

Colonel James H. Brookie, USAF (Ret.)

Colonel James H. Brookie, USAF (Ret.), a distinguished Vietnam veteran, passed away peacefully in his sleep on June 19, 2026, just weeks before his 88th birthday. Born on July 6, 1938, in Bozeman, Montana, Jim lived a life defined by honor, unwavering devotion, and quiet heroism. He belonged to a generation of Americans shaped by steady faith, a deep sense of personal responsibility, and an enduring commitment to family, country, and community.

Jim is survived by his beloved wife of 64 years, Marilyn Brookie, and his youngest brother, Dean Brookie. He was preceded in death by his parents, Robert H. Brookie and Edna C. Brookie, and by his younger brother, Dale Brookie.

A devoted father to his two sons, Dennis (and wife Tangee) and Kevin (and wife Diane), Jim's legacy continues through his grandchildren, whom he cherished deeply: TJ (and wife Emily), Ryan, Justin, Amanda, Sean, and Jessica; and his great-grandchildren, Caleb and Ash.

Jim's journey of service began early in the rugged landscapes of the West. True to his resilient Montana roots, he trained with the Missoula smokejumpers for the U.S. Forest Service in 1959. His early life was also shaped by the working example of his father, Robert, a master mechanic who taught high school auto mechanics for 20 years and notably established civilian training corps programs to train GIs across post-World War II England, France, and Germany in 1946. From him, Jim inherited a deep respect for machinery and craftsmanship, pursuing his father's love of automobiles throughout his own life by showing classic cars and enjoying fellowship within the Buick Club.

Jim graduated cum laude from Montana State University in 1960 and later earned a master's degree from UCLA. In 1960, he entered the United States Air Force, embarking on a distinguished 26-year military career characterized by professional excellence. As a master Navigator and specialized Electronic Warfare Officer (EWO),



Jim served on the front lines of national defense during the most critical windows of the Cold War and the Vietnam era.

Flying thousands of hours aboard EB-47, RB-47, and RC-135 strategic reconnaissance



aircraft, Jim's assignments spanned vital global stations, including Lockbourne AFB, Forbes AFB, Offutt AFB, and Kadena AB in Okinawa, followed by Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany, and the Pentagon. His combat service included extensive time in the skies over Vietnam and Thailand, where he completed 125 combat missions. He carried out highly sensitive reconnaissance operations under exceptional flight conditions with calm, technical precision. His leadership culminated in senior command, serving as the Commander of the C3CM Joint Test Force in Albuquerque, New Mexico, until his retirement in 1987. For his decorated career, Jim was awarded the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Distinguished Flying Cross with First Oak Leaf Cluster, the Meritorious Service

Medal with Two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Air Medal with 13 Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Air Force Commendation Medal.

A passionate world traveler, Jim loved exploring the globe with his family, successfully journeying through all 50 United States, nearly every country in Europe, and most of Asia. Following his military retirement, Jim focused his devotion heavily on his family, ultimately relocating to Denver to be closer to his grandchildren. He became an unmissable fixture in their lives, proudly attending every concert, scouting event, hockey or soccer game, graduation, and family barbecue possible.

Beyond his military uniform, Jim poured his steady reliability into his community. For more than 40 years, he was a passionate, avid volunteer with the Boy Scouts of America. He dedicated countless hours to the formation of youth character and leader training, serving in prominent roles as a District Commissioner and Wood Badge Scoutmaster, and he additionally served on the National Scout Jamboree staff. His lifelong impact on generations of scouts was recognized with several of the organization's highest honors, including the Silver Beaver Award, the District Award of Merit, and the James E. West Fellow Award.

An outdoor enthusiast, Jim found great joy in nature. He could be found with family boating or camping, gathered around a campfire, hunting, and fly fishing, eagerly

passing these passions on to his family. Whether standing in a river with a fly rod, mentoring a troop of scouts, or gathering with family under a starry sky, Jim led with a strength that was kind, quiet, and completely reliable. He leaves behind the enduring witness of a life exceptionally well lived, rich in service, and deeply appreciated by all who knew him.

Celebration of Life will be held for Jim on Monday, August 10, 2026, 11am, Horan & McConaty Family Chapel, 3101 S. Wadsworth Blvd., Lakewood. Committal with full military honors will follow at 2:30pm, Fort Logan National Cemetery.

Family wishes donations be made to Scouting America Colorado Council in Jim's memory. Please click on this link to donate:

<https://donations.scouting.org/council/061/appeals>