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**Deceased: Retired Col. James K. Johnson, 'double ace' fighter pilot**

**Date: September 3, 1997**

Retired Col. James K. Johnson, a highly decorated "double ace" fighter pilot who became the first commander of supersonic B-58 bombers at what was Carswell Air Force Base in Fort Worth, will be buried today in Arlington National Cemetery.

Col. Johnson died in Las Vegas, Nev., on Aug. 22 after a long bout with cancer, his son, James Johnson Jr., said yesterday. He was 81.

Col. Johnson, who retired from the service in 1963, held several positions in the aerospace industry, including a long stint with General Dynamics in Fort Worth where he worked on the F-111 project.

During his command of the 43rd Bomb Wing at Carswell from 1959 to 1961, his B-58 Hustlers set nine world speed records. One bomber flew from New York to Paris in 3 hours, 19 minutes.

"He was an all-Air Force type of a guy and one hell of a pilot," said retired Gen. Paul Krause, 74, of Fort Worth, who served under Johnson at Carswell as chief of air training.

Forming the B-58 wing was an enormous undertaking, Krause recalled.

"The airplane was way ahead of its time - the first supersonic bomber, and we were the first wing to have them," he said. "Problems had to be ironed out before it could be a smooth operation. It flew like a fighter and maneuvered like a fighter so it was logical that they selected a person with fighter experience to command the wing. " A native of Arizona, Col. Johnson joined the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1939 after attending the University of Arizona and playing several seasons for a Boston Red Sox minor-league baseball team. He graduated from San Antonio's Kelly Field Advanced Flying School in 1940.

In World War II, he commanded the 48th Fighter Bomber Group in support of Allied troops invading Germany, flying P-47s.

As a wing commander during the Korean War, Col. Johnson was called the "Mayor of Sabre Jet City" by Stars and Stripes, downing 10 MiG-15s in an F-86 Sabre jet fighter - twice the required number of kills to win "ace" status.

Col. Johnson flew more than 150 missions in each of the two conflicts and was awarded numerous decorations, including the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Silver Star with cluster, the Distinguished Flying Cross with two oak clusters, the Legion of Merit with cluster, the Air Medal with 19 oak leaf clusters, Presidential Unit Citation and the Korean Presidential Citation.

His exemplary war record led to Col. Johnson being featured in the History Channel documentary, Most Decorated Aces of the Korean War, which brought a bumper crop of fan mail in his last years, relatives said.

Moving to the Las Vegas area after retiring from General Dynamics, Col. Johnson became a casino host at the Aladdin hotel in 1979, the year he married his third wife, Sylvia. His previous two marriages ended in divorce, his family said.

Aside from his widow, Col. Johnson is survived by a brother, a son, five daughters, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

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