

## OBITUARIES

### Florida Rites Held For Brother of Local Resident

Funeral services for Grover C. Walker Jr., Captain (Ret.) USN, of Atlanta, Georgia, were held Wednesday, June 30, in the All Faiths Chapel, Pensacola (Florida) Naval Air Station, with Chaplain Ken Griffin officiating. Burial followed in Barrancas National with Military Honors.

Grover Walker, Jr. was born in Jacksonville, Texas, on December 11, 1923. He died June 21, 1999, at the age of 75.

Mr. Walker entered the U. S. Navy as a Naval Aviation Cadet on his nineteenth birthday after having played freshman football at Texas A&M College. He was designated a Naval Aviator and commissioned an Ensign in September 1944 and spent the next three years flying Corsairs in VBF-14 on the USS Intrepid and on the island of Saipan before leaving active duty.

In 1950, he graduated from Southern Methodist University after having played middle linebacker on the outstanding SMU football teams of the late 1940's, which featured Doak Walker and Kyle Rote. His last game was the SMU-Notre Dame game in December 1949, which subsequently was voted the outstanding game of the first half of the century.

After graduation, he coached in Texas high schools for three years before being recalled to active duty in March 1953. He reported to Pensacola for a three-year tour of shore duty, during which he served as swimming instructor and Head of the Physical Fitness Department in the Navy Pre-Flight School, as well as coach of the Naval Air Basic Training Command football team - the Goshawks. The 1955 team played in the Poinsetta Bowl for the service championship.

He then began a twelve-year tour of sea duty which included tours in three jet fighter squadrons, two jet attack squadrons, command of VA-72, deep selection one year early as Commander, Attack Carrier Air Wing Three aboard the USS

Saratoga, followed by a tour as navigator of the USS Oriskany.

Walker was then assigned to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations as the Aircraft Carrier Readiness Officer for a period of two and a half years before returning to Pensacola in 1970 as Director of the Naval Aviation Museum.

In 1974, he retired after 26 years of active duty and accepted employment as the civilian director of the Naval Aviation Museum. During his naval career, he flew 24 types of aircraft and operated from 14 different aircraft carriers.

In 1987, he retired from the Museum after having been the director for a total of 17 years.

During his tenure as director, he was highly instrumental in determining the design of the museum building, its location and its development through Stage II. When he became director, there were only five aircraft in the collection; when he retired, there were 156 in the collection.

Mr. Walker is survived by his wife, Joan Merritt Walker of Atlanta, Georgia; a daughter, Mary Walker Burleson of Atlanta, Georgia; a son, Russell D. Walker of Atlanta, Georgia; two sisters, Virginia Walker Baumgardner of Abilene and Nella Walker Whittaker of Grapeland; and several nieces and nephews.

Memorial contributions may be made to The Naval Aviation Museum Foundation, 1750 Radford Blvd., Naval Air Station, Pensacola, FL 32508.

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