



Billy Bob Jackson

August 28, 1931 - May 20, 2026

Master Chief Billy B. Jackson (“Bob”) (94), of Okmulgee, passed away on May 20, 2026. Bob was born on August 28, 1931, to William (“Bill”) Jackson and Vesta (Chronister) Jackson outside of Calvin, Oklahoma in a house built on land allotted to his family during the federal allotment era of Indian Territory.

At the age of seven, and before the advent of an effective antibiotic, Bob contracted tuberculosis. He was sent to the Eastern Oklahoma Tuberculosis Sanatorium in Talihina, Oklahoma, where he lived under isolation and rest protocols in an open-air children’s ward for nine months. During this time, the disease took the lives of several of his family members, including his younger brother, Gerold. Bob recovered and returned home.

In December 1947, Bob enlisted in the United States Navy. He worked as a mechanic on carrier-based aircraft, including the A-4 Skyhawk and the A-3 Skywarrior. His naval career took him all around the world, to include service aboard the aircraft carriers USS Forrestal and USS Ranger, the aircraft repair ship USS Megara, as well as aboard Naval and Naval Air Stations in Rota, Spain; Pensacola, Florida; Jacksonville, Florida; Kingsville, Texas; Memphis, Tennessee; and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. After twenty-three years of service, he retired with the rank of Master Chief Petty Officer (E-9) and returned to Oklahoma. He volunteered for many years with veterans groups and veteran honor guards. He was proud of his military service, and was referred to as

“Master Chief” by his veteran friends.

After his naval retirement, Bob worked in the Civil Service for the Defense Contracts Administration, where he supported quality assurance and government oversight of major defense contracts, to include the early development and production of the Rockwell B-1 Lancer heavy bomber.

In 1975, Bob was nominated by the Principal Chief of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Claude Cox, to serve as the Director of Economic Development for the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes. His nomination was approved by the Chiefs of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Seminole Nations. Bob took pride in his Muscogee heritage and enjoyed studying the language and passing down family stories and artifacts. He ensured all of his children and grandchildren were enrolled as Muscogee citizens.

After his final retirement, Bob moved to a property on Lake Fort Gibson, near Hulbert, Oklahoma. He continued to use the skills he learned in development and grant writing and volunteered in doing so on behalf of the City of Hulbert and the Creek Nation when he saw needs to be filled.

Bob was gifted with tools and mechanically inclined. While stationed at Guantanamo Bay in the 1960s, Bob spent two years building a seaworthy powered barge from scratch, welding together 55-gallon drums and affixing a framed structure to the deck, effectively constructing a houseboat. He sailed his young family out into the Caribbean Sea for days at a time, catching and cooking their meals aboard his homemade vessel. His love for the water never waned, and he cleared land at lakefront campsites for his family, fished, kept boats, and maintained a dock at his home on Lake Fort Gibson into his eighties.

Bob held a lifelong compassion for animals, and adopted many throughout his

life. He raised his children around horses and German Shepherds. In his later years, he found Rottweilers and most recently, a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel named Simon. He found joy in feeding deer and hummingbirds at his home.

Bob is survived by his children, Jerra (Sid) Caldwell of Rose Hill, KS, Robert (Stephanie) Jackson of Norman, OK, and Wendell Jackson of Broken Arrow, OK; his sister, Jean Bales; his grandchildren, Hope Fitzgibbons, Brennan Jackson, Ethan Jackson, and Alex Jackson; and four great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, brother Doug Woodruff, and three-year-old brother Gerold Lee Jackson.

Master Chief Billy Jackson will be laid to rest at Fort Gibson National Cemetery, 1:30PM, Thursday, May 28, 2026. He will receive burial honors from the United States Navy.

The family of Master Chief Billy Bob Jackson has entrusted his care, service, and burial to Clifford D Garrett Family Funeral Home in Fort Gibson. 918-478-2555. Online condolences may be left for the Jackson family at clifforddgarrettfamilyfh.com

Cemetery Details

Fort Gibson National Cemetery

1423 Cemetery Road
Fort Gibson, OK 74434

Upcoming Events

Celebration of Life

MAY 28. 1:30 PM (CT)

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1423 Cemetery Road
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