



## **CMSgt Alton O. Eckhardt USAF (Ret.)**

August 29, 1926 - December 25, 2018

Chief Master Sergeant Alton O. Eckhardt, USAF (Ret.) passed away peacefully on December 25, 2018 at the age of 92 years.

Alton was a fourth generation son of Hill Country pioneers who founded Fredericksburg, Texas in 1846, and he was a proud Son of the Republic of Texas.

In his early years he helped his family struggle through the Depression by becoming a proficient fisherman and hunter with a cane pole and a single-shot 22. His father would give him two bullets and instruct him to come home with two squirrels for dinner. At this early age, he developed a love of the outdoors and hunting that endured all his life.

He enlisted in the Air Force on January 8, 1949 and his first assignment took him to the hunter's paradise of Alaska. It was no surprise when he earned the Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon.

Air Force stripes came quickly for Alton, and it was on to an assignment in Wisconsin, where he met his love Jacqueline (Jackie) Blau at a dance hall in Madison.

They married on June 1, 1957 and a year later welcomed daughter Laurie,

followed by son Gregg in 1959. Their second son Gary joined the family in 1965.

The 1960s were an adventure in travel and living in exotic places, with Air Force assignments in England, California, and the Philippines. The family toured extensively throughout Europe and Asia and felt grateful for the Air Force lifestyle that offered exposure to different places and cultures.

Along the way he became a 4th Degree Knight of Columbus and very much enjoyed the Knights mission of promoting charitable work and rendering assistance to the sick and needy and their families.

Alton also served several tours in Vietnam, where he earned the Vietnam Service Medal and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal. When he returned he was awarded the Bronze Star for his service.

While in California he embarked on a hobby of restoring Model A Fords and returned two vehicles to pristine showroom condition. Alton and son Gregg tinkered with various cars for decades and attended many swap meets and car shows.

Alton was known for adding a comic dry wit to almost any situation. He had been assigned to provide support for a mission to put a man on the moon and on the night of the Apollo 11 moon landing, the kids were busy playing outside. He asked them to come inside and watch. They did as he asked, but not without many complaints. "I tell you," he said, "you can give these kids the man in the moon and they want something else!"

When Alton was preparing for retirement from the Air Force in 1972, he settled the family in San Antonio to be near his beloved Hill Country. For several years he and son Gregg operated a cattle ranching enterprise on a

large tract of land near the San Antonio airport. They rounded, branded, punched, and sold cattle at the Union Stockyards.

In 1974 he and Jackie started A&J Printing and Secretarial Service in the south tower of the GPM building at Central Park Mall. They quickly became well known in the business community for delivering high-quality services and printed materials, served up with Alton's unstoppable folksy wit.

However, Alton missed hunting and fishing, so he sold the business in 1980 and took a job with the American Sportsman's Club organizing and provisioning hunting leases. He was a natural at that. He also went on many hunting expeditions to destinations like Colorado and Maine and filled a spare room with trophies.

In 1991 he built a second home on the shores of Lake LBJ to pursue his fishing passion. He closely oversaw the construction of his vision of a comfortable and modern house, where the whole family could stay as well.

When twin granddaughters Allison and ToniMerie were born in 1992 to daughter Laurie and husband William Kincer, he became their full-time nanny so their parents could continue working. He dedicated all his daylight hours to their care for 2 years.

For the next 25 years his life centered on family, especially watching his grandchildren grow. He enjoyed spending time with ToniMerie and Allison at the lake, where he taught them to fish. He also enjoyed watching his young grandson Zane play. The car bug never left Alton. In later years he enjoyed polishing his Thunderbird and he assembled a complete collection of Texas license plates.

Alton was variously known to people as Dad, Huggie Bear, Opa, Uncle Sarge, Tex, and Chief, but all who knew him will remember his gentle kindness, his keen intellect, his love for this country, and his dedication to family.

Alton's death marks the passing of a generation. He was preceded in death by his sister Opal Haufler and his five brothers, Harvey, Elgin, Wesley, Melvin, and Hubert.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Jackie; his daughter Laurie and son-in-law William Kincer, granddaughters Allison and ToniMerie; his son Gregg; and his son Gary and daughter-in-law Christine, and grandson Zane.

The family would like to thank Alamo Hospice, especially Alton's kind aide Sonia and nurse Harald.

Memorial services will be held on Thursday, January 3, at St. Matthew Catholic Church, 10703 Wurzbach Road. Visitation will begin at 12:30 p.m. followed by a funeral Mass at 1:00 p.m. Military Funeral Honors will follow at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery at 2:45 p.m. A reception and celebration of Alton's life will be held at The Charter Oaks Clubhouse, 3031 Oneida Drive at 4:00 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to The St. Matthew Catholic School Spirit Fund at 10703 Wurzbach Road, San Antonio, TX 78230.

# Cemetery Details

## **Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery**

1520 Harry Wurzbach  
San Antonio, TX 78209

# Previous Events

## **Funeral Mass**

**JAN 3.** 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

St. Matthew Catholic Church  
10703 Wurzbach Rd  
San Antonio, TX 78230

## **Committal Service**

**JAN 3.** 2:45 PM (CT)

Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery  
1520 Harry Wurzbach  
San Antonio, TX 78209

# Tribute Wall



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of CMSgt Alton O. Eckhardt USAF (Ret.).*



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December 31, 2018 at 11:49 AM



“ *Sacred Duty Spray was purchased for the family of CMSgt Alton O. Eckhardt USAF (Ret.).*



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December 30, 2018 at 10:09 PM



“ *Ricardo Maldonado lit a candle in memory of CMSgt Alton O. Eckhardt USAF (Ret.)*



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**Ricardo Maldonado** - December 29, 2018 at 01:22 PM

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“ I met CMSGT Eckhardt through his son Gary, while we were classmates at UTSA in the late 1980s. I have very fond memories of a very warm, kind, and friendly man. Rest in peace, Chief.  
SALUTE...

*Rick Maldonado*  
*Major, USAFRes*

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**Ricardo Maldonado** - December 29, 2018 at 12:32 PM