

# Obituary

## Col. Donald Herman Retzlaff, USA(Ret.)

### Mar 29, 1934 - Jun 8, 2022



Don was born on March 29, 1934 in Casco, WI to Clifford and Myrtle (Englebert) Retzlaff. He received his biology degree from St. Norbert's College in Green Bay in 1956, and he was commissioned into the US Army Medical Service Corps upon graduation. He entered active duty in the Medical Service Corp and attended the US Army Aviation School. On August 24, 1955, he married Lorraine Marie Jacobs. They raised three sons, Kelly, Scott and Steve, and one daughter, Janine.

Don spent 23 years in the US Army as a Medical Service Corp aviator. He did a tour in Korea and two tours in Vietnam. During his service in Vietnam he was the first aviator to do a hoist mission lifting a wounded soldier from the jungle. In addition to his tours, he was the Aviation Staff Officer in the Surgeon General's office in the Pentagon and a Battalion Commander at Ft. Meade MD. He retired from the Army in 1980. During his time in the Army, Don received numerous awards to include the following: the Master Aviator's Badge, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Army Commendation Medal and 20 Air Medals.

After retiring, Don spent his spare time pursuing many hobbies. He restored numerous vintage cars, antique tractors, antique player pianos and vintage clocks. He also built the family cabin in West Virginia as an adjustment from military life to civilian life. Each year for the past 15 years, Don spent several months making beautiful games crafted of different woods for his grandchildren and friends. He was also a faithful volunteer for their church, Most Holy Rosary, doing handyman jobs. His 'never bored motto' was "Accomplish something, no matter how small, each and every day".

Don is survived by his beloved wife of 66 years, Lorraine, and his three sons, Kelly of Pittsburgh, PA, Scott and his wife Donna of Hughesville, MD, and Steve and his wife Amy of Strasburg, VA. Don has four grandchildren; Shelby (Richard) Harrington, Cliff Retzlaff, Brenden Retzlaff and Devin Retzlaff. In addition to his four grandchildren, Don has one great grandchild, Kaelyn Harrington and one step-great grandchild, Christopher Harrington. Don was preceded in death by his father, Cliff, his mother, Myrtle, his daughter Janine, and his grandson Cliff. He is also survived by his sister Diane Carroll of San Francisco, CA, Merlin (Bonnie) Retzlaff of Green Bay, WI, several cousins, nieces, and nephews.

Relatives and friends are invited to Col. Retzlaff's Life Celebration on Wednesday, June 15, 2022 from 10 a.m. until Mass of Christian Burial will be offered at 11 a.m. at Most Holy Rosary Catholic Church - St. Joseph Center, 11700 Duley Station Road, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772. Interment with Military Honors at a later date at Maryland Veterans Cemetery, Cheltenham, MD.

Memorial Contributions can also be made to St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital or Spring Dell Center, Inc.