

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

**Robert Kenneth "Ken" Kelly**

Born in New Orleans, LA. October 1934

**SPOUSE: Beverly Ann George Kelly**

Since December 1954

**CHILDREN: 2 GRANDCHILDREN: 3 GREATGRAND CHILDREN: 5**

Kenneth Kelly joined New Orleans Cadet Squadron, CAP in Jun 1949 as step one of his aim to be a pilot. Three Summer Encampments, Barksdale AFB, Keesler AFB and England AFB. Plus, almost every Friday night at Delgado College with "CAP Aviation Study Manual" and untold hours of "close order drill" totally engrossed the next three years. Rewards were plenty; Drill competitions at Billy Mitchell Field NY 1950, Kirtland AFB NM, and CAPC National at Andrews AFB, MD in 1951. He completed the required Navigation Check Ride to Qualify as "Observer" for participation on Search and Rescue flights. In the 1951, he was selected for the annual International Cadet Exchange to the Canadian Air Cadet League with a group of about 20 CAP Cadets from other states.

The fun ended in January 1952. The next couple of years at LSU, including Air ROTC, limited CAPC participation to Sunday visits. In 1953 he vacated his Cadet Captain position and assumed a nominal Group Command position as Cadet Major in New Orleans and Metairie.

He enlisted in the USAF in June 1954 with the rank of A/3c based on his prior CAPC training. He completed Basic Training at Lackland AFB TX and Technical Training at Lowry AFB Colorado as a Photo Radar Interpreter. His first duty assignment shortly after promotion to A/2c was Fairchild AFB, WA. He was promoted to S/Sgt in 57, designated Honor Graduate at NCO Prep School. Selection to Officer Candidate School occurred with assignment to Lackland AFB, TX in Sep 58.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF SERVICE:** Shortly after graduation from OCS Lt. Kelly received a directed duty assignment as a Photo-Radar Intelligence Officer at the **15th Reconnaissance Technical Squadron at March AFB, CA.** Returning him to the career field he worked in as an NCO. At March he was involved in the production of Air Target Materials for SAC Target Planning purposes. This included the interpretation and preparation of studies and Air Target Charts from strategic intelligence collection systems products including the then highly classified U-2 program. As a Distinguished Military Graduate of OCS, Lt Kelly received a Regular Officer Commission in August 1959. During this assignment he attended the Cartographic Technician Course at the Aeronautical Charting Center, St. Louis MO to broaden his abilities to work as a Liaison to 15th Air Force Targets. Reassignment came shortly thereafter. In July 1961, Lt Kelly was assigned to the **10th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, RAF Alconbury, England** as a Photo Intelligence Officer. Duties involved the supervision of interpretation and reporting from tactical reconnaissance photography from the RB-66. As a supervisor of a team of imagery processors and interpreters which won the NATO Night Photographic Reconnaissance Competition "Royal Flush", he was awarded an Air Force Commendation Medal for Meritorious Achievement. Promotion to Captain came in October 1963.

In July 1964 Captain Kelly returned to the Strategic Air Command. While assigned to the **544th Aerospace Reconnaissance Technical Wing, Offutt AFB, NE;** Captain Kelly participated in and supervised the exploitation of Satellite Reconnaissance Imagery Programs in support of the National Strategic Target Data Base. This involved both scanning search and detailed interpretation of Soviet Strategic Weapon Systems during their greatest expansion period in the mid-sixties. As part of the response to the Tonkin Gulf incident in 1965, Captain Kelly deployed to Guam with the first contingent of iron bomb equipped B-52's. His job on this deployment was the preparation of Target Strike Folders for North Vietnam. Unfortunately, as fast as the folders were prepared Navy Carrier Strike Forces attacked the targets. Political considerations prevented the use of B-52's at that time. **Captain Kelly attended Squadron Officer School, Maxwell AFB, AL in 1965.** This SAC assignment resulted in an Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Force Commendation Medal. **He graduated from the University of Omaha in early 1967** culminating many years of "night school" courses. This occurred just weeks before Receiving SEA orders.

In March 1967 Captain Kelly was assigned to a then classified program, which provided target intelligence support to the Air Attaché **US Embassy Vientiane Laos.** Target Selection support was provided to the Royal Lao Air Force, third country air forces and USAF Tac Air and B-52 strikes in LAOS. As part of these duties he presented briefings to the US Ambassador and his staff regarding USAF rules of engagement for air operations in Laos. Additional duties included real time air operations coordination between indigenous forces, and USAF supporting forces including, ABCCC's, "MoonBeam" flareships, "Specter" gunships and "Butterfly/Raven FAC's, all within the politically sensitive prescribed rules of

engagement for operations when friendly forces engaged.

