life. On February 19, 1955, Jim married his high school sweetheart, Dora Maria Mendoza, at Gesu Catholic Church in Miami, Florida. Together they shared more than seventy-one years of marriage, creating a home where faith was lived every day and everyone who entered felt welcome. Their marriage was later honored with an Apostolic Blessing from His Holiness Pope John Paul II, a treasured reminder of the spiritual foundation they shared. One of the greatest honors of his life was serving in the Honor Guard for His Holiness Pope John Paul II. He is survived by his daughter, Phyllis Jeanne Rahilly (Richard Hamilton), and his son, Paul Joseph Morris (Amy Catherine). **//Obit – Wilkinson Funeral Home//**



Nicholson, Voy "Joel", Colonel (ret), 84, passed away August 6, 2026. He is survived by his devoted wife of 56 years, Martha Nicholson of Sarasota, FL. In 1964, he commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Regular Air Force. After 28 years, he retired from the Air Force with the rank of Colonel. He met Martha in 1968 when he was stationed at the Air Force Fighter Weapons Center, Nellis AFB, NV. Two years later they were married. They loved the Air Force and had a fairy tale life. Joel's duty assignments included San Angelo, TX, Las Vegas, NV, Montgomery, AL, San Antonio, TX, The Pentagon, and The National Security Agency. Overseas assignments were to Japan, Hawaii, Italy, and England. He served as an Intelligence Officer/ Director of Intelligence for most of his assignments. He received multiple rewards and medals from the Air Force, Department of Defense, and the Central Intelligence Agency. **//Obit – Fisher Funeral Home//**



Obert, William John, Sgt, 79, passed away July 2, 2026. Bill is survived by his devoted wife and best friend of 39 years, Sherry J. (Mills) Obert of Bedford, Pennsylvania. He attended the USAF Russian Language School at Indiana University. Bill served his country in the United States Air Force from 1965 to 1969 as a Russian Airborne Intercept Analyst Crew Member flying aboard RC-130 and RC-135 aircraft. During his military service, he completed numerous hazardous missions and was awarded two Air Medals in recognition of his meritorious service and dedication to duty. **//Obit – Akers Funeral Home//**



Owens, Ben Edward, 92, passed away June 27, 2026. He enlisted in the USAF during the Korean War, serving in the Air Force Security Service in San Antonio, Tokyo, and Washington, D.C. He is survived by his wife of (69 years), Dixie Lucille Owens, of Jonesboro; his sister Mary Kay Grossman, his son, Dr. Ben Owens Jr., and his wife, Tracy, of Jonesboro; his daughter, Nancy Owens, of Jonesboro. **//Obit - Gregg-Langford-Bookout Funeral Home Chapel//**



Owings, Guy Wilson II, 87, passed away July 20, 2026. He proudly served in the United States Air Force, specializing in Chinese Linguistics. During his military service, he attended Yale University for advanced language training and he continued his education at Texas Tech University and the University of Missouri, where he earned his Bachelor's, Master's, and Ph.D. degrees. On August 4, 1973, Guy married Pamela Sue Wingate, in Avon, Illinois. Together they built a loving marriage that spanned more than five decades and was marked by devotion, partnership, and a shared commitment to family, education, and community service. **//Obit – Brenner Mortuary//**



Parish, Patricia Ann, 63, passed away July 17, 2026. She served in the United States Air Force as a Cryptologic Linguist. Patricia is survived by her children, Tasha Marrotte of Arizona; Jason Parish of New Jersey; and Ashley Parish and her husband, Daniel Ebalagoza-Vandaele, of Washington. //Obit - **East Lawn Palms Mortuary & Cemetery**//



Pederson, Ronald Leroy, A1C, 93, passed away June 8, 2026. He enlisted in the USAF at age 17, training at Brooks Air Force Base before deploying to Germany during the Korean War. He served as a radio intercept and crypto operator in the 6910th Security Group, USAFSS. Ron was honorably discharged in June 1954 as an Airman First Class. Ron is survived by his five children Mike Pedersen, Julie Aguirre, Kelley Campbell, Patty Kellum (Les), and Chris Pedersen (Betsy). //Obit – **Hamilton-Mylan Funeral Home**//



