

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JAMES OBENAUF  
By Richard Long

Lieutenant Colonel James Obenauf lived a heroic lifetime on one mission: April 1958. Read the entire riveting story posted on the Veterans Club website, know the real "Obie".

In 1954, Jim enlisted in the Air Force, scored well on the pilot training test and entered the Aviation Cadet program. After pilot training for almost 2 years, he received his wings and simultaneously was commissioned with a waiver because he wasn't of age to be a commissioned officer. First assignment—McConnell AFB, Wichita, Kansas, for B-47 training, then stationed at Dyess AFB, Abilene, Texas for 7 years. During that time he trained on the F-102 so he could fly the B-58 Hustler—a plane ahead of its time—which only highly skilled pilots were invited to fly. As a young enlisted airman, Jim and a friend decided to ride motor scooters in the Texas hill country. Of course, Jim's quit so his friend decided to tow him back to base using a piece of rope. The highway patrol found this somewhat unsafe but amusing none the less. Jim thinks alcohol may have been involved in this decision making process.

Jim spent a year as DaNang Vietnam's 9th Special Operations Commander flying "02 putt-putt" aircraft, then returned stateside as Squadron Commander, 100th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, Davis-Monthan AFB.

Lt Colonel Obenauf's final assignment was Headquarter Operations as Director of Reconnaissance Maintenance for the U-2 SR-71 Drone and RC-135 aircraft.

Lt Colonel Obenauf, we honor you and thank you for your service.