



Joseph Auther "Woody" Woodard

October 19, 1950 - May 9, 2025

Joseph "Woody" Woodard, age 74, passed away Friday, May 9, 2025. He was born in Dayton, OH to the late Walter and Cleo Woodard on October 19, 1950.

Woody was a veteran of the U.S. Army where he flew Cobra attack helicopters with the 361st Aviation Company, aka the Pink Panthers, supporting Special Ops in Vietnam. During his two tours, he was shot down three times. He served from 1969-1981 and was Honorably Discharged as a CWO3. Woody received many prestigious military medals including the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with a V for Valor, Vietnam Service Medal, Bronze Star, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry (with a Silver Star), among others.

Following his military career he joined the Metro Aviation family as an EMS helicopter pilot until his retirement in 2018. He was lead pilot at several bases including Tyler, TX; Las Vegas, NV; and Melbourne, FL during his 34-year career with them. He was the 2011 and 2013 Florida EMS Pilot of the Year and as the 2013 Florida EMS Association President he worked to implement statewide EMS helicopter safety procedures. In his retirement, Woody participated in several podcasts and interviews pertaining to his military career.

Woody is survived by his wife of 38 years, Julia (Porter); sons Michael (Kimberly) Woodard, and Andy (Emily) Woodard; grandchildren Haley, Liam, and Greyson Woodard; brother Lee (Gloria) Woodard; in-laws David (Brenda) Porter and Cindy Porter; and many nieces and nephews.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his sister-in-law: Nanzy Porter Stewart, and nephew: John Stewart, Jr.

His family was always his first priority in life.

A Celebration of Life service is scheduled for 10:00am on Saturday, May 17, 2025 at Austin & Bell Funeral Home in Greenbrier, TN.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in his honor to the Ronald McDonald House of Dallas or St Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Austin & Bell Funeral Home in Springfield is in charge of these arrangements.

AUSTIN & BELL FUNERAL HOME-
509 WALNUT STREET, SPRINGFIELD, TN (615) 384-1000

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

MAY 17. 10:00 AM (CT)

Austin & Bell Funeral Home Greenbrier
2619 Hwy 41 S
Greenbrier, TN 37073
(615) 643-4000
<https://austinandbell.com>

Tribute Wall



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Joseph Auther "Woody" Woodard.

July 14, 2025 at 05:42 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Joseph Auther "Woody" Woodard.

May 28, 2025 at 10:40 AM



“ John D. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joseph Auther "Woody" Woodard.

John D. - May 16, 2025 at 09:16 PM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Joseph Auther "Woody" Woodard.



May 16, 2025 at 01:56 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Joseph Auther "Woody" Woodard.

May 16, 2025 at 01:56 PM

DZ

“ We worked with Woody at ETMC Tyler Texas. Doug flew with Woody for Metro and became great friends with Woody and his family. Woody would fly the crew to Mt Vernon Tx where I worked as a medic and stay 12 hours. There was never a dull moment with Woody around. The stories he told were funny and amazing. Woody came in smiling and left smiling. How blessed we were to have known Woody and his family. God bless you Julia and your family and thanks for sharing Woody with all of us

doug and gwen zink - May 15, 2025 at 08:35 PM

LA

“ So many memories of good times with Woody. An amazing pilot who kept the crew at ease knowing exactly when to be serious and when to laugh. Chuck and I had so much fun thinking about the call we would make to Woody to tell him we were “a thing” after first meeting 30 something years before while flying together...and the reaction was priceless. Oh the stories that were told! Julia, you were a trooper as we continued the story telling on our visit to Florida. I have a feeling we weren't the only ones you had to listen to. Woody is a legacy in so many ways. Julia and family... May his memories last your lifetime. Prayers for comfort and peace.
Chuck and LaDonna

LaDona Allen - May 15, 2025 at 06:36 PM

LA

“ Ladonna A. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joseph Auther "Woody" Woodard.

