

OBITUARY

Mark John “Skully” Skulborstad

MAY 24, 1947 – JULY 29, 2021



Mark J. “Skully” Skulborstad, 74, of New Caney, TX, died on Thursday, July 29, 2021, with his wife Christal and daughter Maren by his side.

Mark, who was best known as Skully to his friends, was born on May 24, 1947 in O’Neill, NE to Palmer “Skully” and Marlys Skulborstad.

He attended high school in Salina, KS, graduated from Littleton High School in Littleton, CO and attended Colorado State University for one year before enlisting in the US Army in 1966.

Skully served as a Chief Warrant Officer in the Vietnam War from August 12, 1966 to August 27, 1968. He was a “Huey” helicopter pilot with the 282 Assault Helicopter Company known as the “Black Cats.” He was stationed in a detachment at Hue and ran approx. 500 missions. On January 31, 1968, Skully was wounded defending a perimeter during a ground attack at the Hue MACV compound as part of the Tet Offensive.

He was later awarded the Purple Heart. Skully's commanding officer characterized him as "an outstanding pilot—one hundred percent proficient, brave, who learned every day, and everybody loved the guy." He was medically retired from the US Army as a Chief Warrant Officer II due to the loss of his right eye. Skully loved keeping in contact with his brothers in arms and often traveled around the country and to Australia to visit them.

After retirement from the Army, Skully returned to Colorado State University to study forestry and later took on aviation mechanics. He spent most of his career as an aviation mechanic with Frontier, Continental, and United Airlines. He also spent some time as an instructor at an A&P aircraft mechanic school and was commonly sought to travel internationally to assist and instruct other mechanics on more technical/complex aircraft issues.

Skully had four children prior to marrying his soulmate of 32 years, Christal M. Skulborstad, on January 14, 1989, in Littleton, CO. They lived in Aurora, CO and Bennett, CO before moving to New Caney, TX in 2000. He retired from United Airlines after an accident in 2014.

He is fondly remembered for his intellect, sense of humor, generosity, his fierce love of his friends, and his pursuit of excellence in many hobbies. His hobbies through the years included: anything related to aviation, rocketry, botany, woodworking, model and RC airplanes, hunting and fishing, skydiving, astronomy, and NASCAR. He was an avid photographer, collector of gems and coins, and rehabilitator of any small animal that needed it, but grew particularly fond of his squirrels.

Skully strived to perfect any task undertook, whether it be flying, building cribbage boards, carving intricate tobacco pipes and pistol grips, or baking the perfect loaf of bread or Wacky Cake. His family and friends frequently benefited from his desire to perfect a talent. His children still play cribbage on the boards he crafted and his colleagues will forever remember the Wacky Cake as the "Pack of Pigs Cake."

In his younger days, Skully was a champion silhouette shooter, an excellent pool player, an artist, a western dancer, and a singer. He was also very proud of his Norwegian heritage and stayed in contact with and visited his extended family in Norway. But what he loved most throughout his life was the time he spent with his wife, children, and friends - often over a beer.

He is survived by his wife, Christal Skulborstad, of New Caney, TX; four children: Leif (Vikki) Skulborstad of Castle Rock, CO, Sabra Shay of Colorado Springs, CO, Maren Skulborstad of Castle Rock, CO, Lars (Jess) Skulborstad of Parker, CO; seven grandchildren: Aria Skulborstad, Cecily Rawlings, Anders Skulborstad, Nathan Bordas, Sven Skulborstad, Nora Skulborstad, and Torsten Skulborstad; brother Dale (Ruth) Skulborstad, sister Sandy (Carl) Unrein, as well as many nieces and their families.

Skully was preceded in death by his parents, Palmer Skulborstad and Marlys Skulborstad, brother Gary Skulborstad, his and his wife's unborn child, and granddaughter Carlisyn "Carli" Skulborstad.

Services and a Celebration of Life reception will be held at the VFW in Porter, TX at 2 p.m. on August 7, 2021. Skully will later be interred in Ft. Logan National Cemetery in Denver, CO, with military honors, on August 23, 2021, at 1:30 pm with a wake to follow.

