



John Stephen Hillman

June 30, 1946 - January 6, 2014

Retired Capt. John Stephen Hillman passed away in his sleep on January 6, 2014 at 2:55 AM in Fayetteville, AR after a valiantly fought battle with cancer. He lived on this earth for 67 years, 6 months and 6 days. John was the only son of Col John L. Hillman and Geneva Francis (Betts) Hillman born on June 30, 1946 in Okmulgee, OK. John attended school in Okmulgee and was preceded in death by both of his parents.

He is survived by his two daughters: Heather Hillman-Easley and husband Lt Col John C. Easley of Siloam Springs, Arkansas and Stephanie Jamison and husband Trey of Houston, Texas; three grandchildren: Charles Ray Easley and wife Trish of Middleton, Wisconsin, John William Greenberry Easley and Mollie Marina Michaelle Easley both of Siloam Springs, Arkansas; his first cousin Pamela Acton who is known to the family as "Aunt Puddle", and a countless number of other cousins.

John was a multifaceted man but he could first and foremost be defined by his love of country and his level of patriotism which he inherited from "The Colonel". John followed in his father's footsteps as an infantryman enlisting into the Army National Guard, 45th Division on July 1, 1963. He later was commissioned to 2nd Lt. on September 22, 1965. The beginning of the Vietnam War compelled John to join the US Army and become a pilot. He entered Vietnam on April 27, 1969 as an O1-L19 Birddog Pilot, being stationed in Phu Bai. This is where he became a man among men and found the brotherhood he would spend the rest of his life trying to recreate but never

imitate. As a member of the 220th Catkillers Unit, John, AKA Indian John, has been described by those who served with him as “fearless warrior, loved by everyone, Brother, larger than life, loyal to everyone.” While in country, he earned 3 Distinguished Flying Cross medals and 1 Bronze Star with Valor among countless other ribbons. His second tour was cut short due to the drawdown and so he found himself leaving Phu Bai on November 24, 1970. He was stationed at Ft. Rucker until his honorable discharge on September 3, 1973.

John continued the education he had started prior to his enlistment, enrolling at Embry Riddle University, later graduating with a BS in Aeronautics with a minor in Management.

John began a multi-decade career as a Personnel Director first for GTE then for Creek Nation. This took him from San Angelo, TX to Texarkana, AR and back to his home town of Okmulgee, OK.

After John retired, he decided to pursue a second full time career as a poker player. He was well known around the tables as “Two Dogs” and was always greeted by fellow players with a smile as they wondered in the back of their minds if he would walk away with their chips, and he often did.

John’s personal passions included hunting, fishing, listening to blues music, dancing and cooking: above all cooking. He was considered by most as an accomplished chef without any formal training and many looked forward to a meal they knew John had a hand in cooking.

John found comrade in the Masonic Fraternity and was a member and Past Master of the Okmulgee Masonic Lodge 199. He was also Worthy Noble and Past Assistant Potentate of the Bedouin Shiners and other Orders of the Shrine. He is a master of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite and a member of the Sigma Chi Fraternity. The friendships created during his time spent with these organizations were invaluable and could never be replaced. John’s greatest achievements were his 2 daughters and no one could be prouder of them for their personal growth and accomplishments. He will be missed by all.

A graveside memorial service celebrating John's life will be held at the Okmulgee Cemetery on Saturday, January 11, 2014 at 10:00 A.M. with Dan Sulivant officiating. There will be Masonic Rites. The military honors will be done by Creek Nation Color Guard. The family request memorial contributions be made to the Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center c/o Palliative Care Unit, 1011 Honor Heights Dr. Muskogee, OK 74401.

Cemetery Details

Okmulgee Cemetery

2601 South Wood Drive
Okmulgee, OK 74447
(918) 756-5109

Previous Events

Graveside Service

JAN 11. 10:00 AM (CT)

Okmulgee Cemetery
2601 South Wood Drive
Okmulgee, OK 74447
(918) 756-5109

Tribute Wall



“ *John Stephen Hillman*

December 20, 2022 at 11:29 AM



“ *I served contemporaneously with John in his first tour with the 220th. Sadly now, I harken back to remember a genuinely super guy who was truly was a delight to be around, but was a skilled "warrior of the sky" to be held in awe. All of us Catkillers will miss our association with him, and convey to his family our sincere sympathy.*

--Roger Bounds (CK11)

P.S. Didn't know it at the time, but we were almost "brothers" as my mother was born near Muskogee, Oklahoma Indian Territory!

