



Col. David H. Stohler, Ret.

June 2, 1934 - February 10, 2016

Col. David H. Stohler Ret., 81, died Weds. Feb 10. 2016 at Lutheran Hospital, Ft Wayne.

David was born on the Stohler farm in Anderson, Indiana on June 2, 1934. He graduated from Markleville High School in 1952 . He married his wife Judith (Smith) on October 13, 1961.

David retired as the Vice Wing Commander of the 122nd TFW, Ft Wayne, in 1989 after 34 years of service. During his time in service he logged over 3,600 hours of flight time in fighter jets and was deployed to Europe for the Berlin Crisis, he served 2 tours from a NATO base in Tripoli and worked with a pilot exchange program with Turkey and the West German Air Force.

David passed on his military legacy to his son Col Michael Stohler, his daughter Michele Mechling, grandson Shane Quillen, granddaughter Ashley Canfield, grandson Kaleb Mechling and nephew Robert Gustin.

He is survived by his wife Judith, his children: daughters - Lisa Bernarducci & Michele (Kevin)Mechling and son Michael Stohler (Michelle). He has 8 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren. 2 sisters Grace (Harold) Markle and Faith (Jim) Burmeister.

He is preceded in death by his parents Audrey and Henry Stohler, Step Father Roy Gooding, sisters Dellarose Gustin and Paula Nugent and brother Phillip. Funeral Services will be held at 5 p.m. on Sunday (February 14, 2016) at the First Church of Christ in Bluffton. Pastor Larry Sprinkle and Chaplain Michael Frese of the 122nd Fighter Wing will officiate. Calling hours will be held from 2

to 8 on Saturday at the Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home and for one hour prior to the service on Sunday at the church. Burial will take place at a later time at Elm Grove Cemetery. Memorials may be made to the First Church of Christ or to Mt Zion Lutheran Church in Anderson. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the care of the Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton. Friends can send online condolences to the family at www.thomarich.com.

Cemetery Details

Elm Grove Cemetery

3500 East State Road 124
Bluffton, IN

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 13. 2:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home
308 West Washington Street
Bluffton, IN 46714
<http://www.thomarich.com>

Visitation

FEB 14. 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM (ET)

First Church of Christ
909 W Spring St
Bluffton, IN

Service

FEB 14. 5:00 PM (ET)

First Church of Christ
909 W Spring St
Bluffton, IN

Tribute Wall



“ *Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Col. David H. Stohler, Ret.*



Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home - February 13, 2016 at 03:43 PM



“ *Col. David H. Stohler, Ret.*

September 08, 2022 at 08:26 PM



“ *Lukas lit a candle in memory of Col. David H. Stohler, Ret.*



Lukas - February 16, 2016 at 12:35 PM



“ *Alex lit a candle in memory of Col. David H. Stohler, Ret.*



Alex - February 16, 2016 at 12:30 PM

TI

“ *Timmy lit a candle in memory of Col. David H. Stohler, Ret.*



Timmy - February 16, 2016 at 12:29 PM

SK

“ *There are good ships and wood ships, ships that sail the sea, but the best ships are friendships, and may they always be. Dave greeted everyone like you were his best friend. He will be missed but not forgotten.*
Scott & Bobbie Krause

Scott & Bobbie Krause - February 15, 2016 at 08:45 AM

DW

“ *RIP Uncle Dave. Thank you for your service to our country. You were a great mentor to all of us. Love, Doug and Yvonne Wearley*

