



## Col. Samuel Idrogo, Sr., USAF (Ret.)

February 15, 1935 - December 13, 2017

Retired Colonel, United States Air Force Reserves, Samuel Idrogo, was born in Laredo, Texas on February 15, 1935. He was born to a family from humble beginnings with three sisters and one brother. As a young child, Colonel Idrogo was always known to spend a lot of time with model airplanes. He attended Laredo Martin High school and had a strong interest in mathematics and science courses. He was a distant runner on the track team and was selected as ROTC Cadet of the Year and voted "Best All-Around Male." In his senior year, Colonel Idrogo served as Class President. He was selected as the Executive Officer of the Junior ROTC as well as President of the Pan American Student Forum. He was one of two seniors selected to attend Texas Boys State for outstanding students. He also became President and co-founder of the Laredo Junior LULAC (The League of United Latin American Citizenship) from 1953-1954. Colonel Idrogo graduated high school in 1953 in the top 5% of his class. In his high school yearbook, he was selected to be, "One Most Likely to Succeed."

Colonel Idrogo attended The University of Texas in Austin and earned academic scholarships. He carried a class schedule of 18 to 21 hours a semester and worked 6 days a week between the hours of 5:00pm to midnight as a waiter, cook and manager for a hamburger chain during his junior and senior college years. In 1958, Colonel Idrogo graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Aeronautical Engineering and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Air Force. Poor eyesight kept Colonel Idrogo

from flying so he became an aircraft maintenance officer. He separated from active duty and began a prestigious civilian career at Kelly Air Force Base in 1957 as a Material Management Directorate GS5 Aerospace Engineer.

While building and raising a family, in 1964, Colonel Idrogo was promoted Aerospace Engineer Supervisor at Kelly Air Force Base and enrolled at St. Mary's University at night to work on his Master's Degree in Business Administration, which he received in 1969.

In 1972, Colonel Idrogo was promoted to Supervisor Mechanical Engineer and in 1973 his title changed to Supervisor of Quality Assurance Specialist. He held other various management positions; he was the chief of the Quality and Reliability Assurance Division and the chief of the Technical Services Branch. In 1976, Colonel Idrogo was promoted to GS-15 as Chief of Aeronautical Design and Performance Analysis Section, the first Mexican - American to hold that position. He managed over 100 engineers, equipment specialists, and administrative personnel. He was named as the Executive Assistant for external affairs to the Commander, San Antonio Air Logistics Center in January 1984 and he served in this position with the distinction until he retired in June 2000.

Colonel Idrogo enrolled at the University of Texas in Austin and completed his doctoral coursework and dissertation requirements towards his PhD in Public Management and Operations Research. He graduated from numerous federal executive courses, to name a few, such as Legislative Operations Roundtable for Executives, The Executive Developmental Seminar and The Senior Executive Seminar. He was also a graduate of the Air War College (Seminar) and of the first-ever USAF Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program which culminated with an Office of Personnel Management SES certificate.

Colonel Idrogo served over 30 years combined active and reserve time in the United States Air Force. He served with the rank of Colonel in a General Officer position, as the Mobilization Assistant to the Commander of the Logistics Operations Center, Headquarters, Air Force Logistics Command,

Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. He received numerous awards including the Civil Service Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, Air Force Meritorious Service Medal and Air Force Legion of Merit.

An article by Ross Day, Lackland AFB Public Affairs officer, quoted Major General Bielowicz, the Air Logistics Center commander, "As one of the finest individuals you'll ever know, he is a quiet, unassuming professional, our Kelly version of E. F. Hutton. When Sam speaks, people listen because he is one of the wisest and most caring leaders you're ever encountered. Having been a part of Kelly over half its existence, Samuel Idrogo himself has become a kind of Kelly Institution; a wonderful professional who represented the finest Kelly has to offer. Samuel Idrogo's life time ambition was to pilot the aircraft."

Along with his professional career, Colonel Idrogo was actively involved in community affairs as board member of the United Fund, Guadalupe Community Center and the Board of Trustees of the San Antonio library. He was also Chairman of the Board of San Antonino Credit Union now known as Credit Human. Other service includes: member Target '90/Goals for the San Antonio Development Committee, the San Antonio Private Industry Council, the Mechanical Engineering Visiting Committee at the University of Texas at Austin, and was a charter member of the Advisory Committee of the College of Sciences and Engineering at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Colonel Idrogo also served as President of the Kelly Management Association for the year 1981-82, as Vice President of the Board of San Antonio Neighborhood Youth Organization, Vice President of the San Antonio New Schools Development Foundation, and as Board member of the San Antonio Education Foundation, chaired by his long-term friend Major General (Ret) Richard Smith. He was active at St. Matthew Catholic Church along with many more organizations. Over the years, Colonel Idrogo received numerous outstanding performance awards and letters of appreciation.

