



# Colonel Joseph L Laughlin

JUN 26, 1917 - FEB 17, 2006



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Colonel Joseph L. Laughlin, (U.S.A.F. Retired), at age 88 slipped the surly bonds of earth and joined his former aviators on Friday, February 17, 2006. Son of Charles A. and Gertrude I. Laughlin and born in Grand Island, NE on June 26, 1917, he attended Univ. of Nebraska prior to entering Flying Cadet training at Spartan School of Aeronautics in Tulsa, OK. Commissioned as a 2Lt. in Jul. 1940 at Kelly Field, TX with an initial assignment to Wheeler Field, HI, he was transferred to Westover Field, MA for the formation of the 362nd Fighter Grp. flying P-47 Thunderbolt aircraft. The Grp. was subsequently transferred to the European Theatre in Nov. 1943. European operations included combat assignments in England and multiple combat assignments in France and Germany including close air support operations for Gen. George S. Patton's Third Army during Battle of the Bulge. He assumed command of the 362nd Fighter Grp. in Aug. 1944 and was promoted to Colonel in Nov. 1944. He was credited with 3 air victories and the sinking of 1 German light cruiser. Worldwide post-war assignments included the Pentagon in Washington D.C., Chief Air Force Section MAAG Taiwan, Wing Commander 506th Tactical Air Command (TAC) Fighter Wing at Tinker AFB OK, Commander Combat Crew Training Wing at Nellis AFB NV, Chief of Staff 12th Air Force in Waco TX, Director of Training TAC Headquarters at Langley AFB VA, Chief of Staff 17th Air Force at Ramstein AFB Germany, Deputy Commander Air Forces 314th Air Division Korea, and Senior Air Force Advisor U.S. Army Field Artillery Center Ft. Sill OK. Graduated from Air Command and Staff School in 1948 and Air War College in 1952. Retired from active duty after 30 years service in Nov. 1969. Decorations awarded include Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Medal with 15 Oak Leaf Clusters, American Defense Service Medal with 1 Bronze Star, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic/Pacific Campaign Medal with 1 Bronze Star, European African Middle Eastern Campaign



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Medal with 7 Bronze Stars, World War II Victory Medal, Army of Occupation Medal, Presidential Unit Citation with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Force Longevity Service Award and Clusters for 30 years and French Croix De Guerre with Palm. Married Oct. 1945 to Audrey Jean (McElroy) Laughlin. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to Air Force Museum Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 33624, Wright Patterson AFB, OH 45433. Include the name of the honoree, your name and address, and the name and address of the family to be notified. An acknowledgment will be sent to you, the donor, and the appropriate family will be notified of your generosity. Additionally, an entry will be recorded in the automated donor book of record. Donations may also be sent to the church or charity of your choice. A memorial service will be held on Sunday, February 26, 2006 at 1:00 P.M. at the Floral Haven Chapel in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. Survived By: his wife Audrey of Claremore, OK, son Bruce and Mary Jo of Tulsa, OK, son Craig and Janice with granddaughters Jennifer and Jamie of Lewisville, TX, daughter JoAnn Keirse and grandson Collin of Oklahoma City, OK and daughter Kelly and Chris Rooker with grandson Robert and granddaughter Elizabeth of Oklahoma City, OK.



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