



Andrew J. Calliham, Jr.

June 17, 1933 - May 20, 2009

Andrew J. Calliham, Jr., 75, of 6 Croydan Way, passed away Wednesday, May 20, 2009 at Richard B. Campbell Veterans Home.

Born in Perry Florida, he was the son of the late Andrew J. Calliham, Sr. and Jessie McDaniel Calliham. Mr. Calliham was a retired Lt. Colonel from the U.S. Air Force having served his country for 21 years. While in the Air Force he served two tours of duty in Vietnam, first as a combat pilot and later he volunteered to be retrained in helicopter rescue. He once flew a helicopter across the Pacific Ocean with a cracked windshield he had put together with duct tape. He flew the Vice President in Air Force II and he rescued the astronauts when they landed the Apollo capsules in the ocean. He LOVED this job and wanted to become an astronaut himself. Colonel Calliham was the recipient of numerous awards and medals too numerous to mention, including the Distinguished Flying Cross for rescuing downed pilots under heavy enemy fire. He was a peace loving man that hated war, but loved his country and felt it was his duty to be where he could help out the most. After he retired from the military he was a Senior Vice President with Florida Federal Savings and Loan. He was a member of Unity Church of Greenville in Taylors, SC.

Surviving are his wife Susan Bailey Calliham of the home; two sons, Scott Calliham and wife Toni of Memphis, TN and Drew Calliham of Tampa, FL;

three step-children, Karen Bailey and Jennifer Covert both of Greenville, SC and Greg Riser of Portland, OR; a sister and brother, Louise Keatts and Paul Calliham both of Tampa, FL; six grandchildren, Sara Calliham, Brian Calliham, Ember Covert, Jordan Covert, Kyle Phillips and Sean Phillip; one great grandchild, Davien Covert and his best friends Ron & Annie McWilliams.

He was predeceased by a son, Rory Calliham.

A graveside service will be held at 11 o'clock Wednesday morning, June 17, 2009 at M.J. "Dolly" Cooper Veterans Cemetery.

Previous Events

Service

JUN 17. 11:00 AM.

Graveside

Tribute Wall



“ GOOD-BY AJ

Good-by dear friend. This will be your last flight. You won't mind, I'm sure, if I accompany you part of the way. You are the pilot extraordinaire having flown everything in the Air Force that has wings - bombers, fighters, and even those aircraft where the wings turn - helicopters.

As we line up for the flight, the weather briefing has said overcast with the ceiling at 2500 feet and tops of 12,000 feet. Okay, we are rolling down the runway so keep the compass steady not even one degree off the runway heading. As we break ground and the wheels come up we get that old floating feeling that we both know so well and we are airborne.

I can feel your worldly worries melting away as we climb out. During your time with the Strategic Air Command and in Viet Nam, serving our Nation, away from your family for extended periods you worried about the well being of Sandra, Scott and Drew. Sandra has departed ahead of you, and Scott and Drew are on their own life's travels.

We slip into the clouds at 2500 feet and its getting darker but it looks like it's going to be a nice smooth climb. Keep her steady, scan the instruments and if they fail we can go back to the basic needle, ball and airspeed - needle, ball and airspeed, like they taught us in flight school. I can feel you relaxing and your life's troubles continuing to slip away as we climb higher.

You retired from the Air Force and entered civilian life going back to school to earn an accounting degree. What a change that must have been from pushing a state of the art fighter through the sky to flying a desk. Then the day came along and you met Susan and as the song "The Second Time Around" says you started a new life. Rory entered your life and you were destined to take care of him to the end. Above he awaits your arrival.

It's getting light now and here we are at 12,000 feet breaking out - clear as a bell, nothing but fluffy white clouds as far as the eye can see, and a beautiful blue sky that goes on forever. Just like your old flying days. No, no, don't level off. Your destiny now is to keep climbing into the heavens. I can feel you are now just about clear of your worldly worries and looking forward to meeting Rory.

It's getting close to the time that I must leave you old friend. I remember the good old high school days - squirrel hunting in Avon Park and the time you fell off the log we were walking on into the cold creek. Our time at the University of Florida and working together at the college cafeteria. Then, you were off to the Air Force to become a pilot and I the Army as a pilot. Yes, I remember each of the brief times we were together with our families during the passing years and our final renewing of our friendship during the last few years in Tampa.

Okay, keep back pressure on the stick and keep her climbing into the heavens. Thank you for letting me be with you on this last flight. It's been great reminiscing our friendship. It seems like only yesterday that we were two young cocky guys out to capture the world. Time flies - it has gone fast, hasn't it?

It's time now for me to return home as you continue to fly into the heavens. Soon you will be in the awesome light of God in whose presence you will spend eternity.

Until I too climb into the sun and we meet once again, good-bye old loyal friend, husband, father, airman and American Patriot.

Ron###imported-begin###Ronald McWilliams###imported-end###

June 15, 2009 at 12:26 AM



“ I knew A.J. for almost 30 years and when I reflect on the man, the one word that comes to mind is integrity. A.J. was a man who had the courage to do what was right; courage that a lot of us don't always have. He was a selfless man who was always willing to help others and give them a second chance. During those 30 years, there were times I was going through a difficult period and needed a hand and he willingly stepped up without judgment. A.J. is one of those people you feel blessed to have known and who continue to inspire us to be better than we are. My prayer is that A.J. knows how much he meant to the people who loved him.

