



Spessard Boatright

May 20, 1940 - April 6, 2024

Spessard Boatright, age 83, entered eternal rest on April 6, 2024, in Tallahassee, Florida. He was born in Pine Mount (Suwannee County), Florida and grew up in McAlpin, FL. Spessard resided in Tallahassee since 1984.

Spessard was the youngest child of Joseph Arch (Joe) Boatright and his wife, Susan Elizabeth (Starling) Boatright, and was welcomed into the world by a large and loving family of thirteen children (4 girls and 9 boys). He was raised on a family farm 13 miles from Live Oak. He was educated in the public schools in Live Oak, Florida, and never missed a day of school in all 12 years. He joined the Florida Army National Guard during his senior year of high school in March 1958, and went on to attend Army Basic Training at Ft. Jackson, SC, the following summer and attended Armor Basic Training at Ft. Knox, KY, the following fall. After completing his military training and before entering Junior College, he returned to help his father and brother on his

family farm. In January 1960, he began his college career and enrolled in North Florida Junior College in Madison, FL. In the Spring 1961 he was selected to attend Officer Candidate School at Ft. Benning, GA., and was Commissioned a Second Lieutenant U. S. Army in June 1961. During the Spring 1962, he received his Associates of Art Degree from North Florida Junior College, and subsequently enrolled in Florida State University (FSU). He graduated from FSU in the Fall 1964 with a bachelor's degree in education. Spessard began his career as an educator in 1965, teaching 6th and 7th grade Math and Science for 3 years in Suwannee and Palm Beach Counties. He left teaching to pursue his desire for a post-graduate education degree and enrolled in Florida Atlantic University, receiving his degree of Master of Education (MEd) in Education Administration and Supervision in 1968. During his last trimester at FAU, he paused his schoolwork to return to Live Oak to seek the office of Superintendent of Schools in Suwannee County. He won the election with 62% of the vote on the first ballot, edging out his three opponents. When elected, he was 27 years old, and to date, is still the youngest person ever elected District School Superintendent in the State of Florida. Under his supervision, the Suwannee County School system was integrated, a step in the right direction that was guided by Spessard's careful oversight, and the success of this endeavor was proof of his extraordinary

leadership skills.

While campaigning for the superintendents' office, he met his beautiful and wonderful wife of 53 years, JoAnn Newton Kirkland, and they married on June 1, 1968. Spessard and JoAnn were active in their church, First Presbyterian, and became parents to daughters Rebecca in 1970 and Brenda in 1972.

Following eight years as Superintendent of Schools, he served five years as Director of Office Services for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida. He also served one year with Dial Communications in Tallahassee, FL. For the next 25 years, he worked for the Florida Department of Education, retiring in 2010 as the Director, Office of Educational Facilities.

Throughout his civilian career, Spessard continued to be very active in his military career. He concluded his career with the Florida Army National Guard in October 1997, retiring as a Brigadier General after serving his country for 39½ years. During his decades of service in the Guard, he held many staff and command jobs, including 20 years of command time at the Company, Battalion, Group, and Brigade levels. His last major active duty was Commander, 202 Medical Group in Jacksonville, FL. In this role, he deployed

the Group

to Saudi Arabia for Operation Desert Storm / Desert Shield. During the deployment he commanded three 400-bed hospitals, one in the country of Oman, and two in United Arab Emirates.

Spessard considered himself a lifelong learner and throughout his life enjoyed activities such technology, travel to over 60 countries, obtaining his private airplane pilot's license, photography and genealogy. However, his most favorite activity was that of a beloved and active grandfather to his two grandsons, Cooper and Chandler Heath. He held a deep faith in his Heavenly Father and was a member of Thomasville Road Baptist Church for 40 years and enjoyed his Sunday School class and church family.

Survivors include his two daughters Rebecca Boatright Heath and her husband Scott of Atlanta, Brenda Boatright of Atlanta, grandsons Cooper and Chandler Heath; brother Ronald Boatright and his wife Ingrid; brother-in-law Robert (Bobby) Newton, sisters-in-laws Sybil Newton, Annettee Boatright, Alice Boatright, along with many, many beloved nieces and nephews.

On April 13, 2024, the family will receive family and friends at Bevis Funeral Home at 1pm, with funeral services to follow at 2pm. Burial will be at MeadowWood Memorial

Park. Services will
be streamed and available online at www.bevisfh.com.

in lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Big Ben Hospice of Tallahassee
or Thomasville Road
Baptist Church in Tallahassee, Florida.

Dayne Parker of Bevis Funeral Home (850-385-2193 or www.bevisfh.com) is
assisting the family
with their arrangements.

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 13. 1:00 PM (ET)

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

Funeral Service

APR 13. 2:00 PM (ET)

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

Burial

APR 13 (ET)

MeadowWood Memorial Park
700 Timberlane Rd.
Tallahassee, FL 32312

Tribute Wall



“ *Bevis Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of Spessard Boatright*



Bevis Funeral Home - April 12, 2024 at 10:41 AM



“ *My Sincere Condolences to Mr. Les & Mrs. Amy Boatright, Mrs. Robin & husband . Praying God comfort you and your family. Keeping you all in my prayers. ❤️🙏*

Sharon Dennis - April 13, 2024 at 03:24 PM



Thank you for the thoughtful words Ms. Sharon! My Uncle Spessard was truly a wonderful and talented man, he will be greatly missed. Blessings, -Les Boatright

Leslie Boatright - April 13, 2024 at 03:38 PM



Thank you so much. Uncle Spess was one of a kind. He will be forever loved and missed. Robin

Robin - April 13, 2024 at 06:01 PM

LB

“ Leslie B. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Spessard Boatright.

