



Lt. Col. Cal Crochet

Branch of Service: Air Force

Conflict: Vietnam War (1961-1973)

Years of Service: Army National Guard (1952-1954); USAF (1954-1976)

Cal Crochet-son, husband, father, grandfather, patriot, friend, Christian-was born July 31, 1935 in Centerville, Louisiana. He died in Selma, Texas on June 21, 2011 after a long and courageous battle with ALS, better known as Lou Gehrig's disease. He is survived by his wife, Barbara; children, Cynthia Kennington, Connie married to Ken Bardett, Clay Crochet and wife, Nicole, Craig Crochet, and Layne Stapp and wife, Dorine; grandchildren, Meghan, Landon, Lucas, Blake, Brandon, Mitchell and Jenna and his sister, Gloria Hebert. He was preceded in death by his parents, Edward and Louise Crochet, his brother, Elby and a son, Calvin II.

Cal's professional life has been dedicated to his country, either as an active participant in defense of its freedom or as a provider of the tools and equipment to enable the people involved in that defense. His initial exposure to the military was in 1952 with the United States Army where he served as a member of the Louisiana National Guard as an infantry rifleman. Following that, in 1954, he became a member of the United States Air Force where he served with distinction until "retirement" in the grade of Lieutenant Colonel in 1976. During his years in the Air Force, he flew a number of different fixed and

rotary wing aircraft, including the B-47, the B-52 and the well-known helicopter, the Huey. Of all the aircraft that Cal flew, his first love was the B-47. According to Cal: "She was pretty, fast and demanding." At retirement, he was a Command Pilot with some 8,000 flight hours. Over those 8,000 hours, Cal had numerous opportunities to excel, including flying in some of the nuclear bomb tests conducted at Eniwetok Atoll; standing operational alerts in General LeMay's Strategic Air Command; serving as the Squadron Operations Officer in the 306th Bomb Wing; and completing four combat tours in support of Southeast Asia air operations where, among other things, he served as the Operations Staff Officer (20th Special Operations Squadron, Vietnam) and as Commander (21st Special Operations Squadron, Vietnam). These 8,000 hours resulted in numerous service, flight and combat awards and citations. They also resulted in Cal developing an intense interest in aircrew and ground crew life support and protective equipment. He became the Command Life Support Officer at SAC responsible for aircrew, missile crew and ground support personnel life support and survival equipment and training. After retiring from active duty, he remained at Strategic Air Command as the Command Life Support Acquisition Manager. In this position, he was responsible for research and development of aircraft oxygen systems, aircrew life support, chemical warfare and nuclear protective equipment for the Strategic Air Command. He was "Mr. Life Support", a man who had been there, done that and could articulate why it needed to be better. Since that "retirement" job in 1984, Cal has continued that professional interest, serving a number of industrial firms with his own consulting company. Air Force personnel have all been impacted by Cal's contributions that have made their "offices" more habitable and efficient.

In real retirement, Cal continued to serve others and endeavor to improve their lives. Among other things, he was active in the Care Cottage at MacArthur Park Church of Christ, working to serve others. He maintained concern for others until the very end of life. If he were writing this obituary, he would say to us: "What can I do for you today? How are you? How is your family?" He was a people person-a mild, modest person-a friend. He made a difference in all phases of this life.