Pundt, Jerry Gordon, 84, passed away June 7, 2026. He joined the United States Air Force in 1960. He served 2 years overseas, one year in Turkey and one year in Taiwan, he was a morse inceptor operator. He leaves behind his wife of 23 years, Carol Zike Pundt, his children Sonia Huckabay (Troy), Gina Gestri, Todd Pundt, Scott Pundt, Stepchildren Lisa Parsons, Linda Witt (Herb), Jason Zike. //Obit - **The Porterville Recorder**//



Render, William Edward, 92, passed away July 13, 2026. He enrolled at Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University (Virginia Tech), where he earned his Bachelor of Science in Metallurgical Engineering in 1956. While there, he served in the Corps of Cadets and was inducted into the Alpha Sigma Mu honor society in 1954. Upon graduation, he received a commission in the United States Air Force, launching a distinguished military career that would span the next twenty-four years. Bill trained as a Navigator and Electronic Warfare Officer with the Air Training Command from 1957 to 1959, then moved through a series of increasingly important assignments around the world. He flew crew duty in RB-66C aircraft as an

Electronic Warfare Officer with the 42nd Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, first at Spangdahlem Air Base in Germany and later at RAF Chelveston in England, conducting electronic reconnaissance missions in support of NATO. It was at Chelveston that he met Pam, a Rushden resident working on the base. They married in Bedford, England, and shortly afterward the squadron was transferred to the Alsace-Lorraine region of France. From Old World France, he brought Pam back to the heart of America: Wichita, Kansas, where he served as an Electronic Warfare Officer and Development Engineer with Air Force Detachment #34 at the Boeing Company, overseeing acceptance testing of electronic countermeasures equipment installed in B-52 aircraft. He prided himself at having flown every B52 H model in the fleet. In December 1967, Bill deployed to Korat Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, where he served as Squadron Electronic Warfare Officer with the 554th Reconnaissance Squadron, flying aircrew duty in support of operations during the Vietnam War. He sometimes mused that karma might have rewarded his 13-month tour of duty with a Vietnamese son-in-law. Returning stateside, Bill served at the Air Defense Weapons Center at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, as Chief of the Test Projects Branch and Test Project Officer, and as a crew member on EB-57 aircraft supporting electronic warfare testing and training. He was later assigned to the Air Force Electronic Warfare Center at Kelly Air Force Base, Texas, where he rose to Chief of the Electronic Warfare Analysis Division, and went on to serve as an EW Staff Officer with the Electronic Security Command, also at Kelly, before retiring from the USAF in 1980. Bill is survived by his three daughters and their husbands — Rebekah Rivers and her husband, Gene Rivers; Karin Render and her husband, Thach Pham; and Lisa Render and her husband, Bradley Gardner. **//Obit – Neptune Society//**



Ritter, Donald Henry, SMSgt (ret), 92, passed away July 1, 2026. In 1953, Donald set out to enlist in the United States Navy. Fate had other plans. On a warm day in Port Angeles, the Navy recruiter happened to be out to lunch. Seeing the young man waiting outside, the Air Force recruiter crossed the street, handed Donald an ice-cold Coca-Cola, and struck up a conversation. That simple act of kindness changed the course of his life. Donald enlisted in the United States Air Force that day and never looked back. Interesting fact: In Don's military file, is a picture of his Air Force enlistment that was sent from the Army Department to his mother and father. On the back of the picture is a DOD message confirming the fact that Don was the last official

military enrollee under President Harry S Truman. Following basic training at Park Air Force Base in California, Donald began a distinguished military career with the United States Air Force Security Service. His assignments took him around the world, including Edinburgh, Scotland; Trabzon, Turkey; Fort Meade, Maryland; Kelly Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas; Peshawar, Pakistan; Zweibrücken, West Germany; the Vietnam war zone; and finally Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska. He retired in 1976 after more than 23 years of honorable service as a Senior Master Sergeant. As Donald's Air Force career progressed, so did the Ritter family. While stationed at Headquarters Command at Kelly Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, Donald and Patricia welcomed their first son, Rodney, in 1960, followed by Dennis in 1962. Donald's promotions led the family to Peshawar, Pakistan, in 1963, where their third son, Patrick, was born in 1964. Donald embraced every opportunity to learn about the people and places around him. He quickly picked up many Turkish & Pakistani words and phrases, a talent that stayed with him for the rest of his life. Even decades later, he delighted in surprising a Persian rug merchant at the Fort Lewis Post Exchange by carrying on a conversation using words he had learned while living abroad. The family's journey continued to Zweibrücken, West Germany, where their youngest son, Timothy, was born in 1966. Another assignment brought the family back to Kelly Air Force Base before Donald deployed to Pleiku, Vietnam, in 1969. During his deployment, Patricia and the boys returned to her hometown of Algona, Iowa, where family surrounded them until Donald safely returned home.

