



# **Lt. Col. Robert W. "Raz" Rasdal US Marine Corps Retired**

JUN 10, 1927 - FEB 10, 2020



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# **Lt. Col. Robert W. "Raz" Rasdal US Marine Corps Retired**

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**L**ieutenant Colonel Robert W. "Raz" Rasdal, U.S. Marine Corps (Retired) passed away on February 10, 2020 at Brentwood Assisted Living in St. Petersburg, Florida at the age of 92. He was preceded in death by his wife, Jean Douglas Rasdal, and is survived by his son, Mark Rasdal, of Port Richey, Florida; his daughter, Martha Mahlke, and her husband, Max, of Fayetteville, North Carolina; and his step daughter, Debby Nunez, and her husband, Bill, of St. Petersburg Florida. Raz was very proud of his grandchildren Darcy (Joe) Gillespie, Alexandra Rasdal, Bob and Sarah Mahlke and his great grandchildren Nicolina and Jason Moren. Raz also leaves behind nieces and nephews in Iowa and across the country who have given him much joy.

Raz was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa on June 10, 1927 to the late Clarence and Eleanor Rasdal. Growing up his favorite subjects were military aviation and the ancient Roman Republic and Empire. He named his childhood dog Marcus Aurelius after the "divine military philosopher emperor Marcus Aurelius." His mother wanted him to take piano lessons when he was twelve years old. His father promised him he would take him to an entire season of Iowa Hawkeye football provided Raz agreed to start piano lessons when football season was over. Raz played piano well into his 80's much to the delight of family and friends. He served in the Navy in World War II. Following World War II, he signed up for the Navy Reserves and graduated from the University of Iowa in 1950 with a B.S. in Commerce. He worked in sales for the Nash Finch Company, but the love for aviation he held in his youth resurfaced about the same time the Korean War started. Raz began his Naval Air Cadet training in Pensacola, Florida in 1951 and was commissioned as a Second Lt. in the United States Marine Corps in 1953. He married Margaret Kennedy in 1953 and they had many laughs and adventures as a married couple in the Marine Corps. He flew 250 combat missions in Vietnam and earned the Distinguished Flying Cross, seventeen Air Medals, and the Bronze Star with Combat V. Of course, his valor and medals are only part of his Marine Corps experience. Raz forged life-long friendships and along with those



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friends he was able to survive the seriousness of war by injecting comic relief in the form of satirical squadron skits and newsletters, rebuilding a piano complete with leopard skin fabric for the Quanset hut recreation room, and orchestrating way too many practical jokes to recount.

Following his retirement from the Marine Corps in 1971 Raz began a second career in the furniture industry with U.S. Furniture Industries in High Point, North Carolina. His leadership included his work hard, play hard style of living as well as building up his employees into a team much like a family as the company expanded greatly in the thirteen years he worked there. In 1979, illness and stress broke up his marriage to Peggy, but he made sure she was provided for until her death in 2007. In the 1980's Raz continued to work in the furniture industry founding his own furniture inspection company in Taipei, Taiwan and subsequently working at Kane Furniture and Tampa Wholesale Furniture following his move to St. Petersburg, Florida. Not long after his move to Florida, Raz met Mary Jean Douglas while resolving a delayed furniture order. Jean was recently widowed after being married to an Air Force pilot for 38 years, and it didn't take long for Jean and Raz to realize they had a lot in common. They were married in St. Petersburg by one of Jean's dearest friends, June DeWitt, in front of family and friends in 1985. They enjoyed traveling and entertaining family and friends.

As his Alzheimer's progressed, Raz's well-being was monitored by Debby and Bill Nunez, who over saw his care and lifted his spirit. The family would also like to thank the staff at Brentwood Assisted Living and the hospice Coral team.

At Raz's request the family will not be holding a memorial service, but the family welcomes family and friends to share a memory on this page.



## Tribute Wall

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**Linda Reddick Turner** posted:

Martha & Mark, your Dad was loved by many friends. He was a great friend & co-worker. We had so many fun times with him. May God be with you & the family during this difficult time. Love always,  
Linda Reddick Turner

February 12 at 8:31 AM



**Andy Hinshaw** February 13 at 4:19 PM

Great man and a great boss



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Robert by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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