

Lieutenant Colonel. THOMAS R.E. WATERS

Colonel THOMAS R.E. WATERS was born in Chicago Illinois. He enlisted in the United States Air Force in July 1960 after graduation from Tilden Technical High School. After basic training, he was stationed at Shaw AFB, South Carolina before going to Vietnam as a Staff Sergeant in 1966. Although exempt from serving in the war-zone because his younger brother (Melvin) was killed in Vietnam in 1965, he volunteered because of his dedication to duty and love of country.

In Vietnam, Colonel Waters was assigned to the 3rd Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) at Bien Hoa Air Base and later transferred to the 366th TFW at DaNang Air Base. At DaNang, he was wounded in a midnight rocket attack while working as an Egress (ejection seat) technician on an F-4C aircraft in July 1967. Injuries received by being blown from the aircraft to the concrete ramp were a broken foot and cracked spine. He was honorably discharged as a Technical Sergeant (E-6) in 1968.

Colonel Waters returned to Chicago and, still feeling the desire to serve, joined the Illinois Air National Guard where he was selected for promotion to Master Sergeant (E-7) while attending Olive-Harvey Community College. In 1971, he transferred to the Air Force ROTC program at the Illinois Institute of Technology where he was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant upon graduation with his Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree in May 1973. He returned to active duty in August 1973.

Colonel Waters served in several Air Force assignments as an aircraft maintenance officer in positions of Flightline OIC, propulsion OIC, maintenance supervisor, acting Field Maintenance Squadron commander and Chief - Maintenance Management branch (73-78). His next assignment was as an Associate Professor of Aero Space Studies at the Illinois Institute of Technology while also serving as the Illinois State Admissions Counselor for the Air Force Academy and Air Force ROTC (78-82). He was then transferred to Headquarters Air Training Command on the Logistics staff as Assistant Chief of the Quality Assurance Branch at Randolph AFB, Texas (82-85) before being assigned to the 3785th Field Training Wing at Sheppard AFB, Texas as the Resource Division Chief (85-87). His next assignment was to the Philippines and Clark Air Base where he was the Component Repair Squadron Commander, Chief of the Maintenance Operations Division, and Assistant Deputy Commander for Maintenance (87-90). He returned to Headquarters Air Training Command, this time to the Technical Training staff, as the Chief of the Combat Support Training Division (91-92). Returning to the Pacific, his assignment was with Headquarters 13th Air Force as the Logistics Readiness Flight Commander (Deputy LG) at Andersen AFB, Guam (92-95). His last active duty assignment was with the Air National Guard Readiness Center (ANGRC) as the AMC Team Chief where he managed the C-5, C-17, C-141, and KC-135 aircraft (95-97). He retired from active duty on 1 August 1997 at the grade of Lieutenant Colonel with over 32 years of active duty service.

While on active duty, Colonel Waters received his Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree from Mississippi State University in Starkville, Mississippi in 1976. He graduated from the Air Force's Squadron Officer's School, Air Command and Staff College, and the prestigious Air War College. He is also a graduate of the Marine Corps Command & Staff College. He received his Doctorate of Education (Ed.D.) degree from California Coast University in 1996. He holds teaching licenses with the island of Guam and the state of Nevada. He is also certified to teach in Illinois. Selected by his high school alum, he was inducted into the Tilden Tech Alumni Association *Hall of Fame* in November 1985.

After retirement from active duty with the Air Force, Colonel Waters accepted the position of Director of Education with ITT Technical Institute in Burr Ridge, Illinois. He began that position in Oct 1997 but felt he could better help students at the high school level. Even though it was a lower salary, he resigned his Director of Education position in September 1998 to accept a Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DoDDS) teaching position as the Cooperative Work Experience (CWE) Coordinator/Teacher at Ansbach Middle/High School in

Germany. DoDEA (Department of Defense Education Activity) is considered the fifty-first state for educational purposes and receives and sends students to all fifty states. In July 2001, he accepted a position as Assistant Principal at Ramstein American High School where he served until his transfer to Ramstein American Middle School where he was selected as the DoDEA Assistant Principal of the Year for 2007. Ramstein American High School is the largest American High School in the DoDDS system worldwide and Ramstein American Middle School is the largest Middle School in the DoDDS system. He retired from the DoDEA system on 1 August 2008 after ten years of service and settled down in Pahrump Nevada where he volunteered his expertise in several areas of the community. In the November 2010 General Election he was elected to serve on the Pahrump Town Board with a term of office from 1 Jan 2011-31 December 2014.

Additionally, he is an Ordained Minister (Local Elder) with a local church and has also served as Director of a local Youth Group (Pathfinders and Adventurers) with young people ages 10-16.

Colonel Waters has four children; Michael (a retired Air Force Major), Shawna (Army Veteran), Valencia, and Tamara. He is married to the former Fe (Armen) Benedicto of Southern Leyte, Philippines.

AWARDS & VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Military and Civilian decorations and service include:

Military Decorations - The Purple Heart; Meritorious Service Medal (6); AF Commendation Medal; Distinguished Presidential Unit Citation; Outstanding Unit Award with Valor; AF Organizational Excellence Award; AF Good Conduct Medal (2); National Defense Service Medal with bronze star; Vietnam Service Medal with 2 Campaign Stars; Overseas Ribbon for Short Tour; Overseas Ribbon for Long Tour; AF Longevity Medal (8); AF Marksmanship Medal; Air Force Training Ribbon (2 - Officer & Enlisted); Vietnam Campaign with Gallantry Cross; and Vietnam Unit Citation with '60 Device.

He was also presented the California Service Medal in 1997 by special proclamation of the California Governor and Legislature for his work with the California Air National Guard. The special proclamation was necessary because he is not a California resident.

Civilian – Hall of Fame Induction by the Tilden Tech Alumni Association in 1985; Certificates of Appreciation from the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), 11th Aviation Regiment, 235th & 282nd Base Support Battalions, and Larson Barracks (Germany) Chapel services. He has also received awards as Guest Speaker for several Black Heritage functions at Anderson AFB, Guam, Ramstein Air Force Base and the Army 1st Cavalry in Germany. Lastly, he was the 2007 DoDEA Assistant Principal of the Year.

Volunteer in Nevada – TV Show (Pahrump Live with Dr. Tom Waters), former member of the Veterans Memorial Advisory Board, member of the Community Outreach Commission, member of the Great Basin College Steering Committee, member of the Nevada Center of Public Policy Dialogue, member of the Pahrump Valley Rotary Club, life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), life member of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), life member of the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), life member of the American Legion, life member of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), and also serves as a Local Elder in two area churches. In the November 2010 General Election, he was elected to serve a 4-year term on the Pahrump Town Board (2011-2014). His current TV Show (Nye County) airs the 2nd Tuesday each month from 6:00-7:00 PM on local Channel 25. It can also be found on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I7Hfrq3oaD4>

He was selected as the Nevada Veteran of the Month in November 2018 by Governor Sandoval.