Roger S. Bounds - January 18, 2014 at 05:58 PM



“ *I will always remember the great dancer you were, and that smile.....how you melted hearts! Rest in peace John and may your family find their peace and comfort in the days ahead. We will miss you my friend!*

Theada Palmer - January 13, 2014 at 08:38 PM



“ *Rosetta Han lit a candle in memory of John Stephen Hillman*



Rosetta han - January 12, 2014 at 12:05 PM

RH

Thanks for serving our country,

Rosetta han - January 12, 2014 at 12:06 PM

RK

“ *Rebecca (mattingly) Koenig lit a candle in memory of John Stephen Hillman*



Rebecca (mattingly) Koenig - January 10, 2014 at 11:05 PM

BC

“ *Go with God our brother. You spent your time here with honor and will be missed by all. We will always remember you as you were, 10 feet tall and bullet proof. Save a seat for me John.*

Bob Cortner - January 10, 2014 at 04:27 PM

BW

“ *It has been years since we have seen John, but knew him in our younger days! John was a great man! Our sympathy to the family and John, may you now rest in peace! Shorty and Bonita Wood*



Bonita Wood - January 10, 2014 at 01:40 PM

EM

“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



E Moore - January 10, 2014 at 01:03 PM

JB

“ *We were all richer for having known John. Who will forget the engaging personality, radiant smile and wonderful sense of humor? John was a fearless warrior, an honorable soldier, and a great friend. So many memories, all of them good, he is missed. Heather, he loved you more than life itself.*

Jack & Cathy Bentley

Jack Bentley - January 10, 2014 at 12:18 PM

BA

“ *I had the pleasure of connecting again with John at the CatKiller reunion in Seattle and of talking with him by phone a little over 2 weeks ago. During that conversation he was in great spirits even though he knew the end was near! My condolences to his family. He will be missed by all those fortunate enough to know him.*

Bob Arrington/Catkiller 18

Bob Arrington - January 10, 2014 at 11:32 AM

BT

“ John you made my life richer by living yours the way you did. You will always remain in my heart.

*Buzz Trevathan
Cat Killer 26 1970*

Buzz Trevathan - January 10, 2014 at 11:27 AM

MD

“ I have so many great memories of John; he was a fun guy to be around and at the same time he took care of his business; I remember when he gave rodeo a try, and well, he had great courage, really did; and we enjoyed the kind of bantering you do in an organization when there are deadlines to meet, things to get done, etc. and John took it all in stride and was really dedicated to what we were doing at the Creek Nation; John was rightfully very proud of his Creek blood and spoke of that often in such a good way.



Mark Downing - January 10, 2014 at 01:48 AM

DR

“ Some look at life as a sentence to endure, but John showed his attitude about it each time he smiled. It warmed you up and disarmed you when he walked up, grabbed your arm, broadly smiled and he spoke your name. Friendly, approachable, down-to-Earth, a people person, and one heck of a leader and aviator. He was human yet someone to look up to, big but respectful of others, a kind and gentle brother and a fierce warrior-spirit of a man. A man's kind of man, and the world just lost a nugget-like hero who seldom gave a hint of his past. We will miss the security of your living presence, John, but you are forever fondly in our memories.

Donald M. Ricks

Catkiller 49, CATCOM Editor

Stationed with John in Vietnam 1969 and at Fort Rucker in 1970-71.

We enjoyed several reunions together and John was an excellent speaker during memorial services.

Donald Ricks - January 09, 2014 at 11:19 PM

GM

“ Wherever and whenever Catkillers who have served with John, gather, He will be among those remembered. He was a soldier, a patriot, and a friend to all who had the pleasure to have met him I caught my first bass fishing with John.

Gary Miller

Gary Miller - January 09, 2014 at 02:32 PM

LS

“ *Linda Segars lit a candle in memory of John Stephen Hillman*



linda segars - January 09, 2014 at 08:43 AM

LS

R.I.P. my sweet friend! We will all miss you! Linda and John Segars

linda segars - January 09, 2014 at 08:45 AM

CD

John was a noble Catkiller I will never forget. He was a friend that I could always count on. He was a fine aviator and served his country with honor. The Catkillers will miss you my dear friend. Carl Drechsel

Carl Drechsel - January 09, 2014 at 05:44 PM

QA

“ *It seems that I knew John a short time but he made a lasting impression. A sincere, loyal, and dedicated friend and fellow soldier. John was a man you could always feel good about as a friend and a guy one wanted to spend time with. John was one of those individuals whose absence leaves a permanent hole in the universe. He will be missed.*

