



John "Snake" Smith

September 19, 1941 - February 27, 2024

“PEACE AND LOVE” These are words John ended every interaction with and succinctly communicated what was in his heart.

John Mark Smith was born on September 19, 1941, in Toppenish, Washington, the second child of Paul Lee and Nellie Sue (Macon) Smith. He was the only one of the seven siblings to be born in the house his father built. He attended schools in the city of his birth and graduated from Toppenish High School. John was a military man to his heart and served in the US Army, Marines and Navy. As a veteran he could be seen playing the snare drums in a variety of venues.

After retiring John became a loving and devoted caregiver for his mother (known as Grandma Nellie) for many years. Imagine his joy at entering heaven to see her more alive than ever! John was a man of many talents that he shared as a member of many community organizations, (which will be detailed and highlighted at his upcoming Celebration of Life - date and time to be determined). One of his favorite things to do in life was to fly airplanes and he was a certified pilot/ flight instructor. John was a member of the United Pentecostal Church in Toppenish, WA., where he attended both the English and Spanish speaking services, played the drums in each and even occasionally taught Sunday School.

John transitioned to glory on Tuesday, February 27, 2024, in Toppenish, Washington. “To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord”. He leaves to mourn his passing his remaining siblings, Gloria Smith of Yakima,

Washington and Grace Smith of Monroe, N.C., in addition to nephews, Malcolm Smith of Los Angeles, CA., Maurice (Melissa) Hamilton of Edmonds, Wa., Alana Smith of Troutdale, Oregon, Renata (Adam) Smith-Morris of Tigard, Oregon, Frunzino Blake of Portland, Oregon, Derrick Jackson of Bay Area, CA., Danielle Jackson of Washington D.C., plus grand and great grand nieces and nephews. He also leaves a loving community including brothers and sisters with whom he served in the military, brothers and sisters in Christ, cousins, and many friends, among others. John was preceded in death by his parents and four siblings: Joyce Durrett, Gladys Jackson, James Smith and Paul Smith.

Services for John are as follows at Heggie's Colonial Funeral Home in Toppenish, WA.: ***Viewing Monday, March 11, 2024 from 9 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. followed by Gravesite Service to include military honors ***John's family will host a Celebration of Life (Date and Time to be determined - prayerfully sometime in April, 2024) The Smith family wishes to express their deepest thanks to the Yakama Warriors , Stephen Busby, Tom Anderson, Maurice Hamilton and so many others who went above and beyond the call of duty to show their love and support to John during his life, illness and death and in so many ways that can't be numbered!! May God richly bless each of you.

The family of John Smith kindly asks for donations towards the funeral arrangements for John. If you can help, please donate to Heggie's Colonial Funeral Home in Toppenish or at the GoFundMe page using this link--> <https://gofund.me/e9bf1ed9>, it would be greatly appreciated. Address and number for Colonial below. Thank you.

Colonial Funeral Home
228 S. Alder St. Toppenish, WA 98948
(509)865-3222
Office Hours: Mon.-Fri. 9AM-4PM

Cemetery Details

Elmwood Cemetery

Elmwood Road
Toppenish, WA

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 11. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (PT)

Colonial Funeral Home
228 S. Alder
Toppenish, WA

Graveside Service

MAR 11. 11:30 AM (PT)

Elmwood Cemetery
Elmwood Road
Toppenish, WA

Tribute Wall

MS

“ When I was a little girl, my mom became friends with John and we would visit with him at his shoe shine shop and attended his family's church a few times. John was always so kind and inspired me to learn how to play drums. I think I was the only little white girl in that church but everyone treated us kindly and we had a lot of fun singing and eating together after service. John treated us like family and I'll always remember that. I have so much respect for his service and the dignity he carried. Sending love to his family and friends.

Marielle Stobie - March 28, 2025 at 08:10 PM

BT

“ Over 30 years ago I invited Snake to attend a Toppenish Lions Club meeting as my guest and he eagerly accepted. From that moment on our friendship grew as we both became very active members of the Lions Club. Not only will he be greatly missed at our Lion's meetings...but he will also be missed as a very valuable member of the entire Toppenish community! Such a loss for our entire valley. I Love you Brother!!



Blaine Thorington

Blaine Thorington - March 15, 2024 at 09:32 AM

CH

“ I only knew John for a couple years, but he was instrumental in encouraging me to become a pilot. He would always check in on my progress and encourage me if I was feeling discouraged. I was hoping to be able to fly with him at least once, but I know he's flying higher than all of us now.

Cynthia Hronek - March 10, 2024 at 02:16 PM



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Heggie's Colonial Funeral Home - March 08, 2024 at 04:05 PM

Ruth
Palacz

“ Ruth Palacz lit a candle in memory of John
"Snake" Smith



Ruth Palacz - March 07, 2024 at 05:45 PM

Ruth
Palacz

John was such a great person. I will always remember him coming in to Toppenish Family Medicine for his flight physicals. Dr Ray and Mother (Doris) loved hearing his stories and adventures while flying as we all did. I'll never forget him coming to my Mother's funeral and sharing a fun story about offering her glasses to him when he was having trouble seeing the eye chart. John will truly be missed by all his many friends, family, and the community. RIP my friend!❤️

Ruth Palacz - March 07, 2024 at 05:56 PM

CJ

“ Our friendship with John goes way back to high school times, walking to school and many memories of John's smile, kindness, devotion to his family, always the caretaker. Loved family, God, country, and valued his friends and community. Never ask for or wanted more than he had. Always ready to give. His values are an inspiration of today's lost direction. Seen the good always. We, who knew John, are better people today for sharing in his life. His smile, joy, and love will be missed by many. May you enjoy your rewards John. May who John was, his memories give comfort to all of us, especially his family. To grieve is our expression of love. Jerry & Carol Johnson
Marvina Southards McDonald

Carol Johnson - March 05, 2024 at 06:43 PM

CS

“ Lifetime of respect and memories of Snake, Mr. Smith has been a staple in our communities for anything and everything patriotic and community oriented. Countless interactions and beloved conversations with him at parades, funerals, community events and just around Toppenish driving by his house. My most sincere condolences to his family, friends and communities. Just a sincere authentic true gentleman with a dynamic personality that will always be remembered and truly missed.



