



Gary L. Starbird USN (Ret.)

January 1, 1953 - January 25, 2013

Capt. Gary L. Starbird USN (Ret), 75, of Dover KS passed away on Thursday night, January 17, 2013, at St. Francis Hospital in Topeka KS. Gary was born in Christ Hospital in Topeka KS on Aug. 30, 1937. He lived and attended grade school and high school in Willard, Rossville and Dover KS. He graduated from Marysville High School in Marysville CA in 1955 and continued on to receive a BA in English at San Francisco University. Gary enlisted in the Navy in November 1956. After boot camp he came up the ranks thru the NAV-CAD program and began his career in naval aviation. He is a Vietnam veteran. He was Executive Officer of Attack Squadron VA-"Champs" July '74 - September '75, and Commanding Officer September '75 until December '75 on the USS Midway. He was one of the elite 1000 Trap Club Members and was respected by all who knew and worked with him. He was considered by colleagues as "The aviators' aviator". Capt. Starbird retired his last command with the National Airborne Emergency Command Post in 1984 after a 27 year career. Gary enjoyed hunting, fishing, gunsmithing and reloading. He loved his college football and basketball, especially the Jayhawks. (Rock Chalk!) He was also actively involved in Quail Unlimited and the NRA. Gary was married to Kathryn Hartman, in September 1959, for 9 years. To this union, two children were born, Andy Starbird and Stephanie Starbird-Kramer. Gary was married to Life Starbird, August 1968, for 12 years. From this union, there were two boys, Jason Starbird and Zackary Starbird. They all survive. Also surviving are his grandchildren, Kiefer and Conner

Starbird, Grace and Clay Kramer, Ashley, Joshua, and Zack Starbird and Katia & Kaylee Starbird; and great-grandsons, Alex and Jason Starbird. Gary was preceded in death by his mother, Agnes Starbird, his father, Delbert Starbird and his sister, Dixie Starbird. Family will greet friends from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday Jan 25th at Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home, 2801 SW Urish Rd, Topeka KS. Funeral service will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, January 26th at the funeral home. Burial with military honors will follow at Dover Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the NRA, sent in care of the funeral home.

Tribute Wall



“ Gary L. Starbird USN (Ret.)

January 28, 2023 at 12:08 PM



“ Zack, It was great to meet you in Lemoore at the Attack Pilots Reunion. Please accept my condolences for you and your family. I flew so many combat missions with Bird that he called me "Wingie" (for wingman). He was a truly fearless combat pilot and I will miss him.

Bill Kraus - January 23, 2013 at 03:13 PM



“ I was deeply saddened to hear of Birds passing. We shared many adventures in combat, in 1966 and 1967 with the "Blue Tail Flies". He saved my life over the Phuc Yen Mig base in 1967. On the way back to the ship, when the refueling tanker threatened to cut off my refueling, Gary said "If you do, I will shoot you down". I got my fuel and made it back to the ship. That was classic Bird.

Bill Byers (Billy Bayou) - January 22, 2013 at 02:52 PM

L(

“ *"The Captain" as I knew him was ending his Naval career as mine began. Following my retirement I went into Law Enforcement and met The Captain when I stopped by the shooting range while on patrol. He and I hit it off, both being Navy and gun enthusiasts. I then spent many days, (not enough) at the Delia gun shop with him talking about guns, politics, and old Navy sea stories. I learned much from the Captain and will miss him greatly. Captain Starbird contributed much in the defense of our country and the enrichment of the lives of all who knew him.*

Larry Collins GMCS (sw) USN (ret) - January 20, 2013 at 01:26 PM

BT

“ *I cherish all the memories and stories I shared with "The Bird". Our sporting Clays and pheasant shoots were great. Every time Gary and I talked I learned something. The man was so knowledgeable on many subjects. You all of the family should be very proud. May he rest in peace.*

Bernie Trompeter - January 20, 2013 at 09:28 AM

CA

hi bernie you seem to be the only one i really KNEW? i did meet a couple of his "kids pilots " but i knew you from our home and sporting clays . i truly wish he werent gone , so sad , and such a resource he had a great mind no telling whatvelse he could have don beside what he did 27 years flying for us and the navy quite a feat. take care berbie, carole starbird

carole - September 29, 2023 at 04:03 AM

CS

hi again bernie i will speak for myself and zack zack and I are very proud of gary and I are very proud of all he did during his 27 years in the navy very proud very proud of gary i just wish he had shared more of his navy life with me. treasure all he shared with you, we don't get another chance to listen to him share. I can't believe how sad I am that he is gone. I may com back to kansas and do some shooting, that seems like the best way for me to feel closer to him. take care , love, Carole Starbird.

Carole Starbird - June 27, 2025 at 01:42 AM

JT

“ *Jason and Zack I am so sorry to hear of your dad's passing. You are all in our thoughts and prayers.*

Joe and Alberta (Olds) Tate - January 20, 2013 at 09:10 AM