



## Alfred Nicholas Katzenstein "Nick"

November 14, 1947 - February 8, 2021

Alfred Nicholas "Nick" Katzenstein, 73, passed away peacefully in his sleep of natural causes on February 28, 2021, at his home in Santa Barbara, California. Nick will be remembered for living life to the fullest. A decorated war veteran, a longtime and highly respected peace officer, Nick was an extremely accomplished man.

Nick was born to Alfred Julius and Nonna Katzenstein in Los Angeles, CA, on November 14, 1947. Although his mother was an immigrant from Shanghai, China (of Russian descent), he had an all-American childhood. He was a Boy Scout, played football, wrestled, surfed, and raced Mini Coopers, but his two biggest passions were fishing and baseball. He was scouted to play for the major leagues while in high school. Nick received his education from Mount San Antonio College, Cal Poly Pomona, and the University of Virginia.

Nick was born into a Navy family and became a highly decorated Veteran. He was an Airborne Ranger and an Army Special Forces member as a Green Beret and part of the famous SOG unit acting as the Operations NCO. He obtained his MOS' in Radio Communications, Combat Engineering, and Operations and Intelligence. Nick's work in the Vietnam war operating in Cambodia was classified for thirty years. His unit MACV-SOG CCS recon (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, Studies and Observations Group) received the Presidential Unit Citation in 2001, which is given to units that displayed extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy. This award is equivalent to the Distinguished Silver Cross award, the military's

second-highest award of valor. He also received the Bronze Star, two Air Medals, the Combat Infantry Badge and Vietnamese Jump Wings. Nick's best military memories are the relationships established with other Special Forces personnel.

Nick took his Military training and experience into Law Enforcement. He started his 31-year career with the Santa Barbara Police Department in 1971. He worked in every division as an Officer, Sergeant and Lieutenant as a patrol officer, "Mary 3" Motorcycle patrol, Detective and Public Information Officer. Nick received over 40 commendations, including the H. Thomas Guerry Officer of the Year Award in 1980. He was a 1975 graduate of the FBI Hazardous Materials (bomb) School, a 1988 graduate of the FBI National Academy, a 1991 graduate of the POST Command College, and completed 70 other specialized training classes.

Nick helped develop the department's original SWAT team and Bomb squad. His highlights while with the SBPD included removing 2,300 pounds of volatile dynamite from a hidden cache in the Santa Barbara foothills and acting as the lead Detective in solving a triple murder case. He also implemented a Historical Homicide Case Review Program, which helps clear unsolved cases and make arrests.

In 1996, Nick became well known as the "Voice" of the police department when he took on the role of public information officer. Hardly a day went by where his family and friends didn't see him on the local news stations. After 31 years as a decorated law enforcement officer, Nick decided it was finally time to hang up his hat and go fishing.

Nick had many hobbies and passions and had fond memories growing up fishing with his father and brother. He eventually instilled that passion in his two sons, John and Nicky. Together they went on many trips to Alaska, Mexico, Oregon and the Channel Islands. One of his claims to fame is the heroic fish story of fighting a 1,200-pound marlin for ten hours in the Bisbee Fishing tournament in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. Unfortunately, ten hours of the 1,200-pound pull and a frayed line on the pectoral fin was just too much,

and the marlin got away. This cry-in-your-beer fish story did not keep Nick away from his love of fishing. Nick also served as president on the board of the Channel Fishing Club.

He was an avid Dodger fan and spent his entire life going to Dodger Stadium. He was a board member of the semi-professional Santa Barbara Foresters Baseball Team. But perhaps his best baseball memories were watching his son, Nicky, swing a bat as a toddler and continuing to play in college. He was not only his biggest fan throughout his time playing but his biggest supporter during Nicky's coaching career. Later in life Nick followed the son of his childhood friend, a Major League Baseball pitcher. He would meet up with a group of his friends and they would travel to Florida and Arizona for Spring Training and then ultimately San Diego for the official season. He appreciated the military flyovers and the tribute to the military.

Nick was very involved in the community of Santa Barbara and served on multiple boards. His most prominent position was serving on the Old Spanish Days board and eventually becoming the 2002 El Presidente. His theme was "Mi Casa es Su Casa" and those were words he truly lived by. He was so happy to have family and friends from near and far surround him during this special event he loved so much. Up until his death, he continued to serve on OSD and the Carriage Museum Boards.