Karen (stepdaughter)###imported-begin##Karen Bailey###imported-end##

May 31, 2009 at 10:02 PM



“ Susan, I was very sorry to hear about AJ...didn't spend much time with him but was impressed by his calm, assured demeanor and was more touched by his bio and the story of his service. It reminded me of my father and I found myself feeling very thankful that he had someone like you to take care of him in his time of need. My deepest sympathies...###imported-begin##Michele C. Wayland###imported-end##

May 31, 2009 at 06:21 PM



“ This wonderful man was my uncle and great-uncle to my daughter and we all love him very much. We spent many Thanksgiving & Christmas holidays together as family over the years and I never tired of his gentle, southern accent and crook'd smile. A quiet, strong, calm, yet very deliberate man who would do anything for anyone. He came to the hospital when my daughter was born in 2003 and lit up while holding her..as she grew up Great Uncle AJ was always there with a smile, hugs & always willing to pick her up..."Up, up, up..." he'd always say. I'll cherish those memories. We shared a love of football (Gators, USF & Bucs), chocolate and ice cream! Oh how Uncle AJ loved sweets! I'm so glad his suffering has ended & he is Home in Heaven with Jesus now. He will be missed, but loved & remembered by so many lives he touched in his lifetime. Love ~ Kathleen & family###imported-begin##Kathleen Pankoe###imported-end##

May 26, 2009 at 04:25 PM



“ Our thoughts and prayers are with the family, in A.J.'s passing. He has held our respect and admiration over the years. In his even demeanor and thoughtfulness, he served as an example of how to do well for his family, and more importantly, how to do good for his country and fellow man, throughout his life. With all of our sympathies in your time of sorrow, our condolences go to the Calliham Family, with special mention to our closest relations, Brian, Sarah, Drew & Diane, Scott & Toni, may you find solace in the belief that "A.J." is at rest having lived well, and taht he loves you all.###imported-begin##Peter Malone, Emilie Condon, James Condon Malone###imported-end##

May 25, 2009 at 09:40 AM



“ I, your only sister. will miss you but you will always be in my heart. I know I will see you again in heaven with our Savior Jesus Christ. A.J. endured his illness with bravery. He is an inspiration and always will be to me. Although I will not be in attendance for your service know that I love you very much. When we have your military burial service, I will be there to say my final physical goodbye but not the spiritual that I will always have of you in my heart. I LOVE YOU. Your sis Louise###imported-begin###Louise Calliham Keatts###imported-end##

May 24, 2009 at 01:45 PM



“ We will always remember A.J. as an intelligent, caring and committed man. He served his country well, sometimes at great personal sacrifice. We will always remember his handsome face and his winning smile.

We hold his family in prayer, and we hope that he is at rest and peace.

We especially send our condolences to Toni and Scott, Drew, Brian, Sarah, Louise and family. May you be comforted by your best memories of A.J. and the love of your families at this very difficult time.

Deepest sympathies,

Kathryn (Malone) and Dominick Rizzo, Jr.###imported-begin###kathryn and dominick Rizzo###imported-end##

May 23, 2009 at 03:10 PM



“ Although I never met Mr. Calliham himself, he was presented to me in conversation as a "great" man by his step-daughter and my friend, Jenniver Covert. He will be terribly missed, no doubt.##imported-begin##Gay Claiborne##imported-end##

May 23, 2009 at 01:12 PM



“ Susan,
I know you were expecting this, but I also know that you cared for him for a long time. I hope his release from this life will lead to a greater life and fulfillment in non-physical form. You know my support and caring is with you.
Dianne##imported-begin##Dianne Greyerbiehl##imported-end##

May 22, 2009 at 07:03 PM



“ Scott & Toni & Family,
I am so sorry for your loss at this time. I pray for you all.
In Christ Love
Sue Maxey##imported-begin##Sue Maxey##imported-end##

May 22, 2009 at 05:06 PM



“ Susan, I'm very glad I knew Andrew and was able to hear his story. I treasure your friendship.

Denise##imported-begin##Denise Riddle##imported-end##

May 22, 2009 at 01:35 PM



“ We were deeply saddened to hear of your loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. God bless.##imported-begin##Dr. Pearce and Staff##imported-end##

May 22, 2009 at 12:30 PM



“ Susan and family - i am so sorry to hear of Andrews passing. It was a pleasure to have met him the few times that i did . A great legacy he leaves behind. Blessings and sympathy to you.

Sincerly , Renee Stovall

Allen Tate Realtors##imported-begin##Renee Stovall##imported-end##

May 22, 2009 at 11:49 AM



“ Dear Shoshana,

So sorry to hear of your loss. Know you are in my thoughts and prayers. I'm always a phone call away. May God's strength carry you through this time and always remember the good times. Isn't that The Secret?

Love,

Lawrence##imported-begin##Lawrence Piper##imported-end##

May 22, 2009 at 10:19 AM



“ Susan and family,
My thoughts and prayers are with you at this time.
With love,
Joyce###imported-begin##Joyce Glauser###imported-end##

May 22, 2009 at 09:45 AM



“ Our thoughts and prayers are with you, Shoshana.
Sweet peace to Andrew... and to you.
Love,
Lyte###imported-begin##Lyte###imported-end##

May 22, 2009 at 09:15 AM



“ As a USAF Prarescueman, I knew of your father. He was a great H3
and 53 pilot, never showing fear, even on the most dangerous of
missions.
He was very fond of Bill Pitzenbarger, another Pararescueman who
died in Nam in 67 and was later awarded the Medal of Honor.
I am sure that he was the same kind of father and husband as he
was a pilot and officer. Caring, honest, forthright and brave.
He, without doubt, made this world a better place and many men
are alive today due to his heroic efforts.
With my sympathies and condolences,
David Shumock
Tampa, Florida.###imported-begin##David Shumock###imported-
end##

May 22, 2009 at 01:09 AM