



Thomas C. Taylor

June 24, 1936 - February 26, 2023

Thomas Carroll Taylor, 86, of Fort Gibson was born June 24, 1936, in Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, to Mike and Mildred (Cooper) Taylor, and peacefully passed away, Sunday, February 26, 2023, in Muskogee.

Tom received his education at Fort Gibson Schools. He joined the United States Army in 1954 in Muskogee. The day before leaving for Vietnam, Tom accepted Jesus as his Lord & Savior and was baptized in a special Wednesday night baptismal service at First Baptist Church, Fort Gibson. He proudly served in Korea and 3 tours in Vietnam as a combat medic, and honorably retired after 20 years of service, as a Master Sergeant serving mostly with the Special Forces on August 31, 1974, while serving in Thailand. After returning to the United States, he received an associate's degree in Nursing from Bacone College and was employed at Muskogee County Health Department as a Registered Nurse until his retirement.

Tom was a highly decorated soldier, receiving many citations and commendations, which included: Bronze Star Medal With Valor & Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal 4th Award, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (Korea), Republic of Vietnam (RVN) Gallantry Cross Medal w/Palm, Republic of Vietnam (RVN) Gallantry Cross Medal w/ Bronze Star, Republic of Vietnam (RVN) Campaign Medal, Parachutist Badge, Combat Medical Badge, UNIT Awards, Army Valorous Unit Citation Award, Navy Unit Commendation Thin Ribbon, Army Meritorious Unit Citation - Thin

Ribbon.

Award of the Bronze Star Medal for Heroism letter:

“For heroism in connection with ground operations against a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam: Sergeant Taylor distinguished himself while serving as medical NCO on a recovery aircraft. His aircraft had completed the successful recovery of a downed helicopter crew, and was himself treating a seriously wounded crew member when the recovery ship itself was shot down while attempting to take off. Realizing the danger involved in remaining in the aircraft, which by now was literally being raked by enemy fire, Sergeant Taylor continued to treat the wounded man, and remained in the aircraft until all the personnel had cleared it, then he proceeded to recover his equipment and with the wounded man on his back, made his way to the ranger company’s perimeter through a hail of murderous enemy fire, escaping miraculously unscathed. He then returned to the exposed area of the landing zone time and again to bring in wounded men who had fallen to enemy fires. During the night, Sergeant Taylor selflessly maintained a constant vigil on the wounded, offering what ever encouragement and/or medical assistance he could to those who needed it most. The following morning, after an all out attack by the enemy had been repelled, the unit moved to a landing zone for extraction. Sergeant Taylor at this time carried many of the wounded for some 800-1000 meters through some very rugged terrain in order to get them to the extraction aircraft as expeditiously, as possible. Once on the landing zone, he supervised the loading of these personnel on the aircraft, remaining on the landing zone until the last ship was loaded before boarding it himself. Sergeant Taylor’s gallantry in the face of overwhelming odds, his devotion to duty, his fellow men as well as his calm, professional attitude throughout the entire action were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the Special Forces, and the United States Army.”

Sergeant Taylor later said, “When the recovery helicopter was shot down, the pilot was killed and I, myself, took over the controls and safely landed the

aircraft.” Sergeant Taylor had some previous training in flying helicopters. After his highly decorated military service, he worked as a medic for a private oil company on large oil barges in Singapore. It was there he met Marlina Pandi and they married on March 13, 1981. They made their home in Singapore, Houston, TX, Midwest City, OK, and Fort Gibson. She preceded him in death on August 15, 2013.

He was a member of the Frank Gladd American Legion Post #20 in Fort Gibson. Tom enjoyed gardening, especially growing oriental vegetables. He also enjoyed watching Western movies, listening to world news on a short-wave radio, and loved spending time with his family. He will be missed by all that knew him.

Tom was preceded in death by his wife, his parents, sister, Betty Lou Smith, and a son, Michael Joe Taylor.

Those left to cherish his memory, are his brother, Gerald Taylor of Fort Gibson, OK; sister, Carolyn Anderson of Muskogee, OK; several nieces and nephews, and former foreign exchange student, Robert Ho, and many friends. A service celebrating Tom’s life will be held 12PM, Noon, Thursday, March 2, 2023, at Clifford D Garrett Family Funeral Home Chapel in Fort Gibson with Reverend Logan Lambert officiating.

Committal prayers and interment will follow in the Fort Gibson National Cemetery at 1:30 pm with the American Legion Post #20 members serving as casket bearers. Military Honors will be observed.

The family of Thomas Carroll Taylor has entrusted his care, service and burial to Clifford D Garrett Family Funeral Home, Fort Gibson. 918-478-2555.

Online condolences may be left for the family at clifforddgarrettfamilyfh.com

Cemetery Details

Fort Gibson National Cemetery

1423 Cemetery Road
Fort Gibson, OK 74434

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

MAR 2. 12:00 PM (CT)

Clifford D Garrett Family Funeral Home Chapel
1224 E Poplar
Fort Gibson, OK 74434