



Stephen Kianka

November 5, 1932 - February 15, 2020

Stephen Kianka, 87, of Enon, passed away peacefully at Danbury Senior Living Sat, February 15, 2020. He was born on November 5, 1932 in Trenton, New Jersey to the late John and Mary (Lengen) Kianka as the sixth of seven sons. On their Hopewell family farm, Steve grew tomatoes for Campbell's Soup, learned how to fix tractors and cars and grew a passion for the skies. Stephen retired with the rank of Major after 20 years in the US Air Force where he served his country as a B47, B57 and B52 Navigator- Bombardier. Steve then went on to further serve as a budget analyst and supervisor in the Air Force Logistics Command at Wright Patterson Air Force Base before retiring again to spend the winters in Englewood, Florida. Steve's love of his country was only paralleled by his love of family. On July 25, 1959 he married the love of his life, Mary Ann (Felix) Kianka whom he met at the Officers Club in Sacramento, CA. Steve is survived by his wife Mary Ann; two sons and daughters-in-law: Mark & Elizabeth Kianka of West Milton, OH and David Kianka & Misty Cooper of Springfield, OH; two daughters and sons-in-law: Karen & Kevin Batridge of Canby, OR and Suzanne & Matthew Holtkamp of Buford, GA; a brother and sister-in-law: William and Eileen Kianka; a sister-in-law, Valerie Kianka ; three grandchildren: Margaret Holtkamp, Annabelle Holtkamp and Claire Batridge; as well as numerous nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by five brothers and three sisters-in-law: John & Gertrude Kianka, Andrew & Virginia Kianka, Paul Kianka, Michael & Elsie Kianka, and Joseph Kianka. Steve enjoyed square dancing with his beloved

bride, was an officer and very active member of the Springfield Model Airplane Club, the RC Flyers Club of Florida and the Dayton Corvair Club. His other hobbies included bragging about his kids, fixing anything with a motor or engine, visiting the AF Museum, cutting the grass, spoiling his grandchildren and babying his '57 Chevy. There weren't very many things that Steve couldn't fix, even if it required duct tape or wire. His sense of humor, loyalty, discipline, and love will be sadly missed as his family and friends learn to live in a world where Steve no longer is here to draw out maps, give directions and recycle all the plastic. A funeral mass will be held on June 4, 2020 at 10:00 AM in St. Peter's Catholic Church, Huber Heights, with Father Ambrose Dabrozsi officiating. Burial will follow in Dayton National Cemetery with Military Honors. In lieu of flowers, the Kianka family ask that donations be made in Stephen's name to the Wounded Warriors Project. Adkins Funeral Home, Enon, is assisting the Kianka family with Stephen's final wishes.

Cemetery Details

Dayton National Cemetery

4100 West Third Street
Dayton, OH 45428

Previous Events

Mass of Christian Burial

JUN 4. 10:00 AM (ET)

St. Peter's Catholic Church
6161 Chambersburg Road
Huber Heights, OH 45424
<http://www.saintpeterparish.org/index.html>

Tribute Wall

TP

“ I was very saddened to hear of Steve's passing. He was an integral part of my early RC years with the SMAC in Donnelsville. Having someone like Steve to aid in flying skills was a great help to a 12 year old! I have since moved out of state, but enjoyed meeting both Steve and the SMAC crew for breakfast at Colliers on occasion when I returned to Ohio.

Another great memory I have was attending the Barnstorming Carnival event several years ago in July at the Springfield Municipal airport. I was able to spend time with Steve and Bob Braun; Steve regaled stories of his time in the service with the B-47.

He will be sorely missed, but I am grateful for the friendship I had with him!

Tim Provens - June 10, 2020 at 02:55 PM

KT

“ We were so sorry to hear of Steve's passing. I know he had a lot of health problems, but he never gave up and continued his activities. He was so helpful to any one who needed assistance. He was a loyal member of the Springfield Model Airplane Club, repairing the lawn mowers, helping with the field, etc.

We will miss seeing him every Wednesday at breakfast with the flying group! Great memories of him with Mary Ann and all the gang!

Kathy and Jeff Traub - June 05, 2020 at 02:48 PM

BP

“ I first met Steve and Mary Ann in Wichita, Kansas where Steve and I became crew members of a B-47 bomber. I had been a navigator-bombardier in a B-47. Steve replaced me in that important position when, after graduating pilot training and becoming a co-pilot, I would now be the radio operator and tail gunner. Steve was leery of me at first, but quickly learned that if there was something he needed for his job, he could find it in this former-navigator's bag.

Soon we became good and lifelong friends. Steve always wanted to become a pilot, but that didn't seem to be in the cards for him. He knew as much as, and maybe more than, I did about flying. One of his passions became building and flying model airplanes. He tried teaching me to fly his planes and allowed me to help retrieve his free-flight planes when we were on alert in Morocco. There was this time he had me buy a model building kit. I didn't know it at the time, but his reasoning for my purchase was so he could have the wheels from the kit for one of his planes. I believe he enjoyed repairing the ones that I crashed as much as he enjoyed flying them.

Another of Steve's passions was repairing and restoring automobiles; I took advantage of that since I was not a very good mechanic. He knew this, so when I would invite him over to look at a project I was working on, he would just push me aside and complete the job himself. What a great and very competent friend.

We parted as crew members too soon; he went into B-52s and I stayed in B-47s. Our friendship, however, remained intact, and our families got together as often as we could.

I knew Steve to be a loving, caring husband and father, a person of great integrity, and a wonderful friend to have had all these years. Steve--you left us too soon and you will be sorely missed. "Go rest high upon that mountain", as the words of a favorite hymn say; I know you will be first in line there. God speed.

Bill Palmer - February 24, 2020 at 11:55 AM

RR

“ My father died when I was just one year old, and I have no memory of him. My whole life has been searching for "father figures" I could admire and try to be like them, as surrogate fathers. Steve Kianka was the best one I ever had. Started with our relationship as B-52 Crewmembers at Homestead AFB.. He was a Radar Navigator, the most important member of a B-52 Crew, because it was his skill that got the bombs on the target, and everything else was subordinate. As pilot, I was merely a "chauffeur" to fly the aircraft according to his direction, to get to the target area so he could accurately drop the bombs. Takeoff's and landings, that was my job. Everything in between was his, and he did it better than anyone I ever flew with. But my respect and love for him went much further than flying and the USAF. I also loved and respected his role as a parent, I could see his interaction with his children, and tried my best to imitate that with my two sons. Same with his role as husband to a great woman. I learned so much from him while trying to be like him. We had common interests of course, Bluegrass music, automobiles, but mainly love of family, country. and patriotism. Nobody has affected my life as much as he, without any doubt.

Richard L. Jones, LtCol, USAF, retired - February 21, 2020 at 05:22 PM

JS

“ Steve and I spent a lot of time discussing aviation. I never made it into the air force like Steve did but we shared a common interest in aviation. I found it fascinating listening to Steve talk about flying in a B-57 jet bomber and doing a toss bombing practice with a dummy nuclear weapon from a verticle climb then rolling over and getting the heck out of the area before the bomb went off.

We spent a lot of time together at a number of car shows especially the Orphan Car Shows at Young's dairy. Steve was one of the active members when it came to our club's special events. He was usually there. Being vice president of the Corvair club he was always at the meetings except during the winter when he and Mary Ann spent time in Florida. We both shared a love for ice cream. A stop at Burger King for a soft cone after the club meeting was a common practice for us. Jim Stukenborg, Dayton Corvair club

James Stukenborg - February 20, 2020 at 12:01 PM

KC

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Kevin Clark - February 19, 2020 at 09:36 PM