



Col. Joseph S. Hice USAF (ret.)

February 28, 1928 - August 26, 2019

Colonel Joseph S. Hice, US Air Force (ret), of Miami, FL and Roswell, GA died Monday, August 26, 2019 at age 91. He was preceded in death by his wife Mary P. Blankley Hice, and is survived by his children, Joseph Hice Jr. (Sandra), of Tampa, FL; Charles N. Hice (Sharon) of Miami, FL; Leslie Jane Hice Coleman (Darryl), of Roswell; and his brother, Thomas Hice of Tucker, GA; grandchildren Katherine Hice Madriz, of Miami; Mary Hice of Atlanta; Laurie Hice Michaelson (Jake) of Woodstock, GA; Kenneth Hice (Sarah) of Miami; Jenna Coleman of Orlando, FL; Kimberly Coleman of Atlanta; great grandchildren Charlotte Hice, Alexander Madriz, Caroline and Ella Jaye Michaelson; his pup, Louie; and many nieces and nephews.

Colonel Hice was born in 1928 in Cherry Log, Gilmer County, GA and attended the University of Georgia where he studied aeronautical engineering. He joined the US Army Air Corp. at age 17 as an airman and retired from the US Air Force 21 years later as a colonel. He was among the first jet pilots in the nation and piloted the P-80, F-84, F-86, F-100, F-104, KC- 135 and B-52. While in the service, he also flew prop planes, including the J-3, P-51, B-25, Steerman AT-6, and P-47. He earned the WW II Victory Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, USAF Outstanding Unit Award with Oak Leaf Cluster, USFA Commendation Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and the Bronze Star Service Medal. He served his country during action in Korea and Vietnam and led the first squadron of jet aircraft to circumnavigate the globe nonstop.

During the October 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, Colonel Hice was at Strategic Air Command (SAC) headquarters, Offutt AFB, Nebraska, where he helped coordinate the different branches of the Air Force and Navy on operation "Looking Glass," in recent years referred to as the Airborne Command Post (ABNCP). He briefed President Kennedy on what and where things were happening in real time, making information available instantly that before would have been impossible. SAC began the Looking Glass mission in 1961 using EC-135C airplanes from the ABNCP, also at Offutt AFB, backed up by aircraft flying with other squadrons. These aircraft provided the ability to be over the Sea Blockade, then over the USA in minutes. EC-135 Looking Glass aircraft were airborne 24 hours a day for more than 29 years, until July 24, 1990, when "The Glass" ceased continuous airborne alert, but continues to date on ground or airborne alert 24 hours a day under the ABNCP.

Following his career in the Air Force he joined Eastern Airlines in Miami as chief flight instructor. He was type-rated in the DC-8, DC-9, DC-10, Boeing 707, Boeing 720 and Boeing 727 and retired after more than 20 years with the airline. He moved on into the real estate industry and was active in South Florida and Atlanta until he was 90.

Colonel Hice will receive full military honors during a ceremony at Georgia National Cemetery in Canton, GA, on Friday, October 4, at 11 a.m.

He led an amazing life of service and commitment to his family, friends and country. As Colonel Hice would say, "Fly low and slow, and keep the doors open. 10-4."

Cemetery Details

Northside Chapel Crematory

12050 Crabapple Rd
Roswell, GA 30075

Previous Events

Graveside Service

OCT 4. 11:00 AM (ET)

Georgia National Cemetery
1080 Scott Hudgens Dr
Canton, GA 30114
(770) 479-9300

Tribute Wall



“ *Col. Joseph S. Hice USAF (ret.)* ”

October 08, 2022 at 11:37 AM