Ladonna A. - May 15, 2025 at 06:16 PM

MK

“ *Much love, Rita, Jean and Keith purchased the Blue Caribbean Bouquet for the family of Joseph Auther "Woody" Woodard.*



Much love, Rita, Jean and Keith - May 15, 2025 at 05:42 PM

BN

“ Amazing, wonderful cousin Joe. I was so fortunate to not just have him as a much loved cousin, but to live next door to him for all my childhood years. He was my big brother, playmate, mentor, confidant and friend. Most girls rely heavily on girlfriends as they are growing up, but Joe was "my person" for many years. He was 4 years older, but was always "there" for me and let me tag along beside him whenever I could. I liked to have spelling contests with him when I was really young, and I always won! I have wonderful memories of us playing outdoors and, as I grew older, sharing so many stories. He taught me about boys and dating. He inspired me to be adventurous and brave and want to see the world. He made me laugh A LOT, when things weren't going well. He let this little cousin meet up with him and some of his friends on a few social outings (with my fake ID...yikes!!). I worried about him so much when he was in Viet Nam, but then he would be home and still full of stories and laughter. Then re-enlist and be gone again! He loved the "mission" and he absolutely loved to fly. Joe's humor and kindness remained, even through these difficult past 6 months with multiple surgeries and challenges. We texted regularly, and he still maintained a sense of humor and positivity; and always asked how I was even in the midst of his own challenges. Julia and he were truly the perfect pair. She was so good for him and had a calming, stable influence on him, while never suppressing his big personality. They were fun together and I loved hearing the two of them laughing and telling stories. Joe lit up every time he talked about his family. He was so proud of each of them. I loved him dearly and he will be greatly missed. My deepest sympathies to Julia, his children and grandchildren.

Brenda Noble - May 15, 2025 at 08:04 AM

LA

“ Love..Larry, Is, Autumn, Austin, Alexis purchased the Tender Tribute for the family of Joseph Auther "Woody" Woodard.



Love..Larry, Is, Autumn, Austin, Alexis - May 14, 2025 at 08:46 PM

LA

“ Love..Larry, Is, Autumn, Austin, Alexis planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joseph Auther "Woody" Woodard.

Love..Larry, Is, Autumn, Austin, Alexis - May 14, 2025 at 08:46 PM

CA

“ My condolences to Woody's family. Woody was a great guy and an awesome pilot. I will always remember him fondly from our days together at Flight For Life in Las Vegas. Christine Adams

Christine Adams - May 14, 2025 at 11:59 AM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Joseph Auther "Woody" Woodard.



May 13, 2025 at 02:59 PM

GP

“ A classmate at USAAVNS, brother RW Pilot in Viet Nam and Air Medical Service back in the US! Woody was a great friend, one of the most respected and nicest guys I've had the pleasure of knowing! I'll miss him very much!

Condolences to his family and friends! My thoughts and prayers are with you all!

Gerry Pagano - May 13, 2025 at 02:57 PM

NS

“ Woody was my first boss when I started with Metro in Las Vegas. This was Metro's first remote base in such a hostile flying environment (110° heat, loads of sand etc). I don't think the hospital thought Metro would last, but through Woody's fortitude and hard work, we made it. Woody was a true pioneer in the fledgling EMS industry. Everyone in the industry today can trace their roots back to Woody and those like him. Rest in Peace Woody; you're already missed.

Noel Sachkowsky - May 13, 2025 at 02:49 PM

BS

“ Sweet Uncle Joe - I will never forget our day of learning how small the world really was, give Skip my love. - Kiddo

Bridget A. Smith - May 13, 2025 at 01:54 PM

MS

“ I flew with Woody many years at First Flight in Melbourne Florida. He always had a smile on his face and made you feel that he had everything under control. His love for his family was very evident as his face lit up when he spoke about them. There will never be another Woody. You will be missed.

Mim Strote - May 13, 2025 at 01:37 PM

JG

“ Joe and Brenda Godson purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Joseph Auther "Woody" Woodard.



