



Thomas Ralph "Butch" Steakley

June 20, 1949 - March 3, 2025

Thomas Ralph "Butch" Steakley was born on June 20, 1949 in Gadsden, Alabama. He passed away on March 3, 2025 after a very sudden decline in his health. Butch was only 75 years of age.

Butch is survived by his beloved nieces Rhonda Steakley and Atalie (David) Whitley, and nephew, Todd (Amy) Steakley, and several great nieces and nephews as well as loyal friends and extended family members. He also leaves behind his prized canine companion, Thunder, and his cat, Whiskers.

Butch was preceded in death by his mother, Mary Frances Bates Steakley, and adopted father, George Steakley, as well as his oldest brother, Howard Earl Steakley, and youngest brother, Roger Dale Steakley.

A true patriot and American hero, Butch joined the United States Army prior to graduating from high school in 1967 to fight in Vietnam. He served with the 173rd Airborne Brigade in the U.S. Army and was a member of a long-range reconnaissance patrol unit up to the time he was shot during a mission. He was awarded the Purple Heart for injuries sustained during his time in Vietnam. He also received numerous military awards including the Gallantry Cross with Palm recognizing his bravery in combat as well as the Honor Medal-First Class for his outstanding service.

Butch, known as “Sky Warrior” by the Cherokee Nation was a member of The Cherokee Tribe of Northeast Alabama and served as the Chief of the Warrior Society, representing the tribe in all tribal functions.

Not only did Butch love his country and the Cherokee Nation, but he also loved motorcycles, traveling, karaoke, and spending time with his many friends and family. He was a devoted son, brother, and friend.

A memorial service celebrating his life will be held Tuesday, March 18, 2025 from 6:00-8:00 pm at The Landmark located at 209 4th Street, Gadsden, AL 35901.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

MAR 18. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

The Landmark
209 4th St
Gadsden, AL 35901

Tribute Wall

SP

“ Sherry Powell lit a candle in memory of Thomas Ralph "Butch" Steakley



Sherry Powell - April 28 at 03:56 PM

ED

“ This man threatened to GUT ME LIKE A DEER - God is my judge and protector - he was a predator

Edenslivingtv - January 06 at 04:58 PM

SP

How well did you know him and how much did you know about his life? He in no way to me was a predator. He was to me the protector A friend for 58 years. He would have done anything for a friend! 🕊️🙏❤️

Sher McCabe Powell - April 30 at 01:19 AM

RT

“ My name is Robin "Doc" Titus and I served with Butch in the 173 in 1968-69. He was a fine young man and a true patriot. It was a honor to serve with him. He, McBride, and Dixon and J.J. were my best friends. All from different parts of the country.

Robin "Doc" Titus - June 22, 2025 at 07:49 PM

RB

“ I enjoyed all our riding times while Butch and I was members of the VNVMC. Going to miss my old friend. Happy trails brother. CU in the next life. 🙏

Ricky aka Braindead.. - March 11, 2025 at 04:33 PM

SB

I only knew him for a short time but we became good friends and had a lot of laughs together. The last few months were sad. He just kept going downhill fast. Condolences to his family and friends! He is now Free at last!

Susan Brooks - March 12, 2025 at 09:46 PM

WM

“ *I am so sorry to learn of the passing of my friend, Butch. He was a good friend & although, I had not seen him in several years, I will miss him. Butch is the person who got me interested in my heritage, the Native American Tribe of the Creeks. He helped me find that I am related to Chief William McIntosh.*

Wanda Campbell Moody - March 07, 2025 at 10:35 AM

MR

“ *I remember our time in the Herd(173d),rough times but so much brotherhood. Our friendship continued for half a century. My heart is so sad you are gone my Brother. We never did feel any thing but pride for what we did.My heartfelt condolences to your family.I will see you when the Jump Master calls me.*



Master Rock - March 06, 2025 at 04:58 PM

SP

BUTCH "Sky Warrior" one of my best forever friends! After 3 tours in Vietnam 🇻🇳 and agent orange he was never the same taking so many meds for his body and mind. We road motorcycles 🏍️ and listened to music 🎵. We both are of the Cherokee Native Americans which we spent much time. I am Sher "Night Star." We spent so much time together when I traveled to Gadsden. I was there when "Wayá" his first wolf 🐺 who was his most loved. With a broken heart 💔 waya was buried beside his home. I still have the red tail feather 🏹 he gave me in remembrance. His second wolf 🐺 would eat Cheetos out of our lips 🗨️. He/she was hit by a speeding car. We both drove mustangs and loved to race. I was there each time his cherished dogs and cat died. Butch was "one of a kind!" He loved his parents brothers and nieces and many friends. After 3 Nam tours as a sniper no one could understand all of his behavior. Losing his adopted brother Howard Lamb in Nam. Butch loved weapons and fatigues he wore during the wars. He loved Grapico and Dr Pepper. I was with him through the good times and the bad. He loved AMERICA 🇺🇸! SKY WARRIOR I will always love the person I knew so well! In your very own way YOU were one of the "Good Guys!" I will see you later with "THE GREAT SPIRIT." Wado My friend. Fly High. 🐺🏍️

Sherry Powell - April 28 at 03:37 PM