

John Buckland, 46

May 9, 1957 - March 8, 2004

DERBY, KS – Senior Master Sergeant John Keith Buckland, son of John C. Buckland and Charlotte M. (Young) Buckland, was born May 9, 1957, in Boomer, WV. He was raised in Flatwoods, KY and graduated from Russell High School, Russell, KY. John enlisted in the United States Air Force in July 1975. He was stationed at Hahn AB, Germany as a Munitions Specialist.

His next assignment was Eglin AFB, FL, where he met and married A1C Joy Vollbaum, daughter of Ervin and Ruby Vollbaum, Shelby, Feb. 16, 1978. He had a passion for flying and cross-trained to be an In-Flight Refueling Specialist (Boom Operator). His assignments included Mather AFB, CA; Kadena AB, Japan; Ellsworth AFB, SD; Scott AFB, IL; and Langley AFB, VA. He served in the Strategic Air Command, the Air Mobility Command and the Air Combat Command. He was awarded numerous medals, to include the Joint Service Commendation Medal for Operation Restore/Uphold Democracy, Haiti. He received several special achievement awards, to include Distinguished Graduate of the USAF Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy. He served his country and the United States Air Force for 25 years.

In November 2000, he became an employee of The Boeing Company. He was the Program Manager for the design and production of the Remote Aerial Refueling Operator (RARO II) Demonstrator. He attended airshows in England, France and Australia demonstrating new aerial refueling technology. He was presented the 2002 Atlas Achievement Award, Silver Phantom Award, Bronze Phantom Award and a Special Achievement Award for his contributions in creating the future of aerospace as part of the Automated Aerial Refueling Team and the RARO II Demonstrator Team. He was known as "Boomer" Buckland throughout the Air Force community and The Boeing Company. He was a panel chair member for the Aerial Refueling Systems Advisory Group, a member of the Airlift/Tanker Association and Elks Lodge. He died March 8, 2004, at his home in Derby, KS, from cancer at age 46.

He was preceded in death by his father. Survivors include his wife, Joy, of Derby, KS; mother, Charlotte; sister, Robin (Jerry) Johnson; nephews, Austin and Aaron Johnson; and niece, Hayley Johnson, all of Versailles, KY.

Funeral services were held March 12, 2004, at Smith Mortuary in Derby, KS, with Rev. Kent Holcomb officiating. Military rites were conducted in the Greenwood Cemetery, Oatville, KS, by the McConnell Air Force Base Honor Guard.