



John Fredrick Forsman

MAR 28, 1942 - JUN 16, 2024



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John Fredrick Forsman passed away on June 16, 2024, at the Veteran's Home in Salt Lake City, Utah due to complications of Norovirus and weakened health. He was preceded in death by his parents, Carl John Forsman and Olga Anna Fredricka Wahlberg Forsman and his wives, Lorna Darlene Angel and Naomi T. Fletcher. He is survived by his sister, Carolyn Buckwell and her husband, Bill, as well as his nieces, Christi Buckwell Cass and Cathy Buckwell and his nephews, Bob and Jim Buckwell and many grand and great nieces and nephews. He is also survived by his former wife, Barbara Susan Sparrow.

He was born March 28, 1942, at the St. Mark's Hospital in Salt Lake City, Utah. His only sibling, his sister Carolyn Elaine Forsman Buckwell, was eleven years old when he was born.

As a young boy, he had red hair and bright blue eyes. He grew up in the World War II era and all he wanted to be when he grew up was a helicopter pilot.

He was confirmed a member of Zion Lutheran Church and served as an acolyte for Sunday Services. He had a firm belief in Jesus Christ and said his favorite song was "Jesus Loves Me" due to its hopeful message.

He attended Madison Elementary and then Hillside Jr. High School. He graduated from Highland High School in 1960 and was part of the 2nd graduating class of the new school.

He attended the University of Utah between 1960-1964. His major was in political science and government. He did not graduate because he chose to go to work for Western Airlines on May 25, 1964.

He started in Reservations and then transitioned into both Passenger Service & Cargo Service. He worked as a supervisor for a minimum of 21 years of the 23 years of service for Western Airlines which then merged with Delta Airlines in 1987. He worked for a total of 31 years (1964-1995) for both companies. He worked for Delta



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Airlines until May 1995 at which time he chose to take an early out option and retire in May 1995. He was 53 years old.

At 25 1/2, he got a draft notice in the summer of 1967. He had been in the Navy ROTC in college for 1 year that qualified him for a 1D deferment card which meant he could opt to not be drafted. They gave him 30 days to complain or to prove why he should not be drafted. He wanted to go to Officer Candidate School but was told his grades were not high enough. He approached all 5 branches of the military and finally went back to the recruiting officer and brokered a deal with him to go into special training. John said, "I'll take it. What do I have to do?" He was told that he would have to learn how to fly helicopters. He was thrilled!!!

He scored 392 points out of 400 points on the Flight Aptitude Scholastic Test, "FAST" and he hadn't even flown before. Then he was off to basic training. An abrupt halt was placed on his training due to previous history of bleeding ulcers. A new GI test was ordered which he passed so he was allowed to go on to flight school.

He had married Lorna Darlene Angel on May 17, 1968, and she was able to go with him. He took his military training to heart by keeping the floor of their home polished to a spit shine which proved challenging for Darlene's little poodle, Peppy, who found it difficult to get around on the slippery floor.

He graduated from flight school in January of 1969 and left for Vietnam in February 1969. He spent 2 years flying Helicopters in the Viet Nam War with the 101st Airborne Division. While in Vietnam, he was asked to be a flight instructor. John says of the 70% of pilots that died, pilot error was the cause.

One big battle he especially remembers was the battle of Hamburger Hill. The North Vietnamese had attacked with three thousand men while we only had one thousand men. This battle along with other situations he remembered were very scary.

His father, Carl John Forsman, died on 5/18/1969, on his first-year wedding anniversary to Darlene from a massive heart attack. When John was informed of his father's passing, he was given tickets to fly home for the funeral.

John stayed home for 38-40 days. After that he extended his service for 1 year so that he wouldn't have to serve in the National Reserves, but the war ended so he came home in September 1970.



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When he returned to the USA, he joined the Active US Army Reserve in 1971 and became an Instructor Pilot. He taught throughout his army career. He was stationed at the Los Alamitos Air base which is surrounded by a beautiful golf course and John loved the game of golf. When required to be at the base he stayed at his Aunt Margaret and Uncle Carl's home.

One heroic adventure happened on an evening back in Salt Lake City. He had taken out a new pilot and the route was to take them to Brigham City and back, but he was notified that there was a pilot they hadn't been able to contact who had been flying with night vision which is difficult and very easy to get disoriented. Unfortunately, this pilot ended up flying his craft into the shallow waters of the Great Salt Lake. The helicopter had overturned and the only way anyone could survive was to get up onto the skids.

