



David Frank Class of 2015

Lt. Colonel Jon David Frank, USAF Retired, graduated from Oroville High School (OHS) in 1959. He graduated in the top quarter of his class, **won** the American Legion Certificate of School Award. He played four years of football on teams that were league co-champions in 1956 and undefeated Sierra Foothill League Champions in 1957 and 58. He ran track all 4 years and qualified for the State Meet in 1958 and 59.

Dave was also active in Student Body activities serving as a Class Representative as a freshman, Block "O" custodian in the fall of 1957 and Block "O" president in the spring of 1958, Boys State representative as a junior, Student Body president in the spring of 1959, and was a graduation speaker.

Following his graduation at OHS, Dave attended the USAFA in Colorado Springs, CO where he was named to the Commandant's List for Military excellence in 1961-62 and led the cadet 'Third Class Zone of Interior' Field Trip to six Military Installations (Coast to Coast) in 1961. Returning to California in 1962, he earned his BA degree from Chico State College in 1964.

Dave's 22 year active duty career started in November 1964 as a distinguished graduate of Officer Training School. After completing navigator training in Waco, Texas, he was assigned to the 779th Tactical Airlift Squadron at Pope Air Force Base, N.C. and became an instructor in the advanced course for tactical transport, combat airdrop and assault airlift. For the next three years, Dave spent more than 600 days on unit rotations to Europe, the Dominican Republic, Africa, and Vietnam. He flew 68 combat missions in the Republic of the Congo and Vietnam supporting counterinsurgency troops. He received a Distinguished Flying Cross for a tactical airdrop mission at Khe Sanh in 1968. Dave attended pilot training in 1969 and was awarded the Air Training Command's "Commander's Trophy".

Other highlights of his career include: helping save the life of a 16 year old Eskimo mother and her baby while flying in the Arctic in 1971; flying lead aircraft on the first drop of Arctic Rangers on an open ice flow in 1971; serving as aircraft commander of an AC-130A Spectre Gunship in South East Asia 1973-1974; being course director and instructor of Military Studies, 221/222 a core course at the USAFA, 1974-77; making a mid-air recovery of a \$50 million de-orbiting Gambit space capsule in 1979; negotiating a Pacific Barrier Radar site with the Government of the Mariana Islands, 1982; serving on the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Steering Committee for Imaging Radars, 1982-86; and debriefing the surviving members of the Manhattan Project, 1986.

During his military career, Dave accumulated more than 5,100 flying hours in eight different types of aircraft and has flown 14 model variations of the C-130 Hercules. He is a Command Pilot and authorized to wear navigation wings, the master space badge, and the missileman's badge.

Among Dave's awards are the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Meritorious Service Medal with (2) oak leaf clusters, the Air Medal, the Air Force Commendations Medal, and the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with (8) oak leaf clusters and Valor Device. He has also received a Central Intelligence unit award and a CIA Balkans Service Medallion.

After retiring from the Air Force, as the Western Test Range, Director of Operations in 1986, he became the Operations Manager (OD4/DX) for Martin Marietta Corp. at Onizuka AFS.

Now retired, Dave is active in his community in the Lake Wildwood area of northern California.

Since 2008, he has been a docent in the Empire Mine State Park where he interprets living history for fourth grade students and visitors. He also works as a volunteer in the South Yuba River and Malakoff Diggins for California State Parks. He is a past Vice President of Nevada County Welcome Wagon. In 2009, Dave researched and reproduced photographs for the Oroville Union High School District All Schools Class Reunion held over three days in October with nearly 1,000 alumni and friends of Oroville and Las Plumas High Schools in attendance.

In a letter of support from a friend and colleague of four decades, Gary Andrejak, Lt. Col. USAF (Ret) writes, *“Most importantly and significantly, Dave is a superb LEADER – the kind of leader who earned the respect of all with whom he served during his distinguished Air Force career. This included a wide range of assignments including flying combat during two Vietnam tours, being an instructor at the Air Force Academy, and directing test activities for major AF missile and satellite programs.”*

Dave and his OHS classmate, the former Susan Dustin, have been married 52 years, and have three children and three grandchildren.