Doug and Yvonne Wearley - February 14, 2016 at 04:43 PM

MB

“ To the family of Dave Stohler, my prayers and thoughts are with all of you. I served 20 years at the 122 TFW. During my time at Baer Field we lost many people . This loss no doubt punched us in the gut more than any. Dave Stohler was one of a kind. He treated everyone as an equal. It didn't matter what rank you were, Dave treated you with respect. Dave Stohler was a great husband, a great father, a darn good fighter pilot, a great leader, but most of all, he was everybody's friend. To all of us that meant a lot. I am so thankful I went to the base Christmas dinner for retirees. While there I talked quite a bit to Dave and enjoyed talking about the good old days. It wasn't long and his son Mike showed up. I said to Dave, you must really be proud of Mike, being a Fighter Pilot and a Colonel. Dave just smiled ear to ear and said, I sure am. I then talked to Mike and told him how everyone thought his Dad was such a great person. Well it didn't take me long to see the apple didn't fall far from the tree. Mike was just like his Dad. May God bless Dave's wife and daughters and Mike. I as well as the rest of the base will always treasure the friendship of Dave Stohler.

Mike Bernhardt

Mike Bernhardt - February 14, 2016 at 02:01 PM

MS

“Dad, what a wonderful father and mentor you have been to me. At an early age I wanted to be just like you- a Farmer and Fighter Pilot. Growing up on the small farm you taught me so much. You could fix absolutely anything. I recall one day working on the cultivator, I must have only been 8 or 9. You couldn't get one of the rollers separated from the machine after using the wrench, then the torch. You grumble with your teeth gritting and said “Oh well, ----, Michael, go get the 16 pound sledge hammer!” So I ran to the barn and came back “dragging” it because it was so heavy. I was ready to watch in awe as you beat the heck out of that part. However, you briefed me on a different plan—I was to hold the big steel punch pin on top of the cultivator over the part and you would take a full swing at the pin in my hands. Now I wasn't too experienced at the time but I was pretty sure if you missed the pin I was going to have a broken hand at best. I must have been shaking holding that pin; cause you said several times to hold still or you might miss. That helped a bunch dad. Ha. What trust we both had for each other. I was trusting that you wouldn't miss. You were trusting I wouldn't move----cause mom would kill ya if you broke my hand. So with my eyes closed and holding that pin steady, I heard the swish of air as the sledge hammer moved in a full circle over your head then----- wham it hit the pin and out popped the part. I couldn't believe it. You really know your stuff. And I still had my hands!

Oh Dad, you gave me all the tools to be a good fighter pilot. I had a Honda dirt bike, a dog and a gun. You let me plow the field when I was only 9 all by myself. And let me get real “rowdy” with all my friends when I was a teen ager. All along maybe you knew that is what makes a good fighter pilot-pushing the boundaries and making mistakes was the best way to learn. I remember so much of my childhood, flying with you, working with you, farming.

I will miss that special bond you and I had as Fighter pilots. I could tell you personal things about flying and you knew exactly what I was saying—like night air refueling in bad weather, or flying on the wing at 20,000 feet in the weather at night. We would share stories over and over again.

I will miss those conversations on your porch about my combat

flying that only you --a dad and fighter pilot would understand. What great therapy that was just sipping on a beer and telling flying stories. Every time I fly, I will think of you. Every cloud I zip thru, every sunrise or sunset I see from 30,000 feet I know you will be there. Godspeed Dad-----I love you. Mike



Mike Stohler - February 14, 2016 at 11:41 AM



“ *Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Col. David H. Stohler, Ret..*



February 14, 2016 at 10:22 AM



“ *Rev. Dr. Daniel Leigh Nugent purchased the European Sympathy Dish Garden for the family of Col. David H. Stohler, Ret..*



Rev. Dr. Daniel Leigh Nugent - February 13, 2016 at 09:54 PM

PF

“ *Paula (Nugent) Steiner and Daniel Nugent Families purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of Col. David H. Stohler, Ret..*



Paula (Nugent) Steiner and Daniel Nugent Families -
February 13, 2016 at 09:23 PM

JD

“ *Our sincere condolences are being sent to our good friend Michelle Mechling and our good neighbors Shane and Rachel Quillen along with loving thoughts for the entire family.*

