



## LT CMDR John A. Sullivan USN/RET

August 30, 1923 - December 15, 2019

“Captain Jack” DOB - August 30, 1923 – DOD – December 15, 2019.

The Sullivan family sadly announces the passing of HIMSELF, the Patriarch of the Sullivan Haley Gorman Clan. HIMSELF is the traditional Irish name for the Leader and Patriarch of a clan.

“Captain Jack” passed peacefully at the age of ninety-six years old. His beautiful bride of 51 years, Loretta Mary Chase Sullivan, predeceased him in death in the year 2001. We believe that he now joins her in Heaven for his just reward for a life well lived. He has received his final flight plan, has earned his wings and can fly free as our family’s Guardian Angel forever.

Jack was born in Binghamton, NY on the 30th of August 1923 to his parents, Albert Francis & Catherine Cecelia (HALEY) Sullivan. His sisters, Mary Jean & Joan soon followed and the family remained in the Binghamton area, enjoying summers at their cottage in Laurel Lake, PA. He spent his youth in the outdoors, active and athletic. When asked “what do you want to be when you grow up?” he would proclaim that he was going to be an Indian or Mountain Man. His parents sadly informed him that he could not grow up to be an Indian as he was of Irish descent. His deep love of the land and respect for the indigenous peoples of the Americas would remain an interest to him over the years. His personal library is full of books about the First Nation peoples. In order to fulfill his dream of being a Mountain Man, they encouraged his outdoor skills of camping & hunting. He was a member of the Sons of American Legion Post 80, an altar boy, and a responsible young businessman with his paper route for many years. An avid dancer, Jack was well liked by the young ladies of his hometown and attended many social events.

When World War II broke out in 1941, Jack was employed as an Apprentice Tool & Dye Maker at Universal Instruments & Die Co. At age 18, Jack tried to enlist in the Marines under the aviation program; but he could not fulfill his father's dream of a having son to follow in his own World War I Marine tradition; the enrollment was limited. He proclaimed

to “Big Al” that “he wasn’t going to walk” and applied to the Navy Cadet Aviation Program. On December 5, 1942, he was admitted to the US Navy as a Cadet. On October 25, 1944 he was commissioned as a USN Aviator and Officer. He served with fellow Binghamton friends, his (future) Best Man, Johnny O’ Neil, Chuck Begell, Thomas Mack and his future brother-in-law, Theodore “Dutch” Stacy, and John Connolly, who died while serving his country.

This decision changed the course of the rest of his life. He was an “Aviator.” Among the elite, he logged over 23,680 hours of flight time above the Earth in 51 different types of aircraft as a Test Pilot, Ferry Command, IBTU Instructor, VIP pilot (assigned to NAVY ONE), a civilian Flight Instructor and in his final years as Captain Jack, servicing Hawaiian Islands passengers in a Cessna 402 for Royal Hawaiian Air Service (RHAS). In 2009, he was honored by the Smithsonian Institute’s National Air & Space Museum Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center’s WALL OF HONOR. (FOIL: 011, PANEL: 02, COLUMN: 02 LINE 16).

After World War II ended, he attended St. Bonaventure University in Olean, NY under the G.I. Bill to study Dentistry, where he earned his Bachelor of Science degree in 1950. He continued his military commitment as a “Weekend Warrior” at Naval Air Station (NAS) Niagara Falls in flight squadrons VF-56 & VF-852, flying his favorite F4U Corsairs. His stories of his flight time as a daring young bachelor entertained us all for many years. He appeared in a Labor Day article of The Binghamton Times in 1945 with a F4U Corsair that his commanding officer let him “borrow” for the weekend. The Navy was always eager to show off their pilots.

During his college years he met the lovely Olean gal, Loretta Mary Chase, and they were married on the steps of St. Mary's Church in August of 1950, where they had met the year before. They began married life at Niagara Falls, NY, where they welcomed their first born daughter, Kathleen. The war with Korea had broken out and Jack was re-commissioned in the US Navy. He was sent as a Flight Instructor to NAS Pensacola Florida where the family welcomed first born son Michael and daughter #2, Debra.

Jack began as a cadet’s first flight Instructor and was then delegated to IBTU Instructor status. The Navy’s inventory of single pilot fighter planes included the F4U Corsair, F6F Hellcat, NS-1& 2 Stearman (Trainers), SN-4 Vultee Vibrator, SNJ Texas Trainer and the Grumman F4F-3, among others. Of special focus during this time was his instructional training for night carrier landings, including black-out conditions, in the Gulf of Mexico with the F4U Corsairs – known by the Navy as “Ensign Killers.” The F4U Corsair and F6F Hellcat would remain Jack’s all time favorite planes to fly.

