



## Colonel James Buckley Tapp, SR. USAF Retired

December 6, 1920 - January 31, 2014

Colonel James Buckley Tapp, USAF retired, passed away on January 31st at the Poudre Valley Hospital, Fort Collins, Colorado surrounded by his loving family. Jim was born in Eveleth, Minnesota on December 6th, 1920 where attended elementary and high school before attending Eveleth Junior College and learning to fly in the Civilian Pilot Training Program. Colonel Tapp enlisted in the Army Air Corps in October 1941 and earned his wings and a commission through the Aviation Cadet program at bases in Texas and Louisiana. Jim graduated from pilot training early as a volunteer for immediate combat duty in fighters. Colonel Tapp was assigned to the Pacific Theater and initially posted in the Hawaiian Islands and Midway. He participated in the battle to secure Iwo Jima where he would serve until the end of WWII. On Iwo Jima, Jim commanded the 78th Fighter Squadron, 15th Fighter Group, 20th Air Force. Colonel Tapp led his men as they escorted B-29 bombers from Tinian and Saipan on their long range bombing missions to Japan. On one such mission in April 1945 Colonel Tapp, flying a P-51D fighter plane, scored four victories for which he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the Nation's second highest award for valor. Jim would score four additional victories on his way to becoming the first fighter Ace in the air war over Tokyo. While on leave, Jim and the former Margaret Mary Hobyan of Eveleth were married July 11th, 1945. Following WWII Colonel Tapp attended the Air Force Institute of Technology for bachelor's degree in Aeronautical Engineering and the University of Illinois for a Master's Degree in Electrical Engineering.

Colonel Tapp would spend the remainder of his career in Air Force Research and Development assignments at Wright Patterson AFB, the Pentagon and Eglin AFB Florida. Jim's last assignment was as the Director of Range Operations at Vandenberg AFB, California. Jim's military awards include the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and Air Medal. The Colonel retired from the Air Force in 1973. Following Jim's retirement from the Air Force he and Margaret settled in Lompoc, California where they pursued their love of the outdoors hiking and camping through most of the National and State Parks and Forest in the Western United States. The two re-located to Fort Collins, Colorado in 2000 where they were to spend the rest of their lives together. Margaret and Jim are survived by three children: James, Jr. of Great Falls Virginia, Mary Jacobson of Seattle, Washington and John Tapp of Loveland, Colorado; six grandchildren: Caroline Rhoads, Mitra Kauffmann and Desiree Faili of Virginia, Sarah Tapp of Arizona and Tawnya Williams and Natasha Falk of Colorado; and seven great-grandchildren: Katie, Nicholas, Tapp, Skyler, Matthew, Jackson and Tallen. Colonel Tapp will rejoin his wife Margaret at Arlington Memorial Cemetery later this year. A viewing will be held at Bohlender Funeral Chapel, Fort Collins Colorado from 5 to 6 pm Monday, February 3rd. Immediately following the Visitation, everyone is invited to a reception at the Tapp home, 5202 Keystone Creek Ct.

# Tribute Wall

Jl

“ We were saddened to hear of Uncle Jim's death. We so enjoyed spending our honeymoon with Jim & Muggie in 1964. Our daughter is also Margaret, too. Uncle Jim's visit here in 2008 was so much fun. Our Gov Dayton talked to him at the Fourth of July parade.....where Jim was the parade Marshall in 1946. He was Eveleth's war hero and a special, soft spoken man. We want to express our deepest sympathy as you grieve your father's death.  
John and Shirley Intihar

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**John & Shirley Intihar** - February 27, 2014 at 12:00 AM

AC

“ My condolences to Col. Tapp's family. Great man, great leader, and a great fighter pilot. His service to our country was exemplary.

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**Andrew Carothers** - February 24, 2014 at 12:00 AM

SO

“ My sincere sympathy to the Tapp family. Mr. Tapp was my first boss at 19 on VAFB back in 1976. I too had the highest respect for him. Like Carmelita said; he instilled a very strong work ethic and a great work place. He and Margaret shared a beautiful life together. After he retired; and I had my first child in 1986 Mr. Tapp came by our home to bring a gift for my daughter. I'll never forget that. They would eat at a restaurant that my mother worked at and she got to know them too. I remember my first year working for Mr. Tapp @ ITT. He and Margaret invited the whole dept. to their home for a pre-Christmas get together before the party and he dressed up as Santa Claus and handed out gifts. It was a lot of fun. He was a very well respected man that we all looked up to. Rest in Peace Colonel Tapp.

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**Susan Arevalos Olivas** - February 10, 2014 at 12:00 AM

CC

“ My sincere sympathy to the family. Mr. Tapp was my very 1st boss at age 18 on VAFB during 1979-1982. I had the highest respect for him. He instilled in me high work ethics and working in job you enjoy.

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**Carmelita Lopez Chang** - February 09, 2014 at 12:00 AM

RG

“ Dear great uncle Jim, thank you for your kindness and memories of my father. We wish the rest of the family peace and hope you are rest with Margaret. Love, Robin, Stephanie and our families.

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**Robin Tapp Gonzalez** - February 03, 2014 at 12:00 AM

MA

“ We wish to say Thank You to your loved one for his service to our great country. Our sympathies are with your family. Marine Corps League Auxiliary #785 Fort Collins, CO

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**Marine Corps League Auxiliary** - February 02, 2014 at 12:00 AM

BB

“ Col Jim was a true Patriot and a superb gentleman. I enjoyed our many conversations about his Air Force flying days and his days at the Air Research And Development Command, where I also served. I always wondered how such a tall and stately guy like he could fit into a WW II fighter! God rest, my astute flying friend

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**B/Gen & Mrs Vern Baldeshwiler** - February 02, 2014 at 12:00 AM