

Gary Knecht Obituary



Crestview, FL. — Senior Master Sergeant (SMSgt) Gary Lee Knecht, Sr, United States Air Force, retired, 71, joined departed Spectre "Ghost Riders in the Sky", Tuesday evening, November 4th, 2008, while attended by Covenant Hospice at Careington Manor, Crestview, FL. He was born in Grand Rapids, MI, on February 15th, 1937, the eldest son of the late Arlene Ruth (Miller) Knecht and Roy Cecil Knecht of Kingsley, MI. His surviving siblings are: Kaye and Bill Augustine, Garth Knecht, Beverly Goodman, and Bruce and Lorelei Knecht. His supportive 42 year marriage to Mary Ann (Augustine) Knecht provided him with four children: Charlene Carol Knecht, Bonnie Marie Kelly,

Jessica Ann Roderick and Gary Lee Knecht, Jr.

Enlisting from high school and serving in the United States Air Force for 29+ years, SMSgt Knecht was chosen as initial cadre AC-130A Flight Engineer Test Team Aircrew Member. A Vietnam Spectre Gunship Veteran, his awards included the Distinguished Flying Cross, eight Air Medals, two Air Force Commendation Medals, and Distinguished-Presidential Unit Citation among others. He lived in Mary Esther, FL for four decades, and Lifetime Member - Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 7674.

Long time Corvair Society of America member, he owned and operated Knecht's Auto Repair in Fort Walton Beach, FL since 1977, and was instrumental in providing quality repairs, or lively "pull up a seat" conversations. His refurbished 60s Chevy Corvairs, including the famous "Busch Truck", garnered numerous ribbons and trophies in the SouthEastern United States. Lover of music, audio - video components, computers, and collector of movies and lore. From Busch, whiskey and Camels to Pepsi and Cool Blue, Gary was passionate about living "one day at a time..."

Memorial and Reception services will be at 1 p.m. Saturday, November 15th, 2008, at VFW Post 7674 - 213 NW Carol Ave; Fort Walton Beach, FL. In Lieu of flowers, request donations in memory of Gary be made to: Spectre Association Inc. PO Box 707 Mary Esther, FL 32569-0707. The fund assists family members of fallen Spectres. Interment at Barrancas National Cemetery, Pensacola, Florida. Info contact: Gerald Flynn in DeFuniak Springs, who had the opportunity to give back care in Gary's latter years.