In addition, Colonel Idrogo was an avid runner of marathons and participated

in the New York and Boston Marathons on several occasions. He placed in the Boston Marathon in his age group. He later became the race director of the San Antonio Marathon. He served as a military liaison to the San Antonio Marathon Organizing Committee from 1988 to 2000. He served on the Board of the South Area Council of the S.A. Greater Chamber of Commerce and the Senior Games Organizing Committee.

He was married on January 25, 1959 to Sylvia Garza Idrogo (surviving spouse), and had 6 children; Inez (Rick), Sammy (Peggy), Yvette (Tim), Michael, Sandra (Brian) and Richard. He is also survived by 13 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren.

#### Samuel Idrogo's Visitation/Rosary and Celebration Services:

Visitation on: Tuesday December 19, 2017.

Public Visitation: 6:00 to 7:00 PM.

Rosary Service: 7:00 to 8:00 PM

Mission Park Funeral Chapels North

3401 Cherry Ridge Dr.

San Antonio, TX 78230

Celebration Mass Services on:

Wednesday December 20, 2017 at 9:00 AM

St. Matthew Catholic Church

10703 Wurzbach Rd., San Antonio, TX 78230

Interment at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery at 10:15 AM followed by a reception at St. Matthew's Catholic Church.

Note: In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in memory of Samuel Idrogo Scholarship Fund to:

Martin High School  
Attention: Mrs. Delia Saenz,  
2002 San Bernado Ave.,  
Laredo, TX 78040

# Cemetery Details

## Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery

1520 Harry Wurzbach  
San Antonio, TX 78209

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC 19. 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM (CT)

Mission Park Funeral Chapels Cherry Ridge  
3401 Cherry Ridge Dr  
San Antonio, TX 78230  
(210) 349-1414  
<https://www.missionparks.com/>

## Rosary

DEC 19. 7:00 PM (CT)

Mission Park Funeral Chapels Cherry Ridge  
3401 Cherry Ridge Dr  
San Antonio, TX 78230  
(210) 349-1414  
<https://www.missionparks.com/>

## Memorial Mass

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DEC **20**. 9:00 AM - 9:45 AM (CT)

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

## Interment

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DEC **20**. 10:15 AM (CT)

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

# Tribute Wall

HF

“ Our sincerest condolences to the friends and family of Samuel Idrogo. In both his professional and personal life he lived in honor and integrity. It is with regret and apologies that my family were unable to attend the services, as we’ve just learned of his passing. I pray all is well with your family...  
Hugo Richer Jr and Family

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**Hugo R Richer Jr and Family** - October 02, 2018 at 12:24 PM

OM

“ Mr Idrogo was one of the best supervisors at the Logistics Center at Kelly AFB TX. His dedication, integrity, sincerity, and professionalism were absolutely the best.

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**O Martinez** - January 02, 2018 at 05:22 PM

AK

“ Sam was my Deputy when I was chief of the Engineering Division for a short time at Kelly in the early '80s. However, Deputy is a misnomer in this case, as Sam was truly "the power behind the throne." The place would have collapsed without Sam's guidance and the many times he kept me from making bone-headed errors. I considered him a good friend as well as a mentor.  
When I arrived at Kelly, I'd never eaten Mexican food before. At a luncheon we attended, Sam told me that the banana leaf husks around the tamales weren't to be eaten, thereby saving me a lot of embarrassment--and a lot of chewing.  
I will never forget him, and the world is poorer without him. I'm sure that his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ met him with open arms, and told him "Well done, good and faithful servant."  
Al Koppen, Col. USAF (Ret.)

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**Al Koppen** - December 24, 2017 at 09:44 PM

JH

“ I'm so sorry I was unable to attend the services. I am taking care of my mother who has Alzheimer's that keeps me from going anywhere! My deepest sympathy & condolences to the Idrogo family! May God bless each of you. Mr. Idrogo was a fine man & father!

