



Merle "Tom" Thomas Dingess

October 15, 1939 - May 1, 2021

Merle Thomas "Tom" Dingess, 81, a retiree of both the United States Air Force and the Central Intelligence Agency, died at Conway Medical Center on May 1, 2021.

He was born in Chapmanville, West Virginia to Thomas Clay and Lillie Mae (Curry) Dingess, and attended Chapmanville High School in Chapmanville, West Virginia where he was better known as "Catbird." He attended two years at Marshall University and is a graduate of West Virginia State University.

His military specialty was in Telecommunications Operations. During his military career he received the Air Force Commendation Medal, the Air Force Longevity Service Ribbon with Four Oak Leaf Clusters, a National Defense Service Medal, the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, the Air Force Conduct Medal with Five Oak Leaf Clusters, the Air Force Commendation Medal with One Oak Leaf Cluster, and a Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon. During his career with the USAF he served in Portugal, Turkey, Italy and Thailand, as well as many bases across the United States.

After retiring from the United States Air Force in 1980, he enjoyed a career with the Central Intelligence Agency where he served in Bangladesh, The Philippines, and India.

Mr. Dingess was a competitive athlete and an avid sports fan and outdoorsman; he played fast-pitch softball and golf, and enjoyed fishing in fresh and ocean waters. He also loved his great home state of West Virginia and was a loyal fan of all West Virginia University Mountaineer sports.

The discipline and patriotism he learned from years of service never left him as his family and friends will attest. Mr. Dingess always looked on the bright side of life, was a gentleman, and had a wonderful sense of humor - he kept everyone laughing until his very last days. His optimism and joie de vivre will be painfully missed.

He was predeceased by three brothers, Stanley "Bud" Dingess, Bernie Dingess, and James "Jim" Dingess; and two sisters, Sandra Lee Dingess and Sheila Ann Trader.

Survivors include his wife of 46 years, Panom T. Dingess of Conway, SC; three sons, David Dingess of High Point, NC, Brian Dingess (Amy) of Fort Worth, TX, and Christopher Dingess of Conway, SC; two daughters, Kimberly Dingess-MacLachlan (Alex) of Greensboro, NC and Michele Dingess Noma (Rob) of Atlanta, GA; thirteen grandchildren; and eleven great grandchildren.

A graveside service, with full military honors, will be held at 11:00 AM Wednesday, May 5, 2021 at Hillcrest Cemetery in Conway, SC. The family will receive friends immediately following the service at the graveside.

Memorials may be sent to Homes For Our Troops, 6 Main Street, Taunton, MA 02780 or online at www.hfotusa.org

Cemetery Details

Hillcrest Cemetery

1000 Hwy 544
Conway, SC 29526
(843) 347-4909
office@hillcrestcemetery.com
<https://www.hillcrestcemetery.com/>

Previous Events

Burial with military honors

MAY 5. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Hillcrest Cemetery
1000 Hwy 544
Conway, SC 29526
(843) 347-4909
office@hillcrestcemetery.com
<https://www.hillcrestcemetery.com/>

Visitation

MAY 5. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Hillcrest Cemetery
1000 Hwy 544
Conway, SC 29526
(843) 347-4909
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<https://www.hillcrestcemetery.com/>

Tribute Wall

RS

“ Tom and i went to school together he was one grade ahead of me

Robert L Spencer - May 05, 2021 at 08:58 PM



“ I will never forget the first time I met Uncle Merle at our home in Osceola, Indiana. He was very loving and relaxed as he visited with my Mother (his sister) and our entire family. He brought a serene joy and quick-witted humor that infected our household. Over the years I have been blessed to share fond memories of/with my uncle, my aunt Panom and my cousins. He blessed me with his calming and supportive presence when my Mother was ill and when she passed. I did not get to spend much time with him because of distance but he was in my heart from the moment I met him and will remain there in loving memory for the rest of my days. Rest in Heaven and rave on, Uncle Merle. KK.

Jennifer Grossnickle - May 05, 2021 at 12:15 AM

BB

“ Tommy will always be remembered for his warm smile and genuine kindness. His concern for others was a common theme in his relationships. I don't think I ever had a conversation with him when he didn't ask about how someone close to me was doing whether it was my wife, my son, or me. He truly cared about others, especially his family. We now have another advocate looking out for us from above. That is a comforting thought as we celebrate his life while mourning how much we miss his physical presence.

May God Bless and Comfort your family and friends Tommy, rest in God's grace, pray for us. Thank you for being such a good friend, love, Bob

bob brand - May 04, 2021 at 10:39 PM

OL

“ Thank you for your service. We will never forget.

Orville & Irene Lambert - May 04, 2021 at 10:13 PM

BF

“ Billie Stone Frye lit a candle in memory of Merle "Tom" Thomas Dingess



Billie Stone Frye - May 04, 2021 at 10:06 PM

JO

“ Tom graduated year before I did. I always remember him being a gentleman who treated his friends from Chapmanville, WV as family. Always smiling and brought a bright light into the gathering. May God bless you all during this time of loss.

Joyce - May 04, 2021 at 05:30 PM

MK

“ Marilyn Dingess Kincaid lit a candle in memory of Merle "Tom" Thomas Dingess



Marilyn Dingess Kincaid - May 04, 2021 at 12:14 PM

KG

“ I grew up on Godby Branch near Chapmanville. Everyone knew each other, We started grade school at a two room school on the hill. We went to Jr, & Sr. High School and was in the CHS class of 1957. We have kept in touch all these years . I knew all his family. I can say we have been friends all our life. I live near Dayton, Ohio, but my heart is still in Logan Co. Chapmanville, Godby Branch. I shall miss his post on Face Book. My thoughts and Prays are for the famlies.

Kenneth M. Gibson - May 04, 2021 at 12:05 PM

Michele Noma

“ 38 files added to the album Family Photos



Michele Noma - May 04, 2021 at 10:47 AM

KD

Michelle, thank you so very much for adding these pictures. I had not seen but 2 of them in my life. Dad's service picture made me just break down. I had not seen it, and I'm silently suffering since his passing away. He had no idea how much I very much loved him and missed him. My life had imploded, as you know, with Alex having a brain aneurysm and the sorrow and financial/emotional distress it brought. I have pictures of Dad that you may want and also I could add a few to the family album here, but I don't know how. I'm assuming it will take you or another admin to do it. I will find the pictures and send them to you in case you don't have them. I have some with mom in them, but I won't send those to rule out causing any distress, though my mom LOVES Panom and has from the beginning and there were ZERO hard feelings, etc. between them. I love Panom so much myself. I admire her very much. She's so beautiful. I love you and your family and Chris and Panom, sis!!

Kimberly Dingess-McLauchlin - May 22, 2022 at 09:54 AM