



Van R. Bonnewitz

October 25, 1931 - June 4, 2024

Van Bonnewitz of Orlando, Florida, died peacefully at home surrounded by his family on June 4, 2024, at the age of 92.

He is survived by his seven children: Paul and Mariann (Engelkes) Bonnewitz of Hampton, New Hampshire, Maureen and Allen Sowers, Sheila Bonnewitz, Peggy Bonnewitz, Frank and Linda (Huelsman) Bonnewitz, Kevin and Elisha (Gonzalez) Bonnewitz and John Bonnewitz-Coffey all

of Orlando; eight beautiful grandchildren: Tyler Stokes, Julia Bonnewitz, Mary Sowers, David

Sowers, Kate Bonnewitz, Paul Bonnewitz, Paloma Bonnewitz and Levi Bonnewitz all of

Orlando; his cousins Linda Trump and Carol Mobley; his sister-in-law Betty Daly of Newark,

Delaware; his sisters-in-law Sheila McCloskey and Rose O'Brien and his brother-in-law

Anthony O'Brien of Limerick, Ireland. He had 41 nieces and nephews in Ireland, Canada and the United States.

He was preceded in death by his loving wife Mena of 63 years and his infant daughter Deirdre

Marie.

Van was born on October 25, 1931, in Van Wert, Ohio to Paul and Jane Bonnewitz. He graduated from Howe Military School in 1949 and from Purdue University in 1953 with a degree in Civil Engineering. He was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army Corps of Engineers. He served in many locations over a distinguished 20 year career to include Fort Carson, Colorado where he met and married the love of his life, Mena; La Rochelle, France; Ft Belvoir, Virginia; Ft Bragg, North Carolina; Fort Totten, New York; the Republic of Panama and Augsburg, Germany. He is a combat veteran having deployed twice to Viet Nam, once as a Green Beret, and also to Guam, Mali, and Colombia. He retired from the US Army in 1973 and after having spent a year in Limerick, Ireland with his family, they settled in Orlando in 1974. He worked for many years as the Shipping Manager at Vanda Beauty Counselor in Kissimmee and was a longtime volunteer at Saint James Cathedral. He loved technology and had more laptops, iPads, Kindles and cell phones than the rest of his family combined. There was nothing he could not fix or repair. "If you can read the directions you can do it." He taught himself to paint, do leather work, repair cars, and build anything. And he watched every John Wayne movie numerous times. There will be a viewing at DeGusipe Funeral Home and Crematory at 9001 N. Orlando Ave,

Maitland, FL on Thursday evening, Jun 13 from 5 to 7 PM. A memorial mass will be celebrated on Friday, June 14 at 10 AM at Saint James Cathedral.

There will be an internment with full military honors at Cape Canaveral National Cemetery at 1:30 PM.

As everyone who knew him said, "Van was a true Gentleman." He never met a stranger. Rest in peace beloved husband, father, grandfather, uncle, father-in-law and friend. Van was a supporter of many charities to include Bishop Grady Villas, an organization which supports persons with disabilities to use their God-given gifts to achieve greater independence, physical and emotional well-being, and spiritual growth and the Native American Veterans

Assistance (NAVA), an organization for and about helping Native American Veterans and their

families on the most impoverished reservations in the United States.

If you wish to honor him, they will welcome your donation.

Bishop Grady Villas

401 Bishop Grady Ct.

St. Cloud, FL 34769

<https://www.bishopgradyvillas.org/donate>

Native American Veterans Assistance

PO Box 5053

Pine Ridge, SD 57770

<https://www.nativevets.org>

Cemetery Details

Cape Canaveral National Cemetery

5525 US-1 North
Mims, FL 32754
(321) 383-2638
<http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/capecanaveral.asp>

Previous Events

Memorial Mass

JUN 14. 10:00 AM (ET)

St. James Cathedral
215 N Orange Ave
Orlando, FL 32801

Interment with Military Honor Guard

JUN 14. 1:30 PM (ET)

Cape Canaveral National Cemetery
5525 US-1 North
Mims, FL 32754
(321) 383-2638
<http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/capecanaveral.asp>

Tribute Wall



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Van R. Bonnewitz.*



June 13, 2024 at 04:38 PM



“ *Liz and Sam Lehrfeld planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Van R. Bonnewitz.*

Liz and Sam Lehrfeld - June 13, 2024 at 04:38 PM



“ *Our family is keeping your family in our thoughts and prayers. A small donation was given to Bishop Grady Villas in honor of your dad.*



Burrage Family - June 13, 2024 at 02:06 PM



“ *Patricia D. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Van R. Bonnewitz.*

Patricia D. - June 13, 2024 at 10:29 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Van R. Bonnewitz.



June 12, 2024 at 01:13 PM



“ Lynn and Dianne Owen planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Van R. Bonnewitz.

