



## Air Force, family and friends honor Aderholt's legacy

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HURLBURT FIELD — Thirty years in the Air Force, countless awards and a room packed with family, friends and colleagues showcased the legacy Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Harry C. "Heinie" Aderholt left behind.

More than 650 people gathered Friday morning for a memorial service at the Soundside Club to honor the man many deem the father of special operations.

"It would be impossible to sum up even the best of his war-time stories today," said U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz. "Heinie was a role model of leadership and a mentor of combat airmanship."

Aderholt graduated from pilot training in 1943 and went on to serve in World War II, flying B-17s and C-47s. Later, during the Korean War, he commanded a unit responsible for covert air support to special operations including working with the Central Intelligence Agency.

Among his other accomplishments, Aderholt was responsible for the release of 150,000 with the Hmong Coalition. Kue Chaw was among those who gained freedom.

"I first met Harry in early spring 1961 near North Vietnam border," Chaw said. "The new generation will miss you. We now shall celebrate his life together and say thank you for your friendship. The Hmong people all around the world will remember you."

During his time in service, Aderholt received the Bronze Star, Order of the White Elephant, AFSOC Order of the Sword and was inducted into the ACA Hall of Fame in 1969.

"Heinie did not make waves, he made hurricanes," Schwartz said. "There is so much more that can be said about him. There is a living legacy of Heinie's efforts in so many military men. So now, I ask that we give him one last salute."

The audience stood and military men and women raised their hands in one last salute to Aderholt.

As crowds gathered together to reminisce after the service, many in the room said there would never be another airman quite like "Heinie."

He was a peculiar animal, but he loved flying," said Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Richard Secord. "He was the best combat commander I ever saw – and I've seen a lot."

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