



Roger Thomas McNamara

February 13, 1939 - February 19, 2025

Roger Thomas McNamara, age 86 of Jackson, Ohio passed away on Wednesday, February 19, 2025 at the Grant Medical Center in Columbus, Ohio, of complications from multiple Traumatic Brain Injuries. He was a War Hero.

Born on February 13, 1939 in Baltimore, Maryland, to the late Leonard “Thomas” and Regina (nee Neville) McNamara, he was reared in Arlington, Va. After Wakefield and Gonzaga High Schools he graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point, George Washington School of Law (JD), and Georgetown University (LLM).

During the Cuban Missile Crisis he flew EC-121s low level 100' over the water tracking U2 missile locations in Cuba, dropping flares from his C-47 aircraft to protect ground troops from night attacks and to ensure Russian MIGs didn't fly too close to the U.S. He flew out of McCoy AFB, now the Orlando airport in Florida.

Roger was selected to serve at the White House as a military and social aide to President and Mrs Lyndon B. Johnson. He was responsible for coordinating the funerals with flyovers and highest military honors at Arlington National Cemetery for Virgil “Gus” Grissom, Ed White and Roger Chaffe who perished in the Apollo 1 disastrous fire. He also “lost” the morning suit for the groom-to-be of Luci Johnson when the men of the wedding party were getting dressed at Blair House. Roger had put it in a closet in a room upstairs that had been exclusively assigned to the groom.

Roger volunteered for Vietnam, as did Chuck Robb, another White House Aide who married Lynda Byrd Johnson. Roger flew 100 missions in the C-47 aircraft supporting our troops being attacked by Viet Cong, His Call Sign was Moonshine because he flew at night out of NaTrang. From DaNang, as a Forward Air Controller , a Covey FAC with a Call Sign of Covey Juliet, he flew 155 missions over North Vietnam in his Cessna 02 (which hangs today in the Air Force Museum in Dayton) to protect our troops by locating enemy targets and directing our fighter jets overhead to “come hit my smoke”. During this, his second tour in Vietnam, he attacked enemy supply routes from North to South Vietnam. He saved his flight pay and took his family, including his sister, a Catholic Nun, to Paris for two weeks.

He returned home from Vietnam through San Francisco enroute to Dulles and was spat upon in the airport. He removed his uniform.

Law school at G.W, was next; He graduated with Honors. Roger was re-awarded his Regular Commission and was assigned to Langley AFB Hampton, Virginia as a lawyer. Medical Malpractice became his specialty. He was also involved with Legal Assistance and the Magistrate's Court in Williamsburg, Va, It was here he met and married Sally Jones, a Speech-Language Pathologist. He also resumed his racquetball championship status with Rick Moschel, a local attorney.

On July 4, 1996, Sally and Roger flew to Madrid, Spain, for a three year assignment in the legal office at Torrejon AB, a Spanish base on which Americans were guests. Roger inherited the continued diffusing (as much as possible) of an international incident after a B52 bomber collided with a KC-135 refueling plane dumping 40,000 gallons of jet fuel on a poor farming town of Palomares. Four unharmed B28 hydrogen bombs crashed; Plutonium was scattered. Three did not detonate; the fourth was found three months later deep in the ocean. at 2,850 feet.

At Aviano AFB, Italy, Roger was assigned to duty as a Judge in USAF Courts Martial. It was their favorite assignment. Returning to the CONUS, He was selected by the USAF to return to law school to obtain a LLM in Employment

Law at Georgetown.

In 1984 he became Labor Relations Counsel at Warner-Robins AFB, Ga. At Wright Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio, he was the Chief Labor Relations Council dealing with 80,000 union members throughout the U.S.

Returning to the Pentagon in 1987 as Senior Ethics Counsel of the Air Force, Roger set and implemented ethics policy for 425,000 military and 196,000 civilians. He served on the Department of Defense committees that wrote the DOD-wide Joint Ethics Regulations and chaired a committee to develop ethics training for new, incumbent and departing employees writing a valuable section on Procurement Integrity. He testified before Congress on post-government employment legislation and gratuities.

At the Department of the Navy General Counsel's Office; Headquarters Command Counsel for Ethics was Roger's title. He was heavily involved in the Nominations/Confirmations process for Senior Naval Officers to include the Secretary of the Navy. He vetted all three star Generals and Commanders of the Navy and Marine Corps.

From there, Roger was detailed to NASA as Ethics Officer.

Later, he joined Raytheon Co., a Defense Contractor, as an Ethics Officer for the Mid-Atlantic states

As a Senior Advisor to the Society of White House Military Aides, Roger, Ambassador Abelardo Valdez, Andy Lawrence and Kenn Riordan wrote the original core values and organizational policies/bylaws to "guide us they sons and daughters, aright" forming the structure for the SWHMA for the next 25 years.

On December 24,2024, he and Ambassador Abelardo Valdez were recognized in Washington as the oldest military advisers to White House Military Aides.;Roger then was an Adviser Emeritus due to his health.

