

The 2015 inductee into the 55th Wing Hall of Fame is Colonel Joseph J. Gyulavics, USAF Retired (*Deceased-March 2011*). (*Pronounced JUH-lay-vix*)



Joe had an interesting life and military career. He had the rare experience of going through aviation cadets twice. (*No, he did not wash out the first time.*) He participated in the Berlin Airlift in 1948-49, flew B-29 combat missions from Okinawa over Korea, all before his sterling extended service with the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing in a variety of positions.

He was assigned to 55th SRW at Forbes AFB, KS, in 1952 as a co-pilot in RB-50s. He was a Cold War reconnaissance pioneer, flying sensitive surveillance missions of hostile Communist countries in Europe and Asia from the earliest days of the Cold War.

During his 35 years in the US Army Air Corps and US Air Force, he began as an enlisted man and retired as a colonel (O-6). Of that career, 19 ½ consecutive years were in the 55th SRW. He came to the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* as a second lieutenant co-pilot in RB-50s, became an aircraft commander in RB-47s, moved with the Wing from Forbes to Offutt AFB, NE, and transitioned into the RC-135. He departed the Wing as commander of the 343rd SRS when selected for promotion to O-6 in 1971.

His decorations include the Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross with two oak leaf clusters (OLC); the Air Medal (4 OLC); the Meritorious Service Medal (2 OLC); and the Air Force Commendation Medal (1 OLC). He also earned many other awards, decorations, and campaign ribbons during his service with the 55th, and with other units in the late 1940s, for Korean War combat, and with units after his 55th assignment.

Serving during an era of multiple changes in the Wing's existence, three different platforms, at two bases, and serving in a variety of responsible crew and staff positions,

A consummate professional, mentor, role model and patriot, Colonel Joseph J. Gyulavics is eminently qualified for, and has earned, induction into the 55th Wing Hall of Fame.