Carrie Stone-Arroyo - March 05, 2024 at 06:03 PM

RO

“ I remember going to his house back in 2010 to ask if the Yakama Warriors could be part of the Toppenish MLK Peace March. He was so polite. I will miss not seeing him in the future parades. He always had a proud smile on his face in every parade. Thank you John for your service!

Rosa Ortiz - March 05, 2024 at 05:03 PM

LB

“ A true patriot....he loved his country & served in 3 Branches of the Armed Forces. He was proud to be a Veteran and always honored his fellow service men & women. Thank you for always being a good human being! I'll miss your drums, your stories, your sense of humor, your salutes and your patriotism. It was an honor knowing you& having you in our home for dinner. Semper Fidelis Brother! Rest in Peace while we stand watch!



Louisa Beckstrand - March 05, 2024 at 12:42 PM

RJ

“ Rest in Paradise to a proud Veteran. Thank you for your service. Thank you for being a part of the Warriors. Thank you for being part of our lives. Prayers for your journey. Your Mother is standing there to greet you as well as all the Veterans. Prayers, love, to all. Peace.



Regina Jerry - March 05, 2024 at 06:49 AM

DP

“ Dorothy Mann Perez sent a virtual gift in memory of John "Snake" Smith



Dorothy Mann Perez - March 04, 2024 at 08:04 PM

LC

“ Laura Canfield lit a candle in memory of John "Snake" Smith



Laura Canfield - March 04, 2024 at 06:33 PM

CT

“ John, Thank you for your long military service and your service in the Yakama Warriors Association, I am proud to have served with you with the Warriors and to be the humanitarian Rest in Peace my friend,
We will be there to drum you out in style.
Your friend Curtis Thorne.

Curtis Thorne - March 04, 2024 at 04:05 PM

KA

“ Rest in Peace! You were a wonderful person.

Karen - March 04, 2024 at 01:18 PM

HC

“ RIP John. Very loyal man to our vets.

Herb Coyner - March 03, 2024 at 03:22 PM

FF

“ Rest in peace John. You are in a better place now , no longer suffering. Drumming away in the heavens up above, thanks for the memories



fellow friend - March 03, 2024 at 12:24 PM

JF

“ What a proud American, that served your country well! We need more just like you! Rest in peace John, God's grace will be with you!

just a friend - March 02, 2024 at 07:12 AM

LR

“ John was a person who everyone looked up to and admired. He believed in God, his country and lived his life to reflect his beliefs. We will miss his smiling face.

Linda Rabe - March 01, 2024 at 08:01 PM

JU

“ JU sent a virtual gift in memory of John "Snake" Smith



JU - March 01, 2024 at 05:28 PM

BO

“ *Bernice Owens sent a virtual gift in memory of John "Snake" Smith*



Bernice Owens - March 01, 2024 at 04:41 PM

KL

“ John Smith was a very honorable man. He proudly served his country and community. Thank you, John, for your service... and all the times you joined in the Toppenish community parades (adding drums to your marching efforts.) And, to your dedication to the Yakima Warriors. You were always there. Totally faithful. Totally committed. Totally awesome.



John loved his family. He took loving care of his beloved mother.... never placing her in a nursing facility. He spent time with a sister who resided in Yakima... giving her rides and adding much encouragement to better her life. Other family were always welcomed to visit him. Any time. Any place. Family connections were important.

John was very in tuned with God. He attended church regularly (often praising the good Lord.) He gave what he could and sometimes MUCH more. John treated the whole congregation to a lunch following a church service... just because he wanted to show the members appreciation for their connection to faith and good will. John's hobby was airplanes. He was a pilot. He even taught flying lessons. John was very pleased to have this knowledge and certification. If one approached him on the topic of flight or planes, it became a lengthy discussion. So passionate with aircraft and their capabilities.

Our condolences are being sent to his family.

Your loved will truly be missed by many. John was an amazing man. And, such a wonderful friend!

Love and prayers,

Richard and Karen Lommers

Karen Lommers - March 01, 2024 at 02:29 PM

AE

“ Thank you for your service. My siblings and I grew up in Toppenish and have known you for a long time. Thank you for being apart of Yakama Warriors!! You will be greatly missed, Mr. Smith!! Rest easy Sir 🥹🙏🙏🙏🙏🙏🙏

Anany Ess - March 01, 2024 at 10:13 AM

MS

“ I'll miss your smile and joy you have brought us. Thank you for your Service, I know I'd told you whenever I saw you.



Matilda May Smiskin - March 01, 2024 at 03:28 AM

DJ

“ Going to miss seeing you ol' friend not only with the YWA but also with the Yakima-Kittitas Marine Corps League. Your presence will be missed. Thank you for all your service and safe journey my friend.



Debbie L James - February 29, 2024 at 10:37 PM



“ Shasta Watlamet lit a candle in memory of John "Snake" Smith



Shasta Watlamet - February 29, 2024 at 06:56 PM

MA

“ *Mary lit a candle in memory of John "Snake" Smith*



mary - February 29, 2024 at 04:37 PM