



## Eugene Burlingame Mechling, Jr. Col USAF (Retired)

April 25, 1925 - June 7, 2023

Colonel Eugene Burlingame Mechling, Jr., passed away peacefully from natural causes on June 7, 2023, in the presence of his loving family.

“Mec” or “Gene” was born on April 25, 1925, in Brooklyn, NY, to Eugene Burlingame and Mary Wooley Mechling and was the oldest of two sons. His father, a WWI aviator, exposed Gene and his brother “Bud” to aviation and gave them a strong desire to fly and serve their country. Growing up in Scarsdale, NY, Gene was an Eagle Scout and a talented athlete at Eastchester High School, where he was star of the track team and quarterback on the football team.

During the summer, he would often spend time with his grandparents in Colorado, developing a love for the outdoors and the mountains. While attending high school, he enlisted in the Army Air Force Cadet Corps and after graduation was sent to train as an aircrew on B-24 Liberators, eventually qualifying as a gunner. While in training, he was selected for appointment to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, entering with the Class of 1949. There he spent his spare time competing on the football and ice hockey teams while simultaneously pursuing his high school sweetheart, Ann Tuller of Peekskill, NY. Gene succeeded in graduating and marrying Ann immediately after.

Following graduation, he was assigned to Coastal Artillery. Not happy, he successfully petitioned the Chief of Staff of the Air Force to assign him to flight school. Upon graduation from flight school, he was ordered to Korea, where he flew 100 combat missions flying the F-84 on bombing and fighter escort missions in support of United Nations forces. After subsequent tours flying F-86's in Louisiana, Hawker Hunters with the Royal Air Force in England and a staff tour in Texas, Gene volunteered for Air Force special operations as an Air Commando in Vietnam. There he flew combat missions in the T-28 as an advisor to the South Vietnamese. Following subsequent assignment to the Pentagon, he returned to Vietnam for another year flying combat missions in the OV-10 and T-28 at great personal risk in covert missions over Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos. Returning from Vietnam, he was assigned to his final tour as Deputy Commander of Operations for the Flying Training Wing at Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio, TX.

Gene retired from the Air Force in 1972 and moved to Aspen, CO, where he was a realtor for ten years, before moving to Reston, VA, to be among his grandchildren. He moved to Easton, MD, in 1986 and has resided there ever since. His numerous military decorations include the Legion of Merit and the Distinguished Flying Cross with two Oak Leaf Clusters. From his experiences in the service, Gene developed a strong belief in the importance of faith, family, and freedom and the West Point creed of Duty, Honor, Country. He was extremely courageous and unabashedly outspoken in support of his convictions and was well-known in Easton for his passionate letters to the editor advocating for freedom and a strong defense of our country.

His many loves included ice hockey, American history, West Point, the mountains of Colorado, animals, and most of all his family. Gene lost his loving wife, Ann, in 2010, and his beloved brother, Bud, in 2020.

He is survived by his son, Andy (wife Jacky); his daughter, Gene;

grandchildren, Andrew (Kelly), Emily (David), Laura (Mark), Kate (Billy), Molly (Tate); great-grandchildren, Josephine, Hike, Liam, Luke, Helen, Zoey, Graham, Rye; and best friend and confidant, Jimmi.

Known to his family as Dad, Pop-Pop, and Uncle Mec, he was outgoing, mischievous, gracious, chivalrous, and generous. He was one in a million as a man, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, friend, aviator, mentor, and true patriot. He never criticized, but instead encouraged and educated. He showed us the way. He was a genuine HERO to his family, our nation, and the Korean and Vietnamese people.

A memorial service will be held at the Trappe United Methodist Church on July 18 at noon. A reception will follow at the VFD Hall. Gene will be laid to rest with his beloved wife Ann at West Point. In lieu of flowers, a donation can be made to the Paralyzed Veterans Association at [PVA.org](http://PVA.org).

# Cemetery Details

## West Point Cemetery

Washington Road  
West Point, NY 10996

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

JUL 18. 12:00 PM (ET)

Trappe United Methodist Church  
29421 Maple Avenue  
Trappe, MD 21673

# Tribute Wall



“ *Eugene Burlingame Mechling, Jr. Col USAF (Retired)*

October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ *Dave Fanning, Paralyzed Veterans lit a candle in memory of Eugene Burlingame Mechling, Jr. Col USAF (Retired)*



**Dave Fanning, Paralyzed Veterans** - July 05, 2023 at 02:26 PM



“ *With respectful memories of Gene as close friend and compatriot from earliest days as plebes at West Point and later sharing of meaningful leadership roles, I send my warmest regards to the Mechling family and associates. Bob Kemble*

**C.R. Kemble** - June 21, 2023 at 01:23 PM



“ *A good Soldier who will be well received by 'The Long Gray Line'-- Jim Poore*

**james Poore** - June 21, 2023 at 11:26 AM

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“ *Agnes Blades lit a candle in memory of Eugene Burlingame Mechling, Jr. Col USAF (Retired)*



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**Agnes Blades** - June 20, 2023 at 08:46 AM