



Colonel Robert Max Blacker, 89, of Lubbock, passed away on June 7, 2014 in Lubbock at Carillon. A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. on June 14th at the Combest Chapel at 2210 Broadway in Lubbock.

Bob was the second child born to John Doyle and Marian Louise Blacker on November 13, 1924 in Waveland, Indiana. He graduated from Eden High School in 1942 and as soon as he turned 18, he signed up for the Aviation Cadet program. On February 8, 1944, he graduated from the program as a Second Lieutenant and received his pilot wings. On March 27, 1944, he flew his first flight with his new B-17 Bomber crew. On June 22, they arrived at Nuthampstead, England and joined the 398th Bomb Group H. They were assigned to the 602nd Squadron. They flew their first mission on June 27, 1944. Over the next few months, they flew a total of 35 missions, mostly to Germany and France. Remarkably, he flew 34 of these missions before his 20th birthday. Bob earned an Air Medal, three oak-leaf clusters, and the Distinguished Flying Cross for his service in WWII.

After the war, Bob went to instructor's school and learned to fly the T-28 and the T-33. While instructing Aviation Cadets to fly out of Webb Air Force Base, located west of Big Spring, he met the first love of his life. Bob had his first date with Betty Mary Fillingim, a schoolteacher at Coahoma High School, on January 5, 1955. They fell in love very quickly and were married at New Home Baptist Church on August 14, 1955. Soon after, he requested a transfer to Chanute AFB at Rantoul, Illinois to attend the Aircraft Maintenance Officer's Course. He was assigned to the Mobile Training Wing as Detachment Commander and in January 1958, received his orders to report to Kadena Air Base on the island of Okinawa. In 1960, they were transferred to Lowry AFB, outside of Denver where Bob became a Test Pilot and a Maintenance Division Disaster Control Officer.

In December of 1962, they were stationed at Reese AFB in Lubbock where Bob was the Flight-line Maintenance Officer. He was qualified to fly the T-38 Talon and their base soon transitioned out of the T-33's. In January 1965, he received his orders to report to Headquarters United States Air Force Europe (USAFE) at Lindsey Air Station in Wiesbaden, Germany where he spent three years as the Chief of the Maintenance Inspection Branch of the ORI (Operational Readiness Inspection) Team.

In 1968, he moved his family back to Lubbock but he was immediately reassigned to the Udorn Royal Thai Air Base in northern Thailand. Bob became the Air Force Liaison Officer in support of the Vietnam War. He transferred back to Reese in April of 1969 where he was the Chief of Maintenance until his retirement in March of 1970, after 27 years of service and 4,333 total hours of flight time.

Bob sold real estate for a few years and purchased Southside Automotive, a NAPA auto parts store in August 1972. Their family's next and toughest battle was just beginning. Betty was diagnosed with cancer, and after a 12-year battle against the cancer, Betty passed away on August 24, 1982.

After their kids were grown, Bob joined an RV Club and started traveling. Although Bob's love for Betty never faded, he met his second love, Margaret Mason, on an RV trip in March of 1988 and they were

married on August 1, 1988. They purchased a winter house in Lakeland, Florida and in 1992 moved to Hot Springs Village, Arkansas. In 2001, they moved to Carillon in Lubbock. On April 25, 2012, Margaret passed away.

Col. Blacker enjoyed traveling, fishing, spending time with family, and playing golf but the passion that truly filled him with joy was always flying. He found real satisfaction and accomplishment through teaching Aviation Cadets to fly; seeing them all receive their pilot wings was an absolute thrill for him.

Robert Max Blacker was a courageous and selfless man. He went out of his way to care for others and there was absolutely nothing he wouldn't do for his loved ones. He was a blessing to everyone who encountered him, and he will be greatly celebrated and deeply missed.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents, John and Marian Blacker, his brother Rex Blacker, his first wife, Betty Mary Blacker, and his second wife, Margaret Mason Blacker. He is survived by his children John David Blacker and wife Rebecca of Coppell, Mary Angelyn Summers of Lubbock, Robert Daniel Blacker and wife Elaine of Rowlett; five grandchildren, Aron Douglas Summers and his fiancé Shelby Kloiber of Lubbock, Terron Ray Summers and wife Jamie of Lubbock, Caitlyn Nicole Blacker of Austin, Cory Dalan Blacker of Lubbock, Shaunee Dannon Maclaskey and husband Sean of The Colony, Severin Scott Bartlett and Reese Franklin Bartlett of Rowlett, and one great grandson on the way, Declan Atom Maclaskey.

The family requests memorials to be made to the Wounded Warrior Project (www.woundedwarriorproject.org), The American Cancer Society (www.cancer.org), or Carillon *LifeCare* Community (carillon.cc).