Nick was a member of the Los Rancheros Pobres trail riding group. He had many dear and loyal friends in this group that it's only fitting he spent his last day on earth at their traditional Saturday lunch laughing and enjoying their company. As they say, the saddle may be empty, but his memory lives on. Anyone who had been to Nick's house could quickly tell he liked to BBQ; maybe it was the six plus grills that he had on his patio that gave it away. He not only loved food, but he loved making people feel comfortable and delighted in feeding them. He was the "host with the most." Food was his love language, which he learned from his Russian mother. All those that had the chance to indulge in one of Nick's meals were in for a treat.

In Nick's retirement, he was able to travel often. In addition to his many fishing trips, he saw many friends and family around the world. Shortly after his retirement, he journeyed to South Africa with his mother and brother to meet some cousins. He had such a great time and spoke fondly of these relatives. Nick would often return to his roots in Orange County and spend time with his daughter, Tami, and her family. He loved their time spent at the beach. Nick also made a few reunion trips to Hawaii with his lifelong buddies. His annual reunion in Las Vegas with his military buddies was very important to him, and he kept up with these guys throughout the year. His last big trip was to visit his daughter, Page, and her family in Munich, Germany. He was able to sightsee and eat and drink his way around Germany, Austria and Italy.

Nick wasn't ready to give up his travels. He had a full agenda planned for when "this virus" would be over. Nick planned to get in his car and take a road trip. In true Nick fashion, he never let anything stop him. After all, he had survived the jungles of Vietnam, where most SOG members did not. It was finally time that his party started "winding down," but that doesn't mean it's over. Nick's beloved family and friends will hold Nick close to their hearts and keep his memory alive.

Nick is preceded in death by his father, Alfred Julius Katzenstein. He is survived by his mother, Nonna Katzenstein of Lake Tahoe, CA; brother, John Katzenstein (Robin) of Salem, Oregon; sister, Arlene "Sue" Wolfe (Ron) of Lake Tahoe, CA; children, John Katzenstein (Larilynn) of Roseburg, Oregon; Tami Hughes (John) of San Juan Capistrano, CA ; Nick Katzenstein (Melissa) of Santa Barbara, CA; Page Plowman (Joe) of Santa Barbara; Step daughter, Kathy Gallagher (Mike Eliason) of Santa Barbara, CA; grandchildren, Johnny Katzenstein of Seattle, WA, Mahala Pokorny (David) of San Juan Capistrano, CA, Summer and Jasmine Hughes of San Juan Capistrano, CA, Presly Plowman of Malibu, CA, Lucy, Carter, and Joseph Plowman of Santa Barbara, Emmie, Isla and Olivia Katzenstein of Santa Barabara; great-grandchild, Jonah Pokorny of San Juan Capistrano, CA; cousin, Gary Klinghardt (Beth) of Oregon. Nieces and nephews in Oregon and California and numerous cousins

in Australia and South Africa.

Nick also had many dear friends throughout the world and especially in his close knit community of Santa Barbara. Thank you all for your cherished friendships with Nick over the years. Here's to calm seas and tight lines!  
Farewell family and friends.

The family asks in lieu of flowers that donations be made in Nick Katzentein's name to the Santa Barbara Police Foundation. P.O. Box 91929 Santa Barbara, CA 93109

# Cemetery Details

## **Santa Barbara Cemetery**

901 Channel Drive  
Santa Barbara, CA 93108

# Events

**Details are pending.**

# Tribute Wall

WG

“ Nick, I only knew you for 40 some years but you will always be a life time friend. We spent many times to gather fishing, telling stories (some not printable, but good). We fished In Alaska several times, off the coast of Santa Barbara and our last time together we attempted to fish off the coast of Avila, but due to foul weather that time was impossible. We attended each others retirement from Law Enforcement and was proud we got there. We spend our last time together this last December with each other and my family who you knew well. We couldn't fish but had a great time reminiscing about old friends and times We also attended together a refresher course at Redstone arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama and many hours attending training at IABTI (International Association of Bomb Technicians & Investigators).

*You may be gone Nick, but you will always be in my heart and never be forgotten! Love you brother. Grif*

*I would like to express my sincere condolences to Nick's Mother' Nona, Linda, Nicky, Page, John, their families and to all Nick's relatives and friends.*

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**Weldon Griffith** - May 23, 2021 at 06:31 PM

TB

“ This is Mary-4, Nick, you were Mary-3 and we rode motors for years together. You were a great partner, never to be forgotten. Love you, brother🇺🇸

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**Tom Byrne** - May 20, 2021 at 11:27 PM

SR

“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



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**Scott C. Reid** - May 03, 2021 at 02:40 PM