In 1970, Donald received what would become his final permanent assignment with the 6981st Security Service at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska. Never one to shy away from an adventure, he packed the family into their Rambler station wagon and drove the Alaska Highway, much of it still gravel at the time, creating memories that became part of Ritter family lore. As retirement approached, Donald and Patricia spent long evening walks near their temporary housing at Kelly Air Force Base discussing where they wanted to begin the next chapter of their lives. Remembering visits with his Uncle Dale in Olympia, Washington, Donald knew exactly where they would call home. He is survived by his beloved wife of nearly 70 years, Patricia; his sons Rodney (Dianna), Dennis (Kristin), Patrick (Stacy), and Timothy. **//Obit – Altogether Funeral//**



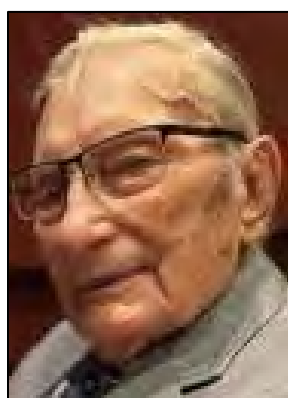
Salsbery, Jack R., MSgt (ret), 90, passed away June 30, 2026. He enlisted in the USAF in 1954, having served two years in the Navy Reserve while in high school. During his 26-year career, Jack served across the United States, including Eglin AFB, Chanute AFB, and Lackland AFB. He also served at the Yale Chinese Language School and retired in 1979 while stationed at the Military Entrance Processing Station in Indianapolis. His overseas assignments took him to Japan, Germany, and France. While serving in France, he met and married his wife, Denise, with whom he shared 67 years of marriage. Together they raised four children: Linda (Pat) Calhoun, Scott (Karen) Salsbery, Philippe (Susan) Salsbery, and Billie (Veronica) Salsbery.

//Obit – Legacy Cremation and Funeral Services//



Segura, Raymond Louis, Jr., 61, passed away August 23, 2026. Raymond Jr. entered the United States Air Force in May of 1989 and received an honorable discharge in May of 1991. During his service in the United States Air Force, he served as a Still Photo Specialist and was awarded the Air Force Training Ribbon and the National Defense Service Medal. During his service, he completed a 20-week course to become a Crypto Linguist Specialist and a 1-week course in Total Quality Management. He also served on active duty in support of Operation Desert Shield/Storm. Raymond Jr. was a loving father to his daughters Chloe, Zeelee, Simone, and his son, Kingston. Raymond Jr. is survived by his children, Zeelee

Segura of Los Angeles, CA, Simone Coffman of Waialua, HI, and Kingston Segura of Waialua, HI. **//Obit – Semien Lewis Mortuary//**



Stringham, Edward E., Jr., CMSgt (ret), 101, passed away August 7, 2026. Edward was born in December 1924 in Elizabeth, New Jersey, the eldest of nine children born to Edward and Leota Stringham. On March 31, 1943, at just 18 years old, Edward answered his country's call to service and enlisted in what was then the United States Army Air Forces. Trained as an airplane armorer gunner, he served in the European Theater during World War II aboard B-24 Liberators, primarily as a ball turret gunner. Edward flew numerous combat missions and was shot down twice. During a mission over the oil fields of Ploesti, Romania, his B-24 sustained severe damage in combat and went down. Edward was listed as missing in action in the Balkan

Mountains of Yugoslavia from July 22 until August 30, 1944. Wounded in action, he was later awarded the Purple Heart. After being rescued, he returned to duty and continued flying as a ball turret gunner for the remainder of the war. By the end of World War II, Edward had attained the rank of Staff Sergeant. He was honorably discharged on July 22, 1945, and returned home to

complete high school. He later spent six months working as a lumber scaler and grader in Idaho. On December 11, 1946, Edward reenlisted in the Army Air Forces, which became the United States Air Force the following year. He would go on to serve his country for nearly three more decades, primarily with the United States Air Defense Command and the Air Force Security Service. From June 23, 1968, to June 23, 1969, Edward served in Vietnam. In March 1969, he attained the rank of Chief Master Sergeant, the highest enlisted rank in the United States Air Force and one held by only the top one percent of enlisted personnel. During his service in Vietnam, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for Valor. On February 28, 1975, CMSgt Edward E. Stringham retired from the United States Air Force, concluding 32 years of distinguished military service to his country. He is survived by his five daughters, Carolyn Chavez and her husband, Eduardo; Adrienne Cantwell and her husband, John; Joyce Arsenault and her husband, Robert; Vanessa Renfrew and her husband, Royce; and Maryellen and her husband, Edward. //Obit - Holt & Holt Funeral Home//



