

VETERAN'S SERVICE OFFICE
411 4TH Street, Courthouse
Fairbury, NE 68352

Jefferson County Veteran Honors Recognition Application

*Please return this completed form to the Jefferson County Veteran's Office.

Veteran's Name: Bruce A. Junker

Address: P.O. Box 11, Fairbury, NE 68352

Phone #: 402-230-9008

Branch of Service: U.S. Air Force

Dates of Service: 28 January 1960 to 27 January 1964

Name of person(s) submitting this application: Doug Kapke

Relationship to Veteran: Friend/Fellow Veteran

Below, please provide a narrative detailing the Veteran's Service:

Bruce Junker graduated from Fairbury High School in 1958, and moved to Chicago, Illinois to work for a large construction company for approximately 1 ½ years. He had no desire to be in the Army Infantry and not being a fan of deep water, he voluntarily joined the U. S. Air Force January 28, 1960, after passing a test to see if he could qualify for a career in electronics. After a train ride from Omaha, Nebraska he ended up in Lackland Air Force Base (AFB) in Texas for four weeks of Basic Training. He was transferred to Chanute AFB in Illinois for additional Basic Training and a rigorous course in Electronics. This is where he earned his first stripe and became an (E-1) Basic Airman. He was assigned to Merced, California to the Strategic Air Command for Flight Simulation Training and that became his base station for the duration of his military career. Upon completion of Flight Simulation Training he received his second stripe and became a full-fledged (E-2) Airman.

Bruce was assigned to a group with "flight simulators" that qualified pilots to fly KC-135 and B-52 aircraft. At the time pilots had to travel to Merced, California

to the flight simulators for quarterly re-qualification. Later a new change in policy allowed for three mobile flight simulators to be placed in train cars and taken to pilot locations for on-site training, thus reducing down time for pilots, and allowing them more time with their families. Bruce's unit was the first of the three mobile units, and they specialized in flight simulation training for K-135 pilots.

At some point in time Bruce received his third stripe as Airman 1st Class (E-3) and was, out of necessity, traveling nine months a year for almost three years. He needed and received additional pay to cover travel costs. One time on pay day when standing in a line for pay, Bruce received about \$900.00 in cash pay, which was a ton of money at the time. The officer in line near Bruce reportedly stated, "I don't know what kind of a racket you are running Airman, but I would sure like to get in on it."

Several weeks before Bruce was scheduled to complete his active duty obligation to the military he committed to his boss in Chicago and agreed to return to work. Shortly after that his commander advised Bruce that he qualified for Air Cadet, allowing Bruce to go to flight school and become an officer pilot, had he stayed in the military. Bruce honored his commitment to his boss in Chicago and Flight Simulation Specialist Airman 1st Class (E-3) Junker was honorably discharged on January 27, 1964. Because of his Bruce's exemplary service to his country he was awarded the Good Conduct Medal and the Air Force Accommodation Medal.

Bruce worked for over 37 years for the Chicago Construction Company which allowed him the opportunities to travel to far-away places to work in Germany, China, Canada, Mexico and Greenland. He retired June 1, 2001, and moved back to Fairbury to finish building a home on an acreage south Fairbury. Bruce and his wife Peggy moved into their completed home in 2004. Bruce met with an untimely death in July 10, 2019, after dealing with some heart issues.

Bruce was an American Legion member for over 29 years, served as American Legion Post 24 Commander for 10 years and served two terms as County American Legion Commander.