

Fort Taber flag to honor New Bedford's Donald "Don" R. Couture, Sr. Former Air Force Pilot

During the month of May, the 33rd Lights for Peace flag to fly at the Fort Taber – Fort Rodman Military Museum honors the memory of Donald "Don" R. Couture, Sr., of Black Diamond, Washington, formerly of New Bedford. Don joined the Air Force after graduating high school and became both an airplane and helicopter pilot.

Don was born in New Bedford on September 11, 1933, the son of Azarius "Pete" and Louise Couture.

According to his obituary, "His smarts and work ethic led to a career as an officer flying planes and helicopters while stationed at Strategic Air Command bases around the country."

After completing his military service, Don settled in the Seattle, WA area with his family, his first wife, the late Ann Jezek Couture, and their four children. He went on to become a manager at Boeing, a corporation that designs, manufactures, and sells airplanes, rotorcraft, rockets, satellites, telecommunications equipment, and missiles worldwide. Don also served as a pilot with the Washington Army National Guard after his active-duty service ended.

He was known as a gifted storyteller with a wonderful sense of humor, who loved to entertain. According to his family, he was known for his "wit and charm" and "loved to tease, and had many jokes for any occasions, which he delivered like a pro."

Don had a sharp mind, excellent memory and loved history. According to his obituary, he was an animal lover and had many interests including reading, playing golf, painting, listening

to music, dancing, and sports. He also loved to travel. Together with his second wife, Fon, of 30 years, they traveled to many places around the world and spent each winter in Hawaii.

He also ventured back to his hometown of New Bedford, nearly every autumn, to visit with family and friends. He loved to take in the New England foliage and enjoy the local seafood.

Don died on November 23, 2021, of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma at Valley Medical Center in Renton, WA at the age of 88. He is survived by his wife, Fon (nee Bayley); a sister-in-law, Glenda Bayley; his children, Donald (Donny) R. Couture Jr., Marie Couture (Gary Olivas), Denise Couture, Jacqueline Couture Escudero (Travis Eckert); his step-children, Cyndee Blackmore and Tiffany Jorgensen (Greg Yutani); grandchildren Trevor Jennings (Kelly), Mellissa Siler, Elise Howerton (Kyle), Aryn Escudero (Ashley), Hunter Blackmore (Kelsey), Gavin Olivas, Dalton Blackmore (Jenna), Evan Hirsh, Calder Hirsh and Maddie Blackmore; great-grandchildren Luke and Liam Jennings and Zoey Howerton; nieces Rona Mingola (Olavo), Jayme Couture, Caitlyn Mingola and Heather Steffenson (Paul); and a nephew, Michael Bayley (Teresa). Don had two elder brothers, the late Arthur and Edward, and a sister who died in childhood.

Linda Ferreira, of **Empire Ford of New Bedford**, researches the life histories of area residents. American flags are provided by Empire Ford of New Bedford. Flags are raised by the staff at Fort Taber – Fort Rodman Military Museum. Those who would like to honor a local veteran in the future can contact Ferreira at lferreira@buyempireautogroup.com.