When John reported what he saw, they told him to fly back and pick up a lifeboat, but John knew there was no time to waste so they agreed to send one to him. The first time they sent the wrong kind of craft and John's helicopter was running out of fuel, so he had to return and refuel and was able to secure an available rope so that he could haul the craft to the shore. A report had been sent to Airforce Rescue, but the call did not reach them in a timely fashion. So, leaving his student pilot at the controls, John climbed out onto the skids of his helicopter. He dropped the rope and was able to get the injured pilot to shore. Airforce Rescue finally got him to the hospital sometime between 2-3 am.

He retired in December 1995 from the service after accumulating 28 years, twenty-five of which were active duty. He completed his Army career as an Active Reservist. He left the reserves in the summer of 1984. He was recognized for his service in Vietnam by the Veterans Foundation and Daughters of the American Revolution with medals, pins and certificates.

John suffered heart and lung problems after his time in Vietnam that was contributed to agent orange exposure according to his doctor. Due to this, he was granted full disability from the government.

John served as the chairman of the Veterans Caucus for the Utah State Democratic Party from 2007 to 2011. He served as the Veteran's advocate to the State



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Chairperson and to those Candidates and Elected Representatives who needed to be aware of Veteran's Issues.

Some of his fondest memories were spent with his Wahlberg cousins, particularly Fred Wahlberg who he considered his best friend. There was fishing, pheasant hunting and camping adventures. He also developed a good friendship with Gordon Kuntz, a pilot, who he met while working at Western Airlines.

Since John had no children of his own, he doted on his nieces and nephews. He was asked to serve as a godfather to his nephew, James Carl Buckwell. Of special note is his grandnephew, Jeff Chesney, who took care of all his financial paperwork, ran errands for him and transported him weekly for Sunday dinner to his sister's home.

John also loved fast cars. His first love was a 1946 Black Ford Deluxe. He then purchased a brand-new Ford Galaxy 500 XL. He loved to listen to the powerful engine and show it off. A 2016 Chevrolet Corvette Stingray was his final pride and joy.

John also loved his dogs. First there was a long haired black labrador named Mister, then Champ, the first of many yellow labrador retrievers which John successively named Dusty, one, two and three. He also took in a stray cat which he named Trouble who served as his last companion.

John was an avid bowler, and he often proudly wore a ring engraved by the American Bowling Congress with the number 300 signifying that he was part of an elite group of bowlers scoring a 300 game. He was also awarded a certificate for his first 700 series on 12/21/2006. His actual score in the series of 3 games was 702.

John was an amateur photographer and star gazer. He brought his camera equipment to family gatherings where he would snap photos of loved ones. He also loved capturing the beauty of nature with its changing seasons and the majesty of sunrises and sunsets. With his high-powered telescope, he loved gazing at the heavens. He would leave the city lights and drive to get the best views of comets and other stars and solar events.

A Celebration of Life was held at his sister's home with close family on June 23, 2024. His interment will be at Mount Olivet Cemetery.



Events

John Fredrick Forsman

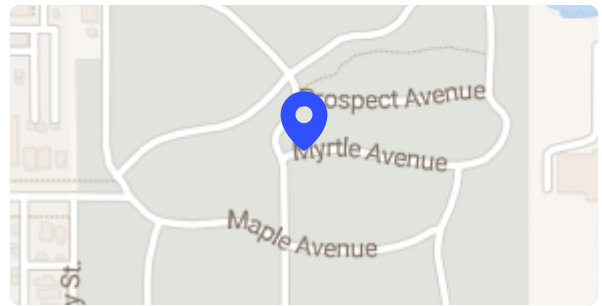
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Cemetery Details



Mount Olivet Cemetery

1342 East 500 South, Salt Lake City UT





Tribute Wall

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Marjean Pahl posted:

I met John at Western Airlines. After beginning my career in 1965, one year after John was hired. We worked together in Passenger Svc at the gates & ticket counter. John, you were a fun guy. You taught me the ropes that there were two kinds of passengers: those that go and those that don't! Although you had rigid military training, you also had a soft spot with folks and your colleagues. We lost track of each other after I transferred to In-Flight in 1995. After 40 yrs, I retired in 2005 and we connected again, enjoying phone conversations. We had fun talking by phone during the NBA playoffs. Vicki & I talked of visiting you at your Retirement Center in Sandy to take you to dinner.. but life got in the way..I'm sorry John..hopefully when I see you again we'll do dinner..promise. Rest in peace. The obituary was very interesting & beautiful. Kudos to your sis for a nice job. Best..Marjean Pahl

July 31 at 5:53 PM



Memories only last if you share them

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



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