His military awards include the Distinguished Flying Cross; Air Medal with 13 Oak Leaf Clusters; Bronze Star; Meritorious Service Medal; Presidential Service Badge; Air Force Accommodation medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters

among others.

He was a faculty member in the Department of Justice's Ethics course for attorneys; the Army Judge Advocate General's course; panels at the Office of Government Ethics; a member at annual ethics conferences for ethics officials in the Executive branch; West Point Leadership conference at George Mason University; West Point MacArthur Society to remove all "Wokeness" from West Point; a Kentucky Colonel since 1965; the American Legion, a 50 year member of the Virginia Bar and US Supreme Court, He was a devout Catholic who attended Mass every day while at the Pentagon. Roger is survived by his sister, Dr. Nancy McNamara (Cliff) Ashburn, Va.; his brother Dr. John McNamara, Arlington, Va., his loving wife, Sally Jones McNamara Jackson, Ohio; Special "little sister" Lyla P Wagner; the Son he Never Had, Brett Hinsch; Brother-in-law Casey (Sue Grillo) Jones Jackson, Ohio; Sister-in-law: Jeanne Jones Jindra (Lou) Gallipolis, Ohio; Nephew: Chris (Mandy) Jones Clarksville Tenn.; Nieces Jenny Jones Wolford (Shane) Jackson, Ohio; Megan Miller, Jackson, Ohio ;Erin Hinsch Young Jackson, Ohio.

Cousins: Michael A Besche (Karen Taylor) Washington,DC; Dr. Frances McNeer Warner (Waverly, Ohio); Jerry Woodall Towson, Md.; Celie Neville Baltimore, Md., Matthew (Veronica) McNamara, Dunwoody, Ga. Cindy (Rich) Ockles, Milton Delaware; Christine (Chuck) Besche, Lewes ,Delaware; Tom Besche, Lewes Delaware, Michael Besche, Lewes, Delaware Vicki (Ralph) Snyder ,Maryland..

Grand Nieces: Ava Wolford Jackson, Ohio; Ari Jones;Clarksville Tenn.; Mikayla Ockles Milton Delaware;

Grand Nephews:Ben Ockles Milton, Delaware; Broxton Wolford Jackson,Ohio; Ty Jones Clarksville Tenn.; Cam Jones Clarksville Tenn. ;Trey Miller, Huntington, W. Va.; Reid Miller Jackson, Ohio; Bodhi Wolford Jackson, Ohio Cade Wolford Kent,State. Ohio.

A Celebration of Life will be held from 11-2 on Saturday, March 15, 2025 at the Mayhew Brown Funeral home with Deacon Emeritus Janie Karl and Father Thomas Herge officiating. Everyone is welcome to speak. Food and fellowship will follow in the Fellowship Hall of Christ Church just across the parking lot from the funeral home.

Burial with full military honors will be held following a Catholic Funeral mass on Ft. Meyer at Arlington National Cemetery at a later date with all funeral arrangements under the direction of the Mayhew-Brown Funeral Home, Broadway St. Jackson, Ohio 45640.

Condolences may be sent to the family at www.mayhew-brownfuneralhome.com.

Cemetery Details

Arlington National Cemetery

1 Memorial Ave
Arlington, VA 22211

Previous Events

Receive Friends

MAR 15. 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Mayhew-Brown Funeral Home
135 Broadway Street
Jackson, OH 45640
(740) 286-4161

Celebration of Life

MAR 15. 2:00 PM (ET)

Mayhew-Brown Funeral Home
135 Broadway Street
Jackson, OH 45640
(740) 286-4161

Tribute Wall

AJ

“ Dearest Sally, sending my heartfelt sympathy for your loss. May God wrap you in His Peace that passes all understanding knowing that Roger's was such an honorable life.... so well lived and so well loved.

Ann Johnson - March 02, 2025 at 12:15 PM

CC

“ Sally, I am so sorry for your great loss. You penned a beautiful tribute to honor your husband.

Carole Coyan - February 28, 2025 at 07:58 AM

CM

“ May the love of God surround you and your family during this difficult time,
May you come to know that the love of God is with you always,

May your memories of Roger Thomas McNamara, give you peace, comfort and strength...

Rest now in the arms of our Lord your mission on earth is complete. I thank you for your service to our Country and my Freedom. You will not be forgotten...
My thoughts
and prayers to the family of

US Air Force Veteran, Roger Thomas McNamara, is “A True American Hero” God Bless†

† Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13 †

Cheryl J Skinner Tri State Military Muse - February 26, 2025 at 09:12 AM

LW

“ Hello, my name is Lea Willett and I have known Rodger for a long time. I am only 18 but I grew up going to church with him. I remember on Sundays after church he would come over to my family and say hello. He always played a game with me and my sister where he would flip a quarter and we had to guess what side it would land on, heads or tails. No matter what we guessed we always somehow seemed to get it right. I never figured out what trick he pulled to make that happen, but it never failed to make me smile.

Lea Willett - February 25, 2025 at 09:15 PM