



## 1SGT (Ret) Jesus "Jesse" Hernandez Jr.

October 31, 1933 - September 12, 2023

Jesus "Jesse" Hernandez, Jr., son of the late Jesus Hernandez, Sr. and Macedonia (Juarez) Hernandez, entered this world on October 31, 1933, in Corpus Christi, Texas and departed this life on Tuesday, September 12, 2023, in the Lake Regional Hospital in Osage Beach, Missouri having attained the age of 89 years.

Jesse, as he was referred to by his friends and family, grew up in Corpus Christi where he attended elementary school and graduated from Miller High School.

Shortly after graduating from high school, Jesse entered the United States Army and served his country faithfully before retiring after 24 years of service. He had attained the rank of First Sergeant and was awarded several medals and commendations; some of which included: Bronze Star Ribbon, Purple Heart Ribbon, Army Good Conduct Ribbon (7), Vietnam Service Ribbon With 3 Bronze Star, Army Overseas Service Ribbon With 2 Numeral, and Republic Of Vietnam Campaign Ribbon, along with several others.

Jesse had quite an illustrious career in the military. He began his career at Ft. Lee, Virginia in 1951 where he did basic training. He did a tour in Germany and then was sent to Fort Leonard Wood in 1955 where he was assigned to the 3rd Regiment. Even though during his time drill sergeants were not a part

of the Army, Jesse served in the capacity of one. In 1959, he served a tour in Korea before being transferred to Ft. Devens, Massachusetts for two years. In 1961, he was sent back to Germany for 17 months and in 1962 was sent to Ft. Benning, Georgia to join the 11th Air Assault Division, which became the 1st Air Cavalry, and they were sent to Vietnam in 1965.

While in Vietnam, Jesse served with the Seventh Cavalry, (Co. C, 2ND BN, 7th Cav., 1st Cav. Div.). It was his unit that went in to relieve LTG Harold Moore's troop that had been ambushed. The Battle of Ia Drang Valley was the first major battle between the United States Army and Vietnam, which was depicted in the movie "We Were Soldiers" starring Mel Gibson. Several of Jesse's buddies did not survive the battle, known as the most intensive battle in the history of the division. For many years afterward, Jesse would not discuss the painful events. In later years, when he was able to talk about the events, Jesse was interviewed for a movie, "History of Seventh Cavalry," that aired on the History Channel.

In 1967, he was transferred to Ft. Hood, Texas before being sent back to Germany in 1968. In 1969, Jesse was sent back to Vietnam and in 1970, he was transferred back to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri where he planned to retire. After coming back to Fort Leonard Wood, he was assigned to the 2nd Brigade and then was sent to drill sergeant school. During his time in drill sergeant school, he was the oldest man in his class at the age of 38. After completing the drill sergeant course, he was assigned as platoon sergeant for the 5th Brigade.

During his first assignment to Fort Leonard Wood, Jesse met and was united in marriage to Ruby Bonnilea Kelly on June 2, 1956, in Tuscumbia, Missouri. They shared seven children together: Jesse, Joyce, Janet, Johnny, Joe, Jerry, and Judy.

After retiring from the military, Jesse continued serving his country as a civil service employee. He worked at Fort Leonard Wood as a supply clerk before retiring from this position.

In his spare time, Jesse enjoyed attending military reunions, spending time with his friends at the local coffee shops, dancing, and doing small engine repair work. He loved spending time with his friends and family while barbequing for them and in general just loved helping people. He also had a fun time flirting with the women that he encountered. He was a member of the VFW Ozark Memorial Post 3176 in St. Robert, American Legion, and the Disabled American Veterans organizations. He was also a member of the St. Bellarmine Catholic Church of St. Robert.

Jesse will be sadly missed, but fondly remembered by all those that knew and loved him. He leaves to cherish his memory, his children, Jesse Hernandez III (Anita) of Eldon, MO, Joyce Vail (Russell) of Rushville, IN, Janet Drury of Belton, MO, Johnny Hernandez of Sarasota, FL, Joe Hernandez of Springfield, IL, Jerry Hernandez of Del Valle, TX, Judy Garner (Brent) of Lebanon, MO, and Pedro Belligio (Joy) of Clarksville, TN; twenty-three grandchildren, sixteen great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild; three half-siblings, Susie Siller of Austin, TX, and Sandra Martinez and Bobby Hernandez both of Corpus Christi, TX; ex-wife: Ruby Hernandez; a number of nieces and nephews; as well as a host of other relatives and friends.

In addition to his parents, Jesse was preceded in death by four sisters: Anna Salinas, Mary Silvas, Theresa Hernandez, and Carmen Chavarria.

Even though he is gone from our sight, Jesse's love of country and family will live on in our hearts forever.

Memorial contributions can be made in memory of Jesus "Jesse" Hernandez, Jr. to the Honor Flight for Veterans. Memorial Donations can be made payable to Lebanon Area Foundation, noting Friends of the Fort on the memo line. Mail to: Lebanon Area Foundation, P.O. Box 1042, Lebanon, MO 65536, or may be left at the funeral home.