His next Tour of Duty took the family to NAS Norfolk, VA, where Jack served in Ferry Squadron, VR-31. The family welcomed 2nd son, Mark and their 3rd daughter Christine. In 1955 he joined the Mach Busters Club in a USN FJ3 Fury, breaking the Mach 1 sound barrier. After being helicopter certified in 1956, he promptly announced that “they are designed to crash” and returned to his beloved Ferry Command & fighter pilot squadron duties. By this time his Naval Aviator career became a career path. He would admit that his deep love of his wife and their strong Catholic faith had created a family with “too many mouths to feed with five kids in the first six years of marriage (with still 2 more to follow)” and felt that “Navy Life” was a good fit for his family. The 4th tour of duty in 6 years was to NAS North Island, Coronado, San Diego, CA, where daughter #4, Diane was born.

His career had taken him into the deep Pacific along with his friend and fellow aviator Cmdr. Marvin Katz, who recommended him for the coveted VR-21 Squadron at NAS Barbers Point, Hawai'i. The family moved to Hawai'i in 1959, coinciding with the announcement of Statehood. Along with their 1st German Shepherd, Alex, they arrived on the USS LURLINE and their photo graced the front page of the Honolulu Advertiser newspaper.

During the Hawaii Tour, daughter #5, Eileen was born. This tour of duty would remain one of the family's fondest memories. A life-long friendship with the Katz family, "Uncle" Marvin, "Auntie" B.J. and fellow "Military Brats" Greg, Terri and Stephen (Jack's Godson), all became honorary members of a united military family. "Auntie" Joyce Farris (Phelphrey) & her daughters Linda & KD (Karen) were added and all have remained life-long friends bound by the nomadic military life.

His last Tour of Duty in 1963, Squadron VR-1 at NAS PAX RIVER, MD would be his longest. Along with test pilot rank, he was assigned VIP duties and served Chief Pilot of NAVY ONE, the Navy's VIP airplane. This assignment allowed him to travel the world with the US Navy's Commander in Chief, Allied Supreme Commander of the Navy, NATO, SACLANT and the staff associated with the US Secretary of the Navy. He served both Four Star Admiral(s) Thomas Moorer and E.P. Holmes with distinction.

“Captain Jack” enjoyed the final years of his Naval Aviation career with Congressional junkets and international travel until his retirement in the summer of 1968. He taught his children geography with a huge wall map of the world.

Upon his retirement in Jack took a one year position with Flight Safety Incorporated of New York. He worked a year for the company, was well liked but regrettably did not see this employment to be a good fit for his family. He said it was a great job for a bachelor,

not so good for a father of seven kids and a wife he sorely missed.

In 1969 to the glee of all, the family returned to the Hawaiian Islands where he continued to live until the late 1980s. Employed as a pilot for commuter service Royal Hawaiian Air Service (RHAS), he flew the Cessna 402 along with many other retired aviators from the military sector. In 1969 Loretta and Jack bought their first home in Kailua. In 1971 they welcomed the birth of their first granddaughter, Sandy Francis. They attended the weddings of three of their five daughters in Kailua, Oahu, and of the youngest son on Maui. In 1981 Jack and Loretta made their home on Maui until his retirement in 1986.

Jack continued to be his very athletic self. Always an avid tennis player, he was President of the Kailua Tennis Association on Oahu. He enjoyed the deep ocean as an NAUI scuba diver, and, needing to have a goal, he decided that his next challenge would be as a Honolulu Marathon Runner. He completed 3 marathons before his 60th birthday, as a testimony to his 7 kids to “keep on keeping on.” Always needing a challenge, he also trained daily and participated in the Waikiki Rough Water Swim with 2 of his daughters.

After his retirement with RHAS, Jack and Loretta looked forward to a vagabond lifestyle while they explored new horizons. They traveled the USA and finally settled in the colonial city of San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. It remained their home for many years. Jack joined the local Lions Club and started an eye clinic, and eventually became the President (four terms). He continued to play tennis regularly and his daily jaunts about town were vigorous at the 7000-foot elevation. He maintained his military bearing and trim figure all his life.

In 2000, Loretta and Jack celebrated 50 years of marriage in San Miguel Allende with their children, their children's children, good friends and family including many nieces and nephews. His loving sister Mary Jean and his brother-in-law and childhood friend, Theodore Dutch Stacy and family, joined the fiesta.