Lynn and Dianne Owen - June 12, 2024 at 01:13 PM



“ Don and Lori Culbreth purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Van R. Bonnewitz.



Don and Lori Culbreth - June 11, 2024 at 08:23 PM



“ Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Van R. Bonnewitz.



June 11, 2024 at 02:31 PM



“ Rebecca Sherod planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Van R. Bonnewitz.

Rebecca Sherod - June 11, 2024 at 02:31 PM

R1

“ Ronny&LaShonda Robertson (Coloss 1:9-13) purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Van R. Bonnewitz.



Ronny&LaShonda Robertson (Coloss 1:9-13) - June 11, 2024 at 01:26 PM

R1

“ Ronny&LaShonda Robertson (Coloss 1:9-13) planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Van R. Bonnewitz.

Ronny&LaShonda Robertson (Coloss 1:9-13) - June 11, 2024 at 01:26 PM



“ Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Van R. Bonnewitz.



June 11, 2024 at 01:12 PM



“ Rose Remembrance was purchased for the family of Van R. Bonnewitz.



June 11, 2024 at 04:18 AM

RM

“ Our lovely uncle Van. Always a kind word and huge hospitality when we visited Orlando. Rest in peace Van, reunited with Mena. Thinking of all our cousins with love x

Rosemary McCloskey - June 10, 2024 at 05:38 PM

SM

“ Sheila McCloskey purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Van R. Bonnewitz.



Sheila McCloskey - June 10, 2024 at 04:53 PM

SM

“ Sheila McCloskey planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Van R. Bonnewitz.

Sheila McCloskey - June 10, 2024 at 04:53 PM

JD

“ JNS and the Army Program Division purchased the Magnificent Life Spray for the family of Van R. Bonnewitz.



JNS and the Army Program Division - June 10, 2024 at 01:32 PM



“ *Sacred Duty Spray was purchased for the family of Van R. Bonnewitz.*



June 10, 2024 at 08:29 AM



“ *Blue Caribbean Bouquet was purchased for the family of Van R. Bonnewitz.*



June 08, 2024 at 10:14 AM



“ *Known Van for years. I called him Uncle Van out of respect. But over time felt like he was an uncle. The fishing trips at Mr. Dalys... oh my. So much drinking and fishing and drinking and poker and drinking. lol It certainly changed the atmosphere when he stopped coming for our trips. To the family, I'm so sorry for your lose. Uncle Van was a great guy.*

terry palmer - June 07, 2024 at 05:17 PM



“ *My condolences to your family. A small donation was made to Bishop Grady's Villas in honor of your Dad.*

Robin Frisella - June 07, 2024 at 04:07 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Van R. Bonnewitz.*



June 07, 2024 at 01:41 PM



“ *Heartfelt and sincere sympathies to all our Bonnewitz cousins on Van's death. May he rest in peace. We really enjoyed, and were made to feel so welcome in Orlando on our visits to Mena and Van. May Van enjoy the fruits of his labours as he joins Mena and all his family and friends in eternal rest.*

Dan loved chatting to Van about all things engineering. A most interesting man. It must have been a great comfort to you all having Van at home with you in his final days. Thinking of you all and sending love, support, prayers and thoughts as you all prepare to say your final goodbye.

Rest in peace Van.

jo O Brien Corbally Limerick Ireland. - June 07, 2024 at 11:49 AM



“ *Mary Ann and Tom purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Van R. Bonnewitz.*



Mary Ann and Tom - June 07, 2024 at 11:08 AM

TW

“ Sending our deepest sympathies to all the Bonnewitz family on the passing of Van. Lovely man - I remember him from his visits to Limerick. May he rest in peace. Thérèse and David Ward (O'Brien) Wicklow, Ireland.

therese ward - June 07, 2024 at 09:17 AM

BD

“ I looked forward to Van coming up for our fishing weekend, We didn't catch much but the poker games made up for it. Rest in Peace.

Brian Daly - June 07, 2024 at 08:10 AM

AB

“ My deepest sympathy to you all on the passing of your lovely dad, grandad & father-in-law. May you be comforted by your many happy memories and may Van rest peacefully. There'll be a fine céad míle fáilte for him in heaven from Mena and all who have gone before him. Thinking of you all. Anne O Brien , Corbally, Limerick.

Anne O Brien - June 07, 2024 at 04:48 AM

JJ

Heartfelt and sincere sympathies to all our Bonnewitz cousins on Van's death. May he rest in peace. We really enjoyed, and were made to feel so welcome in Orlando on our visits to Mena and Van. May Van enjoy the fruits of his labours as he joins Mena and all his family and friends in eternal rest.

Dan loved chatting to Van about all things engineering. A most interesting man. It must have been a great comfort to you all having Van at home with you in his final days. Thinking of you all and sending love, support, prayers and thoughts as you all prepare to say your final goodbye. Rest in peace Van.

jo O Brien Corbally Limerick Ireland. - June 07, 2024 at 09:05 AM