



Duane A. Cox

April 12, 1936 - May 24, 2024

Duane Arlo Cox, 88, Navy veteran, husband, father, grandfather, and great grandfather of Eden Prairie, MN was given the wonderful gift of being surrounded by family and friends in his final days before making his way to his heavenly home on May 24, 2024.

Duane was born on a farm in Lamoure, North Dakota to Suel and Clarine Cox on April 12, 1936. He had three siblings, Stanford, Conrad, and Gerald. At the age of 14, the family moved to Wadena, MN where Duane graduated from Wadena HS(1954). He attended St. Cloud Teachers College (St. Cloud State University). In September of 1956, he joined the Navy as a Naval Aviation Cadet, and entered flight training in Pensacola, FL. He married the love of his life, Carole Zimmer, on November 8, 1958 in Osage, Iowa. Together they had two children, Terrie Lynn(1959)and Brian Lee(1961).

The family had many Navy life adventures, living in various states. When Duane was home from 6 month deployments, he enjoyed his family dearly. He coached Brian's Little League baseball team in Hawaii, attended school functions, and enjoyed his family trips to Yosemite, Lake Tahoe, and Washington state. The family had a tradition of going on "Sunday" drives following church. His faith was very important to him.

Upon retirement in 2000, Duane and Carole moved from Alexandria, VA to

Eden Prairie, MN to be closer to family. Duane loved spending time with his grandchildren, Joshua, Andrew, and Kaitlyn. He had fun playing Santa and making grandpa specials (ice cream sundaes). He was proud of Josh and Drew for attaining the Eagle Scout rank and for Kaitlyn on becoming a Physician Assistant. Duane very much enjoyed the family Alaskan cruise and their 60th wedding anniversary trip to Europe with Terrie and husband Pete. He loved his fly - in Canadian fishing trips, and his annual Ely deer hunts with Brother Jerry, Pete, and nephews Dana and Kris. He enjoyed following his MN sports teams- the Twins, Vikings, and Wild. Lastly, he adored his dog, and companion, Buddy.

Duane was a very decorated Naval Officer, Serving 29 years and reaching the rank of Captain. He qualified in 16 different types of naval aircraft, ranging from jets, turbo prop and propeller driven. His total flight time was in excess of 6000 hours. He specialized in photo reconnaissance, intelligence, anti-submarine warfare, personal management, and systems acquisition management.

His Atlantic military duties included many photo reconnaissance detachments throughout Europe and parts of the African continent, the Caribbean. After Castro overthrew the Batista regime, he flew photo flights of Castro's "Victory March" from Santiago Cuba, burning the cane fields as they marched to Havana. This started a series of Cuban photo flights out of Guantánamo Bay Cuba including the before and after April 17, 1961 Bay of Pigs debacle. The photography was top-secret, which was immediately flown by special carrier flights to President Kennedy. The Bay of Pigs caused Castro to look for ways to defend Cuba. Castro entered into a defense agreement with the Soviet union, which started the process to place ballistic missiles on Cuban soil. Duane was involved with photo flights that detected the early construction of launch sites which eventually resulted in the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. Many government experts agree that the Cuban Missile Crisis was the closest

the US and the Soviet Union came to a nuclear war.

During the Cuban flight operations, NASA was also in full operation, and Duane's squadron (VAP62) was involved with many photo flights of special interest in NASA operations. On February 20, 1962, the day of John Glenn's maiden flight, Duane flew as co-pilot with the squadron commanding officer, and he was tasked to operate special aircraft, mounted cameras, and a handheld camera for close up images of John Glenn's Friendship 7 launch. They flew in a circular orbit at 39,000 feet to take pictures of the stress on the booster rocket as it passed their altitude - pictures were successful. Duane was also involved in planning the photo flights for the last in a series of the nuclear bomb tests in the Pacific. He flew the P3 aircraft in the Pacific and Far East, which included numerous operational flights in support of the Cold War in Vietnam. He flew combat reconnaissance flights in support of Vietnam from 1966 to 1973. The Vietnam flights were a variety of flights called Operation Market Time. The primary focus of these coastal patrols was to stay on the supply materials to the Viet Cong coming by sea. During 1973, Duane (at the age of 34), was the Commanding Officer of VP46, which had a squadron of nine aircraft, 12 flight crews, 85 officers and 480 enlisted personnel. During the squadron tour while deployed in Japan, he also served additional duty as commander Japan air patrol group.