Jerry and Cindy Dillon - February 13, 2016 at 12:56 PM

JC

“ *I've been honored to know the Stohler family since 1990. Col. Stohler was a kind man with a huge heart and a bigger smile. He was a leader, father, husband, grandfather, fighter pilot, and friend. He left us a lasting leagacy both in the community and the 122nd. I will miss his kind words, quick smile, and easy manner. My condolences to the Stohler family during this difficult time. Col. Stohler will be missed, but he will never be forgotten.*

John (Nails) Carroll Lt Col Ret. & family

John Carroll - February 13, 2016 at 07:19 AM

PM

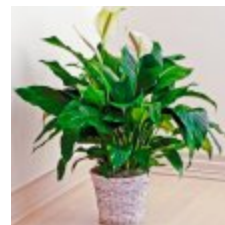
“ We are so sorry for the loss of Dave. He was a wonderful husband, father, grandfather and friend. He was a great neighbor to us on the farm and always helped us out when we needed an extra hand. We are sorry that we won't be able to be there to pay our last respects to him. Just know Judy, Mike, Michelle Lisa and your families are in our thoughts and prayers. He will be greatly missed.

Love,
Paul and Nicki Mills

Paul & Nicki Mills - February 13, 2016 at 06:22 AM



“ Floor Plant for Sympathy was purchased for the family of Col. David H. Stohler, Ret..



February 13, 2016 at 05:11 AM



“ Red, White & Blue Sympathy Floor Basket was purchased for the family of Col. David H. Stohler, Ret..



February 12, 2016 at 09:09 PM



“ *Floor Plant for Sympathy was purchased for the family of Col. David H. Stohler, Ret..*



February 12, 2016 at 08:49 PM



“ *My papa was my best friend and partner in crime. I could pretty much get away with anything. After daycare we would turn "that way" and get french fries that I just had to have. He was the best babysitter in the world. We did get caught one time jumping on the bed eating Oreo cookies. Nana was not happy with us..And that Barbie doll that I couldn't live without. Papa could fix anything, he could do anything. He always believed in me and told me I could do anything, whether he agreed or not with my decisions. He was papa to everyone, even my friends. Even at 20 I could still climb up in his chair and sit with him and he would tell me everything would be okay. I love him more than words can describe. He is was an angel sent from heaven and it was his time to go back home where he could rest eternally, which will be hard for him. He was a busy bee all the time. He was 80 going on 30. I know he is with me and will always be with me.*



ashley canfield - February 12, 2016 at 07:22 PM

LR

“ *To the Family*

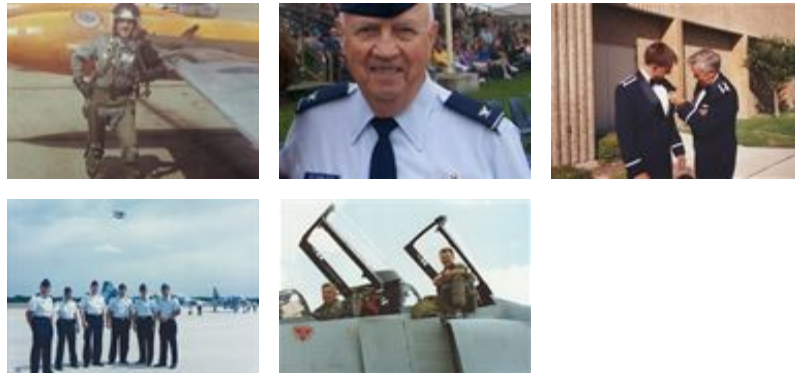
I was in the Air Force and In ANG. Davie was one of the Kindest and Best officer I ever had the pleasure of knowing and serving with If all officers were like himthe militay woud no have some of the problems with Honor and service we have today ,in the militars.

