

William (Bill) Howard Shippey



William (Bill) Howard Shippey, 80, of Leavenworth, passed away peacefully Aug. 11, 2020. He was born Aug. 6, 1940, in Morris, Minn. the youngest of two children, to William Hiram and Bessie Syneva (Torgerson) Shippey.

While growing up in Minnesota, Bill's adventurous spirit thrived on sports, horseback riding, flying planes and social activities, especially dancing.

On June 2, 1973, Bill married Karen Denise Kirkpatrick in St. Paul, Minn. Their daughter, Dana, was born the following year. In 1984, Bill and Karen made Leavenworth, Kan. their home and they both enjoyed being active in the community. Their granddaughter, Lauren, was born in 2005. Bill loved to read and to travel. He enjoyed planning detailed family trips across the United States, skiing with his daughter and taking his granddaughter to aquariums, amusement parks and even swimming with dolphins. Bill's generosity, laughter and positive attitude was evident to all who met him, and he was always dedicated to making sure "everything was taken care of."

Bill's military career began in 1962 when he enlisted in the Army as a Private. He was selected for, and graduated Officer Candidate School in 1963. Bill was an Infantry Officer and graduate of the Airborne (1963), Ranger (Winter, 1970) and Special Forces Qualification (1970) courses. During his two combat tours of duty in Vietnam, Bill served as an Advisor to the South Vietnamese Army and later as the Company Commander, N CO, 75th Ranger Regiment (173rd Airborne).

Later military assignments included the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii and Professor of Military Science at the University of South Dakota. Always a strong proponent of education and continued learning, Bill earned a Master of Arts in Education from the College of Saint Thomas and an MBA from the University of South Dakota. His final assignment was at the US Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. where he developed new curriculum. Bill retired as a Lieutenant Colonel whose decorations included two Bronze Stars, the Purple Heart, the Combat Infantry Badge and numerous awards for gallantry from the Republic of Vietnam. He was awarded the Harry S. Truman Veteran's Medal in 1986. Bill was a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Hanner-Sharp American Legion Post 129 Stillwater, OK, the Airborne Association, and the Special Forces Association, among others.

After retiring from the military, Bill worked in the private sector as a businessman and general manager in the plastics industry in Overland Park, Kan. After a successful 23 years, he left private industry to serve veterans and their families as a VFW Veteran's

Service Officer at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Medical Center in Leavenworth, Kan. Bill worked tirelessly for ten years, until his retirement, to support the veteran community. During his professional life, Bill cultivated enduring friendships and was a mentor to many.

Bill is preceded in death by his parents; and his sister, Barbara Boerger.

He survived by his wife of 47 years, Karen, his daughter Dana Gregory (Charles) and granddaughter, Lauren of Monument, Colo.; his son, Michael Shippey and grandsons, Joshua, Jacob and Jared and their children all of Everett, Wash.; a sister-in-law, Leva Swim; four nieces, Sue Boerger, Mary Beth Boerger-Albertson, Heidi Rodriguez and Patricia Wise; and a nephew, Charles Boerger and their families.

He was a loving husband, dedicated father and grandfather, cherished uncle and devoted friend. He was a patriot, soldier, advocate for veterans and their families, businessman, educator and mentor.

Bill taught us that you can do anything you set your mind to, to seek out opportunities for adventure, to always try to do something positive in the world and to keep a sense of humor-even when it's hard. He is always loved and will be forever missed.