



Lt Col Nils Arthur Ohlson, Sr. USAF, Ret.

May 3, 1934 - March 29, 2020

Hampton – Lt Col Nils Arthur Ohlson, Sr., USAF, Ret., 85, of Hampton, passed away peacefully at his home March 29, 2020 with loving family by his side. He was born in Dayton, OH on May 3, 1934 to John Folke and Lillian (Christianson) Ohlson.

The family relocated to Audubon, PA where they lived on 50 wooded acres. There, Nils and his father planted hundreds of trees. Nils attended Audubon School, Westtown School, West Chester, PA, and graduated from Norristown High School, Norristown, PA. In 2010, Nils was inducted into the Norristown High School Hall of Fame.

Nils fell in love with flying when he first saw an airplane land near Audubon School. He couldn't get out of school soon enough and ran to the airfield before the dismissal bell rang. Right then and there, he volunteered to mow the grass in exchange for flying lessons. He earned his pilot's license before he earned his driver's license.

Nils served in the United States Air Force from 1955 to 1983 where he logged 6,123 hours in various aircraft platforms. He was proud of being a "Mustang," a term for someone who has transitioned from the enlisted ranks to the officer corps. He was selected to demonstrate the USAF's newest fighter-bomber, the FB-111, to the editors of Aviation Week and Space Technology (May

1976). One of his most significant accomplishments was saving a B-47 bomber aircraft from almost certain destruction after an engine failure on takeoff from Greenham Common Airbase, UK. The severity of the situation was compounded by the aircraft being loaded with a Mk6-Mod6 nuclear weapon. Nils flew B-52 bombers during three tours in Viet Nam, logging 697 combat flying hours during 91 combat missions with no aborts. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, Nils flew nuclear weapons on a B-47 to safety near Detroit Wayne International airport. He also served as Director of Simulator Training for FB-111s and KC-135s, Contingency Plan Officer, FB-111 Central Evaluation Group Pilot, Search and Rescue Officer over the area encompassing Greenland, Davis Straits, Iceland and the North Pole. He prosecuted four successful searches with personnel recoveries and no loss of life.

Lt Col Ohlson retired from the USAF in July 1983 after 30 years of service. His awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Medal with three devices as well as many other personal and unit commendations.

Nils was a member and volunteer for numerous organizations including the Military Officers Association of America, the Air Force Association, Daedalians, the New Hampshire Aviation Historical Society, American Legion and the 310th Bomb Wing Veterans Association and served in various leadership positions within those organizations including Chairman and Treasurer. Additionally, Nils was an Inland Search and Rescue Pilot for the Civil Air Patrol.

After retirement from USAF, Nils completed his Bachelor of Professional Studies Degree at the University of New Hampshire. He also attended the North Bennett Street School, Boston, MA, to study period furniture building. He spent many hours restoring furniture and making new heirlooms in his workshop. He also built a nutshell pram at The Wooden Boat School in Maine

and a Windsor chair at the Windsor Institute, Hampton, NH.

Among his many passions and talents were photography, hi-fi stereo, boating, camping, cycling, woodworking, skiing, and music. He once commented that he could enjoy anything if “You’ll Never Walk Alone” was playing in the background.

Nils had a thirst for knowledge. He was often spotted reading books, magazines, newspapers, articles, or spending time researching on the internet. He could have a lively educated discussion on nearly any subject.

Although no longer on active duty, Nils remained an airman all his life. Nils knew kindness like an old friend. He was very proud of his family and circle of friends and loved them all fiercely; but he also treated strangers with tremendous kindness. From his taking in a foreign exchange student, to welcoming strays his son brought home for Thanksgiving dinners, his sense of humor made people laugh and his open heart and generosity always made everyone feel like part of the family.

Whether he was creating, restoring, protecting, giving, or just flying, the sense of wonder and kindness that was part of his soul touched everything and everyone lucky enough to know him. He tried to leave the world a better place than he found it, and the world will not be the same without him in it.

Nils is survived by his beloved wife of 55 years, Elsie Anne “Annie” (Gillispie) Ohlson, his devoted and loving son Nils A. Ohlson Jr.; sister Mareka Lee; nephews Mark Stephen (Anne), Orlando, FL; Jonathan Lee; Tim Gillispie (Maria Francia), Overland Park, KS; nieces Joni Abbate (John), Hackettstown, NJ; Karin Lee; and several cousins. His charm, wit, and love will be missed by all who knew him.

Services will be held at 11:00 am on Friday, October 22, 2021 at the Hampton United Methodist Church, 525 Lafayette Road, Hampton. Burial with full military honors will follow at 3 pm in the New Hampshire State Veterans Cemetery in Boscawen, NH. If desired donations may be made to Flight 53, Order of Daedalians, PO Box 8531, Portsmouth NH 03842-8531 or to the Hampton United Methodist Church, 525 Lafayette Rd., Hampton, NH 03842.

