



The obituary for Golden Eagle member Captain Russell McKnire is posted below containing additional details about Russ and is being issued subsequent to the Gone West notice regarding his passing issued yesterday, August 2, 2024. Thanks to Golden Eagles member Captain Dana Floyd for providing the information regarding Russ`s demise.

The following obituary contains the text of the obituary and an early photo of Russ only. To view the complete official obituary with more detailed information about events, click on the following link:

<https://www.smithfuneralchapels.com/obituaries/Russell-Wayne-McKnire?obId=32542730>



In Loving Memory Of

Russell Wayne McKnire

March 21, 1944 - July 27, 2024

Russell Wayne McKnire Obituary

Forever the pilot, Russell Wayne McKnire, 80, took his final flight at 7:37 am on 7/27. As a military man, it is no surprise he had an on-time departure. Born March 21, 1944, in Lewistown, Montana, he was the second oldest of four children to parents Mary and Vester McKnire. While living in Chinook, Russ had

his first airplane ride with the Civil Air Patrol, sparking his interest in becoming a pilot. A former student of Billings West High, he worked nights at Lovell Clay firing bricks before enlisting in the U.S. Army in 1961.

Certified as a heavy equipment operator, his first overseas tour was to Thailand. He then transitioned to helicopter recovery and maintenance serving three tours in Vietnam with the 14th Transportation Battalion, 540th Transportation Company. Russell was then accepted into and completed Warrant Officer training, earning his (rotary) wings as a helicopter pilot.

Russell's Army Aviation career, from helicopters to fixed wing aircraft, allowed him to fly throughout the Americas and Saudi Arabia before returning stateside, where he retired at Fort Carson, Colorado in 1983.

He served with distinction for 21 years earning numerous medals including: the Bronze Star Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with 6 Bronze Service Stars, the Army Commendation Medal with 2d Oak Leaf Cluster, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal, and others from the U.S. Army, in addition to the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm device & the Vietnam Campaign Medal with 60 device from the Republic of Vietnam. He also earned the Senior Army Aviation qualification badge for extensive flight time in both rotary & fixed wing aircraft.

Russ continued as a commercial pilot for Rocky Mountain Airways, flying Twin-Otters and Dash-7s, upgrading to Captain. He was Director of Operations during the acquisition of Rocky Mountain Airways by Continental/ Continental Express in the mid-1980s. He returned to flying the line for Continental / Continental Micronesia in the early 1990s, flying the 727. He then flew DC-10-30s for Gemini Air Cargo before returning to Continental where he also flew the DC-10 along with 737s and MD-80s. His family was aboard his retirement flight from San Francisco to Houston on March 17, 2004 with a water cannon acknowledgement upon his arrival. Of course, Russ wasn't quite ready for

retirement. For his last career chapter, he developed Lynx Aviation's (Frontier Airline's regional subsidiary) pilot training department and ground school program. Beyond flying a variety of aircraft, Russ is credited with helping shape the careers of so many of his fellow pilots, many of whom have gone on to have amazing aviation careers of their own.

Russell shared his love of aviation with his own children, greatly influencing the direction of their career paths. If there is one common bond in his immediate family, it is aviation. Even when his job demanded he be far away, Russell was a loving and devoted father. He rose to the occasion taking on even greater responsibility for his youngest daughter playing the roles of both parents following her mother's passing. Russell instilled in his children the values of hard work, integrity, and perseverance, inspiring them to pursue their own dreams with the same passion he had for aviation.

Russell is survived by his three children, Ariana McKnire of Calgary, Alberta, Christopher McKnire (Anita McKnire) of Euless, Texas, and Michelle McKnire of Texas, along with his granddaughter Julia McKnire of Denver, Colorado. He is also survived by his three siblings, Dennis McKnire (Lynda McKnire), John McKnire (Claudia McKnire), and Arlene McCann-Kordick.

Events

Aug2

Service

Friday, August 2, 2024 at 10:00AM - 11:00AM

Smith West Chapel

304 34th Street West

Billings, MT 59102

Get directions (see official obituary)

Aug2

Graveside

Friday, August 2, 2024 at 12:00PM

Yellowstone National Cemetery
55 Buffalo Trail Road
LAUREL, MT 59044
Get directions (see official obituary)



Dave Newell
Golden Eagles VP/Email Coordinator
davebnewell@gmail.com

Copyright © 2024 GoldenEagles Retiree Association, All rights reserved.
You are receiving this email because you are a Golden Eagles member

Our mailing address is:
GoldenEagles Retiree Association
233 Forest Ridge Dr
Lakehills, TX 78063-6213

Want to change how you receive these emails?
[You can update your preferences](#)



This email was sent to davebnewell@gmail.com
[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)
GoldenEagles Retiree Association · 233 Forest Ridge Dr · Lakehills, TX 78063-6213 · USA



ReplyForward

You can't react with an emoji to a group