



Lucien Tolly Thompson Jr.

October 13, 1932 - November 30, 2025

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Lucien Tolly "Tommy" Thompson Jr., age 93, passed away peacefully on November 30, 2025, in Oro Valley, Arizona. A Florida native and devoted servant to his country, community, and family, Tommy lived a life marked by dedication, resilience, and compassion.

Born on October 13, 1932, in Sarasota, Florida, Tommy graduated from Sarasota High School in 1950. He earned a degree in Forestry from the University of Florida in 1954. While at university, he participated in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), which launched his distinguished military career. In 1954, he was commissioned into the United States Air Force.

Tommy attended pilot training at Mariana Air Base in Florida, and began active service flying B-47 bombers with the Strategic Air Command. Initially serving as a copilot under the mentorship of World War II veterans, he later became a command pilot himself. He participated in strategic

missions to North Africa, Spain, and the U.K., and provided air support to I Corp in Korea during the Blue House and Pueblo incidents. Over the course of his 25-year career in the Air Force he served at more than two dozen different duty stations, usually accompanied by his wife and sons, and rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. In 1970, he furthered his education by earning a Master's degree in Management and Computer Science from Texas A&M University. He also attended Air War College. Tommy truly took to heart SAC's motto, "Peace is Our Profession."

His final assignment before retiring in 1979 was as Commander of the Alternate National Military Command Center's Computer Operations Division—a critical Pentagon emergency facility located deep within the mountains of Maryland. His quiet and calm leadership and technical expertise were instrumental during a pivotal era of national defense. Among his many commendations, he received the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal w/ 1 OLC, Outstanding Unit Award w/ 3 OLC, National Defense Service Medal, and the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.

Tommy's Thompson ancestry was from south-west Virginia, and each generation there included veterans who served in peacetime and in conflicts, beginning with colonial militia, through the

Revolutionary War, and onwards to the present. His own commitment to service to his country was an example to both sons, a daughter-in-law, and a grandchild, all Air Force veterans.

After retiring from military service, Tommy returned to his hometown of Sarasota where he continued to serve others through faith-based outreach. A lifelong member of churches wherever he lived, and a Deacon at First Baptist Church of Sarasota, Tommy organized and led numerous church-sponsored missions that provided hot meals and essential services, sometimes for weeks on end, following natural and man-made disasters. His efforts helped communities affected by events such as Hurricane Katrina and the September 11 attacks in New York City.

Tommy also found joy in simpler pursuits—he was an expert marksman, loved hunting and fishing and had a talent for finding, repairing and refinishing old furniture. These pastimes reflected his resourcefulness and thoughtful nature—qualities that those around him came to admire deeply. He often reflected that he loved his added time with his grandchildren and great grandchildren in later life.

Tommy and Barbara retired to Sarasota in 1995, and lived there until 2017.

Tommy was preceded in death by his beloved wife Barbara Thornton Thompson in 2017; his sisters Patricia and Betty; and his parents Lucien T. Thompson Sr. and Mabel Hodges Thompson of Sarasota.

He is lovingly remembered by his sons Lucien T. "Tres" Thompson III and Randall W. "Randy" Thompson; their wives Rosa and Tricia; grandchildren Lucy, Brian, John, Nick, and Thea; eight great-grandchildren; as well as many nieces and nephews who cherished his presence in their lives.

A man who gave his best to service—whether through military duty or humanitarian outreach—Tommy also truly treasured time spent with family and friends. His legacy is one of quiet strength, thoughtful action, generosity of spirit, and enduring faith.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Alzheimer's Association to support their ongoing work.

May his memory and attention to duty bring comfort to all who knew him. A Funeral Service will be held on December 9, 2025, from 02:00 PM to 03:00 PM at Sarasota National Cemetery, 9810 State Rd 72, Sarasota, Florida.

Previous Events

burial

DEC 9. 2:00 PM - 2:30 PM (ET)

Sarasota National Cemetery
9810 State Rd 72
Sarasota, FL 34241
(941) 922-7200