*Keep smiling Sir
Les Roberson, MSgt, 122*

Les Roberson - February 12, 2016 at 06:13 PM



“ *61 files added to the album Life Tributes*



Thoma/Rich,Lemler Funeral Home - February 12, 2016 at 03:39 PM

BW

“ *Brig-Gen and Mrs. Thomas (Spider) Webb purchased the Peace, Prayers & Blessings - Blue and White for the family of Col. David H. Stohler, Ret..*



Brig-Gen and Mrs. Thomas (Spider) Webb - February 12, 2016 at 02:25 PM

KD

“ I never had the opportunity to fly with Col. Stohler prior to his retirement, but I did have the honor of knowing him and his son Mike. As a young 2LT WSO and new member of the 113th TFS and 122TFW Col. Stohler spent time to show me around the base and put me in the F-4 simulator since we didn't have one in Terre Haute. After I moved to Fort Wayne, many years later, He always took time to stop by my office whenever he found his way to the base to visit. I truly appreciated his interest in me and my family, as well as my career. I will miss those fleeting visits and hearing his greeting "How are you Buzz, It's good to see you!"

It has been my honor

Lt Col Kevin "Buzzard" Doyle



Kevin Doyle - February 12, 2016 at 01:45 PM

JC

“ Dave was a classmate of mine in Aviation Cadet Class 59-C. In 1998 a poem titled, "Last Of A Breed" (The Aviation Cadet), was written for a dedication involving our class at Lackland AFB, Texas. The last four lines read...

*"As we gather at the "gateway", our memories seem to fill
With cadence shouted in the air, cadet voices echo still
This remembrance of a long gone corps, a spirit in us all
As long as there are those like these, our land will never fall.*

Dave was definitely one of "those like these". Dave, as your classmate I remember you with great admiration for your character, and deep respect for your professionalism and patriotism.

"Check six, Dave"; and save us a place out "West".

*Brig/Gen Jerry W. Cook Ret.
Aviation Cadet Class 59-C*

Jerry W. Cook - February 12, 2016 at 01:17 PM

CS

“ To my Papa Stoh,
I love you and you will always be with me
wherever I go.

*Love,
Carson*



Carson Stohler - February 12, 2016 at 01:05 PM

 Brenda Bowen

“ *My thoughts and prayers for peace and comfort go out to Judy and the whole family during this incredible loss. Col Stohler was a true friend, patriot, officer and gentleman. He will be missed. May he soar forever with eagles and angles.*



*God Bless,
Brenda Nusbaum Bowen, CMSgt, Ret. and family*

Brenda Bowen - February 12, 2016 at 01:02 PM



“ *Plants-A-Plenty was purchased for the family of Col. David H. Stohler, Ret..*



February 12, 2016 at 12:35 PM



“ *I enjoyed the 30 plus years we were together in the Indiana Air National Guard. We just had lunch together in Waynedale on February 3rd. My condolences to his family. Major George M. Smith*

Major George M. Smith - February 12, 2016 at 12:10 PM



“ *Col Stohler was truly the definition of "an Officer and a gentleman".*

Mike Chelf - February 12, 2016 at 11:29 AM



“ *Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Col. David H. Stohler, Ret..*



February 12, 2016 at 11:22 AM



“ *1 file added to the album New Album Name*



William Frew - February 12, 2016 at 10:52 AM



Dave enjoying the benefits of an upper class cadet

William J. Frew - February 12, 2016 at 12:38 PM



“ *Col Stohler was one of the finest people I ever met in my life. It was truly a gift to have know him. He was always cheerful, caring and supporting of all that he came in contact with. He touched many, many lives and all who met and knew him are the better for that encounter.*

He will be missed. God bless his family in this time sorrow.

Mike Lents, CMSgt, Ret

Michael R Lents - February 12, 2016 at 09:44 AM

CA

“ I had the delight of flying as his WSO on one of Col Stohler's last flights in the F-4E prior to retirement. We flew a Basic Fighter Maneuver sortie and I remember both aircraft ended up at the bottom of the floor with no airspeed and neutral. I remember hearing in the pit a chuckle from up front and then him saying "Dice I'm not sure how we got here, but we sure had a fun time getting here"! That was just like my Vice Wing Commander, who was positive at all times and saw the good in almost any situation or person! God speed Col Stohler and blessings to the entire Stohler family!

