



James Norbert O'Connor

May 29, 1940 - February 22, 2024

Mr. James (Jim) Norbert O'Connor, age 83, of Ocala, FL (originally from Hollidaysburg, PA), passed away peacefully on February 22, 2024 at the E.W. & Lucille Cates House in Ocala. He was born in Altoona, PA on May 29, 1940 and was the son of Norbert and Hilda (Fochler) O'Connor.

Jim was a 1958 graduate of Hollidaysburg High School where he was an accomplished drummer in the school band. This accomplishment led to his membership in the Gardner Guards, a nationally renowned marching and maneuvering drum corps based in Tyrone, PA. In addition to drumming, during his youth, Jim also learned the basics of radio technology under the tutelage of his father Norbert. This knowledge, and his intuitive understanding of radio wave propagation, greatly shaped his future.

Following high school, Jim attended the Pennsylvania State University for one year. He then joined the U.S. Army and became an expert in specialized radio communications. Jim served honorably in the western Pacific, first in Okinawa and then in Vietnam during the early stages of the war where he supported the conduct of psychological operations to demoralize the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army. While in Vietnam, Jim was recognized for his expertise in radio wave propagation and was recruited, tested and hand-picked for service as an electrical engineer at the Naval Research Lab (NRL) in Washington, D.C. His primary duties involved designing cutting edge

spacecraft, payloads and supporting global infrastructure for U.S. spy satellites. His work evolved in the 1970s for support of a new, and at that time, clandestine government agency -- the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO).

From the mid-1960s until his retirement in 1999, Jim was a pioneer in the world of collection of radio signals from space. Most of the specifics of his work were, and remain, highly classified. However, even today, Jim's successors at NRL and NRO still study and employ the principles of his groundbreaking work. For his service to the nation, at his retirement, Jim was presented with the NRO's Gold Medal for Distinguished Service.

When Jim wasn't busy protecting the nation, he was raising his two daughters, managing and pitching for his own fast-pitch softball team (the "Green Machine") and playing golf.

Jim married Carmen (Carmencita) Marta Rodriguez, on March 9, 1996 at Andrews Air Force Base in Washington D.C. Following his retirement, Jim and Carmencita re-settled to Dunnellon, FL, where Jim continued his lifelong quest for the perfect golf swing. He was an active member of Queen of Peace Catholic Church in Ocala, FL.

Jim was a loving husband, father, brother, son and uncle. He is survived by his wife Carmencita; two daughters Patricia and husband Raymon Hamzikdhan of Maryland; Jennifer and husband Michael Linov of Canada; brother Dennis and wife Holly O'Connor of Hollidaysburg, PA, and; many nieces and nephews including Goddaughter, Dr. Mary Hensler Michelsen of Encinitas, CA. He was preceded in death by his parents, Norbert and Hilda O'Connor and a sister, Jeanne O'Connor Hensler.

A Funeral Mass will be held March 7, 2024 at 8:30 a.m. at Queen of Peace Catholic Church in Ocala, FL presided over by Father Patrick J. O'Doherty.

Burial will take place on March 7, 2024 at 11 a.m. at Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, FL.

Memorial donations are welcomed at Disabled American Veterans (DAV). <https://www.dav.org/ways-to-give/>

Previous Events

Funeral Mass

MAR 7. 8:30 AM (ET)

Queen of Peace Catholic Church
6455 SW State Rd 200
Ocala, FL 34476

Burial

MAR 7. 11:00 AM (ET)

Florida National Cemetery
6502 SW 102nd Avenue
Bushnell, FL 33513

Tribute Wall

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“ Just discovered that Jim has past. We were good friends and members and fellow radio repairmen of the 16th PsyOp Company of the 14th Bn on Okinawa. I will always remember his great smile and expertise in electronics.

Included is picture of Jim on right with Jay Eubanks and Cal Thomas on Okinawa in 1962.

Tim Yoho



Tim Yoho - April 26, 2025 at 05:54 PM



“ Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of James Norbert O'Connor.



March 06, 2024 at 10:52 AM

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“ Holly and Denny O'Connor purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of James Norbert O'Connor.



Holly and Denny O'Connor - March 04, 2024 at 02:04 PM