



Major Mark Steven "Tubo" Sams

August 17, 1950 - December 31, 2017

Major Mark Steven "Tubo" Sams, USMC (Retired) passed away on December 31, 2017 at age 67 in Tallahassee, Florida. Mark was born in Kensington, Pennsylvania in 1950. After graduating from Ohio State University in 1971, he was commissioned a 2nd Lt. in the U.S. Marine Corps.

During his Marine Corps career, his first assignment was as a tank and light armored reconnaissance platoon commander. In 1986, he was assigned duties as an Aerial Observer with Marine Observation Squadron Two, Camp Pendleton, California. During this assignment he deployed to the Persian Gulf for "Operation Earnest Will," when President Reagan ordered the escort of Kuwaiti oil tankers. He also was deployed to our southern border for Joint Drug Enforcement Interdiction operations.

In 1990, Mark was hand selected as an instructor for the Naval Strike Warfare Center in Fallon, Nevada. It is the premier school for integrating advanced tactics and weapons for the Navy's Aircraft Carrier Battle Group. During this time, he deployed to Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

After retiring from the US Marine Corps Major Sams was a helicopter pilot and deputy for the Levy County Sheriff's Office. After leaving the Sheriff's Office he was a fixed wing pilot for the Florida Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry for fifteen years. During his career with Forestry he provided aerial support to wildland firefighters on the ground. When not flying Mark enjoyed being at the beach and spending time with his friends.

A memorial service to celebrate Mark Sams and to thank all his wonderful

friends who enriched his life will be held at 2:00 PM on Saturday, January 6th, at Bevis Funeral Home, located at 200 John Knox Road in Tallahassee, Florida.

Mark is survived by his niece Yvette Cunat, his great nephew Ryan Krockner, and his wife, Laura Bruce. Mark was preceded in death by his mother Margaret Dannemiller, his father Norman Sams, and his sister Dian Cunat.

The family requests in lieu of flowers a memorial contribution may be made to a veterans service organization or the St. Jude Children's Research Center 262 Danny Thomas Place, Memphis, TN 38105.

Kelly Barber of Bevis Funeral Home in Tallahassee (850/385-2193 or www.bevisfh.com) is assisting the Sams family with their arrangements.

Previous Events

Funeral Service

JAN 6. 2:00 PM (ET)

Bevis Funeral Home & Crematory
200 John Knox Rd
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 385-2193

Tribute Wall

SK

“ *Stunned to hear of Mark’s death. I was envisioning him enjoying beach life . . . I met Mark “The Hulk” when he was a Captain in Tallahassee. We lost touch several years following his reassignment to Camp Pendleton. A true gentleman.*

sherry kennedy - March 14, 2021 at 10:50 PM

CF

“ I first met Mark after he had taken over as OIC of the Tallahassee Reserve unit, “C” Company, 8th Tank Battalion. I was the Reserve company XO; Mark was active duty.

I don't have many pictures from that time; the three attached are from a drill weekend where the Company was invited by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement to drive through the woods with the tanks in their training area, knock down trees. One tank got stuck, crossing a wet sandy area firm enough for a jeep. When I say stuck, I mean hull-down, to the top of the tracks. I don't know why Sams thought a dozen men on a rope could help anything (see the chaw in in his cheek?); we couldn't even pull it out with another tank. We ultimately had to get the tank retriever out there.

Another time, we were at ATD at Camp Lejeune. Lunch was C-rats. I opened mine, and said, “Huh – I got apricots.” Mark said, “Oh, yeah? May I see that?” “Sure.” He took the can and threw it into the middle of the river behind Onslow beach, because of the tanker superstition that eating apricots invites unit disaster.

I went by his house this last spring, we talked for about an hour, had a beer. He had only recently retired from the Florida Department of Agriculture. I can't believe he's so suddenly gone. I'll seriously miss him.