Col Chris Alderdice - February 12, 2016 at 09:16 AM

CA

“ Col Chris Alderdice lit a candle in memory of Col. David H. Stohler, Ret.



Col Chris Alderdice - February 12, 2016 at 09:08 AM

MJ

“ Sorry for your loss. I am a neighbor to the family farm. Grew up with David in the neighborhood through 4-H and Indiana Rural Youth. As a matter of fact, he and some mutual friends, got me involved in Rural Youth.

Have memories of him doing fly overs in the neighborhood.

Mike Jones

Mike Jones - February 12, 2016 at 09:06 AM

MV

“ *Michael J Vorndran lit a candle in memory of Col. David H. Stohler, Ret.*



Michael J Vorndran - February 12, 2016 at 08:57 AM

MV

As a young Airman, I will always remember Col. Stohler taking the time to speak to me and ask how I was every time that our paths crossed. A very nice man. Godspeed Col.

Michael J Vorndran - February 12, 2016 at 09:00 AM

DP

“ *Our prayers are with you during this difficult time. Dave was a wonderful person who we had the honor of working with for many years. Gods speed.*

Deb & Tony Pruitt - February 12, 2016 at 08:23 AM

AP

“ *God Bless you all in your time of need. Col Stohler was a shining example for all of us!*

Aaron Pence - February 12, 2016 at 08:16 AM

RH

“ My sympathies to the Stohler family. I have fond memories of working with Col Stohler over many years. He was a mentor to me and always greeted everyone with a smile. He was a great vice commander and pilot. Everyone that met him could see his love of life and true desire to help in any way he could. His passion and leadership abilities can be seen in his son, Col Mike Stohler. God has just received a true friend and believer.

Roger Hardesty, CMSgt, ret

Roger Hardesty - February 12, 2016 at 08:04 AM

TK

“ Teresa Knight lit a candle in memory of Col. David H. Stohler, Ret.



Teresa Knight - February 12, 2016 at 07:53 AM

DB

“ Dave was a mentor to many of us young fighter pilots - before it was fashionable to mentor. As a brand new Lt, I wanted to be just like Maj Stohler. Cool, always calm, and one of the best sticks I ever knew. I learned so much from him and to this day believe some of the best in me is because of Dave Stohler. Thanks Davey! May your flight West be with a tailwind - you'll be missed! The deployed Squadron is getting some serious talent.

Bru

David Brubaker - February 12, 2016 at 05:07 AM

JS

“ Dave was one of my first commanders. In the highly competitive field of being a fighter pilot, he taught me that good guys can finish first. He served as a mentor to many officers and enlisted with the 122nd FW and more so than anyone else, left everyone he touched with a warm place in their heart for him.- Jeff Soldner

Jeff Soldner - February 12, 2016 at 04:35 AM

ML

“ He will be missed very much



Marcella lacy - February 11, 2016 at 10:36 PM

CD

“ Carolyn&Porter Dailey lit a candle in memory of Col. David H. Stohler, Ret.



Carolyn&Porter Dailey - February 11, 2016 at 09:49 PM

DB

“ my thoughts and prayers are with the stohler family,one time dave told me he was afraid of heights and if he stayed at a motel he wanted to be on the first floor,second floor was the max.i said you are telling me you fly a fighter jet at 30,000 feet and you are afraid of heights,what's up's with that...he replied i feel safe,comfortable,and in control up there.thank you dave for serving our country and being a freind you will be missed...dan burke

dan burke - February 11, 2016 at 09:25 PM

CO

“ *Cindy Osgood lit a candle in memory of Col. David H. Stohler, Ret.*



Cindy Osgood - February 11, 2016 at 08:27 PM

CO

“ *David was a quiet, gentle, strong man with a great faith in God. He had a great love of family and friends. He no doubt heard those words, "well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your master." May you all know that God's grace and peace are with you during this time. Pastor Cindy Osgood*