Jane Hernandez - December 21, 2017 at 02:59 AM

BL

“ Sending our Heartfelt Condolences to the Idrogo Family. So sorry we were not able to attend the services as Raul is still hospitalized. We send our love to each one of you. We loved Sammy and will miss him. May he forever Rest In Peace...  
May God bless you all.  
Raul, Bitsy, Lynda & Leslie Lugo.

Bitsy Lugo - December 19, 2017 at 04:44 PM



“ Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Col. Samuel Idrogo, Sr., USAF (Ret.).



December 19, 2017 at 11:35 AM

CS

“ Sam was the first supervisor that I met and interviewed with at Kelly AFB. He impressed me then and every time I talked to him afterwards for 30-something years. Always a gentleman, easy to talk to, honest, and respectful of others. One of the best people I've ever met. Charlie Suehs

Charles B. Suehs - December 19, 2017 at 10:22 AM

SR

“ I got to know and work with Sam through his running. I volunteered with him on the San Antonio Marathon and his volunteer work at Night in Old San Antonio. His NIOSA booth was always full of runners hoping to get a free beer. Later in his life, Sam became a regular course marshal at the weekly Wednesday Night Zoo Run. We could always count on Sam being at "Sam's Corner," with his good friend, Mario Valencia, being at "Mario's Mile" directing the runners and keeping them safe from traffic.

Sam's contribution to running community is greatly appreciated and missed.

Thanks, Sam!

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**Sally Rios** - December 18, 2017 at 01:57 PM

WK

Sam and I were running partners for many years. I owe so much to Sam for his friendship and mentoring. He pushed me as a runner and helped me to have much success in running and business. We shared many running moments together from training, to racing, to the experience of some of the biggest Marathons. Boston being the icing on the cake. But the conversations about life while we ran together will be What I treasure. He was a Great man. A Great friend. And the Best running partner. Thank you Sammy. Bill Keiffer

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**William Keiffer** - June 06, 2020 at 08:55 AM

“ [The following was emailed to Mr. Samuel Idrogo on Veteran’s Day, about 13 years ago--it still holds.]]

*Sent: Thursday, November 11, 2004 5:44 PM*

*To: Sam Idrogo*

*Subject: Honorable Veteran*

*“It all started when I joined the MHS ROTC and I was selected as Cadet of the Year in my freshman year. The rest is history.”*

*With those words you very briefly, but quite eloquently, provided a nanosecond snapshot (compared figuratively to the 1/60th of a second shutter speed of 35 MM SLR cameras) of your military career’s inception. At another time you mentioned to me that sometimes you feel that what you have done in the military “wasn’t enough” because you did not go overseas to fight the enemy. [That is what I understood.]*

*Knowing you, I feel that you may forget what hundreds of people must have already told you—that what you have accomplished and are still doing in other areas (SACU, marathons, etc.) are way above and beyond your ‘call of duty.’ You set and attain very high goals. I’ll begin with your military career.*

*You took high school ROTC very seriously—as it should be—and made that frame of mind work for you. You excelled there and in AFROTC at UT Austin. As an officer in the U. S. Armed Forces, you attained high rank. Very likely, here in the states you did a lot more harm to our enemies than if you had gone and fought them ‘hand to hand.’ Your weapons were your magnificent use of your upbringing, intelligence, education, training, and moral values. This “firepower” will outgun any old enemy any old time. As a famous great general is claimed to have said to his troops, “You don’t want to go out there and die for your country; you want the other bastards to die for their country.” [You were not honored at your retirement for nothing.]*

*You managed similarly outstanding deeds as a son and sibling, Martin High School student (and Tiger Legend), and then as a UT student and Texas Ex. You don't see this every day—or year for that matter. You are an excellent role model for many.*

*I am one of those many. During your high school days (you were also employed by the local theatre company) and graduation activities, was when I began considering attending college after graduating from high school. During your days as UT student, I considered attending The University after graduating. [You had us (my family including my grandmother) as guests in your apartment on Speedway—around where the George P. Sanchez Building sits now.]*

*I got nearby a couple of areas where you had been in high school (ROTC and class officer) and managed to earn a bachelor's degree at UT. [With me it was more by chance than by deed.] You set the bar too darn high and I could not clear it.*

*Therefore, my dear Sam, remember that you deserve all the credit that is due you and be proud of it, if for only one reason—you have sacrificed and earned it. May God continue to bless you and yours.*

*Very sincerely (but probably ineptly),  
/s/*

*[Mr. Idrogo's reply:]*

*Your commentary leaves me speechless [deleted]. I'll leave it at that by merely saying I am very fortunate to have you stun me with your knowledge of details of my life. May the good lord bless you for the high esteem in which you see me. You're proof that one is like others see us, not how we see ourselves.*

