



James R. Blackwell

July 20, 1934 - April 25, 2020

Colonel (Ret) James R. Blackwell, USAF, of Alexandria, VA., passed away on April 25, 2020, from complications due to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). He is survived by his loving family, his wife of 45 years, Maureen (Missie), sons: Brian M. Fromm, Kevin M. Blackwell and Colin J. Blackwell, sisters: Mary L. Heller (Rick) and Virginia W. Inglefinger, sisters-in-law, N. Ellen Wagner, Joan A. Donnelly, and several nieces and nephews. Jim was predeceased by his parents Virginia W. Omohundro and E. Earl Blackwell, his brothers Howard U. Omohundro, Frederic L. Omohundro and sister, Judith A. Infante.

Jim was born on July 20, 1934, in Providence, KY. He attended Western Kentucky State College for three years. Needing just six hours to complete his Bachelor's Degree, he received his appointment to the newly created USAF Academy, where he transferred in 1955. Jim was a member of the First Graduating Class of the United States Air Force Academy, the Class of 1959, earning his Bachelor's in Engineering. In 1968, Jim earned two Master's degrees in Systems Engineering and Engineering Management from Arizona State University.

Jim Flew over 8,800 hours as a C-130 and C-123 command pilot, including over 900 combat missions during 3 separate tours in Vietnam, while serving in MACV-SOG, First Flight Detachment. Following his special operations and other flying assignments, Jim served in various staff officer and command positions, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Plans and Policy Directorate,

where he was a member of the U.S. MBFR Delegation. In 1979, he completed the National War College before serving as Director of Operations, then Vice Wing Commander, of the 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing, Scott AFB, IL. His last assignment was at the State Department as Chairman, Interagency Consolidated Verification Group (CVG), and Chairman, Arms Control Verification Committee's Policy Working Group, which encompassed U.S. planning efforts of the INF and START Arms Control Treaties.

After serving 28 years in the Air Force, Jim entered the private sector managing national security programs for the Departments of Defense and Energy. Over the next 26 years, he served as Associate Partner, Meridian Corporation; Vice President and Chief Operating Officer DynMeridian and DynCorp; and Director of Nuclear Security and Energy Programs, Computer Sciences Corporation.

Jim's USAF Academy yearbook reads, "He had an intense interest in anything that is fun. Jim made his claim to fame in Football and Baseball and as Chairman of the Entertainment Committee. One of the most likeable guys around, Jim never let the rigorous Academy atmosphere get the best of his social life." Years later Jim would recall humorous experiences leading the Entertainment Committee, which brought out laughter from his fellow classmates.

Jim faithfully watched Falcon Football (USAF Academy Football) every season, no matter what time it came on in the East Coast. Jim also enjoyed watching Western Kentucky Basketball every year. He grew up in Northern Virginia where he developed an early passion for sports, playing baseball, basketball and football. He attended Washington Senators and Washington Redskins games at Griffith Stadium. Later he cheered on the Redskins, Nationals, Capitals and Bullets/Wizards, savoring their Championship titles,. He was also an avid reader of history, the Civil War and sports, possessing a sharp mind and an amazing grasp for detail his entire life.

He always looked forward to his Class Reunions. The last '59er class gathering he attended was the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB,

Ohio, for the 2018 dedication of the USAFA First Class Memorial.

Throughout his career and life, Jim was a patriot, mentor and leader who brought out the best in people with his warm demeanor and wonderful sense of humor. Jim was devoted husband, father, sibling, colleague and a good friend to everyone. He will be greatly missed.

Cemetery Details

Arlington National Cemetery

1 Memorial Drive
Arlington, VA 22211

Events

Details are pending.

Tribute Wall



“ *James R. Blackwell*

October 27, 2022 at 09:45 PM



“ *Many great memories during cadet days and beyond with my "Mr McGoo". Great guy to be with and share a brew and play 2-on-2 basketball with guys from the SEC who thought they know how to play the game. God speed old friend. You're in my thoughts and prayers*

Tom Stack '59

Thomas Stack - May 07, 2020 at 10:49 AM

AW

“ Dear Missie, Brian, Kevin and Colin -- Lori and I extend our deepest sympathies. The almost unbearable sadness we all feel with Jim's passing is surpassed only by the love and affection for him, which will forever reside in our hearts. It was a pleasure working alongside Jim in the private sector, and knowing him for nearly 20 years. Yet, I feel as though he's been there my entire life. Jim was an incredibly good listener and had a way of making everyone around him feel comfortable and valued. With distinguished service to the Air Force and the nation, he was a remarkable leader, patriot, pioneer, and a true American hero. Jim considered it a privilege to serve in the first graduating class of the U.S. Air Force Academy and later honorably served in Southeast Asia where he recorded nearly 1,200 combat hours comprising 903 combat missions. As a fellow Air Force officer, I often marveled at just how much one man could achieve in one's career—not to mention his sharp mind, precisely describing detailed events that occurred across the decades. 'Happy Hours' won't be the same without Jim, yet we'll always savor the wonderful stories and good times. But of all his notable accomplishments, Jim took the most pride in his family and always spoke so fondly of you. Thank you for sharing him with all of us and may God bless you with comfort and healing during this difficult time. Rest in peace, Jim— job well done! Aaron and Lori Wilkins

Aaron Wilkins - April 28, 2020 at 04:44 PM