

James Leo Killete, Ret. LTC



December 28, 1928 - March 30, 2016

James L. Killete, Lt. Colonel, US Army, 87, retired, passed away March 30th, 2016 at the Big Bend Hospice House in Tallahassee, Florida. His death was the result of a fall causing a severe head trauma. He was surrounded by his loving wife, son and daughter.

In addition to his wife, Betty S. Killete of 65 years, his son Mark G. Killete and daughter Dawn M. Killete, he is survived by a sister, Norma (Kermit) Parramore of Montgomery, Alabama, as well as several nieces and nephews. He will also be missed by his four pets: Autumn, Teddy, Hemi and Holley.

He was born in Prattville, AL, son of the late Eugene Leo and Grace Ingram Killete. Also preceded in death by a sister, June Frizzel, Montgomery, AL.

He graduated from Autauga County High School, received his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Kansas and his Masters from the University of Nebraska. LTC Killete proudly, bravely and honorably served his Country for a total of 50 years, the first 30 on active duty. He retired in 1977 after an outstanding career having served as a platoon leader, Korea; instructor, Ft. Benning Infantry School; leader of a recoilless rifle platoon, Berlin, Germany; platoon leader, Ft. Ord, CA; graduated from the fixed wing flight school, Ft. Rucker, AL; graduated from Rotary Wing flight school, Ft. Walters, TX; Aviator / Instructor back at Ft. Rucker; Operations Officer, SETAF Aviation Detachment in Verona, Italy; graduated from the Advanced Officers Training course, Ft. Benning, GA; Company Commander of the 1st BN 18th Infantry, at Ft. Riley, KS; graduated from the Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KS; Operations Officer, MACV Flight Detachment, Vietnam; Aviation Advisor to the Alabama National Guard; Commander of B Company 1st Aviation BN, Vietnam; Chief of Fixed Wing Flight Training Division, Ft. Stewart, GA; District Recruiting Commander, Fargo, ND; From 1975 until his retirement in 1977, LTC Killete was the Airfield Commander and Aviation Officer, Ft. Leonard Wood, MO as well as the Executive Officer of the 3rd Brigade.

His Awards and Commendations were numerous: Combat Infantry Badge, Master Army Aviator Badge, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star with three clusters, Meritorious Medal with two clusters, Good Conduct Medal, Commendation Medal, United Nations Service Medal, Korean Campaign Ribbon, Vietnam Campaign Ribbon, Air Ribbon, Air Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Civic Action Medal, Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Occupation Ribbon Germany and Japan.

From November 1, 1977 to 1997, he served as the Director of the Jr. ROTC of Gadsden County. In those 20 years heading the Jr. ROTC he was still part of the US Army but in a different manner. He still wore his uniform every day but not to fight in combat or fly military aircraft. This particular assignment was indeed a pleasure and honor for him. He was able to help mold young lives into having great respect for their Country and their Flag and to push young people to achieve their goals with courage and perseverance.

In 1997, he once again retired.

After having lived a fulfilling life with such a vast number of accomplishments, he did retire, completely, to a quiet life and truly to just stay home with the family he had missed so much.

He was a nature enthusiast and had a soft heart for wildlife so it comes as no surprise that he enjoyed rescuing and caring for animals which, more times than not, would then remain at the house.

He was a very kind hearted person – always seeing the good side in everything and everybody. He would always thank God for his health and achievements. He also had a very dry sense of humor. The family and friends never tired of his witty jokes and quips.