



Veteran of the Month October 2003

Congratulations to Jan Laitos!

In partnership with the Veterans Coordination Commission, I am pleased to present the October, 2003 Veteran of the Month – Jan Laitos.

Jan Laitos entered the Army/Air Corps in September, 1941 as twenty-three year old Cadet. His first station was Lowery Army/Air Corps Base, Denver, Colorado. He traveled the world during his time in the service and was stationed in the South Pacific and Australia. He spent a great deal of his time in Washington, DC.

Jan Laitos was active during the Cuban Missile crisis as a key player in the Command Center. He didn't realize until later, the importance of the role that he played. He considers that the biggest risk while in the military. Jan received several awards while in the military including a Theater Medal and the Legion of Merit. In his twenty-three years in the military, he was a Strategic Air Command Pilot and worked in the War Department at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. Some of his assignments included: Operations and training for Air Reserve & Air National Guard at Air Staff; Director of Mayor Technical Training Center/Air Training Command; Director of Air Munitions & Weapons and assistant to CicSAC on all (missile) ICBM matters, SAC Headquarter; Special assignments to Chief of Staff USAF, Secretary of Air Force and DOD for all ICMB (missiles) Activation & Acceptance, SAC Air Division Staff Director for multiple air bases with missiles, bombers, tankers, and special missions; Program Director in pioneering the development and implementation – first of a kind- of new operations and maintenance procedures for all ICBM's. He served on Joint DOD-USAF-Major Command-Major Defense Contractor Boards to review development, production and use of new weapon systems; member of Secretary of Defense and Department of Labor Committee to develop legislation to establish better labor and government and management understanding. His accomplishments are extensive.

Jan says his greatest inspiration was his wife Marge, who passed away several years ago. Like many military wives, she sacrificed a career to raise their three sons and as his career took him around the world, she was a grounding force in their life.

Jan Laitos retired as a Colonel in the United States Air Force in 1970 at Ellsworth Air Force Base after 30 years in the service. He continues to be an integral part of the military community and a strong advocate of Veterans everywhere. He currently is a member of the Disabled American Veterans, American Legion, Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), Active Corps Executives (ACE), Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #1273 and Vietnam Veterans. Mr. Laitos works with different veteran agencies who deal with specific issues that veterans face in the workforce. At Ellsworth AFB, Mr. Laitos volunteers his time to talk to all military who are planning to leave the service after twenty years of service; he discusses what is available in the job market, helps determine what type of jobs would be best suited for their skill level. Jan has served several terms as Chapter President to the Air Force Association. He has been a National Director for eighteen years and has received the Medal of Merit, a Presidential Citation and several other citations. Jan accompanied Presidents Ford, Bush and Reagan when they visited the Black Hills. He makes between four and six trips a year to Washington, D.C. on behalf of veterans. For these and many other reasons the Veterans Coordination Commission believe that he is very worthy of Veteran of the Month for October, 2003.