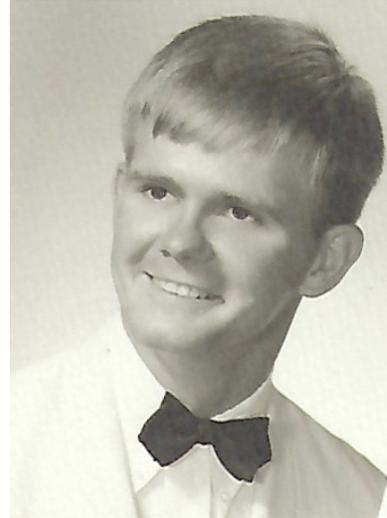


## Obituary

**Michael (Mickey) Malcolm Jean Yves La Garde (nee Goss), LtCol US Army (Ret.) 1946 – 2021**

Died 16 June 2021, in Little Rock, AR. Born 25 April 1946 in Le Havre, France, to Yvette Micheline Claquin and Malcolm Dorris Goss. Adopted son of Arthur Eugene La Garde. His father participated in the Normandy D-Day landing to liberate France and married his mother, a school teacher in Normandy. His step-father participated in the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium and later married his mother in America.

Mickey immigrated to the United States in 1947 and received his certificate of citizenship in 1962. He was raised in the rural community of Burke in Fairfax County, Virginia and graduated from W.T. Woodson High School in 1964 receiving an award as outstanding athlete of his class of over 700. His education includes a B.A. in History from Frederick College in 1968, where he was a track athlete and member of the Varsity Club and IMPS social fraternity; a M.A. in Management from Webster University in 1981; and graduate of the US Army Command and General Staff College.



Joining the Army in June 1968, he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant of Infantry in 1969 (66<sup>th</sup> Airborne Officer Candidate School class) and completed Jungle Operations training in Panama as a “Jungle Warfare Expert”. His military specialties were Infantry, Field Artillery, Personnel Management, and Foreign Area Officer. His military career included service in Vietnam, Panama, Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium, eight states and Washington, DC. His military decorations include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star (Vietnam) and Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross. After a challenging career of 25 years he retired to Shalimar, Florida from his final assignment as Executive Officer, Policy Division, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Belgium. Following retirement he worked briefly as Deputy Supervisor of Elections and as a teacher and track coach in Okaloosa County, Florida. His final home was the Presidio Yacht Club condominium in Fort Walton Beach, FL

Achievements/honors include high school and college athletic awards; coaching high school track in Belgium and two Florida schools; four years as the US Board Member representing the American community on the SHAPE International School Board in Belgium; forming the SHAPE International Military Band that tours Europe as ambassadors for SHAPE; and representing the US Army with a French military honor guard and band while presenting the American wreath at the Château-Thierry memorial in France on Armistice Day 1990 to celebrate the sacrifices of American and French soldiers. His American grandfather fought in the Battle of Château-Thierry in 1918. He was an avid downhill skier and member of the Atlanta Ski Club; a member of the SHAPE Belgium Equestrian Club; and a sailor and member of the Fort Walton Yacht Club, where he twice served as Commodore. He was also a life member of the SHAPE Officers Association and member of the NW Florida Military Officers Association and Florida Commodore’s Association.

He is survived by his wife and sole mate of 53 years Dolores (Dee) Elizabeth La Garde (nee Wilson) living in Fort Walton Beach; his children Marcelle Yves Bell (Fishers, IN) (husband Bill) and Sean Michael La Garde (Shalimar, FL) (wife Julie); his three granddaughters Alison, Mallory and Caitlin; and his grandson Zacharie. His Uncle Jean Claquin (Le Havre, France). He is also survived by sister Gloria La Garde (Atlanta, GA), James La Garde (Laurel, DE), and Jerry La

Garde (Bozeman, MT), his sister-in-law Carol Stearns and husband Al of Fort Walton Beach, and his many nieces, nephews and cousins in France and the USA. A younger brother, Art La Garde (Arlington, VA), passed away in 2019.

Mickey thought of himself as a simple man whose happiest moments were with his wife whether on a grand cruise around the world or in small talk while sipping a glass of good French wine. He loved Dee more than life itself and often told her that he married her so he could kiss her any time he wanted. He also loved celebrating with great food and wine while hosting family and friends. Mickey was so proud to be French and even more proud to be American. Burial services with full military honors will be held at a military National Cemetery. A farewell fête is planned to celebrate his life at the Fort Walton Yacht Club on Saturday, 17 July 2021, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. where family and friends are invited to raise a glass of wine in his memory and to celebrate his happy life.