Stuart, Norman "Norm", 94, passed away August 19, 2026. He married Carolyn Sue Cauble on August 29, 1954. Norm and Sue have four children: Jeffrey, Gregory (Carolyn), Vicki, and Brad (Linda). He is predeceased by his wife of 66 years, Sue, who died July 2021. He was a Veteran of the Korean War and served in USAFSS. He was in radio communications with the 2nd Radio Squadron Mobile. During the cold war, this unit helped start the first Air Force Intelligence Agency. //Obit - Allen-Summerhill Funeral Homes & Crematory//



Warren, Charles "Chuck" Luther Jr., 70, passed away August 15, 2026. He was a proud United States Air Force veteran and served within the Military Intelligence agency during his service. His contributions were a personal sacrifice to himself and his family while performing his duties overseas. He aided in counterterrorism and joint services among US and Allied intelligence agencies. His commitment to his country and service continued well after his active duty as he supported military concerns in the middle east for several years. Chuck is survived by his loving wife of 45 years, Shirley Warren of Gastonia; daughter, Maria Novacek and husband Petr of Gastonia; son, Rodrick Crawford of Wisconsin. //Obit - McLean

Funeral Directors of Belmont//

Chuck was stationed at Ft. Meade, then as an instructor at Goodfellow. He arrived at Goodfellow in 1986. //Stephanie Arrowood Feazell//

I spent a few years with Chuck at Goodfellow AFB. He was a proud NCO, with impeccable appearance. Looked like a clothing store mannequin, always sharp. But, most importantly, he was a good friend. May the Lord provide comfort to the family. //Joel Vazquez//

Chuck made working mids in San Angelo just a little less boring! A great instructor and great guy. //Bryan Whitaker//



Wilbert, Rand Michael, SrA, 38, passed away July 2, 2026. Cherished son of Michael (Kerrie) Wilbert and Laura (Daniel Tucker) Collier. Rand earned his Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Memphis and proudly served in the U.S. Air Force as an Airborne Arabic Linguist. In recognition of his military service, he was awarded the Iraq Campaign Medal with one Bronze Service Star, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the Air Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters. //Obit – Baue Funerals Crematory Cemetery//



Wilkson, Joseph A., CMSgt (ret), 99, passed away June 11, 2026. He was preceded in death by his wife, Midori; son, Frank. Joseph is survived by his daughter, Rosemary S. Bixler (Barry); sons, John Wilkson (Sandy), James Phillip Wilkson "Phil". Joseph served in the Merchant Marines on Liberty ships during WWII in Europe and Africa. At the start of the Korean War, he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. He graduated from the U.S. Air Force intensive Russian language program at Syracuse University, Army parachute jump training at Fort Benning, Georgia and U.S. Air Force survival school in Fairchild AFB, Washington. He served in Europe and Japan.

Joseph retired with 20 years' service as a Chief Master Sergeant, linguist, master parachutist and operation specialist. He was employed as an analyst at FTD/NASIC. //Obit - Marker & Heller Funeral Homes//



Wood, Larry, MSgt (ret), 89, passed away June 11, 2026. He served in the USAF for 22 years, retiring with the rank of Master Sergeant, Following his retirement, Larry continued serving his country as a civilian at the National Security Agency for another 18 years. He did not speak much about his work as a linguist, but he took quiet pride in the service he provided to our nation's security. Larry is survived by his beloved wife of 67 years, Patricia, and his children Lesley, Gail, and Mike. //Obit – Yates Funeral Home//



Yost, George Albert III, 76, passed away June 30, 2026. George served in the US Air Force as a linguist in Turkey. He is survived by his wife of 30 years, Lee Mangum of Indian Trail, his bonus daughter, Anna Hargett of Indian Trail, his two bonus sons of Indian Trail Samuel Smith and Christopher Smith. //Obit - Heritage Funeral Home//

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