Duane, serve three years in VAP62 photo reconnaissance squadron. He was a department head in patrol squadron for VP4, pilot instructor in patrol squadron VP31 and commanding officer of patrol squadron VP46. All squadron aircraft were reconnaissance/anti- submarine P3A, P3B, and P3Cseries aircraft. Duane's major command in 1979 to 1981 was as Commodore Oceanographic Systems Pacific, headquartered at Ford Island, Oahu, Hawaii. His major command consisted of his staff +9 subordinate commands throughout the Pacific with 3000+ officers, enlisted men and

women.

His shore duty tours were in California and Washington DC. One interesting assignment was in the Pentagon with the Secretary Of Navy's Staff. He was tasked to lead a study group to develop and start implementing Physician Assistants into the Navy Medical System. He graduated from the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, and The National Defense University at Fort McNair, Washington D.C. where he received a masters degree equivalent in Systems Acquisition Management. He was also a graduate of the Monterey, California Naval Aviation Safety School which focused on accident prevention and investigations. During the early 60's he was a candidate for the astronaut program, but did not have the right type of college degree in the final cut.

Duane retired from the Navy in 1985. His last tour of duty as a naval captain was the deputy and manager of the Naval anti-submarine warfare systems project office, Washington DC.

After his retirement from the Navy, he worked in the Washington DC office of the Minnesota Sperry corporation doing the time that it became Unisys. In 1987, he was selected to become the chief executive officer and the Chairman of the board for a defense contractor, Planning Systems Inc.(PSI) in McLean Virginia. He left PSI in 1981, thereafter forming and working with 501C3 nonprofit organizations in addition to serving on many boards as a Director and officer. In 1987 he became the CEO/Chairman of Victory systems, Alexandria, Virginia, a corporation that designed and built a prototype helicopter for commercial and military UAV markets. In 2000 he retired and moved to Eden Prairie Minnesota.

He was a member of the Washington DC Military Association of America, Fleet Reserve Association,DC, Association of Naval Aviation(ANA), the US Air

Force Association, Naval Aviation Museum Foundation, Pensacola, Florida. He was also a member of the Military Officers Association of Minnesota, the Hopkins, Minnesota chapter of American Legion. He served as the ANA commanding officer of the Minnesota planes of fame squadron, along with serving 12 years as a trustee to the board of directors for Gettysburg Lutheran Theological Seminary. He was a member of the veterans committee that built a "world class" Veterans Memorial in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, and was a member of Saint Barnabas Lutheran Church in Plymouth Minnesota.

Duane's military honors include the Legion Of Merit with a Gold Star signifying a second award, Meritorious Service Medal, air medals in numerous combat, and Cold War medals and ribbons.

Duane will be dearly missed, but his legacy will go on forever through our stories, and wonderful, cherished memories.

Duane is preceded in death by his son, Brian; parents, Suel and Clarine; brothers, Stan, Conrad, Jerry; and sister-in-law, Patricia Moe Cox. He is survived by his most caring, loving, giving, compassionate and honorable wife, Carole of 65 years; daughter, Terrie Silbaugh (Pete) of Wayzata, MN; grandchildren, Joshua (Tiffany), Andrew, Kaitlyn Soldan (Patrick); great-grandchildren, Fiona (8), DAX (5) and Samantha (22 months); along with sisters-in-law, Lynn Cox of Excelsior, MN, and Carolyn Cox of Indianapolis, IN; aunt, Grace Vee of Maple Grove, MN; and many nieces and nephews.

A celebration of life ceremony will be held on Thursday, July 11th at 10 AM at Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel, 1 Tower Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55450. Committal ceremony with military honors to follow at 11:30 AM at Fort Snelling National Cemetery, 7601 34th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55450. At 12:30 PM, a light lunch will be served at Flagstone, 8350 Commonwealth Dr., Eden Prairie, MN.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be given to the Michael J. Fox Parkinson's research foundation (<https://give.michaeljfox.org>) or Saint Barnabas Lutheran Church -15600 Old Rockford Rd., Plymouth, MN.

Tribute Wall

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“ *Uncle Duane is very special to so many. Forever in our hearts and forever in our memories, he will live on.* ”



Cheryl Garvey - June 26, 2024 at 03:35 PM

CK

“ *Cindy Kivett lit a candle in memory of Duane A. Cox* ”



Cindy Kivett - June 23, 2024 at 04:09 PM

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Duane was a great and wonderful uncle. He will be missed dearly by all. Love Cindy Kivett (Cox)

Cindy Kivett - June 23, 2024 at 04:12 PM