He lost his beautiful bride on Father's Day of 2001. It was a very sad day after 51 wonderful years of marriage. In the years following Loretta's passing, Jack went off on many wandering adventures, taking long road trips to visit family, old friends, all the national parks and wonders of North America. He camped like the mountain man he was. His trusty fully outfitted and well maintained vehicles, a Dodge Ram and Chevy Suburban ventured 71 round trips in and out of the 550-mile (one-way) northern border of Mexico into the United States for his military medical needs in San Antonio, TX until 2014. He continued to amaze his family with his treks to Alaska, yearly visits to Upstate NY for

family reunions and cross country camping trips with his daughters, sons, grandsons and other family members.

He continued to live full-time in San Miguel de Allende until, in 2014, his health no longer allowed him to be at the high elevations. From the late 1980s until 2014, he was a very active volunteer in Mexico as President and Clinic Manager of the Lions Club International, President of the American Legion, S.O.M.E. (So Others May Eat)elderly meal program, ALMA old folks' home, a driver for the Feed the Hungry school lunch program, and a contributor to the Hogar Don Bosco (the boys orphanage). As a charter member of the English Language Catholic community in San Miguel, he served as a Lector and "the world's oldest altar boy" at masses for over 25 years.

From 2014 until December of 2019, he spent his last years in Grand Prairie, TX at the home of his eldest daughter, Kathleen. During this time, he joined the Elks Lodge #2114 and welcomed into the world two great-great grandchildren and two great grandsons. He experienced the joy of his sisters' families' weddings and expanding families. He was a member of St. Mathew and St. Joseph parishes in the area.

He is predeceased by his parents, Albert Francis and Catherine Cecilia Haley Sullivan, sisters Mary Jean Sullivan (Easton) and Joan Stacy, and his wife, Loretta Mary Chase. He lived to be the oldest living member of his immediate family.

He leaves behind his seven children, Kathleen, Michael, Debra, Mark, Christine, Diane and Eileen, and their spouses Leslie Holmes Sullivan (Mark) and Brian Ishiki (Diane). Grandchildren Sandy Duffus (spouse Eric), Ashley Sullivan, Justin Carter (spouse Lindsey), Nicholas Carter(partner Tiffany), Chase Carter, and Christopher Ishiki. Great-grandchildren include Jaxson Sullivan Carter (Justin), Nicholas Martin Carter (Nicholas), and Jasmine Gwilliam (Sandy), her spouse, Ben, and their two children (Jack's great-great-grandchildren), Harrison Kent and Everleigh Kainani. He also leaves behind many beloved nephews and nieces, their children, and their children's children, along with all of his "hanai"(adopted) sons and daughters over the years.

"Captain Jack" Sullivan was a man full of life, generous in spirit, always welcoming adventure and offering his best self, a loving husband, good father and great friend. He gifted us with an incredible legacy of laughter, family, and love. Most importantly, he leaves us with an understanding of the word, DIGNITY.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Fisher House, INC. in his name: Lt. Cmdr. John A. Sullivan, USN-R – The Lackland Fisher House location was

“home” to Dad and various family members several times a year over the last 25 years during his medical check-ups, surgeries and care. Contact: Dwayne Hopkins, Executive Director (210) 419-4436 dwanye.hopkins@sbcglobal.net. Fisher House, INC., 7323 W US Hwy 90, Suite 107, San Antonio, TX 78277

#### MEMORIAL & CELEBRATIONS OF LIFE EVENTS:

Celebration of Life – Saturday, January 25, 2020 - ELKS LODGE #2114

Time: 12 -3 PM Contact: daughter Kathleen Sullivan Elks Lodge #2114, 601 West Pioneer Parkway, Arlington, TX 76004.

USA Military Honors – September, Binghamton, NY – this event is in the planning stages, date to will be announced on this LIFE TRIBUTE page.

Catholic Mass with Drum & Pipe Corp, Graveside Military Color Guard Ceremony at St. Augustine Cemetery, Silver Lake, PA (Sullivan Family burial site) which will include the placement of the Veteran Memorial Plaque honoring “Captain Jack,” and a Celebration of Life event at a Binghamton city location.

Final Internment of Jack and his wife, Loretta to be held at the Pantheon Guadalupe (24 hour Association), in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico in 2021, date has yet to be decided.

# Comments

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“ 1 file added to the album Dad "Capt Jack" TOM Sullivan



**diane** - January 18, 2020 at 08:34 PM

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“ When ever I am in San Miguel, or even thinking about 'the good ol' days of SMA' I think of Jack and Loretta. I will always be grateful to Jack for being such a good friend to my mom after my dad passed away. It's hard to imagine I will not see Jack again. Sending lots of love to the Sullivan family. xx

**Heather Hufstetler McSherry** - January 15, 2020 at 06:54 AM



“ Many thanks, Heather for your thoughts. I know that you are missing your own parents, as you miss lovable Jack & lovely Loretta. I'm so glad we have so many memories to share of our parents. They were so special. Much love to you & your beautiful family.

