

## Mjr Gen Thomas M. Sadler

July 8, 1925 - September 7, 2015

A devoted champion of children in need and a decorated war veteran, Speedway Children's Charities (SCC) National Executive Director Emeritus and retired U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Thomas M. Sadler, 90, passed away peacefully on Monday in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. Sadler bravely served his country for four decades then dedicated his life to serving children through Speedway Children's Charities for nearly 25 years.

"Gen. Sadler was an outstanding man, not just for the sacrifices he made in service to his country, but also for the dedication he had for Speedway Children's Charities," said O. Bruton Smith, executive chairman of Speedway Motorsports, Inc. and founder of Speedway Children's Charities. "I hired him a long time ago to grow our charity and to help children, and he did that every day he worked for me. Gen. Sadler often said, 'When you look into the eyes of a child in need, you're looking into the eyes of God.' He was incredibly dedicated to making a difference for kids who may not have been able to help themselves. General, you will be greatly missed."

A loving father and husband, Sadler was married to Mary Kenner Sadler, affectionately known as "Miss Ken," for 57 years before she passed away in 2008. Sadler is survived by his son, Tommy, and daughter-in-law, Penny. Born in 1925, in Canton, Ohio, Sadler's family later moved to Montgomery, Alabama, where he graduated from high school in 1943. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Syracuse (New York) University in 1965, and a Master's Degree from The George Washington University, Washington,

D.C., in 1970. He also completed Squadron Officer School at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, and the National War College, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.

Sadler entered the Army Air Corps in August 1943 and was assigned in the European theater of operations as a B-17 nose gunner. He flew 35 combat missions with the 8th Air Force's 92nd Bombardment Group. He was discharged in December 1945 and attended the University of Alabama until August 1948.

Returning to active duty in October 1948, Sadler entered the aviation cadet program at Waco, Texas. He graduated from advanced flying school and was commissioned a second lieutenant in September 1949. From June 1950 to August 1951, Sadler served in South Korea where he flew 300 combat missions. He then returned to the 50th Troop Carrier Squadron at Sewart Air Force Base. In 1955, he transferred to Evreux Air Base, France, where he served with the 317th Troop Carrier Wing as commander of the 317th Tactical Command Post.

Sadler returned to Sewart Air Force Base in April 1959 where he served as a C-130 flight commander with the 774th Troop Carrier Squadron. In May 1961, he transferred to Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, as an instructor in the Tactical Air Command Joint Air Ground Operations School. During the Cuban crisis in 1962, he was assigned to the Tactical Air Command advanced echelon at Homestead Air Force Base, Florida.

From December 1962 to January 1965, he was assigned to Headquarters Tactical Air Command at Langley Air Force Base, Virginia, as an operations staff officer. During 1965, he attended the University of Syracuse under the Bootstrap program. Following graduation in October 1965, Sadler again was assigned to the 317th Troop Carrier Wing, which was at Lockbourne Air Force Base, Ohio.

He traveled to the Republic of Vietnam in January 1966 and served for a year with the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) as an air liaison officer and forward air controller, flying O-1s. He spent another six months in the Republic of

Vietnam as an air liaison officer with the 834th Air Division where he developed and organized the emergency airlift system and tactical airlift liaison officer operations for 7th Air Force.

In August 1967, Sadler was assigned to Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C., as chief of the Special Air Force Branch, Tactical and Airlift Forces Division, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations. From July 1969 to July 1970, he was a student at the National War College. While there he also obtained his Master's Degree from The George Washington University. After graduation he returned to Lockbourne Air Force Base as vice commander of the 317th Tactical Airlift Wing.

Sadler transferred to Rhein-Main Air Base, Germany, in August 1971 as commander of the 322nd Tactical Airlift Wing until January 1974. He was then named commander of the 437th Military Airlift Wing at Charleston Air Force Base, South Carolina, where he remained until March 1975 when he became chief of security police at Air Force headquarters.

He was promoted to major general July 1, 1975, with date of rank Oct. 1, 1972.

Sadler retired from the U.S. Air Force on Oct. 1, 1983.

A command pilot with more than 9,360 flying hours, Sadler is credited with more than 400 combat missions in World War II, Korea and Southeast Asia. His military decorations and awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star, Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross with oak leaf cluster, Bronze Star Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal with 15 oak leaf clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal, Purple Heart and the Italian Solidarity Star, 1st degree.

After 40 years of military service, Sadler turned his attention to serving the needs of children as the executive director of Speedway Children's Charities, a position he held from 1990 until 2014. The mission of Speedway Children's Charities remains true to the ideals it was founded upon in 1982: To care for children in educational, financial, social and medical need in order to help

them lead productive lives.

Under his leadership, SCC expanded from one chapter to a national organization with local nonprofits based at each of the eight Speedway Motorsports, Inc. facilities across the United States. Under his guidance, SCC became one of the most recognized nonprofit organizations in the motorsports industry, raising funds for more than 500 children's organizations nationwide each year, impacting more than 300,000 needy children annually.

Since the organization was founded in 1982, Speedway Children's Charities has distributed more than \$43 million and made a difference in the lives of more than 13 million children across the United States.

The General's Final Victory Lap will be held at Calvary Church, 5801 Pineville-Mathews Road, Charlotte, NC, on Monday, Sept. 14. Visitation is scheduled from 10:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m., with the funeral to follow in the church at 3 p.m. Following the church service, The General will be taken in procession to Magnolia Memorial Gardens on the church grounds. There he will receive final military honors before his earthly remains are laid to rest next to his wife, Mary "Ken" Sadler who preceded him in death in July of 2008.

