



Col. Richard Henry McDow, USAF (Ret.)

November 6, 1946 - March 13, 2025

Richard Henry McDow, a decorated combat veteran, dedicated community leader, and beloved family man, passed away on March 13, 2025, in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, at the age of 78. Born on November 6, 1946, in Clanton, Alabama, Richard led a life characterized by service, resilience, his faith, his community, and his family.

A proud graduate of the University of Alabama, Richard's life of service began with his distinguished career in the United States Air Force. He served in Vietnam as a weapons systems officer with the 390th Tactical Fighter Squadron, flying F-4 Phantom aircraft at Da Nang Air Base. On June 27, 1972, during his 141st combat mission, his aircraft was shot down over North Vietnam. He was captured and endured the hardships of being a prisoner of war until his release in March 1973 at the war's end.

In 1978, Richard was selected to fly the A-10 Thunderbolt, the aircraft he would proudly fly for the remainder of his career. He became squadron commander of the 355th Tactical Fighter Squadron at Myrtle Beach Air Force Base in 1989. He led his squadron in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, deploying to Saudi Arabia in August 1990. Under his leadership, the squadron flew nearly 1,500 combat sorties before returning home in March 1991. He retired from the Air Force in May 1994, concluding an honorable career marked by sacrifice, leadership, and devotion to his fellow service

members.

Richard loved being a fighter pilot and was immensely proud of his service and the brave men and women he served alongside.

Following his military career, Richard continued his commitment to service, working as the Director of the Red Cross in Horry County, where he provided aid to individuals and families in times of crisis. He also served at the Civil Air Patrol Headquarters in Alabama, further exemplifying his dedication to community service and leadership.

Richard is survived by his loving wife, Beverly McDow, who stood by his side through both the joys and challenges of life. Together, they raised a family rooted in values of kindness and perseverance. He is also survived by his daughter, Lisa Elizondo, and her husband, Robert. He cherished the time spent with his grandchildren, Henry, Tommy, and Zeke Elizondo, who brought immense joy into his life.

Additionally, he is survived by his brother, Jim McDow, sister, Patti Evans, and her husband, Tim, his sister-in-law, Judy Knight and her husband Jim, who will carry forward the memories of the loving brother they lost.

Richard was preceded in death by his father, James Thomas McDow, and his mother, Mildred Elizabeth Tipword McDow, whose teachings and values shaped him into the compassionate and courageous individual he became. He also mourned the loss of his daughter, Kelly Elizabeth McDow, whose memory will always be cherished.

As we remember Colonel Richard Henry McDow, let us celebrate a legacy of valor, dedication, and unwavering love for his family, faith and country. His strength, leadership, and kindness will continue to inspire all who knew him.

Service Information: His funeral service will be held at First United Methodist Church in Isle of Palms, SC on Sunday, March 23, 2025 at 2:00 pm. J. Henry Stur Funeral Home is directing.

Interment with full military honors will be at Pinelawn Gardens in Columbiana, AL at 3:00 pm on Saturday, March 29, 2025. The family will receive friends from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm at Bolton Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to a charity of one's choice. Please sign online condolences at www.jhenrystuhr.com and/or www.boltonfuneralhome.com.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR **29**. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

Bolton Funeral Home
207 Hwy 47 South
PO Box 4
Columbiana, AL 35051
(205) 669-3179

Memorial Service

MAR **29**. 3:00 PM (CT)

Pinelawn Gardens
207 Hwy 47 South
Columbiana, AL 35051

Tribute Wall

DC

“ My deepest condolences to Beverly, Patti, and family. To live a good life and be a good guy is a noble thing. To say farewell is the hardest. Donna from high school

Donna Stricklin Compton - March 29, 2025 at 10:46 PM

TA

“ The Brothers of Lambda Chi Alpha purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Col. Richard Henry McDow, USAF (Ret.).



The Brothers of Lambda Chi Alpha - March 26, 2025 at 07:30 AM

TA

“ The Brothers of Lambda Chi Alpha planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Col. Richard Henry McDow, USAF (Ret.).

The Brothers of Lambda Chi Alpha - March 26, 2025 at 07:30 AM

JC

“ Beverly and family, my thoughts and prayers are with you. Rick and I were classmates, teammates, and for one year college roommates, so there were many fond memories. But my fondest memory was seeing Rick get off the plane in Montgomery after being a POW in N. Vietnam. Rest in peace my friend. Jerry Carter

Jerry Carter - March 19, 2025 at 03:33 PM

SS

“ I remember praying for Rick and wearing his POW bracelet while he was being held in Viet Nam - Steve Stone

Stephen K Stone - March 19, 2025 at 08:18 AM

FL

“ Frenchell Lansford lit a candle in memory of Richard McDow



Frenchell Lansford - March 18, 2025 at 12:46 PM