Cindy Osgood - February 11, 2016 at 08:26 PM

DG

“ *Dave was a wonderful person to talk with, Dave and I happened to meet each other six days ago in a store. He was talking about the wonderful time he had fishing last summer with his grandkids. Dave and I were co-workers several years ago and he always went out of his way to help the customers. I know that he is soaring in the bright blue skies of heaven looking down at us with that great big smile. Prayers are going out the family.*

Dan Gerdom - February 11, 2016 at 07:49 PM

HQ

“ *just a moment in time a smile every time we met and pleasant talk a friend will be missed and a great person has passed Hagan Quillen a friend*

hagan g quillen - February 11, 2016 at 06:30 PM

DG

“ Dan Gerdom lit a candle in memory of Col. David H. Stohler, Ret.



Dan Gerdom - February 11, 2016 at 05:49 PM

DG

Dave was a wonderful person to talk with. I ran into Dave 6 days ago and we had a wonderful talk. The discussion was about his fishing with his grandkids the past summer. He loved being around the kids. When we worked together several years ago he was always very helpful in helping the customers. Dave will be missed but I know he is watching over us as he is flying high in the bright blues skies up yonder.

Dan Gerdom - February 11, 2016 at 05:55 PM

BG

“ Beth Glessner lit a candle in memory of Col. David H. Stohler, Ret.



beth glessner - February 11, 2016 at 03:41 PM

TF

“*Dave was a great man and will be missed by so many. He was one of the kindest, most gentle, most genuine people I have ever met. He was the best neighbor and friend that you could have ever wished for. He always made me smile and was such an inspiration to my family. My children loved him so much and he loved them in return. Heaven gained a wonderful angel. I know Dave will continue to watch over all of us until we meet again. We will be lifting up your entire family in prayer at this difficult time and in the hard times to follow. Please don't hesitate to let us know if you need anything. You are in our thoughts and prayers and have our deepest sympathy.*”

Tim & Angela Affolder & Family - February 11, 2016 at 12:30 PM

CD

Col. David Stohler, Ret. was a great man, kind, generous, and always had a smile for those around him. He will be missed by his military family at our annual Retiree luncheons and throughout the year. Sending prayers for you and your family.
Connie Douthat

Connie Douthat - February 12, 2016 at 06:28 AM

MS

I got the news Thursday. As I sat down I began remembering Dave and what we experienced during our careers. At that moment I heard and felt a sonic boom, happens down here on the Gulf, And I knew it was Dave heading west. Peace be with you all.

Martin Smith - February 12, 2016 at 10:44 AM

BK

Our sympathy to the family. Dave was nice to everyone. Always liked being around him. He will be missed by us all.

Bob Kimmel - February 13, 2016 at 08:27 AM

JF

Col. Dave Stohler was one of the best. He seemed to remember everyone. One of my fondest memories was of him stopping by my office a couple of years ago to drop off a book he knew I would like; just because....Glad to have had the privilege of knowing you sir. My condolences to the entire family.

John Furge - February 13, 2016 at 09:31 PM

CF

I have so many happy memories of Dave. It seems like I have known him and Judy forever. I will always remember his smile and his chuckle. He always had a smile and was always happy to see us. I can imagine that he and Bob are up in heaven swapping war stories. They spent so much time together and depended on each other in so many way. He was a good friend and my heart and prayers go out to Judy, Lisa, Michelle and Michael and the rest of the family. You were all so much a part of our lives and I feel like we were a family. I'm sorry that I can't be there with you. My love and sympathy to you.

Carolyn Franke - February 13, 2016 at 10:23 PM