**Daughter #2** - January 15, 2020 at 11:22 AM

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“ Hey Dad I miss you plenty. It was great spending Thanksgiving with you and Chris, him as an adult. We had some great times. Love you.



**Diane Sullivan-Ishiki** - January 12, 2020 at 10:29 PM



“ So glad that you & the family got to spend time with Dad recently. That was one of the things about his re-location 5 years ago that was GOOD - he was closer to the family.

January 14, 2020 at 05:00 PM

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“ The best part of my day for last several years that Dad lived with me, was the moment I saw him & heard him say "So how is your morning going, beautiful?" Daily I wake up thinking I will hear him again...only to find out that he is gone & I will never hear that again. Be kind to each other. Tell your loved ones how important they are to you each day. Never let a moment go by if you can help it. Be aware & try to live in the moment. There comes a time when it will be the last time for you.

**Kathleen Sullivan** - January 11, 2020 at 09:57 PM



“ Those memories of living with Dad - being with him on a daily basis -let us know how he truly was a special person. He started off EVERYDAY with a fresh start.

After his 5 year absence from his casa in Mexico due to medical reasons - it was always tough to be here alone. But he still fills this house with his love. And his memorabilia!

January 14, 2020 at 04:59 PM

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“ Miss you Dad.

**Christine Sullivan** - January 11, 2020 at 12:20 AM



“ I can imagine that even your lunch hours are lonely, as you were so good about calling him 'just to say hello.'

January 14, 2020 at 05:01 PM

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“ Daughter Debra Jan Sullivan writes that the family apologies for the three week delay with posting our Dad's - T.O.M.(The Old Man - Military Jargon) Obituary. Dad and Debra Jean worked on this last May during one of her visits. Those that knew Dad will not be surprised that he wrote up the outline for his own obituary - he was - ALWAYS PREPARED. And, yes, he used his trusty clipboard. We are all struggling without him in our lives. Especially hard is "that time of day" that we would call him, enjoying the banter and conversation with his most noble self. We are busy with what he called the "What to do when I die" briefcase contents and the general business of death. Daily, I struggle to make phone calls to loved ones and write letters, emails and Facebook posts to family and friends. We appreciate the immediate efforts of Texas friends and neighbors more than they will ever know. They have been pivotal to any and all movement forward. Mahalo, Gracias and thank you to all of the family, friends, business associates and people who have reached out to our large, extended family in our time of need. EVERYTHING you do is appreciated. He was treasured by his family in this lifetime. He will be in our hearts forever. Never forget the fine example he set for us all - the bar is set VERY HIGH - and we shall all strive to meet up to his expectations every day. Most important to Dad was kindness to all, tolerance for those less fortunate and an understanding that this life is precious - it can be taken away at any moment. We are so lucky that God choose to keep our Dad on the Earth for many wonderful years. "Captain Jack" shared his wisdom, his Irish wit, his deep love of the Catholic faith and the importance of family and friends with every life he touched. May Our Lord hold him near and dear as we do.



**Debra Jean Sullivan** - January 07, 2020 at 12:35 PM



“ A GRIEVOUS mistake was just noted in the Obituary. Somehow, my sentence about our "MILITARY BRAT family" there is an omission of Stephen Katz's name - who is also Dad's God Son. I will petition the funeral home to add that sentence. MY APOLOGIES.

**Debra Jean** - January 07, 2020 at 02:41 PM



“ I was wondering if he was going to outlive me. He always had me believing that he would. He and Loretta were fundamental in shaping the foreign community while working with an contributing to our host country. They helped mak San Miguel a better place, on many levels. And, their humor, equally important, added to mine and numerable others, fortunate to have any contact ith them. I'm truly indebted to him, and your mama. The spirit lives on.

**tom frazee** - January 07, 2020 at 03:29 PM



“ Delighted to have become a member of this clan some 20 plus years ago. Sullivan, Easton & Haley. A big family that decided it was OK if I joined in. I will miss Uncle Jack like no other.

**June Easton** - January 10, 2020 at 02:06 PM



“ I feel truly blessed to have been able to meet this wonderful man and listen to all his stories he told us about his life. He also got to meet mine and Justin's baby boy Jaxson who is his great grand son last summer which is a blessing in itself.

I hope you are enjoying yourself with your wife again and dancing with the angels Jack.

**Lindsey Carter** - January 11, 2020 at 12:20 AM