

Lt Col Thomas J. Laut

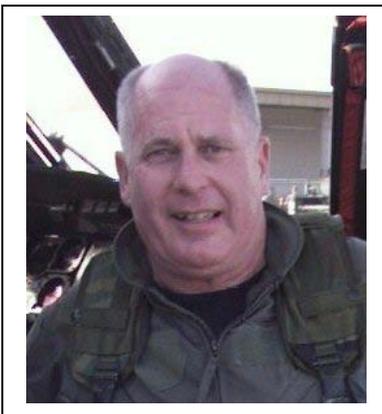
2 December 1944– 11 November 2009

Lt Col Thomas J. Laut passed away peacefully in his San Ramon home, surrounded by family and friends, after a short battle with cancer. Tom was adored and will be missed by his daughter Jennifer Rice and son Aaron Laut. He is also survived by brother, Larry Laut; former wife, Nina Irvin; son-in-law, Chris Rice; and a multitude of friends, family, and associates.

Son of Kenneth and Dorothy Laut (both deceased), Tom was born in Massachusetts where he spent much of his childhood and adult life. He grew up primarily in Ohio and graduated from West Lafayette High School in 1962. In his youth, he spent summers at his beloved family cabin in the Berkshires, became an Eagle Scout, and worked as a camp counselor at Camp Chingachgook located near Lake George in New York.



Tom graduated from Ohio State University in 1968, shortly before entering the U.S. Air Force as a commissioned officer which began a dedicated military career. He quickly distinguished himself as both a fixed wing and later a combat helicopter pilot. His professional and heroic combat rescue service brought him many military honors and awards recognition including the Silver Star and the Distinguished Flying Cross. His 32-year military career, which spanned both the U.S. Air Force and California Air National Guard assignments, took him all over the world and touched many lives. He was a 20-year veteran of the 129th Rescue Wing located at Moffett Field, California, where he also served as an Instructor Pilot. His humanitarian rescue and life saving "anytime, anywhere" efforts over both land and sea continued until his retirement in 2000. His service brought great credit upon himself, the State of California, and the United States of America. He was the epitome of a Citizen Soldier. Shortly after retiring he also enjoyed a brief employment with Southwest Airlines.



Tom had a love of road trips and travel, the outdoors, antiques, the following of current events and financial markets, and animals. Since retiring, he most enjoyed spending time visiting family and friends. An avid reader and lifelong learner, Tom could be counted on to have knowledge of and discuss happily most any topic. His keen insight, unique sense of humor, strength of character, and indisputable integrity enriched many people. His warm heart made those fortunate enough to know him honored to share in his all too brief life.

A celebration memorial was held on the NASA parade grounds at Moffett Field, California, on December 5, 2009. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Sacramento SPCA, American Cancer Society, or other favorite charity of choice.