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Ronald Akers
United States Air Force
26 years of service

Ronald Akers

Veterans risk their lives every day to protect the country they love and to protect freedom and democracy. Without them America wouldn't be the same. Their will and strength was tested during WWII but also in other wars including the Korean War, Vietnam, Iraq, and the Cold War. After WWII conflicts between the Soviet Union and the U.S. rose starting the Cold War which didn't end until 1991, lasting 46 years. Although there was no actual war declared between the USSR and the U.S. but it did cause the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Berlin Airlift because each country wanted to dominate international affairs. One of these veterans is Ronald Akers who served in the United States Air Force as an Officer and was involved in the research and development in the American Space Program.

Ronald Akers was born on May 7, 1934 in Tacoma, Washington to a mother of 30 years old. In March 1940 he moved to Dayton, Oregon and attended grade school there. In 1946 he moved to Brookings, Oregon and finished middle and high school. On August 14, 1952, a few months after he graduated from high school, his father, Dewey Akers, died from an aircraft accident. At this time men were able to be drafted and candidates, like Ronald Akers, were called "Classified 1A". Ron then went to Oregon State College, to avoid the draft, and met and later married his wife, Mildred. While in college he joined the ROTC program. He graduated with his Bachelor's Degree in Mechanical Engineering in 1957. After he graduated he joined the Air

Force and went to Scott Air Force Base, Illinois to become a Communications Officer. At the end of the course everyone in the class put a dollar in and whoever got the worst assignment won the prize money. Ron ended up getting the 16 dollars and had to go to Alaska. In January 1958 he was assigned to go to Saint Lawrence Islands, Alaska which is near the Russian coast. While there he noticed it didn't snow a lot and that most of the snow actually came in from Russia and he was there for a year getting paid 211 dollars a month. After his frozen trip in Alaska Akers was relocated to Youngstown Municipal Airport, Ohio from February 1959 to March 1960. In April 1960 he became a Communications Security Officer at Truax Field, Wisconsin until August later that year. Then he went to the Air Force Institute of Technology at the University of Illinois and got his Master's Degree in Mechanical Engineering and in September 1961 he went to Patrick Air Force Base, Florida. Here he was the Launch Range Requirements/Plans Officer and a Mechanical Engineer for 5 years. In July 1966 he became the Test Range Support Requirements Planner at Los Angeles Air Force Station, California. The reason it was an Air Force Station instead an Air Force Base is because in order to be a base you needed an airstrip and they didn't have one but they had one airplane that would fly from the LAX runway. After 2 years there he went to Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama in August 1968. In Alabama he went to Air Command and Staff College for 10 months and then moved to Washington D.C. in July of 1969. He worked in the Pentagon as a Program Element Monitor (PEM) for the Air Force Western Test Range or Vandenberg Air Force Base, the Space and Missile Test Center. The section of the Pentagon he worked in was the Headquarters of the U.S. Air Force. After his work in the Pentagon he became a United States Representative attached to the Embassy in the Hague, Netherlands. While here he was also the Research and Development Coordinator from July 1973

to July 1977 at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) Technical Center (STC). Once he returned to the U.S. he was transferred to the Space and Missile Systems Organization(SAMSO) as a Deputy Director for Space Launch Vehicles and for Space Launch and Control Systems from 1977 to 1982 and in 1982 he became Assistant Deputy for Integration and Management and Deputy Commander for Launch and Control Systems, Los Angeles Air Force Station.

Ronald Akers retired in 1983 after serving 26 years in the Air Force. When he joined the military after school he was a 2nd Lieutenant and made his way up to a Lieutenant Colonel. Before he retired he and his wife had two girls. The first named Valerie and the second named Cheryl. Valerie graduated at California State University in Northridge (CSUN) and Cheryl graduated from El Camino College and CSUN. They both now live in Hawthorne, California. During his terminal leave period he and his wife built a cabin in Arrowbear Lake, California while living in their mountain cabin in Running Springs, California. In October 1983 he joined Hughes Aircraft Company as an Assistant Project Manager working on Government spacecraft programs. In 1993 after several launches he retired and much of the ten years he worked there he was away from home for extended times in which his wife had to take care of day-to-day activities and financial accounts. After he retired, from his civilian job, he and his wife bought a pickup truck and installed a slide in camper to travel the U.S. to search for records of their ancestors. They visited every state in the U.S. and were successful in finding family history dating back to the early 1600's. They published 9 books in the process. They also visited many "Elderhostel" programs and forest service archeological digs. Before 2002 they also visited every country in Western Europe and visited German blood relatives now released from

communist control. In 2002 they moved to the retirement community at Air Force Village West where they live today. Today they frequently volunteer around their village in committees and other local efforts to help make the village better and useful to the ageing population.

Ronald Akers will be remembered for several achievements such as reaching the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and working at the Pentagon. Also other achievements such as getting a Master's Degree in Mechanical Engineering, Learning Research and Development Management, and Air Command Functions. He has also wrote many books in which he may be remembered by but most of all he'll be remembered as a veteran of the Air Force who helped protect the country.