Cemetery Details

New Hampshire State Veterans Cemetery

110 Daniel Webster Highway
Boscawen, NH 03303

Previous Events

Service

OCT **22**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Hampton United Methodist Church
525 Lafayette Road
Hampton, NH

Graveside Service

OCT **22**. 3:00 PM (ET)

New Hampshire State Veterans Cemetery
110 Daniel Webster Highway
Boscawen, NH 03303

Tribute Wall



“ *Lt Col Nils Arthur Ohlson, Sr. USAF, Ret.*

September 18, 2022 at 12:49 AM



“ *Jane Erickson purchased the Sacred Duty Spray for the family of Lt Col Nils Arthur Ohlson, Sr. USAF, Ret..*



Jane Erickson - October 20, 2021 at 11:20 AM



“ *Daedalians Granite State Flight 53 purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Lt Col Nils Arthur Ohlson, Sr. USAF, Ret..*



Daedalians Granite State Flight 53 - October 19, 2021 at 10:19 AM



“ *Dear Annie and Family
So sorry to hear of Nils passing, although I lost contact with Nils our 55-R reunions were great to catch up on our careers and reminisce about pilot training. He was a great classmate and I'm sure he had an outstanding career. May God give you peace and comfort in the days ahead. Kindest Regards, Lt.Col(R) Ernie Webster*

Ernest Webster - May 26, 2020 at 07:43 PM

FU

“ To the family! I am Col. Frank w. Trojcak Ret.USAF. I was the class leader that had Nils in it's training. I knew him very well and we were always the best of friends. I adored the big lug and had very kind words for him. I am glad that he and his wife, whom I do not remember her name came to our last class reunion I held here in San Antonio, TX. We had a great time and all were equally happy to see each other once again even if a long time ago. I shall never forget him. He was one of my buddies and I'm happy to say that I know he felt the same about me. May he rest in peace and now that he has retracted the gear for the last time. Be on your way in that great place we all loved so well. "Heaven in the Sky"....

Frank W. Trojcak Col USAF/Ret - May 26, 2020 at 05:39 PM

ME

“ Dear Annie and Nils,
Please forgive that lateness of this message, but for some reason we were not notified of Niki's passing until today!! I am really dismayed. We were much closer than people knew. He was my hero as well as my cousin. He taught me how to drive by sitting me on his lap in the white Chrysler that was much like flying a plane. He would say, “put a little in, take a little out,” as a way of teaching how to take corners. He, of course, had pilot's hands so he could place a car exactly where he wanted it, and he taught me to do the same. What confidence he exuded. Although not mentioned in his obit, my memory says he flew in Korea early on and was in fighters at that point. We had a thing then. I sent him a dollar for his birthday (I was maybe 10 or 11 at the time). He saved that very bill and some years later he sent it back to me for my birthday! Of course I did the same, and we traded that bill back and forth many times. I ended up with it the last time and still have it. Do you remember teaching me to water ski on Fulsom Lake? I could go on with many memories. I shall miss him immensely as will most who knew him. He was a true Viking.
Annie and Nils, I will keep you in my prayers. Please keep me informed about plans for a service or memorial for Nick. Love to you both. Mark

Mark Erickson - April 18, 2020 at 06:04 PM

DH

“ Dear Annie and family:

I am deeply saddened to learn of Nils' passing. My thoughts and prayers go out to you all in this time of bereavement. Nils was one of the truly good guys and I considered it an honor to be one of those who shared his friendship.

Don Houldsworth

Donald Houldsworth - April 13, 2020 at 04:30 PM

RJ

“ Dear Olhson family,

It was a pleasure to get to know and serve with Nils. All junior officers looked up to him for guidance and leadership. Thoughts and prayers are with you all.

Dick Johnston

Richard F Johnston - April 10, 2020 at 02:33 PM

AH

“ Dear Annie and family,

I was so sorry to see the notice of Nils passing. I think he was one of Jacks oldest friends. I remember that whenever there was a job to be done, projects to oversee or planes to fly Jack always felt confident asking Nils to take charge. When Jack died a few years ago, I turned around at the memorial service and was so pleased to see Nils sitting in the church. In the rush, I didn't get to speak to him but I was comforted by his presence. Nils was a wonderful gentleman, an outstanding officer, and a good friend.

Alison Harris

Alison Harris - April 10, 2020 at 11:05 AM

JJ

“ Annie & Nils, Jr,

I flew out of the 715th from 1976-80, and I was one of the many, many folks who were lucky enough to get to know Nils. For us "new guys," he was a beacon of information, and his calm gentlemanly personality made it easy to approach & learn from him. And over the years since my Pease days, when I would think of Nils, it always brought a smile to my face...he was truly "one of the good guys."

So, I was deeply saddened to hear of Nils' passing, but please know that he leaves a powerful legacy for those of us in the FB-111 community that had the pleasure of serving with him.

May the Good Lord give you peace & comfort,

Jack Johnson

Jack Johnson - April 10, 2020 at 09:57 AM

JC

“ For three years I was the manager of the Pease alert facility. I always looked forward to the opportunity to interface with Lt Col Olson when pulled alert. He had a great sense of humor and was a true gentleman . CMsgt Joseph Caliro

Joseph Caliro - April 08, 2020 at 07:09 PM

BW

“ Annie and Nils I was so sorry to hear of Nils passing. Prayers are with you at this time. Brian Warburton

brian warburton - April 08, 2020 at 07:45 AM

HG

“ *Helen Gettelman purchased the Small Garden Dish for the family of Lt Col Nils Arthur Ohlson, Sr. USAF, Ret..*



Helen Gettelman - April 06, 2020 at 02:35 PM

BF

“ *Bud and Lela,Buck, Velma and families purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Lt Col Nils Arthur Ohlson, Sr. USAF, Ret..*



Bud and Lela,Buck, Velma and families - April 05, 2020 at 02:26 PM