Mark John “Skully” Skulborstad

MEMORIES

Carol Egan
August 6, 2021
Mark,

You gave us many happy visits. I guess you and Terry are having your discussions on which are the best firearms and Terry has finally given you the keys to the beer fridge.

Rest In Peace Sweet man.

To Christal and family. My deepest condolences. You are in my prayers.

Jimmy Franssen
August 5, 2021

In 2008 Mark said his final goodbye to Terry, however, he continued to honour their friendship and the connection he had made with our family and Australia by attending 4 more Anzac Days. The first after Grandad passed was a difficult for everyone, with Mark feeling Dad's absence keenly. But when we think back on that day it will be with a smile when we remember how Mark unintentionally lightened a emotional day.

After a very big day with his fellow veterans and having crunched many beers, Mark returned home earlier than expected. Shortly after, we too arrived home to find a very cold and very drunk Mark on the doorstep. He declared “Thank Goodness you're here! I just called 000!”, (000 is Australia's equivalent of 911). He went on to say, the operator asked, “What is your emergency?”, to which he replied, “I need a blanket!” The response was “But Sir that is not an emergency”, to which he retorted, “Well if I don't get a damn blanket, it will be an emergency because I'm freezing to death!” Shortly after we received a call from the Police to ask if everything was OK. My Stepdad Michael explained to the amusement of the Police Officer that our veteran had had a very big Anzac Day and was now warming up with a blanket and a coffee.

Michael Butterworth
August 4, 2021

To Christal and family, our deepest and heartfelt condolences at this sad time. May you draw strength from each other and the love you have for Mark and the beautiful memories you all have of this wonderful man.

You are in our thoughts and prayers.

Tracy Butterworth
August 4, 2021

Our family's relationship with Mark was born during the Vietnam War. Our Dad WO2 Terry Egan was an Australian Army Advisor – AATTV with the South Vietnamese Army. In 1968 he was based in Hue, living in the MACV compound together with an amazing unit known as the Black Cats.... courageous as lions. These pilots would fly Dad and his ARVN soldiers to their next mission. Mark and Dad formed a great bond, with much pranking and shenanigans in their down time. When we first met Mark, Dad said ‘This is the man who would take me to places I didn't want to go and would only come back to pick me up because I had the keys to the beer fridge!’ According to Mark, Dad was always hiding the keys.

Their friendship was forged through the intensity of war and a profound respect for one and other and their deeply etched memories endured, long after '68. For many years, both men thought the other dead. That was until they found each other on the Internet.

Mark travelled to Australia for years, but his most memorable visits were for Anzac Day. A sacred day, where our nation commemorates our fallen and all who serve. Mark and Dad would come together as brothers in arms, with a shared history reflecting on their time at the sharp end and to remember mates lost.

He had many friends, from veterans, locals at the Kingsthorpe Pub, and even the Mayor of Toowoomba. In addition to his Anzac commitment Mark would indulge his passions for birdlife, and astronomy. Whether sitting on the deck in the evening sipping a beer while studying the Southern Hemisphere sky, photographing a King Parrot in the early morning or recounting war stories with Terry's son-in-law and grandsons over a top shelf Wild turkey, he enjoyed it all.

Anzac Day 2022 will see an extra candle lit in memory of another veteran, dear to us. To have known you was to know courage and honour. Fly low and fly fast Chief Warrant Officer Mark Skulborstad. You will be forever in the hearts of your Aussie family.

Olav Skulbørstad

August 4, 2021

I meet Mark first time on internet 22 apr 1997. After this day we have a lot of communications to gether. In year 2006 My vife Anita and me meet Mark in Florida. He was our guide and drive us a day round in Florida. It was an wonderful day. We drink a cup of coffee. He told us that we most visit Kennedy space center. and we did that. We remember Mark as a kjernekar (in norwegian) nuclear man. I also have meet his brother Gary and his vife Cathy in Oslo in the year 2010 when I was guide for them. RIP Mark

A memorial photo album for Skully is posted at
<https://www.tributeslides.com/tributes/show/6ST2KZKLN67FOFL>