

Joe (Jose') Tafolla

Born: 5 May 1937 in Pearsall, TX

Died 20 Jun 2017 in Schertz, TX

Joe's family lived on a farm so in June of 1951 Joe, on his own, moved to town to go to high school. He got a job in a bakery, which started at 4AM. He would start school at 8 AM and head back to the bakery after school to make deliveries. One day after the owner claimed there was more product on the truck than Joe knew he had, he went next door and applied for the job at the clothing store. Joe graduated in 1953.

After graduation, Joe moved to the big city of San Antonio and lived with his sister while looking for a job. No one seemed to believe the 16 year old with a diploma but he finally secured a position with a candy and tobacco store. He filled orders all week and swept the warehouse on Saturday before receiving his check. One Saturday the owner told him to continue filling orders because they were behind. At noon, Joe went for his check only to be told that he needed to sweep the warehouse without additional pay. Joe handed her the broom.

Back to Pearsall he went and found a job delivering milk on a route over 300 miles long in South Texas. When he turned 17, he parked the milk truck and walked down the street to the Air Force recruiting office. After Basic training at Lackland, Joe attended Radar school at Keesler and off to his first assignment at Hiner AFB in Savannah, GA. After many deployments to Europe and North Africa, Joe was assigned to Presque Isle AFB, in Maine where he met his dear wife Leah.

After some cool assignments along the Canadian border, Joe was transferred to sunny Puerto Rico, where he finished his undergraduate degree in Political Science, Magna Cum Laude, then back to cold country for another tour. After completing the NCO Academy, he was informed that he was accepted to the USAF Officer's Training School where he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in January of 1972.

After a few assignment changes, Joe was transferred to Pease AFB, in NH, with a side trip to Munitions School in Denver to become the first AF Officer to hold a triple - qualification in Avionics, Aircraft maintenance, and Munitions. In his spare time, he received his Masters in Public Administration, also Magna Cum Laude.

Joe finally retired in warm country, in February of 1982 while stationed in Oklahoma City and went to work for the Oklahoma Public School System as Chief of Maintenance. He joined the San Antonio ISD in March of 89 and retired in Sep 2001.

Joe joined the SAR and the William Hightower Chapter in Oct 2015 and served as the chairman of the Public Relations Committee. He is survived by his wife, Leah, son Mark and daughter, Lori. He was laid to rest at Ft. Sam Houston. in San Antonio, on 6 July 2017. Joe Tafolla, heir of "Mexican Jim", you will be sorely missed.