



## Antonio Savoca

August 10, 1923 - January 10, 2026

Antonio (Tony) Savoca, a decorated World War II and Korean War veteran, aerospace executive and devoted husband and father, passed away peacefully in his home in Gainesville, Virginia, on January 10, 2026. He was 102 years old.

Born on August 10, 1923, in Cleveland, Ohio, Tony was one of seven children born to Sicilian immigrant parents, Peter and Angelina Savoca. He lived a full and admirable life defined by quiet patriotism, staunch integrity, and extraordinary service to his country.

At just 18 years old, before graduating high school, Tony volunteered for the U.S. Army Air Corps Aviation Cadet Program. Commissioned as a Second Lieutenant and Bombardier in 1943, he served with the 95th Bomb Group in the European Theater during World War II. On March 6, 1944, during the first maximum-effort bombardment mission over Berlin, his B-17 was shot down. Tony survived by bailing out under fire and was captured by German forces. He spent fourteen months as a prisoner of war at Stalag Luft I, where he participated in multiple escape attempts before being liberated by Russian troops in May 1945.

After the war, Tony chose to continue his military career, serving with distinction during the Korean War as part of the 22nd Bomb Group. He

completed 26 B29 combat missions over North Korea from Okinawa, receiving a letter of appreciation and commendation from General MacArthur. Over a 21-year Air Force career, he earned promotions to Lieutenant Colonel, received multiple commendations for his leadership and teaching, and completed his bachelor's degree in Business Administration at the University of Oklahoma, earning Beta Gamma Sigma honors.

For his heroism and meritorious achievement in combat, Tony was awarded the Air Medal with four Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters.

September 27, 1952, Tony married the love of his life, Charlene Henson, marking the start of 73 years rooted in unwavering love, partnership and adventure. Together they made homes across the country, living in; Sacramento, California; Houston, Texas; San Antonio, Texas; Norman, Oklahoma; Dayton, Ohio; Brigham City, Utah; and Washington, D.C. In later years, they settled in Gainsville, Virginia to be close to their only daughter, Gina.

In 1963, Tony retired from the Air Force and began an equally remarkable civilian career in the aerospace industry. Rising through the ranks at Thiokol's Wasatch Division, he became Vice President and General Manager. His leadership contributed to some of the most critical defense and space programs in U.S. history, including the Minuteman missile system, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and the solid rocket motors used in the Space Shuttle program. For his contributions, Tony was awarded NASA's Distinguished Public Service Medal and the Collier Trophy. In addition to propulsion, Tony led Thiokol in pioneering automotive airbag safety technologies.

After 19 years at Thiokol, Tony went on to become the President and Chief Executive Officer of Transpace Carriers Corporation, organized to take the

Delta space launch vehicle to the private sector. Tony later served as Senior Vice President of Sequa Corporation and President and CEO of several subsidiary companies, including Atlantic Research Corporation, CASCO Corporation, Kollsman Corporation and Professional Services Group, where he continued to pioneer advancements in defense systems and space propulsion. He retired for good in 1997 after decades of transformative leadership.

Alongside his extraordinary accomplishments, Tony remained a modest and deeply principled family man, and to those who knew him, a real-life embodiment of the American Dream. In retirement, he enjoyed cross-country and international travel with his wife, spending time with his family, and managing his investments. Tony lived an esteemed life of excellence and honor, steadfast service, and enduring love. His legacy lives on through the family he cherished and the country he served so faithfully.

Tony was preceded in death by his parents, Peter and Angelina Savoca, his brothers and sisters, Sam Savoca, Phyllis Longano, Francis Sgro, Litterio Savoca, and grandchild, Mia Rose. He is survived by his beloved wife of 73 years, Charlene Savoca; his daughter, Gina Savoca Rose; his sisters, Adeline Ford and Geraldine Kovacs; his six grandchildren, Lily, Joey, Logan, Jamie, Antonio and Molly; and one great-grandson, Liam.

Visitation will take place on Wednesday, January 28, 2026, from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. at Pierce Funeral Home, 9609 Center St., Manassas, VA 20110. A Mass of Christian Burial will take place on Thursday, January 29, 2026, at 3PM at Holy Trinity Catholic Church, 8213 Linton Hall Rd., Gainesville, VA 20155. Following the mass, all are invited back to the family's home for a reception.

Tony Savoca will be laid to rest with high military honors at Arlington National

Cemetery on a future date.

# Cemetery Details

## Arlington National Cemetery

Arlington, VA 22211  
<http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/>

# Previous Events

## Visitation

**JAN 28.** 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Pierce Funeral Home  
9609 Center St.  
Manassas, VA 20110  
(703) 257-6028  
[pfh@piercefh.com](mailto:pfh@piercefh.com)  
<https://www.piercefh.com>

## Funeral Mass

**JAN 29.** 3:00 PM (ET)

Holy Trinity Catholic Church  
8213 Linton Hall Rd  
Gainesville, VA 20155-2997  
(703) 753-6700

# Tribute Wall

TB

“ *The Blackmans purchased the Pretty Please for the family of Antonio Savoca.*



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**The Blackmans** - January 27 at 03:51 PM

NA

“ *On behalf of the Board of Trustees, volunteers and staff of the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force, we extend our deepest and heartfelt sympathies to the family of Antonio Savoca. He represented the courage, character and patriotism displayed by the men and women of the Eighth Air Force.*

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**National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air** - January 27 at 02:32 PM

EJ

“ *Erik and Paula Johnson purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of Antonio Savoca.*



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**Erik and Paula Johnson** - January 27 at 06:25 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Antonio Savoca.*



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January 26 at 04:44 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Antonio Savoca.*



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January 24 at 02:07 PM



“ *On behalf of Shawn Lewis & Hammer& Nails purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Antonio Savoca.*



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**On behalf of Shawn Lewis & Hammer& Nails** - January 20 at 11:22 AM



“ *Tender Tribute was purchased for the family of Antonio Savoca.*



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January 19 at 06:48 PM



“ *Lily and Rose Tribute Spray was purchased for the family of Antonio Savoca.*



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January 19 at 05:30 PM