



Romona Iris Leigh Hamblin
February 9, 1952-March 4, 2021



This is the true story of a woman who really lived her dreams, who loved life and lived it to the fullest!

Born Romona Iris Leigh, her journey began on February 9, 1952 in Georgetown, KY. From an early age she dreamed of living the big life surrounded by love and laughter, and she dreamed of joining the military to see the world and serve her country.

Iris graduated from Danville (KY) High School in 1970 and Campbellsville University in 1974. One year later she joined the Air Force and shipped off to basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, TX, where she met the man of her dreams while crawling under a table to retrieve her ping pong ball. Three months later they were married.

Iris moved with her new husband, SSgt. Ronnie Hamblin to their first assignment at Homestead Air Force Base near Miami, FL. Married life brought two wonderful children, Michael and Jenna, and the military life fit perfectly with her wandering spirit. As Iris often said, "When Uncle Sam says jump you have to do what needs to be done, no matter what other plans you had." Iris loved every minute of it!

Over the years they were stationed in Italy, Greece, Guam, and in the United States: Kentucky, Florida, and Texas. Their final assignment was in San Antonio where they stayed. After attaining the rank of CMSgt., Ronnie and family retired from the Air Force in 1998. Since they traveled so extensively, often having only one another to depend on, they are a very tight-knit family, and all are proud veterans of the US military, including both children: Michael and Jenna.

In addition to being a wife, mother, sister and friend, Iris was also a social worker, mental health tech, reiki master, hotel clerk, professional chef, occupational therapist for infants, and a caregiver over the course of her life. She treasured the experience of riding with the Texas Patriot Guard, marching with the Women Veterans of San Antonio, and singing with the Silver Serenaders. She was a lover of music at every age and stage of life and went nowhere without her beloved playlist of oldies but goodies. In 2018 Iris checked an item off her bucket list when she sang on-stage at the Flora-Bama, a honky-tonk beach bar located at the state line of Florida and Alabama. Iris loved life, always with a quest for knowledge and new adventures.

Her favorite moments came from spending time with her family and hugging on all she loved (and she loved many)! Iris was an excellent cook and crafted specialty dishes from every country where they were stationed. She loved to host weekly Sunday brunches, Super Bowl parties, all the holidays, and never considered any of it - 'work'.

Her pool parties were legendary: "Splash Day" every Wednesday in their backyard with her 'Water Babies', some of her best friends who were all of a similar age. No matter who you were ... You could always count on being welcomed into her home with loving arms, a never-ending smile, and a table spread with great food.

Iris also loved spending time on the beaches of Florida, Texas, Alabama, and every beach she could hit around the world. Hawaii may have been her favy, or maybe Bali, but she was also happy on the beaches of Rough River, KY, and the Guadalupe in TX.

For nine years, Iris was an exemplary volunteer with Vet TRIIP, a non-profit organization in San Antonio for veterans with PTSD, chronic pain, and traumatic injuries. There she was able to use her gifts of Reiki and healing energies, along with others who offered a multitude of alternative therapies. She always said the healing spirit, atmosphere, and energies of Vet TRIIP were cleansing to the soul and as great an experience for her as it was for the veterans they served.

In August 2019, Iris was diagnosed with cancer, but continued to live her life with joy and abandon, until her travels came to an end on March 4, 2021. She leaves behind her loving caretaker-husband, Ronnie Hamblin; their son, Michael Hamblin; and their daughter, Jenna Annas (Raymond), all of Schertz, TX. Iris loved her three grandsons with a passion: Cyrus (Natasha) Hamblin, and Logan and Oliver Annas. Along with a brother, two sisters, nieces, nephews, cousins, aunts, uncles, in-laws and out-laws, all of whom she loved fiercely.

Iris also leaves behind a bunch of friends who say they are better off because of her influence. She has been described as 'one-of-a-kind in all the best ways' and 'a loving soul who threw caution to the wind, found positives in every situation, and had a passion for helping others'. Many say they will never forget her 'bright personality, fun attitude about life, and her beautiful heart and spirit'. Many commented: 'You never saw Iris without a smile, whether she was sitting alone, surrounded by family and friends, or in a long line at the supermarket. Iris never knew a stranger'.

With deep appreciation, we thank the staff of Hope Hospice for the gentle touch, comfort, and care they provided Iris in her final days. Their beautiful ceremony honoring Iris as a military vet will never be forgotten, especially her brave reply when we stood to salute her: "As you were."

For 69 years Iris brought so much joy to all who love her, and she will be missed! We like to think she danced into heaven singing her favorite songs and ran down the beach to meet up with her parents, Odell and Virginia Leigh, and her two little grandsons, Joshua and Noah. We know she is looking down on us now saying, "Ahh ... Life is good! Go out and live it to the fullest."

A beach-themed Celebration of Life will be at 12.00 noon on April 14, 2021 at Alamo City Church in the Funeral Caring Chapel. Burial with full military honors will follow at the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, San Antonio. Due of COVID, attendance is limited to 25. Arrangements entrusted to Funeral Caring of San Antonio.

Those wishing to honor Iris Hamblin may donate online at www.VetTriip.org, or via snail mail: Vet TRIIP, PO Box 460902, San Antonio, TX 78246.