



GILBERT “GIB” GUTTRICH (Class of 1947)

Wabash, Indiana was home to Gib from his birth on May 21, 1929 until his mother took him to Nevada in 1944. He graduated from Las Vegas High School in 1947 and moved to Oklahoma to live with his father. In 1948 he joined the U.S. Army. He was offered the opportunity to become a member of a very exclusive intelligence corp that would require a great deal of intensified training. He spent 9 months at High-Speed Radio Operators school learning to send and receive International Morse Code and then went to Radio Intercept Operators school.

In 1950, while he was in this training, the U.S. Air Force opened up a new program to recruit more pilots. It was open to all active enlisted military regardless of their educational level. It required a 6 hour battery of tests to be accepted. Gib's friends encouraged him to join them for the written exam. Only 4 out of the 10 passed the test. Gib was one of them. Out of the 4, only 3 passed the physical exam. The three remaining men had to meet with an interview board consisting of 7 high-ranking officers. Out of the original 10, Gib was the only one to be accepted. Of course the Army was not happy because they had big plans for him since he could understand code and was fast to pump out material. They offered a spot promotion to keep him in the Army however he only wanted to fly airplanes.

In Basic Flight Training, most of the men had at least two years of college. Gib had none but he excelled again and graduated 6th in his class. Out of the 68 who started together, only 34 finished. His first assignment was to a Special Air Missions Squadron which provided transportation for high-ranking personnel. On Thanksgiving Day 1954, Gib flew out from Sondrestrom Air Base in Greenland for a record high altitude ice cap landing at 10,300 feet. He could skillfully land a plane on ice, snow and water. During his career he flew 9,600 official flying hours and another 400 "secret mission" hours. Total = 10,000 hours.

Because Gib held higher than regular security clearances, he was sent to spy school. Serving as a spy for the U.S. sent him to foreign countries on many dangerous, secret missions. While stationed in Greenland, he was in charge of entertainment at the Officers Club and kept up the morale with his funny skits and comical nonsense. When he returned to the states, he became the Director of Intelligence and remained there for the rest of his career. In 1961 he received a Bachelor of Laws degree from Blackstone School of Law. This degree was required, in case a problem surfaced while on a mission. After serving 20

years in the military, he retired as a Major at the age of 39. Realizing he was much too young to retire permanently, he became a PGA golf professional and managed golf courses at Ellington AFB, Texas, Holloman AFB, New Mexico, Little Rock AFB, Arkansas, Ken McDonald Golf Course, Arizona, Lake Hefner Golf Club, Oklahoma and French Lick Springs Resort, Indiana. He was a PGA teaching professional, had a golf cart management certificate and became a certified golf smith. Many sets of clubs for friends and family were hand made by Gib.

By the time he reached the age of 51, he went back to school and received a BS in Management. A few years later, he attended Arizona State University where he received a Master of Science degree in Recreation Therapeutic and a Certificate in Gerontology with a GPA of 3.8. He taught Personal Health classes at Rose State College and was a Red Cross instructor trainer of CPR for professional teachers and instructor for HIV/AIDS. He spoke to many business groups on "How Not to Choke Under Pressure" and "Practicing the Art of Falling". Gib wrote poetry, which was included in 2 hard bound books. He was the author of a Chipping and Putting instruction book and The Story of the Search for The Corners of Oklahoma after he located all 8 corners in the state. After he retired from golf, he became a Rules Official for many of the major tournaments in Oklahoma and Indiana and received his PGA lifetime membership.

Gib was an accomplished woodworker and made beautiful oak furniture. He loved working with wood and created many of his own patterns. He was always ready to learn something new and was convinced he could even learn how to knit. After several practices and many dropped stitches, he finally gave up. With a burning desire to play the piano, Gib bought a keyboard with several instructional tapes to learn everything about chords and runs, but never was satisfied with the results. One of the last things he did was to purchase a DVD to learn German. He spent hours listening and practicing the words until he could speak them perfectly. Even near the end of his life, he took his laptop and German DVD to the hospital, so he could study. Gib died on September 7, 2009.

Written by Ardie Ban Colburn, LVHS Class of 1947

:"Gib seldom spoke of these accomplishments but I felt it was important for family and friends to know what a fascinating life he lived."

These biographies are based on research and could contain discrepancies.
If there are any excerpts you feel should be changed please feel free to contact dave@lvhsaa.com

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