



## Paul Canant

December 28, 1921 - May 29, 2010

Colonel (Ret) Orion Paul Davidson "Paul" Canant 28DEC1921-29MAY10

Colonel (Ret) Orion Paul Davidson "Paul" Canant was born in Dallas, Texas on December 28, 1921 to Oscar Price Davidson and Zeta Nancy McDaniel. He graduated from Dallas High School, Dallas, Texas, as an ROTC Cadet Captain, Infantry.

He was married in Houston, Texas to Anna Louise Marques on February 14, 1942. Shortly after their marriage, he enlisted in the Army Reserves at Houston, Texas as an Aviation Cadet. 2Lt. Canant was attached to Headquarters Squadron, 303rd Basic Flying Training Group. After completing 1 year, 4 months and 19 days in Army Air Force Pilot School (Advanced 2 Engine), he was awarded a Good Conduct Medal and Honorably Discharged on March 11, 1944, at Pecos Army Air Field, Pecos, Texas to accept a Commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Army.

Col. Canant then served in the United States Army as a Pilot from March 12, 1944 to May 16, 1946, and during this time he completed the US Army Air Force Instructor's School at Randolph Field, Air Force Training Command. He then served as a B-25 Mitchell Bomber and a T-6 Texan Instructor Pilot until May 16, 1944, when he was separated from Active Duty as First Lieutenant, Air Corps, at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, per Demobilization Orders per HQ Scott Field at the end of World War II.

Following his love of flying, Paul flew DC-3's for the Atlantic Pacific Company as a contracted Pilot from May 1946 until November 1947 when he re entered

Active Service in the United States Air Force. Col. Canant served in various capacities until retirement on June 1, 1974. During the 31 Years 6 Months, 10 Days, Colonel Canant served this Country, he held many unique and important assignments some of which are; Flight Instructor; Pilot to the Commanding General HQ Far East AF, Japan; Operations Officer, Donaldson AFB, SC; Group Assistant Operations Officer and Wing Training Officer, Burtonwood AFS, UK; Wing Plans Officer, Donaldson AFB, SC and Hunter AFB, GA; Director of Current Operations, HQ MAC, Scott AFB, IL.

In 1953, Col. Canant flew C-124 aircraft supplying construction of the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line, which was to warn North America against Soviet Nuclear attack, and he assisted in the construction and supply numerous weather stations for the Danish government.

He flew many flights in "Operation Deep Freeze" from 1955 to 1956 and held the record for flying the longest mission over Antarctica. Col. Canant helped design and develop the Aerial Port concept in 1955 when he was assigned to Burtonwood AFS, UK. Later in that tour, he and Sgt. Lambert personally designed the loading system platform they dubbed "CanLam" which later became the 463L system. Col. Canant also authored the requirements manuals for combat airlift and support.

On December 20, 1973, Col. Canant was awarded the Legion of Merit for service as Vice Wing Commander, 436th Military Airlift Wing Military Airlift Command and on May 31, 1974, he was again awarded the Legion of Merit for service as Commander, 437 Airbase Group, 437th Airlift Wing, Charleston Air Force Base, Charleston, South Carolina.

Col. Canant flew 18 different aircraft over his career of three wars, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, for a total of 8073.4 hours of flight time. The three aircraft that he spent the most time in were the C-124 Globemaster (Old Shakey), 2810 Hours, the C-47 Dakota, 2122 hours, and the C-141 Starlifter, 1490 hours.

Col. Canant was the Project Officer responsible for bringing the C-5 Galaxy on line at Dover AFB as Vice Wing Commander of the 436th AW.

Col. Canant served 10 years in South Carolina, with two tours here in Charleston, one as Deputy Director of Operations, CAFB and his last tour as Base Commander, CAFB, from Jan 1973 to Jan 1974. He retired here in Charleston on June 1, 1974.