Joe and Brenda Godson - May 13, 2025 at 12:45 PM

JG

“ Joe and Brenda Godson planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joseph Auther "Woody" Woodard.

Joe and Brenda Godson - May 13, 2025 at 12:45 PM

MF

“ Metro Family purchased the Loving Lilies and Roses Bouquet for the family of Joseph Auther "Woody" Woodard.



Metro Family - May 13, 2025 at 12:19 PM

MF

“ Metro Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joseph Auther "Woody" Woodard.

Metro Family - May 13, 2025 at 12:19 PM

HR

“ condolences to Julia and family i first met Woody when he was one of the initial pilots for our Air1 medical service in Tyler Tx. i was a street medic but on occasions i was able to grab a hop for a maintenance flight he was amazing. my fondest memory is that everytime he landed on a LZ the first thing you saw was a huge grin he so loved flying. we hung out quite a bit and shared some interesting times. then he met the love of his life Julia. she tamed him down some but his spirit was always there. lord knows how many lives he saved but the number is unfathomable. RIP Woody we know you will be flying the skies for eternity God Bless

Henry Whatley, EMT/P. ret. - May 13, 2025 at 11:02 AM

JG

“ Woody was a pioneer in helicopter EMS. He founded the Florida EMS Pilots Association with the idea to come together for safety. He was a great guy and family man. A friend to all. I was proud to be his friend.

joe godson - May 13, 2025 at 10:56 AM

TS

True words, Joe 💕

Tamara Monroe Shultz - May 13, 2025 at 12:15 PM

KC

“Woody was a great guy! I had the privilege of knowing him from the sister program (Florida Flight 1) in Orlando. He loved his job and he always had a smile on his face. I am sorry for your loss and pray for your comfort during this difficult time. -Kim Cain

Kim Cain - May 13, 2025 at 10:44 AM

JS

Our thoughts and prayers are with Woody's family. I was heartbroken to hear of his passing. Joe, as we knew him, was a good friend of my brother when they were high school. Later in life my daughter, Bridget, met Joe when they were both working for First Flight in Melbourne, FL. We feel privileged to have known him. May memories of this wonderful man bring comfort to his family and friends during this difficult time.

Judy (Plummer) Smith - May 13, 2025 at 12:21 PM

JH

He was the sweetest person i know,he was one of the best pilot my heart goes out to family he will truly be miss Jacqueline Hall

Jacqueline Hall - May 13, 2025 at 09:51 PM

JD

I don't think my words can do justice to this amazing guy, but I owe it to him to try.

One day in Vietnam a new pilot, fresh out of school, was assigned to my platoon. I had only been in country a couple of months and was still learning the ropes. Little did I realize on the day he walked in that Woody's skill would help make our unit markedly better; and his energy and optimism would help make the remainder of our tours a whole lot more enjoyable for all of us in the 361st. He was the epitome of calm professionalism in the most trying circumstances. If he knew fear, I certainly couldn't tell. Always a pleasure to be in his company, always determined to succeed no matter the difficulty of the challenge. Admirably, Woody never never doubted it was his duty to serve. One of the things that made him so respected was his focus on people. In ever larger circles around his seat in the cockpit, he saw the faces of the pilots he flew with, the guys that maintained the aircraft, and most of all - the recon teams we supported. His dedication to people was extraordinary, and I am sure some of us in these groups made it home because it was a lucky day in the 361st when Woody reported for duty.

John D

John Debay - May 16, 2025 at 10:19 PM

BS

My thoughts too, John. I shall miss Woody. Last saw him last October in Las Vegas. Brian Sweet Panther 36/3/5. 1970.

Brian Sweet - May 25, 2025 at 11:32 PM

HW

“*Heidi, Michael, Leah & Lorelai Willett purchased the Basket Full of Wishes for the family of Joseph Auther "Woody" Woodard.*



Heidi, Michael, Leah & Lorelai Willett - May 13, 2025 at 10:21 AM