



39TH (EAGLE) FLIGHT

ORDER OF DAEDALIANS

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“AMERICA’S PREMIER FRATERNAL ORGANIZATION OF MILITARY AVIATORS”

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JANUARY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 7, 2020

OFFICERS, STAFF

Flight Captain

Lt Col Al Jewell
USAF, Ret.
951-7958

Vice Flight Captain

Maj Tim Bollinger
USAF, Ret.
953-3838

Adjutant

Maj Dick Howze
USAF, Ret.
971-4627

Treasurer

Lt Col Don Netzinger
USAF, Ret.
953-8277

Provost Marshal

Maj Joe Moran
USAF, Ret.
918-5445

Historian

Maj Bob Komlo
USAF, Ret.
284-6310

Chaplain

Maj John Moore
USAF, Ret.
478-8910

Membership

Maj Bob Komlo
USAF, Ret.
284-6310

Programs

Lt Col Art MacDonald
USAF, Ret.
361-5954

Scholarships

Lt Col Doug Lewis
USAF, Ret.
918-3888

Newsletter Editor

Lt Col Art MacDonald
USAF, Ret.
361-5954

Upcoming Meetings:

15 Jan (Wed Noon)
19 Feb (Wed Noon)

Staff Meeting:

Wed 5 Feb – 1100
at Pine Oaks Golf Crse

Lunch meeting Wednesday, 15 Jan – RAFB Heritage Club (Brick Room)

Dress: UOD, Casual

Program: Daedalian Biographies

Menu: Turkey and Swiss sandwich, potato salad, wine, coffee, tea (\$12.00).

Reservations: Please call Art MacDonald (361-5954) with your reservations or RSVP on Apollo, not later than noon on Tuesday, 14 Jan. Your place can not be assured unless you have a reservation.

Check Six

At the December meeting and Christmas party, multi-instrumentalist Jim Larimer of the Grapevine Band played holiday selections on the flute and the saxophone. A good time was had by all.

Last Flights: Bob Hopkins and Sam Watson

Lieutenant Colonel Robert S. Hopkins, USAF (Ret)

Robert S. “Hop” Hopkins, career Air Force pilot and officer, died on December 21st, 2019, in Oklahoma City. He was 94.

Born in Portsmouth, Virginia, in 1925, he grew up in Radford, Virginia, son of Robert and Agnes Hopkins, local civic leaders. At age 18 he entered the U.S. Army Air Force as an Aviation Cadet and trained as a pilot.

He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant, completed P-47 conversion, and reassigned to the Pacific Theater in preparation for the invasion of Japan. Following the war, he entered Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University where he majored in chemistry. Concurrently, he was a pilot with the Virginia Air National Guard, and earned several notable awards, including top scores in gunnery competitions and most hours flown. After graduation, he worked as a chemist for Hercules Powder in Blacksburg, Virginia.

The war in Korea prompted his recall to active duty, and he was assigned to a variety of jet powered air defense interceptors including the F-94, F-89, and F-86 in Delaware, Iceland, and New York, respectively. This extensive jet experience led to his assignment as a B-47 aircraft commander (again in New York), followed by duty as an Atlas Missile Combat Crew Commander in Wyoming.

He was reassigned to the Air Force Western Test Range in California, where he launched the first Minuteman II intercontinental ballistic missile.

During 1967 Hop served in Vietnam as a C-7 transport pilot, and was awarded the Silver Star for conspicuous gallantry at the battle of Loc Ninh. He returned as a B-52 aircraft commander in California, and was subsequently transferred to Headquarters, Strategic Air Command, in Nebraska, as part of the Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff. He held subsequent staff assignments in Michigan and Georgia, retiring after 36 years of military service at Robins AFB, Georgia, where he resided until 2018 when he relocated to Oklahoma for health reasons.