After Retirement from the United States Air Force, he worked for Bosch Corporation for 10 years then returned to the Charleston Air Force Base from 1989-1999 as Director, Retiree Affairs Office, then from 1999-2000 as Senior Consultant, Retiree Affairs Office, Charleston, AFB, SC.

On July 30, 1993, Col. Canant was presented The Order of The Palmetto, the highest civic award in South Carolina, for service to South Carolina.

On March 19, 1999, Col. Canant was honored by Team Charleston, CAFB, by the dedication of the Heritage Air Park, Charleston Air Force Base. Heritage Air Park is dedicated in his Honor, and Canant actually flew two of the aircraft in the park, the C-124 and the C-141, during his career. A marble monument with a brass plaque on top stands at the front of Heritage Air Park, with the following words " Dedicated to Colonel Orion Paul Canant for Outstanding Service to the Nation, 1942 - 1999.

Anna Louise Canant, Col. Canant's wife, passed away after of 59 years of marriage. Anna was such a blessing to the family and this Country, raising 5 daughters while OPD flew all over the world carrying the mantle of Freedom throughout.

On July 26, 2003, Col. Orion Paul Davidson Canant married Bettina Davis Miller and they began a new adventure together here in Summerville, S.C. Orion Paul Davidson Canant is survived by his wife, Bettina Davis Miller Canant, and \*

Five Daughters \*

Joyce Ann Canant Smith

Polly Louise Canant Burns

Janiece Canant Gordon (Daniel Lynn Gordon)

Pamela Jean Canant Chivers (Carl Eugene Chivers)

Jennifer Marie Canant White (Ronald Keith White) \*  
2 Step Children \*  
George William Miller III (Marcie June Miller)  
Melanie Ann Miller Halpin ( Edward Dominick Halpin) \*  
Nine Grandchildren \*  
Robert Paul Smith  
Melissa Marie Smith Simmons  
Alicia Louise Burns Siehl  
Angela Marie Burns Riley  
Brandy Michelle Gordon Williams  
Tabatha Chance Gordon Cina  
Christina Lynn Chivers Collins  
Meredith Ann Chivers  
Robert Michael White \*  
5 Step Grandchildren \*  
Ian Edward Halpin  
Catherine Bettina Halpin  
Luke Dominick Halpin  
Keenan William Miller  
Tess Dariel Miller \*  
13 Great Grandchildren \*  
Anna Elizabeth Simmons  
Phillip Grayson Simmons  
Sean Preston Siehl  
Spencer Christopher Siehl  
LeighAnn Faith Siehl  
Jake James Riley  
Chase Burns Riley  
Jessica Faye Dietze  
Dominic Corbin Cina  
Peyton Riley Williams

Kolbe David Collins

Isaac Austin Collins

Mathias Lee White

Col. Canant also served on the Council of Military/Veterans Affairs Advisors to Congressman Henry Brown, and played a vital role in the study to place the new Veterans Cemetery at Fort Jackson for the National Cemetery Expansion Act.

He was member of the Charleston Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Order of Daedalians and the American Legion.

Col. Canant was the Charter Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus Council 6629

Colonel Orion Paul Davidson Canant will be sorely missed by his Brothers in Arms, his family, his friends, and his loving wife. The contributions he made to this country are immeasurable, and his legacy will live on forever. He loved his God, his country, and his family and friends. He sacrificed much for all of them. He lived an exemplary life that exemplified the motto of Team Charleston, 437th and 315th Airlift Wing:

Integrity First

Service Before Self

Excellence in All We Do

Godspeed, Sir. A funeral mass will be held Friday, June 4, 2010 at 10:00 at St. Theresa's Catholic Church, 11001 Dorchester Road, Summerville.

Entombment will follow at Dorchester Memory Gardens, 11000 Dorchester Road, Summerville. Friends may visit at James A. Dyal Funeral Home, Summerville from 6 until 8 o'clock Thursday evening.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Paul Canant*

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September 29, 2022 at 10:11 AM