*Quinton "Andy" Anderson
Catkiller 10/3*

Quinton "Andy" Anderson - January 08, 2014 at 08:44 PM

K4

“ John Hillman talked in Seattle about our first meeting in Vietnam and our lives after. He talked about the battle he was having and the probable outcome. Sad to say he lost this last fight and in peace. To his family I will tell them you were a Patriot, a courageous warrior, fun filled and proud man. John was most proud of his father . He talked about his family a lot. John knew his fate yet he was not angry. I knew John for almost a year then lost contact until 35 years later. We met up in Las Vegas and again in Seattle. I will miss him and remember a good man. John Hillman rest in peace.
Keith E. Klett Catkiller 40



Keith E. Klett Catkiller 40 - January 08, 2014 at 07:30 PM

GS

“ Very saddened at the loss of brother Catkiller John Hillman. He was a very brave and charismatic man. During my tour of duty in Vietnam as a Catkiller with the 220th, John stood out as a leader and an someone you wanted to hang with. He had many friends and I never heard anyone speak ill of him. I only wish that I had taken the time to know him better.
Glenn Stewart Catkiller 45 69-70

Glenn Stewart - January 08, 2014 at 04:42 PM

TC

“ John was the first Catkiller I met when as a FNG I arrived alone at the 220th late one afternoon in Feb 1970. He greeted me warmly and immediately led the way to the “O” club to begin my indoctrination. It was the beginning of a friendship I will forever treasure. John was a hero to me and I only regret not having the opportunity to spend more time with him over the ensuing years. God speed John and every good wish for your family.
Tom Clark CK36 70-71

Tom Clark - January 08, 2014 at 03:14 PM

DC

“ John it was a better world with you in it, I will miss you my brother but I know you are with the best of the best, look over us and guide us for we will be joining you in God's time.

Doc Clement
Catkiller 18

Doc Clement - January 08, 2014 at 02:35 PM

KL

“ Seeing and visiting with John was always a high spot in our class reunions for me. As we approach our 50th, I regret he won't be there. He fought the good fight for many years.

We shared a common interest in blues music. I will be thinking of him the next time I hear them.

To his daughters, I hope you find solace in knowing he was loved by those who knew him.

Kevan LaCroix - OHS class of 64

Kevan LaCroix - January 08, 2014 at 01:30 PM



“ *Fire Red Stargazer Lily Mix (Silk Cemetery Flowers) was purchased for the family of John Stephen Hillman.*



January 08, 2014 at 12:15 PM



“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Dana McGregor Douglas - January 08, 2014 at 12:07 PM



“ *John
In Seattle we talked about our first meeting in Vietnam and our lives after. He talked about the battle he was having and the probable outcome. Sadly he lost this last fight and is in lasting peace. To your family I will tell them you were a Patriot, a courageous warrior, fun filled and proud man. John was most proud of his father. He talked about his family a lot. John knew his fate yet he was not angry. I knew John for almost a year then lost contact until 35 yrs later. We met in Las Vegas and again in Seattle. I will miss and remember a good man, John Hillman.
Keith Klett Cat Killer 40*



Keith E Klett Catkiller 40 - January 08, 2014 at 11:34 AM

JD

“ John,

Roomie, Friend, BROTHER. I will remember you always and especially that ever present wicked grin! Enjoy your eternity of CAVU flying.

*Jerry DiGrezio
Catkiller 25/3*



Jerry DiGrezio - January 08, 2014 at 11:14 AM

DD

Love your pics of John. As a young man and the recent pic. He was a great guy and will be missed by all who knew him.

Dana Douglas - January 08, 2014 at 12:11 PM

DP

“ *John you will be missed by all who knew you. Always such a fun person to be around & to work with. Thanks for always being you & a true friend. May God keep his hands around John's family & give them peace & comfort.*



Debra Boss Price - January 08, 2014 at 11:04 AM

WH

“ Sleep well John, from a life well spent, by a man who left his footprints well respected and for others to follow. You will be missed.
William Hooper
Once upon a time CatKiller 12

William Hooper - January 08, 2014 at 09:37 AM

DD

“ Will miss dancing with you. We had so much fun growing up.

