



George P. Gaines IV (Rocky)



I was born in Midwest City, OK while my Dad was stationed at Tinker AFB during the post WW II drawdown. Pretty soon we started moving and kept on that track until I went to high school in Annandale, VA.

The USAFA Class of 1968 was in the leading edge of a more relaxed approach to Academy discipline, and we made the most of it. After graduation I married the love of my life and went to pilot training at Vance AFB, OK, and won an assignment as a Forward Air Controller (FAC), flying the O-2A in Phu Bai, Republic of Viet Nam. It's unfortunate that our greatest assignments have to accompany bringing trauma to others; but that's the biz. I left Phu Bai in February 1971 and returned to Hurlburt Field, FL to train other FACs going to Southeast Asia.

Our squadron began to scatter as Viet Nam was coming to a close, and I went to the University of Arizona for a master's in Latin American Affairs. My follow on assignment was to the Panama Canal Zone, USAF Southern Command in the Plans Branch, then moved down the hall to work for the Commander as his Aide-de-Camp.

From there I served as an action officer in the Western Hemisphere Division, Plans, HQ USAF. Three years later I escaped to Sembach, GE as a FAC in the OV-10A. We were still in the cold war and had some fairly cynical views on the survival of our squadron. Fortunately, things cooled off and my family and I moved to Mountain Home, ID where I flew the F-111A and commanded the test detachment for the EF-111A.

Next, we moved back to Germany—Heidelberg—where I was Chief of the Plans Branch for the Fourth Allied Tactical Air Force, NATO. From Heidelberg we went to Maxwell AFB, AL where I attended the Air War College for one year and served as the Chair for the Chief of Staff, USAF for another year.

Next stop was Cannon AFB, NM as Deputy Commander for Operations, flying the F-111D and F-111G. The USAF was consolidating all F-111 aircraft from USAFE, SAC, and TAC (now ACC) to Cannon; so it was an interesting experience to help prepare the base for the huge influx. Finally, my fun meter pegged and I retired to Colorado; first to Evergreen as a consultant for a Boston-based company specializing in organizational development; then moving to Monument where I could see my Doolie room from my house!

My last work in Colorado was supporting the North American Aerospace Defense Command as an action officer working on bilateral military cooperation with Canada. I now sit in the middle of Kansas thinking of you beginning your journey. Good luck, and check six!

“Some of it's magic; some of it's tragic; but it's been a good life all in all.” *Jimmy Buffet*