



John G. Roberts

August 18, 1931 - September 20, 2017

JOHN G. ROBERTS

OBITUARY

September 26, 2017

John G. Roberts died in his home Wednesday, September 20, 2017 after an extended battle with congestive heart failure. He was 86 years old.

Born in Cottage Hospital, John was a lifelong resident of Santa Barbara. The son of John P. and Sue Roberts, he owned and operated Cameron & Roberts Insurance until his retirement in 1986. But his true passion was flying, a passion that first planted itself in his psyche as a young boy building the hand-launched gliders and rubber-band-powered airplanes he flew in the streets outside his home.

That passion took root in ROTC at Santa Barbara High School and grew stronger at the University of Colorado, where he majored in Geology – until an ROTC colonel told him about an engineering unit based in the Pacific Northwest that flew helicopters in support of surveying and mapping operations in Alaska.

In December of 1953, John entered the Army as a second lieutenant in the Engineer Officer Basic Course at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Between classes, he

haunted the base airfield bumming airplane rides and taking flying lessons before soloing in a J-3 Cub. He was subsequently accepted to the Army Aviation School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where he earned his Army Aviator wings in November of 1954.

John had already logged an impressive number of flights in a variety of fixed-wing aircraft when he was sent to Gary Air Force Base in Texas for helicopter training before advancing to the new Army Aviation School at Fort Rucker, Alabama. It was an opportunity that would change his life.

During his five years of Army service, John flew myriad missions, including a months-long assignment flying over and mapping the rugged, isolated terrain of what would become the 49th state of the union as a member of the 521st Engineer Company, 30th Topo Group. He later spent two years surveying and mapping the country of Nicaragua with the 937th Engineer Company for the International Geodetic Survey.

Upon his discharge, John joined the Army National Guard for another 23 years of service, during which he earned the coveted Master Army Aviator badge and commanded the 140th Aviation Company composed of over 150 pilots and ground support personnel. He also served as the preferred pilot to General Charles A. Ott, the distinguished Santa Barbara native who at one time was in charge of the entire Army National Guard.

John's lifetime of service extended beyond the military and into the community and the world at large. As a private citizen, he volunteered his planes and piloting services to the doctors of SEE International, whom he flew to Mexico to provide free eye care to people in need. His service also extended to the operating room, where he assisted surgeons and acted as an interpreter.

Upon retirement from the National Guard, John became a distinguished

member and Captain in the Sheriff's Aero Squadron, flying search and rescue and prisoner transport missions, and providing tactical and operational support for drug raids and other law enforcement operations.

He was a 44-year member of the Santa Barbara Club, past president of the Aviation Country Club, a member of the QB's (Quiet Birdmen) of Oxnard-Santa Barbara and the Santa Barbara Control Modelers Club.

John is preceded in death by his parents, John P. and Sue Roberts and his son-in-law, Frank Cavaliere. He is survived by his wife of 48 years, Suzanne E. Roberts, his daughters, Beverly Cavaliere and Marilyn Osborn, both of Los Angeles, and his son-in-law, Jeffrey Eckerle, also of Los Angeles.

A memorial service will be held Friday, September 29th, at 10:00 AM at Welch-Ryce-Haider Funeral Chapel, 450 Ward Drive, Santa Barbara, CA. Interment will be at the Santa Barbara Cemetery. A reception will follow from 2:00-4:00 at the Santa Barbara Club, 1105 Chapala Street, Santa Barbara, CA.

Cemetery Details

Santa Barbara Cemetery

901 Channel Drive
Santa Barbara, CA 93108
(805) 969-3231

Previous Events

Memorial Service

SEP **29**. 10:00 AM (PT)

Welch-Ryce-Haider - Goleta
450 Ward Drive
Santa Barbara, CA 93111
(805) 965-5145
info@wrhsb.com
<https://www.wrhsb.com>

Tribute Wall

CP

“ Dear all,

What an incredible life. An extraordinary man who lived a life of courage, responsibility and adventure, balancing those strong qualities with a tender heart, a love of animals and nature and a deep and abiding concern for all of us. I remember his kind and twinkling brown eyes, his love for his beloved wife, Susie, his daughters, Marilyn and Beverly, his planes, his cats, his home(s), and of course his unforgettable fourth of July firecracker celebrations (!). I loved reading in the beautiful obituary the amazing parts of his life that I never knew....John Roberts made a real difference in the lives of people in every part of the world.

You must be very proud. I know I am proud to have known him and, along with all of you, I miss him already.

See you tomorrow.

Clare

Clare Peters - September 27, 2017 at 05:18 PM

RH

I met John when I joined the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Aero Squadron over ten years ago. I considered John a friend. He will be missed by many.

*Richard Hille - Past Captain
Santa Barbara Sheriff's Aero Squadron*

Richard Hille - September 28, 2017 at 09:03 PM