Assignment to the **67th Reconnaissance Technical Squadron at Yakota AB , Japan** as OIC Photo Intelligence followed the SEA tour in early 1968. Captain Kelly supervised the interpretation and reporting of national interest reconnaissance programs including “Giant Scale” SR-71 missions flown over North Vietnam and peripheral coverage of North Korea. He was promoted to Major in November 1968. He ended this tour as Chief of Operations with management responsibility for Imagery Processing, Interpretation and Intelligence Data Handling in a unit which was designated “Overseas Photo Interpretation Center – Asia” by the National Reconnaissance Office. He was awarded a Meritorious Service Medal for this tour.

With the closure of the 67<sup>th</sup> RTS in early 1971 Major Kelly continued his work with the “Giant Scale” SR-71 missions by leading the move of the majority of personnel and the computers and databases to the **548th Reconnaissance Technical Group, Hickam AFB Hawaii**. During the final phases of the Vietnam War in 1972, the 548th Exploitation Center, under his leadership, prepared one third of all the Immediate Photo Interpretation Reports issued in the PACOM area. Major Kelly returned to SEA for a short period in the summer of 1972 to assist the 432nd Recon Tech Squadron that was having reporting difficulties. A quick analysis and support from the 432 TRW command structure put things back on track and the late reports ceased. Major Kelly’s efforts at the 548<sup>th</sup> earned a First Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Force Meritorious Service Medal.

Assignment to the Defense Intelligence School, Post-Graduate Intelligence Course followed in Sep 1973. Upon graduation in June 1974 he was assigned to the Resource Management Directorate Asst. Chief of Staff Intelligence, Headquarters USAF at the Pentagon, Wash. DC. Responsibilities included the preparation, presentation and staffing of Air Force Intelligence positions for JCS Approval. He also represented the Air Force in Joint Service Studies concerning Digital Imagery Transmission and was a member of the Committee on Reconnaissance Exploitation as the primary USAF member of the Data Handling Coordinating Group of the US Intelligence Board. Major Kelly completed Air Force Command & Staff Course in by correspondence in 1975. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel in 1975. He elected retirement for family reasons in early 1976. He was awarded a 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Force Meritorious Service Medal.

**SERVICE AWARDS:** Meritorious Service Medal w/2OLC, Air Force Commendation Medal w/OLC, Good Conduct Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award w/1Silver OLC, National Defense Service Medal w/1BSS, Rep. of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Vietnam Service Medal w/3BSS, RVN Gallantry Cross w/Palm, Air Force Longevity Service Award w/4OLC.

**SECOND CAREER:** In early 1976 he took a position as a system engineering specialist with Bunker Ramo Corp. in Roslyn, VA. He was responsible for the requirements interpretation and functional design of the “Computer Aided Tactical Information System” (CATIS), a system that provided real-time display, information processing, storage and retrieval of formatted imagery reports and intelligence databases. He provided interface between “programmer” and “user” and devised and performed user training. Upon delivery of the program in 1979 he moved on to project engineering management for the Tactical Operations Analysis Support Facility at Largely AFB, VA. In this capacity he supervised systems analysts, programmers and functional analysts in review of existing Automated Tactical Air Operations/Intelligence Support Systems and the preparation of studies of system designs and recommendations for implementation for future systems.

The remaining 12 years of this second career saw four different company acquisitions and company name changes. In spite of these changes he advanced to executive management positions involving the bidding, staffing and management of Intelligence Support Systems programs. As **Director of Programs** he successfully acquired the contract for Intelligence Data Handling Support to the National Military Intelligence Center. One final corporate acquisition in early 1998 put an end to interest in the “rat race” and a second retirement was negotiated for November 1998.

**HOBBIES/ACTIVITIES:** While residing in Virginia from 1979 to 1989, he was a participant in Boating activities on the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay. He was Commodore of the Aquia Harbour Yacht Club in 1987-88 and Commodore of the Potomac River Yacht Club Association of 17 Yacht Clubs in 88-89. In 1990, accompanied by his wife he brought his boat to Slidell, LA. on the Northshore of Lake Pontchartrain near New Orleans. The trip of almost a hundred days went up the Chesapeake Bay, down the

Delaware to the Atlantic, into NY harbor. From NY, up the Hudson, across the Erie and Oswego Canals to Lake Ontario. They then crossed into the St. Lawrence for a short bit and returned to Hamilton Ontario before heading for the Georgian Bay via sixty plus Locks in the Trent-Severn system. Next through the Thousand Islands, Mackinac Straits, and down Lake Michigan to Chicago. On from Chicago to the Mississippi River via the Peoria and Illinois River. The final leg was down the Mississippi past St Louis, Cairo, Memphis, Vicksburg, and Natchez. They entered Lake Pontchartrain through the Navigation Canal at New Orleans and completed the journey with a night crossing of Lake Pontchartrain to Oak Harbor at Slidell. Boat travel has been supplanted by air travel to places Intelligence Officers never believed they would go, including Eastern Europe, Russia China and North Vietnam.

Summer visits with grandchildren completes the activity story. Family remains #1.