

JAY A. COLLARS

Jay Collars was born on March 30, 1938 in Baltimore, Maryland to Charles & Caroline Collars. He had two brothers, Frank and Roy as well as three sisters, Elma, Betty and Caroline.

He attended Baltimore's George Washington Elementary School and graduated from Southern High School. He graduated from St. Leo College in St. Leo, Florida with a degree in Office Management.

Jay entered the United States Air Force on June 21, 1955. He took basic training at Sampson Air Force Base in New York. From there he served all over the world and with flying, he visited most of the Air Force bases in the world. Jay did two tours of duty in Vietnam. The first one was at Bien Hoa, South Vietnam and the second tour was at Phu Cat. Jay is highly decorated and has a chest full of medals and ribbons. Some of the major awards are the prestigious Meritorious Service Medal, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with seven oak leaf clusters and the Bronze Star Medal with "V" for Valor. He also received the National Defense Service Medal, Air Force Good Conduct Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Palm and several other Air Force medals.

Jay married Jan Combs on October 25, 2003. Jay has three children: Jay Jr., Toni Ann & Kenneth, along with three step-children: Darrell (deceased), Kathy & David. There are 14 grandchildren and 26 great-grandchildren.

Jay served honorably in the Air Force for 25 years and retired as a Chief Master Sergeant (E-9).

After retiring from the Air Force, Jay worked for the Department of Veterans Affairs in Washington, DC and then spent 5 years coordinating the volunteers as the Director of Volunteers at the Children's Museum in Indianapolis.

Jay attends Hope Baptist Church in Dillsboro.

He is a life member of the Am Vets, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), the Vietnam Veterans Chapter 71 and the 40 & 8. He is also a member of the American Legion. Jay was inducted in the Indiana Military Veterans Hall of Fame with the Class of 2019. He was presented with the Raymond L. White Distinguished Military Service to Freemasonry Award in 2022 by the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons. President Jimmy Carter recognized Jay with a Presidential Certificate for his service to the Veterans.

He currently serves as the Commander of the 40 & 8 for Marion/Johnson Counties Chapter. Jay coordinated a trip to Washington, DC, in late June of 2024 with PG Gentrup, and they escorted 50 men & women veterans to see the monuments and memorials. Jay was honored to be one of the four wreath presenters at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Jay is one outstanding American Veteran & Patriot and lives by the words: Duty-Honor-Country.