



SSG William "Buddy" A. Estes

December 21, 1947 - June 6, 2023

Staff Sergeant William (Buddy) A. Estes, United States Army (Retired) passed away on June 6, 2023, after a long illness. A Georgia resident for more than 48 years, he was currently living in Ponte Vedra, FL. He was preceded in death by his father, Albert Felon Estes, his mother, Leoneda Manley Estes and his brother, G.W. Estes, all of Bowdon, GA. He is survived by wife of 46 years, Nancy Cantrell Estes; three sons, Matthew A. Estes of Centreville, VA, William (Bo) A. Estes, II (Ashley Mullins) of Carrollton, GA, and Brian R. Estes (Courtenay Bowers) of Cumming, GA; seven grandchildren, Charlotte, Kane, Luke, Matthew, Nathan, Kayla, and Jacob, two sisters, Virginia Estes Cates (Billy) of Bowdon, GA and Neda Estes Thompson of Peachtree City, and many nieces and nephews.

Buddy was born December 21, 1947, in Bowdon, GA. He graduated from Bowdon High School in 1965. He enlisted in the US Army in 1966, and was assigned to the H 3-503 Infantry 173 Airborne Brigade. He received an honorable discharge after 3 years of service, including 2 consecutive tours of duty in Republic of Vietnam where he served as an infantry paratrooper and jumpmaster with the elite 173rd.

Once home, Buddy began a 17 year long career as a dental equipment specialist/salesman, adding dental office design to his skills. His heart was still with the military and he wanted to spend less time away from his family. He

reentered active duty with the Georgia Army National Guard in 1986 and retired with an honorable discharge in 2004, after more than 22 years of active duty service. While in the GA Guard, he served with Company A, 151st MIBN in Marietta, HHS 151st MI BN at Dobbins AFB, HHC STARC in Douglasville, Company B, 108th Armor BN in Cedartown, Company H, 121st Infantry (ABN) (LRSU) 221st MI BN in Newnan and Ft. Gilliam, and retired from Joint Forces HQ in Ellenwood. Just prior to his retirement, because of his extraordinary expertise, his deep respect and gratitude of these vets and his combat experience, he was chosen to go to France with the US Army journalists and historians to cover the 60th anniversary of D-Day. Fulfilling a lifelong dream, he was honored to do personal interviews with many WWII veterans and walk the ground where they had so bravely fought. This mission was highly successful and was a treasured experience for him.

His awards include 2 Bronze Stars (merit and valor), 3 Purple Hearts (earned in combat), Meritorious Service Medal, 3 Air Medals, 2 Army Commendation Medals, 2 Army Achievement Medals, 6 Army Good Conduct Medals, 3 National Defense Service Medals, Vietnam Service Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge, 2 Army Reserve Components Overseas Training Ribbon, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Expert Marksmanship Badge w/Pistol Bar, Senior Parachutist Badge and Parachutist Badge.

While in the GA Army National Guard, Buddy served as a recruiter, a tank commander, a training NCO, a readiness NCO, a safety NCO, as a nuclear, biological & chemical NCO, and was in a long-range surveillance unit (LRS) for 6 of his last 8 years of service, where he continued to meet their high physical fitness standards. He made his last parachute jump with full equipment at age 55.

For 8 years of his GA Guard duty, Buddy would use a week of his leave time to work security for the East Lake PGA Tour. For 10 years, he was a certified

coach with PONY baseball in Douglasville., GA, coaching boys age 6-14. Also during that time, he worked with Make A Wish to make all arrangements and host a family to grant their son's wish to see what it was like to be an army soldier.

After retirement in 2004, Buddy moved to Jacksonville, FL, where he began real estate investing and rehabing houses. He then took a security job servicing CSX Railroad. He left that position in 2016 due to health challenges.

