

Colonel Randolph Smith Reynolds III

USAFA Class of 1963

June 29, 1941 — January 25, 2026

Memorial Service — United States Air Force Academy Cemetery, April 28,
2026

This obituary was provided by Randy's family and preserved here from the summary and photo album compiled by classmate and class photographer Jimmie Butler.

Obituary

Randolph Smith Reynolds III, born in Anniston, Alabama on 29 June 1941, left this life for his next adventure on 25 January 2026.

While growing up he had a strong desire to fly, which ultimately led to his admission to the United States Air Force Academy to become part of the Class of 1963. After graduation, he went on to pilot training where he graduated first in his class and was eventually assigned to Japan in 1965 where he flew his favorite fighter jet, the F-105 Thunderchief, during his service in the Vietnam War. It is also where he met Vonna whom he later married in 1967. He served 8 years as an active-duty officer, at which time he traded active time for reserve duty allowing him time to earn his master's in aerospace engineering at the University of Arizona. When he finally retired as a Colonel from the Air Force, he had 31 years of service behind him along with a Legion of Merit Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, and the Air and Space Commendation Medal. Afterwards, he worked for McDonnell Douglas, then Vought Aerospace, and ultimately reaching his goal of working for NASA, where he was given the Exceptional Service Medal.

In 1999, Randy and Vonna settled in Prescott, Arizona, where he served as the Associate Dean of Aviation at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University while teaching aerodynamics until 2010. However, it was his attendance at USAFA that had the most profound effect on Randy; he was very proud of all of the members in his class and it is where the many friendships he maintained throughout his life were initiated, so for the next 63 years, he stayed an active member of his USAFA alumni group. Randy was also a published and prolific writer, having generated twelve books about these experiences as well as a few dramatical fictions and musings about his life with Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension.

Randy will be remembered as a storyteller, teacher of life lessons, mentor to his children, lover of the outdoors, and for his enduring faith in God. He will be immeasurably missed but his love and legacy remain strong in his family and many friends, who will continue to pass along everything they learned from him.

Randy is survived by his wife, Vonna Reynolds; brother, Perry Reynolds (Marilyn); sister, Katy Goodgame; and two children, Randy Reynolds IV (Allison) and Emily Stoneham (John).

A Celebration of Life service was held Saturday, April 25, at American Lutheran Church, Prescott, AZ, followed by a reception. A graveside service was held Tuesday, April 28, at USAFA, Colorado Springs, CO. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be sent to the Pulmonary Hypertension Association (www.PHAssociation.org), the Association of Graduates (m-usafa.giftlegacy.com), or the Yavapai Humane Society.





From left to right: Jimmie Butler, Bob Hall, Jim Hannam, Gordon Bredvik, Jim Kuhn, Vic Thacker, Ev Vaughn Joe Coates, Drue DeBerry, Art Johnson, Jim Fain, Bob Hayes, Stinky Steinbrink, Phil Tate and Lucky Ekman.