



William Caldwell Brookbank

Colonel William C. Brookbank, 94 of Baldwinsville passed away peacefully Wednesday at the Veterans Hospital in Syracuse, NY. During his service, Colonel Brookbank was presented the nation's third highest award for service - The Legion of Merit. Major General Archie M. Burke, when presenting the award, said "Colonel Brookbank has distinguished himself by exceptional meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service to the United States as Seventh Air Force Director of the Tactical Air Control Center, North Sector, Son Tra, Republic of Vietnam." In addition to the Legion of Merit, Colonel Brookbank holds the Bronze Star, the Air Medal with Seven Oak Leaf Clusters, the Joint Service Commendation Medal and the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry. Colonel

Brookbank's distinguished, varied career began in June of 1940 when he enlisted in the Army. In December, 1942 he was made a Flight Officer upon graduation from flight school as a Staff Sergeant and commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the US Air Force in October, 1943. He then served as a Fighter Pilot following his commission, flying P-40 Hawks and P-47 Thunderbolts in North Africa and Italy during World War II. He flew with the 317th Fighter Squadron of the 325th Fighter Group. The Colonel separated from active service in July, 1945 where upon he played semi-professional baseball, but was recalled to active duty from his reserve position and reentered the Air Force as a First Lieutenant in March, 1948 at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. After his recall to active duty, Colonel Brookbank flew transport aircraft and served in Korea during the Korean Conflict from 1952 to 1953. He later participated in an exchange program with the Royal Canadian Air Force from March, 1958 to June, 1960. Served two tours of duty with NORAD at Hancock Field, Syracuse, NY. The next overseas tour was again in Korea from November, 1962 to December, 1963. From Korea, Colonel Brookbank traveled to Winston-Salem Air Force Station in North Carolina to assume the duties of Installation Commander. He was reassigned as Commander of Ft. Fisher Air Force Station, North Carolina before being sent to Rome, Italy where he attended the NATO Defense College. He remained in Rome as Assistant to a Deputy Commander for Air Defense in the NATO Forces. The next assignment was as Director of Air Operations, Monkey Mountain, Vietnam during a tour of duty in Southeast Asia. Upon his return, Colonel Brookbank was made Commander of the 817th Air Defense Group at Kingsley Field, Klamath Falls, Oregon from which he retired.

He was predeceased by his loving wife of 62 years Helen in 2010 and 6 brothers and sisters. Survived by his daughters, Jennifer Johns-Laupheimer of Baldwinsville and Joan (Guy) Arkut of Prosper, Texas; 5 grandchildren: Peter Johns, Heather (Timothy) Slavik, Joshua (Tara) Johns, Daya (John) Whitham and Christian Catalini; 6 great grandchildren and a special friend Mike Vinciguerra.

Calling hours will be held on Tuesday, August 18th from 10 am – 11 am in Temple Baptist Church, 2295 Downer Street, Baldwinsville with a Funeral Service to follow at 11 am. Entombment with Military Honors at Greenlawn Cemetery in Warners. In lieu of flowers donations can be made to: Team Red, White & Blue, 1110 W. Platt St., Tampa, Florida 33606 a non-profit organization for Veterans or Temple Baptist Church.

The Brookbank family would like to thank everyone at the VA Hospital for our father's wonderful care over the past few years of his life and a special thanks to his friends at Temple Baptist Church.