The General's family has given the family of Lowe-Neddo Funeral Home the privilege of caring for them. For further details and to share memories, condolences, photos and videos, please visit [www.LoweNeddoFuneralHome.com](http://www.LoweNeddoFuneralHome.com) or call 704-545-3553.

# Cemetery Details

## Magnolia Memorial Gardens

5801 Pineville–Matthews Road  
Charlotte, NC 28226  
[http://www.calvarychurch.com/site/18\\_150\\_112.cfm](http://www.calvarychurch.com/site/18_150_112.cfm)

# Previous Events

## Visitation

SEP 14. 10:30 AM - 2:30 PM (ET)

Calvary Church  
5801 Pineville-Matthews Road  
Charlotte, NC 28226  
[info@calvarychurch.com](mailto:info@calvarychurch.com)  
<http://www.calvarychurch.com>

## Service

SEP 14. 3:00 PM (ET)

Calvary Church  
5801 Pineville-Matthews Road  
Charlotte, NC 28226  
[info@calvarychurch.com](mailto:info@calvarychurch.com)  
<http://www.calvarychurch.com>

# Tribute Wall



“ He was a kind man, as a A1C I was shoveling the entrance of the NCO Club due a freak snowstorm. His staff cat pulled up, he jumped out, I almost croaked dead. I saluted, he saluted then picked up the other shovel and joined in on the work. I'll never forget it!

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**Fred Greathead** - January 27 at 02:43 PM



“ *Mjr Gen Thomas M. Sadler*

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October 05, 2023 at 07:26 AM



*Plz you know me & really love c me*

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**L sad Jr no me fly mad e do it** - July 02, 2024 at 07:08 PM



“ *I really enjoyed my time serving under him.*

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**bob moody** - September 28, 2023 at 02:09 PM



“ *Mjr Gen Thomas M. Sadler*

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October 24, 2022 at 08:52 PM

SA

“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



Sharon Allen - October 06, 2015 at 02:09 AM



“ 47 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Lowe-Neddo Funeral Home - September 14, 2015 at 06:14 AM

RF

“ Robert T. Dickson family purchased the Magnificent Life Spray for the family of Mjr Gen Thomas M. Sadler.



Robert T. Dickson family - September 13, 2015 at 07:27 PM

SH

“ Sharon lit a candle in memory of Mjr Gen Thomas M. Sadler



Sharon - September 13, 2015 at 05:26 PM

JM

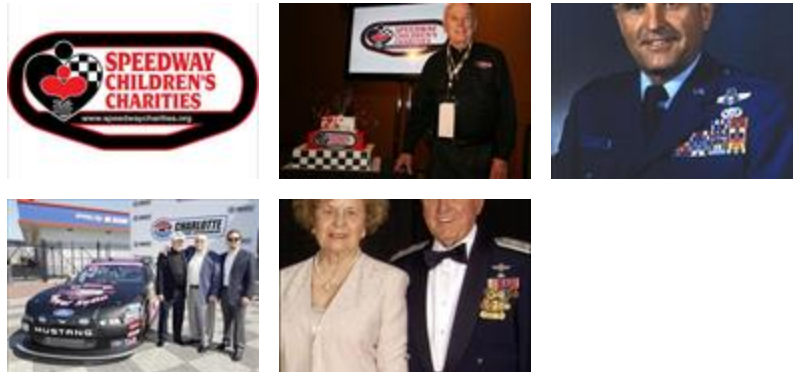
“ I enjoyed flying with Gen Sadler out of Sewart AFB as part of his crew. We had a good time in Alaska. Jan, 1959. I know he will be missed by all C-130 Flyers. Peace to him and his Family. J. Moscato, USAF Ret, MSGT FE.



JERRY MOSCATO - September 13, 2015 at 02:05 PM



“ 6 files added to the album Memories Album



Lowe-Neddo Funeral Home - September 11, 2015 at 04:48 PM

ST

*My father, other three-war veterans know and served along with General Sadler. Qualities all men should follow. God Speed , Sir and sincere condolences to the family. He will be missed.*

steve - September 12, 2015 at 08:12 PM

JC

*I sat with the General in church..always his favorite seat with his hat he always carried with him. We shared many laughs together waiting on the service to start...an honor to know him.*

**Jean Carter** - September 13, 2015 at 02:38 PM

DG

*Tommy, it was a pleasure to know your father. He was a great person.  
Dan and Donna Grigg*

**danny grigg** - September 13, 2015 at 09:27 PM

BJ

*I met General Tom through Speedway Children's Charities in the early 90's. We were putting together the first benefit motorcycle poker run for them and the route changed at the last minute. While I was hustling to get the rider packets changed, General Tom sang to me & I remember the song. He was making up the words to make me laugh & I just loved it. It started out "Mommamas don't let your bikers grow up to be cowboys." What a ray of sunshine & such a nice, nice man.*

*Babs Shaw Johnston*

**Babs Shaw Johnston** - September 15, 2015 at 07:48 AM

RR

*Tommy so sorry to hear about your father.He was a great man.  
Rose Marie Ruppert*

**Rose Marie Ruppert** - September 11, 2017 at 04:46 PM

DC

*I met General Sadler when myself and a friend was having a drink at the NCO Club in Athens Greece. The General had recently been appointed CO of Security Police. That is how I recognized him when he walked in. I was not thinking properly when I yelled out, "hey Tommy". He came straight over to our table and sat down. We had a drink and a great conversation. I kept my stripes.*

*Don Campbell. Jan, 11th 2018*

**Don Campbell** - January 11, 2018 at 07:57 PM