*With Best Regards,*

*SAM*

Nicolás - December 16, 2017 at 04:01 PM

MP

*Samuel, you were 14 years older than me, ever since I was young I admired you on your accomplishments you were beautiful best she always said that to me when I lived with her, we would see the 'T38' flying in Laredo we wave at the planes thinking it was you, Sam or Samuel I called you not uncle that because I always thought of you as my older brother, thank you for the memories we shared here in Wimberley, Galveston, at your home you will always be in my heart, as Gen. MacArthur said 'an old soldier never dies he only fades away...'*

Mario J Piña - December 17, 2017 at 10:59 AM

SW

*I love you dad and I miss you. You had so much to boast about but never did. You wore a humble heart. Quiet and resilient, focused and driven, and so very wise. I'm so proud of you daddy and I know you are putting angels to work in your new place. I can hear them sigh. Please watch over me from heaven and whistle me a special tune so that I know you are still there.*

Sandra Winter - December 18, 2017 at 12:04 AM

MH

*My condolences to the Idrogo family. Samuel Idrogo name is spoke of in our house of someone of great accomplishments. Everytime there is a conversation of school specifically math; Uncle Sam's name is brought up. See I have two boys that I want the best for. So when we Ana and I are trying to inspire them to do their best Ana brings up Sam's name and his accomplishments. I can see it in their eyes; and their eyes tell me they are inspired. So from one Father to another thank you Uncle Sam. By the way both our boys are in AP math and or pre AP in all other subjects. Uncle Sam you will always be an inspiration to us all and you will live on in our hearts and in our minds. You are the best of us. May GOD bless your family and see it that you continue to inspire those around him.*

*Mark & Ana Hessbrook*

Mark Hessbrook - December 18, 2017 at 07:29 AM

JD

*Sam was the best.*

*John C. Dinsmore*

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**John C. Dinsmore** - December 18, 2017 at 09:45 AM

EG

*Sam -- remember your recognition in ROTC - Martin High (Laredo)*

*Rest in Peace!!*

*Eddie J Garcia - Class of 55*

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**Eduardo J. Garcia** - December 18, 2017 at 12:19 PM

BM

*Sam Idrogo was the consummate professional. His concern and care for his coworkers at Kelly AFB positively impacted the mission but most importantly, it positively impacted the lives of thousands of our people. Thank you Sam for your years of dedicated service to our Air Force and Nation.*

*Bob Murdock*

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**Bob Murdock** - December 18, 2017 at 03:12 PM

CJ

*Sam was one of the finest gentleman we have ever met. He was always helpful, courteous and approachable. Each of us has had so many interfaces with Sam over the years and they were all positive. He was one of Kelly's finest. God bless the family. We know we will see Sam again in heaven.*

*Charles & Pat Jurek*

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**Charles jurek** - December 18, 2017 at 08:50 PM

PB

*Sam was such a kind and caring leader - a superb member of our community and our Air Force. We will always remember his legacy of excellence - excellence that he demonstrated each and every day. It was not only what he did but how he did it. Regardless of the time, the place, or the situation, Sam always had time for a kind word and a focus to genuinely help people. He always made a difference and showed the way by example. He will be missed by all, and always fondly remembered. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wonderful family and his many friends.*

*Maj Gen and Mrs. Paul L. Bielowicz, USAF (Ret)*

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**Paul and Melanie Bielowicz** - December 19, 2017 at 11:26 AM

GE

*Best Tio I ever had. You have an open space in heaven. Rest in peace and God Bless you and your family.*

*Mr. & Mrs. Gerardo(Jerry) L. Piña & family  
2208 Blaine St.  
Laredo, Texas 78043*

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**Gerardo(Jerry)** - December 20, 2017 at 09:13 AM

PW

*Dear Idrogo Family:*

*While serving with Sam at SACU, we made numerous trips to Washington, D.C. .... I was always impressed at how Sam was received & respected whenever we visited congressional offices ... by staff personnel as well as by congressmen ... most knew him on a first name basis.*

*Sam was a no-nonsense guy with a great sense of humor and led SACU for many years with distinction as Chairman of the Board.*

*God bless you all and God bless Sam.*

*Sincerely, Pat Wilson*

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**Pat Wilson** - December 27, 2017 at 01:51 PM