



Colonel William R. Rawlinson USAF (Ret)

Sixty-five years ago, two teenagers met in a roller rink in Warwick, RI... for keeps! In 1953 as Bill neared graduation from Providence College, a letter arrived from his draft board: "Come in now!" He was told he would be drafted and sent to Korea. Within 10 minutes, he was at the Air Force recruiting office filling out paperwork for flight training... of any kind! Weeks later, he was told he was an aviation cadet and trained as an aircraft observer, and 15 months later, he went to England as a B-29 navigator. His fiancée Betty had more months to wait. Christmas week a year later, he hitched a ride back to the U.S. and they married that winter. Betty had waited more than five years! The return to England was on *SS United States*... together. Bill was flying SA-16s and C-119s, and 16 months later, they returned to Texas for pilot training. He elected to go east and began a career as an "air lifter." Over the next 25 years, he flew to every continent and hotspot of the world (Berlin, Cuba, Vietnam). Four children joined the family. Volunteering for Vietnam, he finally completed 181 missions and returned to HQ Military Airlift Command. Next to command a C-141 squadron and then base chief of supply. Last assignment was to Travis as operations group commander (C-141s, C-5s), base commander, and chief of staff HQ 22nd Air Force. In "retirement," he joined the Federal Reserve Bank and faculty of Solano College and spent ten years as manager of a waste management company. He then joined the NCROC board. His volunteer work is with Gideon's Int'l, Rotary Int'l and his church.

Departed July 20, 2024.