



## William S. Chapman

July 30, 1937 - December 14, 2024

Lieutenant Colonel William Stewart Chapman, Sr. (US Army Retired) took his last breath December 14, 2024.

### An American Hero

If you walk into our father's home, you will see a shadow box hanging on the wall. That frame is full of medals he was awarded during his stellar military career. Among them: The Legion of Merit, The Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal and The Distinguish Flying Cross. He also earned the coveted Air Medal. Not once, but 14 times, telling his story of flying more than 300 combat missions during his deployment to Vietnam.

Our dad was an American hero but not because of the medals that hang on the wall. In fact, we never heard him speak about his awards. We never knew the details of those medals...

Bill Chapman went to North Georgia College and State University and graduated in 1959. He met our beautiful mom there, Mary Elizabeth Rucker, and they were married that same year. These two imperfect people from challenging backgrounds decided to create a beautiful life together. And that is where the story of our hero begins.

He would lead his family with honor, loyalty and commitment that could not be matched. Those two imperfect people took each other's hand and never looked back.

Faith

His faith was top priority and the foundation of our home. Jesus was his Savior and King. Our family was raised to love the Lord, and church was what we were doing. As dad played the piano in the living room on Sunday morning, it was a reminder to all of us that “It’s past time to go.” You could find the “6 B’s” lined up sitting all together looking like a million bucks on the front left pew every Sunday.

We learned about the love of a Savior. Something that each of us would treasure and take into our own lives as our family circle grew.

### Family

As an only child and military man, the details, a plan and order were of utmost importance. Those things, however, were never more important than our family. He loved us all fiercely and nothing was more important than being together. On any given holiday, you could find us, all of us, in their large house in Atlanta. There were 24 of us then, with babies, our air mattresses and togetherness like you could not begin to describe. He would happily set aside his desire for perfection and order and perfectly vacuumed rows in the carpet for the time together and embrace the chaos.

You could always catch Dad at the front of the line for our family meals even when there were 24 people. Mom was the best cook, and I can picture him rubbing his hands together, ready for the feast.

If you screwed up, which people in families often do, you would only find unconditional love and a “what can I do” heart from Dad/Big Daddy, despite his honesty and his own long track record of true integrity as just an all-around great guy. He might not understand, but he was never going to walk away or give up on one of his people. You could always count on him for a big bear hug, a daily phone call and the right pair of shoes for any occasion. If you needed a Band-Aid and a kiss on the knee when you were little or the meanest attorney with a ponytail and missing front tooth, he was there for you.

### Friend

We watched our dad be the kind of friend that is a rare treasure. He had a pool of friends, like drops of water in a pond. That center drop was his inner

circle, those he talked to daily and would “solve the world’s problems” with. The circle had a ripple effect. The rings grew further and further and if you were fortunate enough to be in the circle consider yourself well loved. He was a dear friend that truly cared and showed it. In the day where men’s friendships were surface level, you would see him push through with his 6’4” frame and hear him say “I just wanted to hear your voice” and “I love you” without a hitch.

#### Loved Our Mom

He loved our mom so well. He wrote her every day without fail while serving in Vietnam. They had a dream of a large, wonderful family. There was never a doubt that Mom was at the heart of that dream. He set out to make all her dreams come true. Whether gifts or travel, he was making it happen. They danced in the White House and frequented Disney, just the two of them sometimes. Through dad had no desire to visit France again, he took her on her dream trip to Paris when they were in their 80’s. He valued her opinion and considered it a joy to love her.

And that is how the story of an “American Hero” comes together. We don’t know any of the details of what happened in a helicopter. Some things are only between him and God, but we do know what happened on the ground. “Well done thy good and faithful servant”.

You will be missed.

This is Us:

Spouse – Betty Chapman

Children – Barbara Sellers (Doug), Beth Neely, Bill Chapman (Betsy) and Belinda Brooks (Joey)

Grandchildren – Tyler Neely (Priscilla), David Waite Jr., Kyle Neely (Lauren), Elizabeth Stewart (Greg), Marybeth Waite, Stephen Waite (Gretchen), Amanda Brooks, Will Chapman, Timothy Chapman, Michael Waite, Joseph Brooks, Cole Chapman, Nathan Chapman

Great Grands – Honor Neely, Chapman Stewart, Rayleigh Grace Stewart,

Ryder Stewart, Brooks Neely, Cadence Stewart, Isla Waite, Brody Neely, Theo Neely, Eloise Neely, Millie Waite

Funeral services will be held at 1pm Saturday December 21, 2024, at Greer First Baptist Church conducted by Dr. Doug Mize.

Burial will take place at Georgia National Cemetery, Canton, Georgia on Thursday, January 16, 2025, at 1:30 p.m. conducted by CH (COL) David Burris.

Visitation will be held 11:30am- 12:45pm Saturday, December 21, 2024, at Greer First Baptist Church.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Camp Highland ([www.camphighland.com](http://www.camphighland.com)) 1200 Camp Highland Road, Ellijay Georgia 30540.

Online condolences may be made to [www.thewoodmortuary.com](http://www.thewoodmortuary.com).

