



Mr. James "Rambo" LaGarde

September 27, 2015

LaGarde, James "Rambo", 68, moved on to his next life at 5:38 A.M. Sunday, September 27, 2015, after a courageous battle with cancer. He leaves behind his wife and soul mate, Cathy, son Bobby, daughter Caron, grandson David, and his fur-babies Norman, Josie, DA, Sunny, Sylvester and Ms. Priss. He was reunited with his grandson William who passed away in 2014. I am sure he was met at the gates of Heaven with the more than 58,286 soldiers whose names are on the Vietnam Wall as he has kept them remembered for 50 years plus all of his relatives and friends who have passed on. The gates were open wide for him and all his fur-babies that he reunited with at the Rainbow Bridge. He was born in Warsaw, Indiana where he was a farm boy and he never outgrew his love of tractors of any kind. Uncle Sam sent him to Vietnam for his senior trip where he was a Crew Chief and Door Gunner on a Huey Gunship stationed at Bearcat. He retired from Manatee County School Board where he was a welder, always at recess because he was in charge of maintaining all the playground equipment. He checked out each piece himself before allowing the kids to play on it. He met the Superintendent one day while working on the playground and they took time out to swing together and it really impressed him that he knew his name...one of his favorite memories. He was a fanatic Nascar fan and everyone knew not to bother him when a race was on. He has enjoyed the Sprint Winter Nationals at East Bay for the last 33 years. He was a member and past President of the Vietnam Veterans Chapter 787, a member of Amvets Post 26, and for the past 15 years he has

been a Speaker in the History of Vietnam Classes in Hillsborough County. All the kids love and remember Rambo, The Legend. Of all the many things he did in his 68 years, he loved his time with his students and his family the best. He was able to fly to Indiana for his 50th class reunion in June this year and see all of his old classmates. This was a dream come true. He is going to be missed by all that knew him as he considered his friends his family. His Celebration of Life is going to be on Saturday, October 3 at 11:00 A.M., at Hopewell Funeral Home, 6005 CR 39 S, Plant City, 33567, with visitation beginning at 10:00 A.M. It is going to be officiated by "His Pistol Packing Minister" and friend Linda. Please bring memories and stories to share with everyone. In lieu of flowers. we ask instead that you make a contribution in his name to the Vietnam Veterans Chapter 787, Amvets Chapter 26 or Plant City High School JROTC. Expressions of condolence at www.HopewellFuneral.com.

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT 3. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Hopewell Funeral Home
6005 County Road 39 South
Plant City, FL 33567
(813) 737-3128
office@hopewellfuneral.com
<http://www.hopewellfuneral.com>

Celebration of Life

OCT 3. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Hopewell Funeral Home
6005 County Road 39 South
Plant City, FL 33567
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Tribute Wall

JD

“ Jim was a larger than life presence for so many of us. We will always remember him for the wonderful person he was and we are grateful to him for all that he did for everyone he met. RIP Rambo, until we meet again, prayers for Cathy and the family.

John & Cynthia Dross - October 17, 2015 at 08:03 AM

BF

“ Since returning from Vietnam Rambo has been one of the best friends a family could have. All four of my kids and several Grand kids who knew him loved him. We da a lot of breakfasts and lunches as a large "family" type group. He will be sorely missed...RIP
Bod, Donna Ortelt and Family

Bud and Donna Ortelt and family - October 04, 2015 at 05:38 PM

SS

“ During the funeral of sweet Will, Rambo told me that I had a great son (Troy) and that he told Troy that at anytime something were to happen that he could not come to me about that he would be there for him and just give him a call. Thank you Jim for caring so much about my son as your whole family does which you all are wonderful and caring people. All our love.
Sheila Surrency

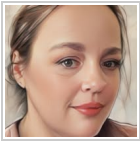
Sheila Surrency - October 03, 2015 at 07:50 AM

LP

“ I am so saddened at the thought of not seeing Rambo again, but so happy he is now at peace and in the presence of God. I will miss that rascal more than can be expressed. My prayers are with Cathy and family. Linda Pugsley Tampa (can't say here what Rambo always called me!)



Linda Pugsley - October 01, 2015 at 05:27 PM



“ I remember when I went to my first VVA 787 Chapter meeting as an AVVA member I felt very outnumbered. LOL However Rambo had such a warm approach about him. He asked me why I wanted to hang out with all of these "Old Guys" and I told him that I had lost my father. I was looking for a way to honor his memory. He said that the group would be happy to adopt me as one of their own and they certainly did. It is unfortunate how sometimes life takes us in such a different direction and I was sad that I lost touch with most of them but I have never forgotten how lucky I was to have known them. Rambo was such a memorable person. The experience I have gained working with him is something that I will carry on for the rest of my life.
Beverly A. Thomas
Baldwin City, Kansas



Beverly Thomas - September 30, 2015 at 03:41 PM

CS

We've known Rambo about 23 years, we camped together, we helped put the Vietnam Wall up and we worked the wall. Rambo was a very passionate person for all the military. RIP RAMBO. Prayers for Cathy and the family.

Carl and Margie Smith - October 01, 2015 at 07:11 PM

TC

“ I wish I could truly express the impact that Rambo made on the students in the History of the Viet Nam War class over so many years. I have students from over ten years ago who still send me messages regarding his stories and who have been so saddened to hear of his loss. My heart goes out to his family, but know that he made a lasting impression on so many young minds, and that he will never be forgotten. My thoughts and prayers go out to you all.

Tiffany Carr

Freedom High School

Tiffany Carr - September 30, 2015 at 01:17 PM

CH

“ Cathy, Carron, Bobby, David & family, Our hearts go out to you for your loss of Rambo. He made a difference in our life just as you all do. We will miss him terribly and treasure his memory and friendship for the rest of our lives. We are praying for God to keep you strong and bring you through this transition. We love you .
Semper Fi.

Carl & Elaine Harris



Carl & Elaine Harris - September 29, 2015 at 10:39 PM

BS

“ *Those who truly knew Jim and became his friend had a friend for life. He was my friend and I could always get him to laugh. He will always have a friend in me. Love you brother. Bob*

Bob Silmser - September 29, 2015 at 09:33 PM

CS

We didn't have the pleasure of getting to know Jim as closely as we would have liked. However, on the few occasions that we saw him, we knew that he was a fun loving family man. Our love and prayers are with Cathy and the family. Calvin and Donna Streetman

Calvin and Donna Street,am - October 01, 2015 at 08:22 PM

HT

Wanda and I met Jim on a few visits to Florida about the time period of Cathy /Jim getting married . Jim was welcomed into the Thompson family , Jim was a good person who loved his family. He will be missed but surely remembered. Our love and prayers for Cathy and family members.

Hubbard Thompson - October 02, 2015 at 03:56 PM

JN

*It was my honor to care for Rambo while he was a patient at the James A. Haley VA Hospital. I am saddened by his passing and will miss seeing him. His family is in my prayers at this difficult time.
Jane Nichols*

Jane Nichols - October 16, 2015 at 04:55 PM