



Lt. Col. Harry I. "Buzz" Strandhagen, Jr.

August 2, 1934 - May 21, 2025

Lt./Col. Harry I. "Buzz" Strandhagen, Jr., passed away on May 21st, 2025, at Red Hills Retirement Resort in Tallahassee, Florida.

Buzz was born in New Haven, Conn., on August 2, 1934. He was one of six children born to Grace and Harry I. Strandhagen, Sr. His father, who was known as "Doc Hagen" was host of the first radio quiz show, called "True or False" which aired in New York City. Buzz's mother, Grace, was the first "Miss Ft. Lauderdale" in 1927. Buzz was extremely proud of both of his parents.

His family moved from New Haven to Ft. Lauderdale where Buzz attended Ft. Lauderdale High School. Following his graduation, he enrolled in Florida State University where he was a member of Phi Delta Theta. At the time of his graduation from FSU in 1956, he received his commission as a 2nd Lt. in the U.S. Air Force and received his pilot's wings in 1958. He proudly served his country as an officer, combat pilot and ROTC and pilot instructor.

Buzz married that same year, and in 1960, during a three-year assignment to RAF Station Wethersfield, Essex County, England, where their son, Jeff, was born. Buzz was always proud of his son and made it known throughout his life.

Upon returning stateside, Buzz was assigned to Luke Air Force Base in Phoenix, AZ where he was an instructor in the Fighter Pilot Training Program for the F-100 Super Sabre. This aircraft is known to have flown more missions during Vietnam than any other aircraft. In January of 1966, Buzz, along with his entire squadron, deployed to Thailand for twelve months during the Vietnam War. Upon his return to the States, he served as an Air Force ROTC Instructor at North Texas State University in Denton, Texas, where he enjoyed his time being on a college campus again. His next assignment brought him to Laredo Air Force Base in Texas, where he resumed his role as a Pilot Instructor—this time in the T-38 Aircraft Training Program—while also serving as a Flight Commander and, later, a Section Commander. After four years at Laredo, Buzz completed a one-year

unaccompanied tour at Osan Air Base in Osan, Korea, before relocating to Austin, Texas, for a five-year assignment at Bergstrom Air Force Base.

A lifelong water sports enthusiast, one of Buzz's first priorities upon arriving at a new stateside assignment was finding a nearby lake. His final assignment came in 1979 at Homestead Air Force Base in Homestead, Florida, where he would go on to spend the next 46 years enjoying water skiing, sailing, and lobstering in the nearby Bay. After 27 years of active duty, Lt. Col. 'Buzz' Strandhagen retired from the U.S. Air Force in 1982. On June 28, 1986, he married his best friend, Claire Maddox. Together, they were active members of the Homestead Yacht Club, where Buzz served as Commodore for two years. He, Claire, and their many friends spent countless days sailing and boating around Biscayne Bay, enjoying spearfishing and lobster diving. They made their home on five acres in the countryside, where they relaxed by the pool to the sounds of Buzz's extensive CD collection playing through outdoor speakers.

Buzz was preceded in death by his parents, Harry and Grace Strandhagen; sister, Bonnie Hodges; brothers, Jon and Bruce Strandhagen. He is survived by his devoted wife, Claire; his son, Jeff Strandhagen; granddaughter, Lauren Strandhagen; sister, Pat Meredith; brother, Bill Strandhagen and his wife, Jan; stepson, Scott Maddox; stepdaughter, Stacy Warren; sisters-in-law, Jackie and Angie Strandhagen; numerous nieces and nephews.

A celebration of Buzz's life will be held at a later date.

Kelly Barber of Bevis Funeral Home (850-385-2193 or www.bevisfh.com) is assisting the Strandhagen family with their arrangements.