# Cemetery Details

## Rose Hill Memorial Park

Corpus Christi, TX

# Previous Events

## Visitation

SEP 16. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Memorial Chapels and Crematory of Waynesville/St. Robert  
202 Historic 66 W.  
Waynesville, MO 65583  
(573) 774-6111  
memorialchapels@embarqmail.com

## Funeral Service

SEP 17. 2:00 PM (CT)

Memorial Chapels and Crematory of Waynesville/St. Robert  
202 Historic 66 W.  
Waynesville, MO 65583  
(573) 774-6111  
memorialchapels@embarqmail.com

# Tribute Wall

SI

“ *SFC Elizabeth Irizarry lit a candle in memory of Jesus Hernandez*



SFC (Ret) Elizabeth Irizarry - February 07, 2024 at 01:08 PM

PS

“ *Pam Stacey lit a candle in memory of Jesus Hernandez*



Pam Stacey - September 22, 2023 at 11:02 AM

WW

“ *I know your family will miss you very much. May peace be with you. Always a 1SGT.*



*Wendy Hernandez Wu*

Wendy Hernandez Wu - September 20, 2023 at 07:39 PM

DC

“ *Descansa en paz mi amigo y heramo. It is an honor and privilege to call you my friend and brother -in arms. Jesse you may be gone from this earth, but you will never be forgotten.*



Daniel Cerda - September 18, 2023 at 02:19 PM

JP

“ *Our Condolences To The Hernandez Family!  
It was nice knowing you, you were a good  
friend! Rest In Paradise 1SGT HERNANDEZ!  
SLOW HAND SALUTE!  
FROM: SFC CLIFTON POOLA &FAMILY*



---

**Jennifer Poola** - September 17, 2023 at 04:44 PM

EL

“ *RIP Mr. Hernandez. Thank you for your  
service.*



---

**Elizabeth** - September 17, 2023 at 04:34 PM

PM

“ *Peggy Medlock lit a candle in memory of  
Jesus Hernandez*



---

**Peggy Medlock** - September 17, 2023 at 01:27 PM

KT

“ *Thank you for your Service Sir. May you rest  
in eternal peace, free from the nightmares of  
war and May the good Lord's perpetual light  
shine upon you forever more.*



---

**Katherine Pollock from San Antonio TX** - September 16, 2023 at 02:46 PM

CP

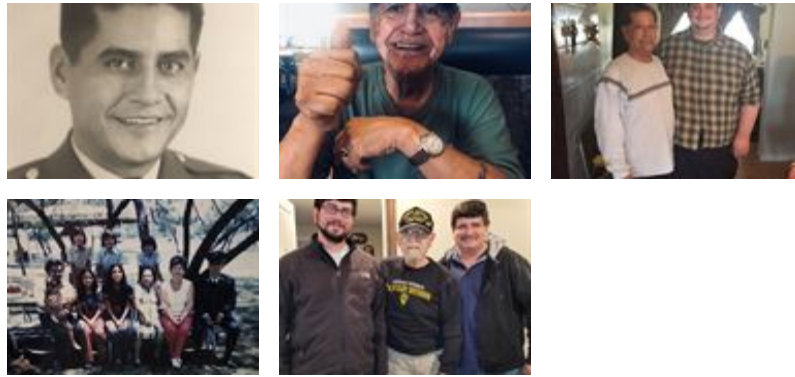
“ *Clemente Perez lit a candle in memory of Jesus Hernandez*



**Clemente Perez** - September 15, 2023 at 06:26 PM



“ *209 files added to the album LifeTributes*



**Memorial Chapels and Crematory** - September 15, 2023 at 05:20 PM

JC

“ *Julie Cones lit a candle in memory of Jesus Hernandez*



**Julie Cones** - September 15, 2023 at 10:36 AM

SM

“ *Suzanne Mai lit a candle in memory of Jesus Hernandez*



---

**Suzanne Mai** - September 15, 2023 at 06:12 AM

LS

“ *Lori Shaddock lit a candle in memory of Jesus Hernandez*



---

**Lori Ann Shaddock** - September 14, 2023 at 11:06 PM

LS

“ Jesse was my family. He was my hero. He gave me courage and bravery. It was an honor to be his caregiver and friend. I learned to knit because of him! My Dad, one of his best friends, who passed in 2020 and who also kept a look out on him and was so proud to call him friend. I will never forget how much Jesse taught me. He would help anyone in need, would pick you up if you fell and never had a bad word to say about anyone. He showed me kindness and even though things got tough sometime, he taught me to keep going, persevere, gave me a can-do attitude. He went through hell here on earth but he got saved after I met him in 2018. I thank God for freeing him from the flashbacks he started to get in his last year of life. He made peace with the Lord, found forgiveness for the wars and the love of God carried him home. I used to tell him, you are going to be a General when you get to Heaven. See you soon, Vato!! I took this picture of the sunset tonight after I found out today that you passed. Thank you Yeshua (Jesus's real name in Hebrew) for taking my Jesse home. It is what he dreamed of.  
God, give me the strength to carry on without him. 💔🙏❤️

Lori Ann Shaddock - September 14, 2023 at 10:02 PM

MH

“ Maryesther Hamm lit a candle in memory of Jesus Hernandez



Maryesther Flores Hamm - September 14, 2023 at 08:52 PM

LC

“ *Linda cole-schonbok sent a virtual gift in memory of Jesus Hernandez*



Linda cole-schonbok - September 14, 2023 at 05:30 PM



“ *I'm very sorry to hear Jesse is gone. He was a wonderful, full of life man. He would make me laugh every time I saw him. This world is sadder without Jesse*



Kathy Goodman - September 14, 2023 at 10:27 AM

CB

“ *CSM(Ret)Harold&Brigitte Burleson lit a candle in memory of Jesus Hernandez*



CSM(Ret)Harold&Brigitte Burleson - September 14, 2023 at 09:51 AM

PG

“ *Pulaski Camp Gideons lit a candle in memory of Jesus Hernandez*



Pulaski County Camp Gideons - September 14, 2023 at 09:50 AM

PM

“ *Peggy Medlock lit a candle in memory of  
Jesus Hernandez*



---

**Peggy Medlock** - September 13, 2023 at 09:14 PM