



James Robert Linnen

JUN 25, 1940 - JAN 27, 2026



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Table of Contents

Obituary	Page 3
Events	Page 6
Tribute Wall	Page 7
Media	Page 10



James Robert Linnen

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Obituary for Jim Linnen, of Lewes, DE

James “Jim” Robert Linnen, Col. Ret., passed away peacefully on January 27, 2026, with his beloved wife, Gaby, by his side.

Jim was born June 25, 1940, in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, to Robert and Katherine (Markofski) Linnen. The oldest of four boys, he spent his early years in Waupun, Wisconsin, serving as an altar boy, delivering newspapers, and working at the local canning factory during the summers.

At age 13, he was accepted to St. Francis Minor Seminary in Milwaukee, where he went on to graduate as Valedictorian of his class, achieving the second-highest grades in the school’s history. After high school, he moved to Green Bay to attend St. Norbert College and participated in the ROTC program. Upon graduation with a degree in psychology, he accepted a commission in the U.S. Army and was assigned to the newly developed branch of Military Intelligence.

Having studied German for eight years, he volunteered for his first assignment in Augsburg, Germany, in 1962. It was in Augsburg that he met his future wife, Gaby, who was a translator for the Army Corps of Engineers at the time. The time spent in Germany was very formative and cemented his lifelong love for Gaby, Augsburg, classical music, history, and travel. They were married in Augsburg in August of 1964, famously with three anniversary dates due to the rules for civil and church weddings.

Jim served proudly in the Army for thirty years with his wife, Gaby, by his side. They had a son, Patrick, in 1965, and a daughter, Katherine, in 1967. Jim completed two tours in Vietnam and experienced countless moves that included Maryland, Kentucky, Kansas, and, of course, several tours in Germany. He also continued his education with a Master’s degree in Literature from Johns Hopkins, as well as service schools at Fort Leavenworth, Carlisle, and the FBI Academy.



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After thirty years of service, Jim retired from the U.S. Army with the rank of Colonel, his final assignment being Chief of Counterintelligence for the Army. His record was distinguished and decorated, and he was always known to be a strong, fair, and supportive leader and mentor. Following his military retirement, Jim spent ten additional years serving the government in a Military Intelligence position at the Pentagon.

Jim and Gaby retired to Lewes, Delaware, in 2002 after moving and traveling the world. Lewes was one of his favorite places, having spent many summers and vacations at Fort Miles in Cape Henlopen State Park. Retirement was filled with travel in Europe and throughout the United States. Visiting his four granddaughters wherever they resided was one of his favorite things to do. He was a wonderful grandfather and was able to help and enjoy watching them grow into strong, capable young women.

In retirement, aside from traveling, Jim enjoyed serving his community. He was an active member of the Lewes Historical Society, where he regularly gave trolley tours. He helped organize the annual Strawberry Festival for many years, an event held primarily in appreciation of the many volunteers for the Historical Society. Additionally, he volunteered his time serving on the Land Commission committee, where he was known to carefully review proposals, often noting important issues that the lawyers had missed.

Jim enjoyed listening to classical music, reading the paper, visiting antique stores, and collecting antiques. He particularly enjoyed collecting classical records, Swedish glass, and watches. Most of all, he loved being with his wife of 61 years, Gaby. They enjoyed visiting the state park to view the deer and osprey almost every afternoon when they were in town.

Jim was preceded in death by his parents and his younger brother, John. He is survived by his wife, Gaby; his son, Patrick Linnen; his daughter, Katherine Linnen Czarnik, and her husband, Jim; and their four daughters, Sasha, Maddie, Paige, and Bella; as well as his two remaining brothers, Tom and Patrick, and their families.

A memorial service will be held on Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. at Parsell Funeral Homes & Crematorium, Atkins-Lodge Chapel, 16961 Kings Highway, Lewes, DE 19958, where friends and family may visit beginning at 10:00 a.m. Chapel committal services will follow at 2:00 PM at Delaware Veterans Memorial Cemetery, 26669 Patriots Way, Millsboro, DE 19966.



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Any donations may be made to the Lewes Public Library, <https://lewes.lib.de.us/support-us/>.

Please sign the virtual guestbook located on the tribute page.

FLORIST NOTE: PLEASE DELIVER ALL ARRANGEMENTS BY 3:00 PM ON MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2026 , TO OUR LEWES LOCATION.



Events

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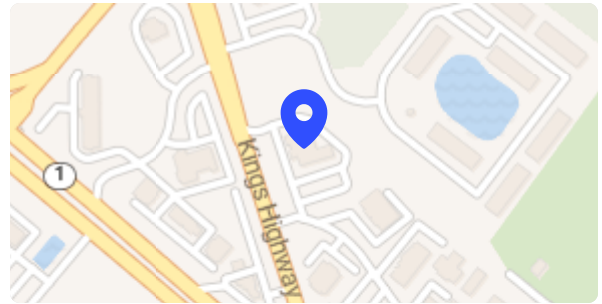
Visitation