Buddy's love of God, all people (especially family and those he was fortunate enough to call friends), his country, those that did and those that continue to protect it was evident in everything he did. He was proud to be able to personally help veterans, to arrange US Army representation for patriotic holidays, to speak at educational forums, and to keep in close contact with many friends and acquaintances throughout their difficult circumstances. A humble man, he never sought fame or fortune. He most wanted to brighten someone's day and hopefully lighten their load. He literally gave his life to loving, protecting and nurturing everyone.

The family will receive friends at Rainwater Funeral Home (317 N. Carroll St., Bowdon, GA 30108) on Thursday, June 15, 2023 from 12:00 till 2:00 p.m. Funeral services will be held immediately following at 2:00 p.m. in the funeral home's chapel. Interment services with full military honors will be held at the Georgia National Cemetery in Canton, Georgia on Friday, June 16, 2023 at 11:00 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, Buddy requested that donations be made in memoriam to him to either Gary Sinise Foundation, Tunnel2Towers or St. Jude's.

Cemetery Details

Georgia National Cemetery

1080 Scott Hudgens Dr
Canton, GA 30114

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN **15**. 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Rainwater Funeral Home
317 North Carroll Street
Bowdon, GA 30108
(770) 258-7239
info@rainwaterfuneralhome.com
<https://www.rainwaterfuneralhome.com>

Funeral Service

JUN **15**. 2:00 PM (ET)

Rainwater Funeral Home
317 North Carroll Street
Bowdon, GA 30108
(770) 258-7239
info@rainwaterfuneralhome.com
<https://www.rainwaterfuneralhome.com>

Graveside

JUN 16. 11:00 AM (ET)

Georgia National Cemetery
1080 Scott Hudgens Dr
Canton, GA 30114

Tribute Wall



“ 58 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Rainwater Funeral Home - June 15, 2023 at 09:14 AM

JS

“ Crossed path with him in Viet Nam with the 173rd Airborne. Good mam. Rip brother 🙏

Joe samples - June 14, 2023 at 12:29 PM

JD

“ *Judy Wilson Dixon lit a candle in memory of SSG William "Buddy" A. Estes*



Judy Wilson Dixon - June 13, 2023 at 04:13 PM

EH

“From one vet to another, rest in peace. Ed
(Wallace Harvell) Wichita Kansas



ed harvell - June 12, 2023 at 03:20 PM

JE

“Jim Eason lit a candle in memory of SSG
William "Buddy" A. Estes



Jim Eason - June 12, 2023 at 07:51 AM

JM

“Janie R Meadows lit a candle in memory of
SSG William "Buddy" A. Estes



Janie R Meadows - June 12, 2023 at 07:43 AM

MH

“Mike Haynes lit a candle in memory of SSG
William "Buddy" A. Estes



Mike Haynes - June 11, 2023 at 08:18 PM

SS

“ Sherry Scales lit a candle in memory of SSG William "Buddy" A. Estes



Sherry Scales - June 11, 2023 at 07:38 PM

SS

Buddy was a great friend and classmate! I enjoyed many classes with him during our school days!

Sherry Scales - June 11, 2023 at 07:39 PM

KW

“ Kathy Holland Williams lit a candle in memory of SSG William "Buddy" A. Estes



Kathy Holland Williams - June 11, 2023 at 05:16 PM

SC

“ Susan Fletcher Crook lit a candle in memory of SSG William "Buddy" A. Estes



Susan Fletcher Crook - June 11, 2023 at 03:42 PM

SG

“ Sara Styles George lit a candle in memory of SSG William "Buddy" A. Estes



Sara Styles George - June 11, 2023 at 01:48 PM

BC

“ Barbara Hollaway Cavender lit a candle in memory of SSG William "Buddy" A. Estes



Barbara Hollaway Cavender - June 11, 2023 at 12:37 PM

TC

“ Tommy&Judy Cantrell lit a candle in memory of SSG William "Buddy" A. Estes



Tommy&Judy Cantrell - June 11, 2023 at 12:03 PM