# Cemetery Details

## Georgia National Cemetery

2025 Mount Carmel Church Lane  
Canton, GA 30114

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC 21. 11:30 AM - 12:45 PM (ET)

Greer First Baptist Church  
201 West Poinsett Street  
Greer, SC 29650

## Service

DEC 21. 1:00 PM (ET)

Greer First Baptist Church  
201 West Poinsett Street  
Greer, SC 29650

# Tribute Wall

RR

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with the entire Chapman family.  
Ross, Lori, Hallie, Virginia & Drew Ramsey

Ross Ramsey - December 22, 2024 at 08:51 AM

BG

“ Ben & Patsy Glunt purchased the Large Basket Garden for the family of William S. Chapman.



Ben & Patsy Glunt - December 20, 2024 at 12:00 PM

DF

“ Daniela, Sean & your TAG family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of William S. Chapman.

Daniela, Sean & your TAG family - December 20, 2024 at 11:27 AM

DF

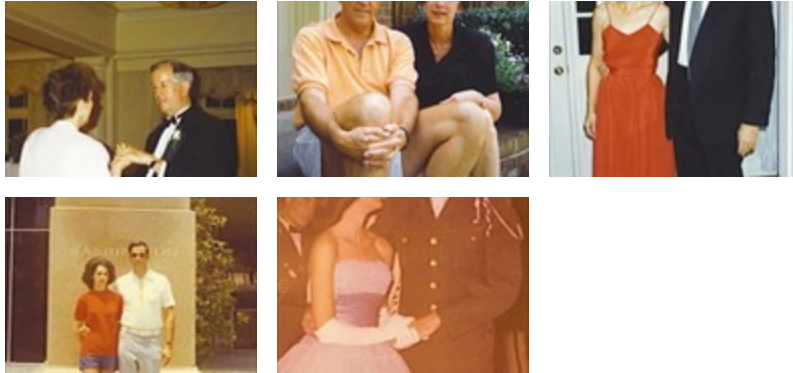
“ Daniela, Sean & your TAG family purchased the Sacred Duty Spray for the family of William S. Chapman.



Daniela, Sean & your TAG family - December 20, 2024 at 11:27 AM

EN

“ 11 files added to the tribute wall



Elizabeth Neely - December 20, 2024 at 05:34 AM

EN

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Elizabeth Neely - December 20, 2024 at 04:51 AM

TF

“ The Lopes Family purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of William S. Chapman.



The Lopes Family - December 19, 2024 at 12:55 PM

RA

“ I'm forever grateful that Big Daddy's faithfulness to lead his family in the Lord, funneled down to a few people who had a great influence in my life. I am praying for you all as your grieve his loss - one that leaves a gaping hole. A life worth celebrating, and a legacy to continue. Love you all!

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**Rachael** - December 19, 2024 at 12:17 AM

JW

“ I had the honor of working for and with Bill for several years at ABMC. My wife Mary and I hosted Bill and Betty in Paris and seldom have we met more exceptional or gentle people. They were lovely through and through and I will always be grateful for the leadership lessons and professional advice I received from Bill, and the professional advice our daughter Grace received from Betty (Grace is now a biochemist in part due to Betty's encouragement). Bill and Betty are together again now and for eternity. The world is a better place for their having lived. "Big Daddy" known to his grand and great grandchildren. Both dearly missed. With deep respect,  
-John and Mary Wessels



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**john wessels** - December 18, 2024 at 05:11 PM



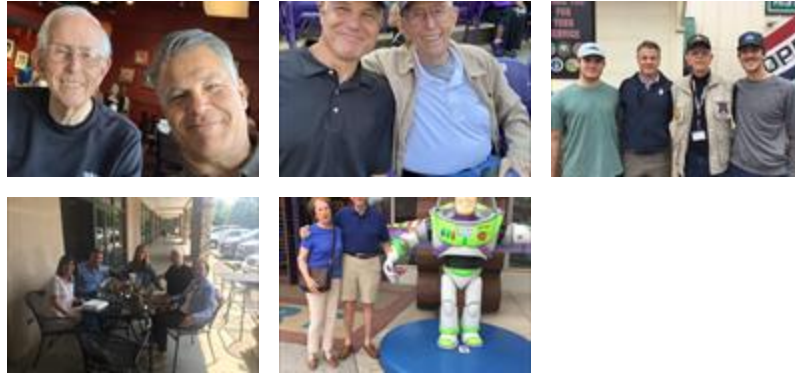
“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of William S. Chapman.

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December 18, 2024 at 04:48 PM

BI

“ 8 files added to the album *Bill Chapman Family Photos*



Bill - December 18, 2024 at 02:59 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of William S. Chapman.

December 18, 2024 at 10:57 AM



“ *Strength & Solace Spray* was purchased for the family of William S. Chapman.



December 18, 2024 at 10:57 AM

CC

“ Carla C. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of William S. Chapman.

Carla C. - December 17, 2024 at 04:15 PM

LC

“ *I'm so very sorry to see this today. We've been missing seeing him at church. He's reunited with his beautiful bride and lots of friends who have gone before him. Our condolences to all the family.*  
*-Linda and Alan*

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**Linda Cooper** - December 16, 2024 at 01:06 PM