

William E. Townsley, Colonel, (USAF, Ret.)

Colonel Bill Townsley was born at Fort Knox, KY, and traveled the world with his military family. Before his Air Force career, he served 2 years in the US Marine Corps Reserve ('63 -'64) attaining the rank of Lance Corporal and the USAFR ('65 -'67) with the rank of Staff Sergeant. While at Kansas State University he was an AFROTC Cadet Colonel and Wing Commander of one of its two ROTC wings. He received a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from KSU in 1967, and a Masters degree in Human Relations from Webster College in 1976.



In Dec 1968, following Air Force pilot and survival training, he went to Viet Nam. During the next year, he flew 466 sorties for 960 combat hours. His combat awards include: the Silver Star, two Distinguished Flying Crosses, an Air Medal for combat action, and 11 Air Medals for numbers of combat sorties flown. He was featured in a 2000 History Channel TV show from the series, "Dangerous Mission" for his 'shot down' story from Vietnam.

His overseas travels included Austria (3 yrs.), Japan (3 yrs.), Vietnam (1 yr), Germany (3 yrs.), South Korea (4 yrs), and many temporary duty locations overseas as well.

Since Bill's retirement in Yorktown, Virginia in October 1994, he has been active in community, veteran, political, and charitable organizations. This includes current Adjutant of the Hampton Roads Chapter of the Military Order of the World Wars (MOWW) after serving as their Commander ('96 -'97 and '01-'10); Commander, Department of Virginia MOWW ('04-06'). He is also a Past Commander and is currently Treasurer of the Virginia Beach MOWW Chapter. He was Chairman, York County Republican Committee ('94 -'98); President of the York River Exchange Club for 7 years (a charitable organization dedicated to the prevention of child abuse); President of the Exchange Club of York ('15-'18) and Past Treasurer of the three state Colonial District Exchange Clubs ('09-'13). He is Past and current Commander ('07- '08) ('15-'18) of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 824, and he is a member of the Disabled American Veterans, Victory Chapter 13.

In 1998, he received a gubernatorial appointment from Governor Jim Gilmore of Virginia, and served in the Department of Rehabilitative Services for one year. From 2000 to 2008, he wrote a political column for the weekly Yorktown Crier newspaper called “Rogue Elephant,” which he later renamed “Free and Independent.” He was a substitute teacher in the York County School Division for five years (’00-’05). From 1999 to 2005, Col. Townsley was Chairman of Senator George Allen’s Tidewater Area Military Academy Selection Committee. In 2005, he founded a small business, We7, Inc, to produce math puzzles for newspapers. In 2008, he received a 3-year appointment to Gov. Tim Kaine’s Joint Leadership Council under the Department of Veterans Services. He was re-appointed for another 3 years by Gov. Bob McDonnell. In January 2010, Bill volunteered to chair a new committee of citizens brought together to plan, organize and conduct the Yorktown 4th of July Parades. He held that position for two years, and then re-assumed that chairmanship in 2012 when his VFW Post 824 took the reins of the annual parade. He is also Past President and Treasurer of his Edgewood Homeowners Association.

In April 2002, he founded the American Independence Youth Leadership Conference, a not-for-profit, military veteran-volunteer organization dedicated to providing leadership training to deserving high school sophomore and junior students from throughout the Nation. Since its inception, he has conducted 19 of these conferences, serving over 750 students hailing from CA, FL, IL, KY, LA, MD, MO, NC, NH, NJ, NM, NY, OK, OR, PA, SC, TX, UT, WI, and VA. In January 2005, Colonel Townsley resigned as Director of the AIYLC, and became its Assistant Director and Treasurer, and remains an active fundraiser. He recently authored and published a short mystery story called, Ironic Justice.

Bill has been married to Linda Lou (Bell) Townsley for 45 years and has five children and several grandchildren.