Dana McGregor Douglas - January 08, 2014 at 09:33 AM

B2

“ We die as often as we loose a friend and the Catkillers lost a great friend when John passed away. He was always up beat and great to be with. I only had the opportunity to be with him for short periods of time over the years but each time his genuine love for his fellow Catkillers always shown through.
John you will be missed by all.
Bud Bruton
Catkiller25/18

Bud Bruton Catkiller 25/18 - January 08, 2014 at 09:23 AM

RB

“ CPT John Hillman was someone I looked up to and regarded as one of the Best of the Best. A great leader who always made you feel at ease. You will be missed by all who knew you.
R.M. (Bo) Boutwell Catkiller 12/04
Vietnam 69/70

R.M. Boutwell - January 08, 2014 at 08:56 AM

JM

“ *Cpt. Hillman was in charge of my section for 2 months, a terrific, no-nonsense guy, the best.*

Sgt. Joe Mead 220th RAC

Joe Mead - January 08, 2014 at 08:26 AM

PB

“ *John - you kept me straight in Vietnam and after. God bless you and enjoy heaven.*

PAUL BRENNAN CATKILLER 36/3

Paul Brennan - January 08, 2014 at 08:10 AM

PB

“ *Thank you, John, forever being a good friend. You will be missed by all of your friends, past and present. Thanks for your hearty laugh that you had that was infectious!! True friends never go away, they are with you always. Was fun working with you many years ago. Condolences to John's family, may God give you all the peace and comfort at this time.*



Phyllis Berryhill - January 08, 2014 at 07:55 AM

JB

“ *John, Catkiller 46, made warriors out of everyone who flew with him. I am forever grateful that I was one of them. The Force was very powerful in him, which added to the adventure. I know I speak for all Sundowners when I say that our hearts are heavy with the loss of such a legend, and friend.*

Thanks for the rides, John. I remember them, and you, each and every day of my life

Joe Brett

Joe Brett - January 08, 2014 at 12:31 AM



“ *Two Dogs, Brother you served with honor. A true friend who lived his life to the fullest. Hope that you can pocket aces with every hand. You will be missed. Lonny. Name 69-70*

Lonny Wedgeworth - January 07, 2014 at 11:36 PM

SE

“ *John lives on in his family and will always be remembered. God speed in his journey.*



Sherill Easley - January 07, 2014 at 09:19 PM

CF

“ *ONE OF THE FINEST AVIATORS I EVER SERVED WITH IN VIETNAM. FEARLESS WARRIOR WHO WAS EXCEPTIONAL IN BATTLE.
GREAT FRIEND WHO WAS LOVED BY EVERYONE IN THE 220TH CATKILLERS. LARGER THAN LIFE, MOST SPIRITED IN EVERYTHING HE DID. LOYAL TO EVERYONE WHO SERVED BESIDE HIM. RAISED A GREAT DAUGHTER HEATHER AND WAS A GIFT TO RIGA HIS WIFE FOR MANY YEARS. WILL BE MISSED BY ALL OF THE CATKILLER BROTHERS AND THEIR FAMILIES WHO GOT TO KNOW INDIAN JOHN AT THE REUNIONS. HOW I WILL MISS HIS LAUGH, HIS HUMOR, HIS OPINIONS AND HIS PATRIOTISM.
CHARLES FINCH
CATKILLER 19
VIET NAM 68-69*

CHARLES FINCH - January 07, 2014 at 08:16 PM

PB

May the Lord bless you and welcome you on your final flight. You were always looking for action. Pete Blevins Catkiller 13

Pete Blevins - January 08, 2014 at 07:19 AM

MA

“ *You were a great guy and so good to my dad Don Graham. Now you two can have breakfast all the time, with no suffering.*
Mary Beth Graham Anderson.



Mary Beth Graham Anderson - January 07, 2014 at 11:03 AM

JH

*Mary Beth:
Sorry about your friend. Your dad was a great guy and the last time I saw him was at Mother's funeral. He was so kind.*
Jerry Horn

Jerry Horn - January 07, 2014 at 10:45 PM

C1

“ *Char Adams OHS 1960 lit a candle in memory of John Stephen Hillman*



Char Adams OHS 1960 - January 06, 2014 at 09:29 PM

JF

Hate to see you go John, I really enjoyed being your friend and co-worker going back 30 years. You were a real professional at work and fun to hang out afterward. Loved to hear your stories about flying bird dogs. Thank you for your service to our country! you were a great friend and great hero. So glad our recent conversation concluded with your big laugh. It was with you up to the end. Will never forget you.

James Floyd - January 08, 2014 at 07:05 AM