

# AVIATION WALL OF HONOR



*Benjamin C. Mukkala, Major, USAF, ret.*

## **Major Benjamin C. Mukkala**

Ben Mukkala was born in Marquette, Michigan on November 15, 1929. He was raised in Marquette and Harvey, graduating from Gravaeret High School in 1947. With the start of the Korean War in 1950, he enlisted in the United States Air Force as a Private. He received training in electronics and was stationed at Carswell Air Force Base in Fort Worth, Texas. He worked in Electronic Counter Measures and flew occasionally as a

crewmember in B-36 "Peacemaker" ten engine (six reciprocating and four jet engines) bombers.

Rising to the rank of Staff Sergeant he applied for and was accepted as an Officer Candidate. He was commissioned a Second Lieutenant and entered pilot training. He graduated as a jet fighter pilot. He instructed instrument flying for several years in an F-86 interceptor school. He was then selected to be an Aircraft Commander in B-47 "Strato-Jet" bomber in the Strategic Air Command. After several years flying the B-47, which included duty in Europe, he applied for and was accepted as an Aircraft Commander in the B-58 "Hustler", a four engine supersonic jet bomber.

After several years flying the B-58s, he was selected to attend the Air Force Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama. Upon

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graduation he trained in F-4 "Phantom" jet fighter-bombers and was assigned to a project code named "Igloo White" in Vietnam. Igloo White involved the use of electronic eavesdropping devices placed at strategic locations throughout South Vietnam and North Vietnam and the whole of Southeast Asia. He served as a Flight Commander in the 25<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Squadron, 8<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing, flying over one hundred combat missions.

While serving in Southeast Asia, he was awarded thirteen Air Medals, two Distinguished Flying Crosses, a Bronze Star, and a recommendation for a Silver Star.

Returning to the United States he was assigned as Commander, Base Operations and Training, at Grissom Air Force Base in Indiana. He retired in 1970 with the rank of Major. Ben holds several civil aviation flying and instructor ratings including an Airline Transport Pilot Rating. He has been active in corporate flying, commercial aviation, air ambulance work, and "bush" flying in Canada.

Ben is a graduate of Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana and has authored several books. He is the father of a son, two daughters, two stepsons, five stepdaughters and several grandsons and granddaughters. As of this writing he lives with his wife, Dorothy, in Harvey, just south of Marquette.

TJ Mudge, Jan. 2004