



Rev. Billy W. Searce Sr.

September 23, 1935 - August 15, 2021

Billy Wiseman Searce, Sr. 85 of Danville was called home to heaven on Sunday, August 15, 2021. Born September 23, 1935, he was the son of the late Forest W. Searce and the late Ruby C. Searce.

He joined the Army National Guard when he was 16 years old and remained in service 43 years and 8 months and 15 days; 37 ½ years of that time was full time service. He began his career in what was known as the Brown Shoe Army, and he always remembered dyeing those brown boots and shoes black. He advanced through the ranks from Private to Colonel and was promoted in retirement to the rank of Brigadier General. He was awarded the US Army Legion of Merit Medal, US Army Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, USAR Achievement Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Federal/State, VANG Service Ribbon with #43 Dev. VANG Commendation Medal, VANG Bronze Star, VANG Perfect Attendance Ribbon.

Billy was member of the Danville Sertoma Club, serving several years as Chaplain, and one year concurrently as President. He also served on the board of The Danville Chapter, American Red Cross. He was compassionate toward the Native Americans. He gave financial support to St. Labre, St. Joseph Indian Schools, Sioux Nation Relief Fund, Southwest Indian Relief

Council, and Council of Indian Nations. Billy was an avid western fan. He loved and collected western movies and his favorites were Roy Rogers and Gene Autry, but he loved them all. His entire wardrobe consisted of nothing but western style jackets, trousers, and boots.

While Billy was at Ft. Sill, OK, Willis Memorial Baptist Church in Cascade, VA asked him if he would be their Pastor when he completed his tour Ft. Sill. Billy accepted the call after his Battalion Commander, LTC Henry I. Slayton, Jr., agreed to let him serve the church as long as it did not interfere with his military duties. Billy served as pastor for seven and a half years. He resigned, and was the founding pastor of Brush Arbor Baptist Church, where he served until he was military transferred to the 116th Infantry (Stonewall) Brigade (Separate) in Staunton, VA, which soon became a unit of the newly re-activated 29th Infantry Division, headquartered at Ft. Belvoir, VA. While in Staunton, approximately 3 years, Billy served as Interim Pastor at First Baptist Church in Staunton, VA for one year. During that time, he founded and was President of "Beulah Land Missions Inc." Shortly afterwards, Billy was transferred to the Adjutant General's Office in Richmond, VA. He remained on the General's senior staff until his retirement from the military on September 30, 1995. Sandy Shores Baptist Church called Billy to be their Pastor and he began those duties on the first Sunday in October 1997.

While he was serving militarily, Billy continued to further his education. He earned a Bachelor of Individualized Studies from Virginia State University; He earned a Bachelor of Theology Degree, Master of Theology Degree from International Seminary (Endorsed by the Department of Defense) and after his retirement, the Board of Directors of International Seminary awarded Billy the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Divinity.

On July 2, 1955, he married Kathleen Barbour Searce, who passed away on October 16, 2016.

He later married Sylvia Clark Searce, who survives.

Survivors also include a son, Billy W. Searce, Jr., (Mary Anne), two step-sons, Carson Clark (Shelby) and Eric Clark (Clover), a brother, Basil Searce, six step-grandchildren, Leigh Anne Ottaway, Patrick Ottaway, Spencer Clark, Ashley Clark, Kaden Clark and Grace Clark.

In addition to his first wife, four brothers, Landon, Dennis, Tommy and Frederick Searce, predeceased him.

Funeral services will be held on Saturday, August 21, 2021 at 11:00 AM from the graveside at Danville Memorial Gardens with the Rev. Haywood Alcorn officiating.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests that memorial donations be made to the Riverbend Fire Dept.

Wrenn-Yeatts Westover Chapel is serving the Searce family.

Tribute Wall

TP

“It was a pleasure to work in Human Resources under the leadership of COL Searce. He was very likeable and showed respect and honor to his job as well as his staff. I always had the highest respect for him, he was "one of a kind". My prayers go out to his entire family & the military community. RIP COL Searce.



Theresita (Terri) Pleasants-Lewis

Theresita (Terri) Pleasants-Lewis - August 25, 2021 at 02:22 PM

DB

“Col Billie, later BG (Ret) was a wonderful individual, friend, and dedicated member of the VaARNG. I remember him as always being "cool under pressure" and attending to duty. Word can not say enough about the true Southern Gentleman he defined. I know God has a special job in that home in the heavens. Rest in pease and I will see you again sometime in the future.

David L. Bishop, BG (Ret)
Former USP&FO for Virginia

David L. Bishop - August 20, 2021 at 03:32 PM

MM

“Col Searce was truly a fine officer and a pleasure to work for. Nothing but fond memories.

Michael Morris - August 20, 2021 at 09:46 AM

SD

“ It really saddens me that such a wonderful, kind, and respectful fellow VaARNG member has said goodbye world! My heart is breaking for he was always there for me in so many ways. There could not have been another. Goodbye my S1. Hope to see you over there.



SFC(R) LaVerne DeSett - August 19, 2021 at 12:19 AM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Rev. Billy W. Searce Sr..



August 19, 2021 at 12:09 AM

JW

“ John & Toni Walker lit a candle in memory of Rev. Billy W. Searce Sr.



John & Toni Walker - August 18, 2021 at 07:54 AM

JP

“ Billy was one of the finest individuals to grace this earth. He was my friend and mentor. I treasured his friendship and will always remember him. He made the National Guard special....john powell

John Powell - August 17, 2021 at 09:32 PM

KC

“ I'm saddened by the passing of Billy. However, I share in the celebration of life of this strong man of God. Unfortunately I won't be able to travel to his memorial service because of some health issues of my own. But, I share in many memories of Billy as we served together many years in the Virginia Army National Guard. Rest in peach my Brother in Christ!
Kent Carter

Kent Carter - August 17, 2021 at 10:09 AM

RS

“ I served with Billy in the Virginia Army National Guard. It was a great experience for he was a man that exhibited humility, a wealth of knowledge, great leadership, a love for God and respect for all mankind. Rest In Peace my friend. Raymond C. Ramsey, Sr. (Capt. VaNG Retired)



Raymond C. Ramsey, Sr. - August 17, 2021 at 09:07 AM

BH

“ Worked for the VA. Army National Guard during his tenure. He was such an admiral individual and an inspiration to so many he came in contact with God bless his family during this most difficult time. RIP my friend.

Betty Hajacos



Betty Hajacos - August 17, 2021 at 08:32 AM

SL

“ *A good man who loved the Lord, his family, his country, and his people. Praying for the family.
II Timothy 4:6-8.
Preacher Steve and Sharon*

Stephen Lamb - August 17, 2021 at 07:55 AM



“ *Rachel Dabney lit a candle in memory of Rev.
Billy W. Searce Sr.*



Rachel Dabney - August 16, 2021 at 09:42 PM



“ *Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the
family of Rev. Billy W. Searce Sr..*



August 16, 2021 at 09:23 PM



“ *Janice Reese lit a candle in memory of Rev.
Billy W. Searce Sr.*



Janice Reese - August 16, 2021 at 09:08 PM



“ *Billy was a kind and thoughtful man and a great pastor when he was at Willis Memorial Church. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family!*

Janice Reese - August 16, 2021 at 09:08 PM



“ *I am saddened to hear of Billy's death. He was faithful to his Lord, family, country, friends and we will hold treasured memories of him in our hearts. May God's comfort surround the family.*

Judy Edmonds - August 16, 2021 at 11:09 AM