Clint Fountain, Captain USMC(R)



cfountain - January 06, 2018 at 09:19 PM

KW

“ Mark was the consummate professional, a lot of fun and a great friend to many. In the early 1980s, we were stationed at Camp Lejeune for a couple of years, just prior to him going off to Aerial Observer School. He had a great personality and sense of humor. On at least one occasion, he participated in a spoof film for one of our outgoing Lieutenants who "cross-decked" to the Navy in order to go to flight school. Mark played the roll of one of the TV wrestlers, either the Hawk or the Animal of the Road Warriors. He was quite the sport about it. We played the film at someone's hail and farewell and it went off with many, many laughs. Years later, we ran into each other at the Del Mar Officer's Club at Camp Pendleton. He never seemed to change and was always happy to see old friends, share some funny stories and laughs. As a Marine, he knew his craft and never backed away from a challenge. He will be sorely missed. RIP and Semper Fidelis, Kyle Watrous

Kyle Watrous - January 06, 2018 at 08:48 AM

RZ

“Mark – Tubo 14, his AO call sign – was bigger than life. He left his footprint where ever he served; while embodying Shakespeare’s: “We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; for he today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother.” Mark left his footprint on me in 1975 in Okinawa and from those days forward, he was my brother, as to countless other Marines. At Camp Lejeune, we ended our week on Saturday morning with an hour and a half in the Base gym, head for Shoney’s and clean out the all you can eat breakfast buffet, and end the day running the sand dunes of Emerald Isles. Oh, we actually ended the week with a few beers in one (or two) of J’villes finest pubs. If Sams was your friend, he had your “6” – whether in the field or on liberty. Tubo bailed me out of jail and General Al Gray tossed out his UCMJ office hours (separate incidents). We had our “wetting down” together and I had the honor of presiding over his retirement at Fallon, NV years later. At the conclusion of remarks, I had the honor of getting wrestled into the pool...and that marked the beginning of the next chapter in the book of *The Life of Mark Sams*. I introduced Mark to Bruce Springsteen way back - he loved "No Surrender" and "Born to Run." For Krystal Jo, it tickles me to see his picture after all these years with a wad of Redman in his cheeks. I used to wonder how he kept his cup steady in the back seat of an OV-10 or F/A-18. It was my honor – and my wife’s and brother and sister – to have Mark Sams my brother. Rest in peace, Brother, our paths will cross.
Rich and Haley

Richard Zee - January 05, 2018 at 04:50 PM

MS

“It was my pleasure to know you and call you a friend, we shared a love of old bikes and riding. You were truly a remarkable man. You will be sorely missed! God's speed until we meet again!

Mike Sherrill - January 05, 2018 at 02:18 PM

KS

“Wow... what a guy! Mark, you will always be one of best people that I have ever had the privilege to know. I failed 98% of your name that tune quizzes or What movie is this from games, but you always made me laugh! You gave me advice while we were running the roads looking for bar codes. You encouraged me, motivated me, and always made me feel important. You listened to me and made me feel like what I had to say was something that you needed or wanted to hear. Inventory will never be the same. I'm certain that my fun meter will get pegged all to quickly from here on out. Look right. Look left. All clear on the firing line. Until the next time Tubo! Keep your head down. - Krystal Jo



Krystal Smitherman - January 04, 2018 at 11:34 AM

TV

A true sword and friend.

--Tom Vaughn

Tom Vaughn - January 18, 2018 at 05:37 PM

HS

A true friend and fellow Marine Tanker. Semper Fi, Mark!

*H. C. (Mike) Smith
LtCol USMC(R)*

Herschel Smith - September 26, 2018 at 01:53 PM

SK

I knew Mark as a neighborhood friend while being raised in Parma, Ohio. I was surprised by his passing and his great accomplishments in life, one would of never thought of this. We shared many outings together and will always have fond memories of him.

stan kaleta - October 27, 2018 at 01:06 PM