



France Reitz

May 23, 1947 - January 2, 2023

Worshipful Brother France “Papa Bear” Reitz, 75 of Muskogee, Oklahoma, laid down his working tools on January 2, 2023.

France was born on May 23, 1947, to Donald and Lilly Reitz of Sunbury, PA. France was predeceased by his father Donald, his mother Lilly, his brother John, his sister Evelyn, his first wife, Nancy, and his friend and honorary brother, Marvin Schmidt.

France is survived and missed by his loving wife of 20 years, Inez, and the children he loved and was so proud of for the lives they lead and their accomplishments: Tammy (Brian) Pitts, Christy (Jeremy) Jones, France (Christiane) Reitz Jr., and Heather (Jesse) Muth. France provided guidance and love to Michael Ogg, Holly (DJ) Silkebakken, Donald (Jackie) Simms, and Katy LeMasters whom he embraced as his honorary children. He will be forever cherished and remembered by his grandchildren: France Reitz III, Jayden Reitz, Elizabeth Reitz, Margaret Gase, Dana Gase, Sabryna Jones, Mason Pitts, Jordan (Mariah) Pitts and Brad Pitts and so many more honorary grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and four great grandchildren. His family knew no boundaries and included his brother-in-arms Alan (Tammy) Wise of Las Vegas, NV; his honorary brothers: Ken (Linda) Frazier, Mark (Donna) McFadden, Mike (Vicki) Kennedy, Randy (Missy) Griffith, and Harold (Peggy) Willard; Masonic and Shrine brothers, the ROMEO’s (Retired Old Men Eating Out), his former wife Betty Reitz, and so many brothers and sisters in-law and friends.

He was born in Sunbury, PA and his family then moved to California where they remained until the passing of his mother at an early age. Due to life challenges, his father was taking the children back to Pennsylvania and during his stay in Tulsa, Oklahoma the children were taken by the State. France and his brother, John, were placed in the Tulsa Boys Home where he grew up. He attended and graduated from Tulsa Central High School in 1966. After graduation he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. France was trained as a Security Policeman after basic training and served with the “combat police” during the Vietnam War and he was “dropped” into territories to secure the premises for the building of an air strip. He was one of the “Four Aces” – each one on his team having a different Ace from a card deck – France was the “Ace of Spades” – he always joked he should have been the “Ace of Hearts”. During his time in Vietnam, France earned the Vietnam Service Medal with two Bronze Service Stars, the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm, and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal. After his service in Vietnam, France remained in the Air Force and served first as an Air Traffic Control Radar Specialist and then as a Real Estate Cost Management Analysis Technician until his separation from the service in 1980.

After his separation from the U.S. Air Force, France continued to serve his country in various U.S. Government positions in the Dept. of Veterans Affairs, U.S. Postal Service and finally with the Corp of Engineers as a Hydropower Technician. His total service to this country and its people totaled 36.5 years. In 2003, when France retired from the Corp of Engineers, he just could not sit still and spend his days in a rocking chair on the front porch. He was avid sportsman all his life enjoying hunting, fishing, and all things outdoors. To this he added service through masonry becoming actively involved in his lodge, Scottish Rite and as a Shriner, as well as enjoying motorcycle trips, cross-country trips, etc. He is one of a small group of motorcyclists who have performed the “border to border” ride. He was so proud of the group of friends he made while accomplishing this endeavor.

He completed the “Turkey World Slam.” He was known in the archery world as

a mentor and skilled marksman. He was sponsored by Browning for traditional archery and qualified twice for the World Championships. Two of his favorite tournaments to participate in were the Arkansas State Archery Tournament and the Texas State Archery Tournament until his health declined and he could no longer compete.

France was a 32nd Degree Master Mason and Past Master of Muskogee Lodge #28. He became a Shriner in 2007. As a member of the Mounted Patrol his unit brought an International Trophy to the Bedouin Shrine for the first time in the Shrine Temple's history. France loved to perform in parades as "Ruckus the Clown" – even though he had health challenges – he rode his little "ruckus" motorcycle and the crowd loved him. In later years, he purchased two parade vehicles for his son, Little France and him to entertain the parade crowds together. They even performed during the Shrine Rodeo half-time. France loved to travel. With Inez, he traveled to 48 states and was making plans for a trip to Alaska. If one traveled with France, you knew it was never about the destination but the journey. So many incredible memories of these journeys. Additional days were always added to the itinerary because one never knew when he would take a road less traveled for new adventures to be discovered.

There are no words that can express how grateful and blessed we are to our friends and neighbors who were there for us during the years France and I were together on this earth. Also, a heartfelt thank you to the Brushy Mountain Fire Department, Muskogee County EMS, and the Muskogee County Sheriff Department for doing everything they could and for being so kind and compassionate.

Family conducted services will be held Saturday, January 14th, at 11:00 a.m. at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 3008 E. Hancock St., Muskogee. The family requests in lieu of flowers donations be sent to the Bedouin Shrine Temple Transportation Fund in memory of France "Papa Bear" Reitz. These donations will be used to ensure the children and their

families are provided full transportation for care without any cost to the family.

Previous Events

Family conducted memorial service

JAN 14. 11:00 AM (CT)

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
3008 E. Hancock
Muskogee, OK 74403

Tribute Wall



“ *France Reitz*

October 23, 2023 at 09:38 AM



“ *Sacred Duty Spray was purchased for the family of France Reitz.*



January 11, 2023 at 09:11 PM



“ *Budget and Planning Division purchased the Fier y Lily and Rose for the family of France Reitz.*



Budget and Planning Division - January 11, 2023 at 08:21 AM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of France Reitz.*



January 10, 2023 at 09:11 AM



“ To the man that adopted me as his daughter,
I will always have a special place in my heart for you! Thank you for
being a wonderful man and loving my Inez and Heather! You always
encouraged and loved me. And never stopped teasing me LOL.
Love, Misty Thomason

Wyndella York - January 10, 2023 at 04:52 AM



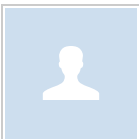
“ Will always remember the days of the Texas Longbow shoots and
going to eat and drink at the German restaurant in Ft Worth.

Ronald Ray Summerlin II - January 09, 2023 at 06:11 PM



“ He was always my brother from another mother I loved him as just
that. He'd do anything for you and say what was on his mind like I
do. We always fought like brothers and sisters do and I loved it. He
will be sorely missed forever.

Brenda Silkebakken - January 09, 2023 at 12:49 PM



“ Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the
family of France Reitz.



January 09, 2023 at 10:59 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of France Reitz.



January 05, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ 1 file added to the album France Reitz Sr



Reitz Family - January 05, 2023 at 11:14 AM



Such a good picture of France!

Darla Boydston - January 07, 2023 at 12:27 AM



“ 1 file added to the album France Reitz Sr.



Reitz Family - January 05, 2023 at 10:26 AM

JB

“ So so sorry for your loss. 😞



Jimmy Blackburn - January 04, 2023 at 10:05 PM