Leslie B. - April 13, 2024 at 03:19 PM

SC

“ Suwannee County Clerk of Court purchased the America the Beautiful for the family of Spessard Boatright.



Suwannee County Clerk of Court - April 12, 2024 at 10:42 AM

BH

“ Brandon ans Heather Huff purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Spessard Boatright.



Brandon ans Heather Huff - April 11, 2024 at 06:21 PM

BH

“ Brandon ans Heather Huff planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Spessard Boatright.

Brandon ans Heather Huff - April 11, 2024 at 06:21 PM

MR

“ *MG(R) Marianne Mathewson-Chapman and RPC purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Spessard Boatright.*



MG(R) Marianne Mathewson-Chapman and RPC - April 11, 2024 at 03:29 PM

MC

“ *We all loved BG(R) Boatright and I would like to share a 202 Medical Group memory of our deployment Saudi Arabia 1990 for Desert Shield and Storm. First they said that he could not command our unit because he was not a physician and once they assigned us a doctor---they would send him home. That did not stop him from carrying out the mission and was the perfect commander for us. With his signal corps background, he knew when the radio specialists showed up and told us it would take 2 weeks until our radios were operational, he had to act. He told them that all of our radios would be up and running by that afternoon. Another fun memory was his expertise in using computers since we were issued brand new computers and did not know how to use them. He gave us classes in the evening. He was always supportive of me "going for the gold" and achieving the rank of Major General, Florida Army Guard. We all loved him and he will be missed by us all. Goodbye good friend and you will be missed but all of us but always dear in our hearts. Major General (R) Marianne Mathewson Chapman, Deputy Surgeon General in the Florida Army National Guard.*



marianne mathewson chapman - April 11, 2024 at 03:21 PM

DB

“ *Datha & Uncle Bobby purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Spessard Boatright.*



Datha & Uncle Bobby - April 11, 2024 at 08:43 AM

JP

“ *Condolences to JoAnn and the family. As did many others, I served with him for several years in the Florida Guard. No one worked harder than he, and he was instrumental in my career. COL (R) John and Anna Porter*

JOHN PORTER - April 10, 2024 at 09:31 AM

CG

“ *I served with and under BG (R) Boatright's command for quite a few years. I always valued his leadership and "common sense" decisions . He treated all soldiers regardless of rank with respect and had their well being at the top of his decisions and orders while still accomplishing our mission always.*

"Rest in Peace General Boatright, save me a slot with you Sir".

CSM (R) Chet Grimsley

Chet Grimsley - April 10, 2024 at 07:04 AM

EW

“ Erin Williams purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of Spessard Boatright.



Erin Williams - April 09, 2024 at 05:22 PM

EW

“ Erin Williams planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Spessard Boatright.

Erin Williams - April 09, 2024 at 05:22 PM

RF

“ Ronald Boatright family purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Spessard Boatright.



Ronald Boatright family - April 09, 2024 at 04:48 PM

RF

“ Ronald Boatright family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Spessard Boatright.

Ronald Boatright family - April 09, 2024 at 04:48 PM

TE

“ *The Heath Family, and Babs and Alan Echtenkamp purchased the Loving Lilies and Roses Bouquet for the family of Spessard Boatright.*



The Heath Family, and Babs and Alan Echtenkamp - April 09, 2024 at 01:48 PM

SD

“ *Thinking of you all and sending love.*



Stacy DeLoach - April 09, 2024 at 12:40 PM

HL

“ *Harrison & Brittany Little purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Spessard Boatright.*



Harrison & Brittany Little - April 09, 2024 at 12:28 PM

TB

“ *BG Boatright was a great leader to work for. Whenever our paths crossed he would always ask first how my family and I were doing before discussing business. He showed that he was genuinely interested in the welfare of his troops. "Rest in Peace, Sir". - LTC (Ret) Thomas Brooks*

Tom Brooks - April 09, 2024 at 09:28 AM

RM

“ Robin M. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Spessard Boatright.

Robin M. - April 09, 2024 at 09:22 AM

DM

“ This is and was one of the greatest men but I've ever known. We love you Uncle Spessard.

Robin and David McMullen

David McMullen - April 09, 2024 at 08:05 AM

GJ

“ BG Boatright was a soldier's General. He mentored many Troops who went on to have careers that impacted and enhanced the Florida Army National Guard and the active Army. His dedication to service continues to live on through those he lead.

LTC (R) Glenn Sutphin Jr.

Glenn W. Sutphin Jr. - April 08, 2024 at 10:07 PM

ML

“ One of the best mentors and leaders I have ever worked for, he did so much for me and others, prayers for the family, soldiers and friends

Mallie Lovett - April 08, 2024 at 09:40 PM