During his career he flew 25 different types of airplanes, and accrued more than 8,000 flying hours, including 1,400 hours of combat time. His decorations include the Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross (with Oak Leaf Cluster), Meritorious Service Medal, Bronze Star, Air Medal (with 10 Oak Leaf Clusters), and the Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Gold Star. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, the former Eula Mae Hill, son Robert S. Hopkins III, daughters-in-law Robin E. Graham and Amy M. Hopkins, five grandchildren Sarah L. Hopkins, Michael B. Hopkins, Robert S. Hopkins, IV, Emily C. Hopkins, and Christopher J. Hopkins, and great granddaughter Olivia R. Hopkins.

A memorial service is planned for Warner-Robins, Georgia, in Spring 2020. The family requests that in lieu of flowers a donation be made in the name of Lt Col Robert S. Hopkins to Boy Scouts of America or St Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

Lt Col (Ret) Raymond S. "Sam" Watson, USAF

Lt Col (Ret) Raymond S. "Sam" Watson, USAF, 90, took his last flight December 25, 2019 in Macon, Georgia. He was born on May 11, 1929 in Tallulah, Louisiana. He attended Louisiana State University ("Geaux Tigers") from 1946 to 1950, majoring in Petroleum Engineering and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant through the Reserve Officers' Training Corps in 1950.

Colonel Watson was called to active duty during the Korean War and served his country in the United States Air Force with pride and honor until his retirement in 1977.

He commanded units in Taiwan and Vietnam and held staff officer and flying assignments in the Strategic Air Command, Tactical Air Command, Pacific Air Forces, Continental Air Command, and Headquarters Air Force Reserve. He served as Liaison Officer to the Chinese Nationalist Air Force and instructed pilots of the Royal Thai Air Force. Colonel Watson served as Chief of Current Operations for Continental Air Command and later Headquarters Air Force Reserve at Robins AFB, Georgia as well as Director of Training for the Air Force Reserve.

While on active duty, Colonel Watson attended the University of Omaha and received a degree in Education.

Colonel Watson held aeronautical ratings of Command Pilot and Navigator with over 6300 flying hours of which 950 were combat hours. He flew 20 combat missions during the Korean War and 284 combat missions during the Vietnam War.

During his distinguished career, Colonel Watson flew various aircraft in assignments around the world including the T-6, T-28, B-25, T-29, T-41, C-54, C-119, KC-97, KC-135 and AC-47 "Spooky" gunship. He received numerous military awards and decorations including the Distinguished Flying Cross with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, the Bronze Star, and the Air Medal with 10 Oak Leaf Clusters for his combat service.

Following his Air Force career, he was a Real Estate Broker in Warner Robins, Georgia as well as Director and Senior Instructor with Williams Academy of Real Estate for 15 years. During that time, he took great pleasure in teaching over 2000 students in the real estate business.

Colonel Watson was a lifetime member of the Order of Daedalians, the national fraternity of military aviators, as well as lifetime member of the local 39th (Eagle) Flight of the Daedalians. He served as its leader for two years, also as Treasurer and in other positions for many years. He was the staunchest and most active supporter of everything they did. In recognition of his many contributions, Colonel Watson was awarded Flight Captain Emeritus status by the 39th (Eagle) Flight.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Olan Watson and Lenora Bright, and his son LCDR (Ret) Randall E. Watson, USCG.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years, the former Margaret Jane Sammons and daughter, Lt Col (Ret) Rebecca J. Watson both of Warner Robins, Georgia; and brother, James Richard Bright (Phyllis) of Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

A visitation will be held on Sunday, January 12, 2020, from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. at McCullough Funeral Home. Colonel Watson will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors at a later date.

The family requests that, in lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the 39th (Eagle) Flight, Order of Daedalians, Gunther-Hiebert College Scholarship fund that provides scholarships to those who intend to pursue careers in military aviation. Donations should be made payable to "39th Eagle Flight, Order of Daedalians" and mailed to the following address: 39th (Eagle) Flight, P.O. Box 6554, Warner Robins, GA, 31095-6554. The memo line on the check should read: "Gunther-Hiebert Scholarship Fund."