Micheal P. Lutzko

Obituary

Micheal P. Lutzko

Abilene, TX

Graveside service with full military honors for Michael Peter Lutzko, Jr., TSgt USAF, Ret., will be Thursday, May 25, 2017 at 1:00PM at Texas State Veterans Cemetery at Abilene.

Mr. Lutzko, 74, passed away Tuesday, May 9, 2017, at Baylor Scott & White Medical Center in Waco, TX, as a result of injuries sustained in an accident while participating in a statewide Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) motorcycle event in Waco.

Survivors include his wife of 43 years, Bettie Laura (Muir) Lutzko of Abilene, Texas; two stepsons, Greg Hendrix of Kansas City, Missouri, and Mike Hendrix of Chicago, Illinois; his twin brother, Regan Lutzko of Huron, Ohio; as well as many nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, and countless friends. A native of Canton, Ohio, Mr. Lutzko was preceded in death by his parents, Michael Lutzko Sr. and Clara (Babcock) Lutzko; his brother, Leonard "Fuzzy" Lutzko; and his sister Mona (Lutzko) Surcheck.

"Trike Mike" as he was loving known by his VFW motorcycle family, had been a resident of Abilene since 1973, while stationed at Dyess AFB. He retired as a Tech Sergeant in 1981 with 20+ years service in the United States Air Force. He served as an Aircraft Loadmaster Technician for 15+ years and a Vehicle Operator Dispatcher before that.

Mr. Lutzko was a decorated military veteran. He served in the United States Air Force during the Vietnam War, earning the prestigious Distinguished Flying Cross for Heroism. A citation for that award notes he "distinguished himself by extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as a C-130 Loadmaster at Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam, on 23 February 1968. On that date, Sergeant Lutzko overcame numerous obstacles associated with a new aerial delivery system and flew a highly successful mission in support of the besieged Marine Base at Khe Sanh. Sergeant Lutzko's unswerving dedication was conspicuously demonstrated when he delivered a load of invaluable cargo, despite the fact that heavy hostile fire had caused extensive damage to his aircraft's fuel cells. The professional competence, aerial skill, and devotion to duty displayed by Sergeant Lutzko reflects great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force."

Another citation with the DFC award notes he "distinguished himself by heroism" in another mission while preparing to airlift Marines out of a combat area in May 1968. Under heavy enemy fire Sergeant Lutzko "in complete disregard for his personal safety, immediately manned his aircraft and assisted in air-evacuating the endangered passengers, crew and aircraft to safety." That citation also notes his "outstanding heroism and selfless devotion to duty."

After his retirement from the Air Force, Mr. Lutzko earned an Associate of Applied Science Degree from Cisco Junior College and worked for the City of Abilene Water Utilities Department for many years until he finally retired to fully enjoy his home and public service activities.

Mr. Lutzko was a member of, and served as an officer in numerous organizations, including the Distinguished Flying Cross Society; West Texas Patriot Guard Riders; Veterans of Foreign Wars Motorcycle Group of Texas Unit #2-6873; and VFW Post 6873; Professional Loadmaster Association, Big Country Chapter; American Legion Riders, Texas Chapter 308, Lynn Snow Post, Bangs, Texas; Sons of the American Legion; Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, S.J., USA; Masons; Golden Rule Lodge #90, Topeka, KS; Suez Shriners, A.A.O.N.M.S. of San Angelo, Texas; Abilene Shrine Club and Clown Unit; Camel Herder; Legion of Honor; Eastern Star Chapter #30; Military Order of the Cootie; Disabled American Veterans; Vietnam Veterans of America, Air Force Sergeants Association; Non Commissioned Officers Association; American Association of Sheriff Posse; Taylor County Sheriff Posse; American Quarter Horse Association; Texas Water Utilities Association.

Memorial contributions may be made to Scottish Rite Hospital, Dallas, TX; Suez Temple Office - Shrine Burns Treatment, San Angelo, TX; VFW National Home Control, Eaton Rapids, MI; Eastern Star Cancer fund; Disabled American Veterans, Cincinnati, OH; AFAM 559, Abilene, TX; Professional Load Masters Association (PLA), Big Country Chapter, Abilene, TX; Golden Rule Lodge #90, Topeka, KS; Ancient Free and Accepted Mason #559, Abilene, TX; or to the charity of your choice.

Published in Abilene Reporter-News on May 21, 2017