

Lt Colonel Richard H. Clark

SEPTEMBER 15, 1934 – MAY 30, 2023

Omaha, NE – Lt Col Richard H Clark, 88, 55th Wing Pilot, passed away peacefully at his home in Papillion, NE on May 30, 2023

Richard was born in Mermill, Ohio on September 15, 1934 to Edgar Howard Clark and Helen Josephine Householder Clark. He had a brother, James Clark (Lu) and two sisters Nancy Clark Fisher (Ron) and Carol Clark McLean (Al).

After Richard graduated from Bowling Green High School in 1952, he went on to study Education and joined ROTC at Bowling Green State University. After graduating he enlisted in the Air Force in July 1956. He was also a graduate of the Air War College. He became a reconnaissance pilot flying missions around Russia during the Cold War, for 10 years in RB-47s out of Forbes AFB and then RC-135's from various locations. Flying near Russia, Richard was shot at several different times for getting too close to Russian airspace. He and his crew did however capture a radio wave, which the Air Force had been trying to capture for several years. This accomplishment helped him to secure his first Distinguished Flying Cross.



While over Vietnam, he had a surface to air missile locked on to his plane, with two other unknown planes coming toward him. He shot straight up toward the oncoming planes with his instruments tuning red and alarms blaring inside the cockpit. His thought process was that if got close enough they would be unable to fire on him or that if they did, the explosion would damage or destroy all three planes. He was able to fly past them; the surface to air missile ended up exploding between the two other planes.

His decorations include 2 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 6 Armed Forces Expeditionary Medals, 6 Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbons, 3 Vietnam Service Medals, 3 Outstanding Unit Awards, 3 Meritorious Service Medals, 3 Air Force Commendation Medals, 1 Combat Readiness Medal, 1 Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, 1 National Defense Service Medal, 1 Air Medal and 1 Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon.

In 1952, Richard met Thelma Yates Clark of Tontogany, OH at Isley's Ice Cream in Bowling Green, OH. Richard was the Chief Soda Jerk and Thelma was a waitress. Richard and Thelma went on to have three children, Kimberly Clark Baker, Major (USAF) Mark Clark (Vickie Anthony) and Elizabeth Clark-Sledge (Ed).

In 1984 Richard retired and spent his time traveling with his wife, visiting with their sisters and brothers. Richard and Thelma loved Nebraska Football and cheering for the Huskers. They also enjoyed Thanksgiving and Christmas and being surrounded by family.

Richard was predeceased by his parents Howard and Jo, his brother, Jim, and his wife Thelma, who passed in 2020 after 66 years of marriage.

He is survived by his three children (Kim, Mark and Beth), all graduates of Bowling Green State University and all have achieved Masters at other institutions. Also by his two Sisters Nancy and Carol, his Grandchildren Shay Baker Miller (Dan), Laine Baker Alter (Adam), Brooke Baker, Terra Clark Neuman (Drew), Nathan Clark (Sarah) Zachary Clark (Kayla) and Ronnie Anthony, Great Grandchildren Max Neuman, Madeline Neuman, Garrett Neuman, Whitney Clark, Drake Hansen, Kaylie Clark, Ashton Clark, Hunter Clark (Olivia), Braxton Clark (Sarah), Dylan Clark, Zoey Alter, Riley Alter, Elsa Miller, Clark Miller and Presley Anthony and a Great Granddaughter Lain Clark.