 **Tuesday**, March 17, 2026

 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM ET

 **Parsell Funeral Homes & Crematorium-Atkins-Lodge Chapel**


16961 Kings Highway, Lewes DE 19958



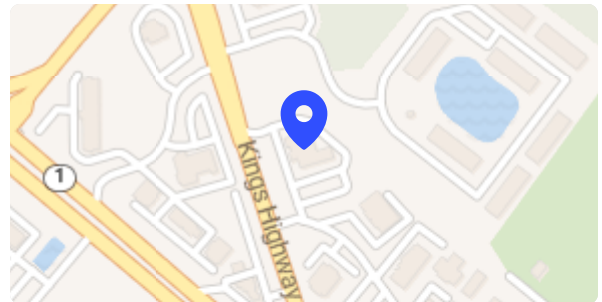
Memorial Service

 **Tuesday**, March 17, 2026

 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM ET

 **Parsell Funeral Homes & Crematorium-Atkins-Lodge Chapel**


16961 Kings Highway, Lewes DE 19958



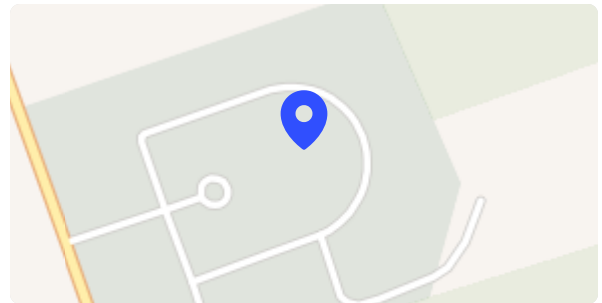
Chapel Committal with Military Honors

 **Tuesday**, March 17, 2026

 2:00 PM - 2:20 PM ET

 **Delaware Veterans Memorial Cemetery**

26669 Patriots Way, Millsboro DE





Tribute Wall

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Chenjing J. planted a Memorial Tree in honor of James.

March 19 at 11:13 PM



Anonymous planted a Memorial Tree in honor of James.

March 16 at 9:50 PM



Jim'S Little Brothers. Patrick & Tom sent a Dreams From the Heart Bouquet to the Linnen family.

March 10 at 11:16 AM



Frederick Wirth posted:

Our first memories of Jim were so indicative of the kind, considerate person he was. Jim was our sponsor when Freddy was stationed in Ansbach and he got up at 4:00 AM so he could meet our plane at Frankfort and drive us to our new post. He felt that having us end an overnight flight to Germany by taking a train to Ansbach was too much so he meet us in person. That was a great introduction to Jim, Germany and to service in the 1st AD.Fred and Linda Wirth

February 14 at 3:28 PM



David D. planted a grove of 3 Memorial Trees in honor of James.

February 8 at 3:30 PM





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Gail Dubay shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

We remember Jim for the gentle man he was in life, how he loved his family beyond measure and how our friendship spanned the many years we knew him. We will miss him on this earth but he will always be with us in our hearts. We wish peace of heart to Gaby, to Jim's son Patrick and to Jim's daughter Katherine and her family during this difficult time. I've attached a photo of our families together in Belgium in 2012. We would always make an effort to meet whenever we were in the same part of the world. Rest in peace, Jim. We will miss you. Don & Gail Dubay



February 6 at 12:48 PM



Don & Gail Dubay sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Linnen family.



February 6 at 12:13 PM



Dan And Susie Baur posted:

We met Jim and Gaby in 1976 when as a brand new Captain and family we transferred to Germany. Small town folks, we were overwhelmed being in a foreign country, but with amazing luck, I had Jim as my boss. Professionally, but mostly personally, we had the greatest mentors possible. We know Jim had an awesome life and contributed so much to everyone around him, the Army and our country - and along with Gaby, especially to us.

February 6 at 10:08 AM



Nancy Hudson shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

Our dear friend Jim has left us, but we remain here celebrating the amazing person that he was. For me, especially, I was so happy to hear his stories and listen to his beautiful classical music. Dan and I enjoyed the best gin and tonics, specially made by him, which made us fall in love with this drink. We always reference Jim when we have one. And, in his honor, we will now have two!! I was so happy to host him during his visit to Italy and include him in our wine adventures with Katherine. What I am most grateful for is that, thanks to Jim and Gaby, I have a friend and sister for life. I wish I could be with her now, but I will be soon. Jim, thank you for the small moments we shared; they are treasures that I will carry with me proudly for the rest of my life. Nancy



February 4 at 12:40 PM



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GH

Greg Howe posted:

This comes to me as very sad news. I didn't have many mentors in my military career but Jim Lennon was one of them. I respected him very much for his intelligence, humor, and love of his country, his family, and those who worked and served with him. On one particular mission where I was serving as his operations officer, he defended my decisions against some very meddlesome senior officers, the only time I ever saw Jim angry enough to get into some serious conflict with his superiors. But, as usual, his calm demeanor came forth and he resolved the issue. He encouraged my controversial decision to write a book about our service in a unit that was one of the first in the military to perform operations security missions. I think he admired the vagabond group of captains and majors he inherited when he assumed command and we returned that ten fold. As he taught me through example, I continued to perform duties as retired military should, serving our communities in many ways. He was a remarkable man and will be missed.

February 4 at 8:28 AM

TD

Trish Dickerson lit a candle in honor of James.

Gaby and family, Mr. Jim was the sweetest. I am glad I had the honor of caring for him. I looked very forward to seeing him every shift. Hugs and prayers to all of you during these difficult times.



February 2 at 3:43 PM



Media

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February 6 at 12:48 PM





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February 4 at 12:40 PM





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring James by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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