

## En Route

Major Bill Worthy's orders carried him to Bangkok, Thailand en route to his new duty station, the Royal Thai Air Force Base at Takhli. Worthy was on his way to join the 42<sup>nd</sup> Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron which supported Air Force missions into North Vietnam from ostensibly safer Thai territory. While he awaited transportation up-country to Takhli, Worthy was quartered at the Chao Phya Hotel in the heart of bustling Bangkok.



William Edward Worthy graduated from Chester High School in 1951 and enrolled in Clemson College that fall as a textile manufacturing major. As a freshman, he was a member of the best drilled platoon in the Cadet Corps' best drilled company. An honors student, he was a member of Phi Psi, the textile honorary society, and attended Air Force ROTC summer training at Randolph Air Force Base in Texas. Colonel Martin Alewine Jr., a member of the Class of 1954 and Worthy's cadet company at Clemson, recalled that "Bill took his duties in the Cadet Corps seriously and was always sharply dressed in uniform, consistent in his leadership, and insisted that all cadets – including 3<sup>rd</sup> semester juniors – shape up and do the platoon and company proud."



Worthy graduated and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Air Force on June 5, 1955. He reported for active duty and was sent to Harlingen Air Force Base, Texas to train as a bomber/navigator on the B-52 Stratofortress. Operational assignments as a B-52 navigator followed in Oklahoma and Ohio. Worthy then earned an MBA degree from the University of Oklahoma before shipping out to Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii for a tour of duty as navigator on a C-124 cargo aircraft. He was awarded the Air Medal for meritorious achievement while serving with the 50<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Squadron and displaying outstanding airmanship and courage under extremely hazardous conditions.

Major Worthy's next assignment brought him back to South Carolina for transition training on the EB-66, an electronic warfare aircraft designed to detect and jam enemy air defense radar. Once this training was completed, Worthy headed west, traveling through Hawaii and Guam to Clark Air Force Base, the Philippines, where he attended Jungle Survival School. From the Philippines, Worthy flew to Bangkok and checked into the Chao Phya Hotel. He was scheduled to depart for Takhli on Saturday, June 11, 1970. On Friday evening, June 10, Major Worthy, wearing his Air Force uniform and accompanied by another service member, left the Chao Phya to walk to dinner at a nearby restaurant. While crossing the

street, a hit-and-run driver struck Worthy. Suffering from internal and external injuries, Worthy was taken to the 5<sup>th</sup> Army Field Hospital in Bangkok. He never regained consciousness and died on July 16, 1970.

Worthy was survived by his wife, Laura Jean Rash Worthy and their three-year-old daughter Kristy. In addition to the Air Medal, he was awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal with One Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with One Oak Leaf Cluster, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Air Force Longevity Service Award with Two Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Award. He is buried in the Florence National Cemetery.

For more information on Major William Edward Worthy see:

<https://soh.alumni.clemson.edu/scroll/william-edward-worthy/>

For additional information on Clemson University's Scroll of Honor visit:

<https://soh.alumni.clemson.edu/>

