



# David R Kline



My uncle, one of my childhood heroes, flew B-17s in the Pacific during WWII, so I was in love with airplanes from an early age. I was fortunate to grow up in Sturgis, SD, a short flight from Ellsworth AFB, and still remember being enthralled as B-36s and other aircraft made low passes over the town. After reading an article in [National Geographic](#) about USAFA, I was hooked.

After graduation and pilot training at Laredo AFB, TX, I was assigned to KC-135s at Wurtsmith AFB, MI. During my 4 years there, in addition to normal training, I flew in support of fighter deployments to and from Southeast Asia, did a tour at U Tapao RTAB, Thailand, and accumulated over 1200 hours, including 38 combat missions.

I left the Air Force in 1974 and went back to school while working a variety of part-time jobs. In 1978, I received an MBA from the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs with areas of emphasis in Accounting and I.T. Hewlett-Packard hired me in mid-1978, and, during a 25-year career with the company, I held a variety of management positions. There was a great deal of consolidation and down-sizing at H-P in the 1990s, but I was fortunate to be able to remain with the company in Colorado Springs and work in Finance, Facilities, Shipping, Production, Procurement, and Corporate Engineering.

The most important thing in my life is my family. Forty-eight years ago, I met the love-of-my-life in Greeley and, three days later, she agreed to marry me. We're still married and have one son, a VP with a content management company in Boulder, CO, an incredible daughter-in-law, and a 5-year-old grandson. In retirement, we own and operate a small property management company.

Whether you have a 30+ year career in the Air Force or separate as soon as you can, you will have life-long friends and comrades as a result of your USAFA experiences. Other than reunions and an occasional football game, I haven't had much to do with the Academy over the last 50 years. Yet, one of my great privileges has been to lead the effort to design a plaque honoring the contributions of graduates who served as KC-135 crew members during the Vietnam War. After its dedication later this year, it will be hung at the Class of 1970's Southeast Asia Pavilion.

What advice could I give looking back over 50 years? I would say: maintain a sense of humor, take responsibility for your decisions, learn more from your mistakes than from your successes, find something to be passionate about, and finally, listen! Good ideas can come from anywhere.