



## Henry Joseph "Rocky" Colavita

February 11, 1941 - December 25, 2023

Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Henry Joseph "Rocky" Colavita, Jr, age 82, passed away after a short illness on Monday, 25 December, 2023 near his home in Haymarket, Virginia. He was surrounded by loving family and friends.

From an early age Rocky dreamed of becoming an Army officer, a policeman and a published author. He ultimately accomplished all three.

Rocky was born in Belleville, New Jersey, raised for a time in Honolulu, Hawaii, but largely grew up in Arlington, Virginia where his father, Lieutenant Colonel Henry Colavita Sr, served as a Judge Advocate officer in the National Capital Region. As a standout track star at Washington and Lee High School, Rocky earned a full scholarship to Virginia Polytechnic Institute (Virginia Tech) where he continued his stellar athletic career. While he immensely enjoyed his time as a highly accomplished four-year student athlete, his true calling was to serve his country as an Infantry officer in the United States Army. Over the course of his distinguished 20-year Army career, Rocky had the honor and privilege of leading Soldiers in multiple combat units. In 1965, he volunteered for duty as an advisor to the Republic of Vietnam Airborne Brigade (RVN) stationed near Saigon, where he was seriously wounded and earned the Purple Heart Medal. After an assignment as the Aide-de-Camp for the 29th Commandant of the United States Army War College, Rocky once again volunteered to return to Vietnam to lead the men of Delta Company, 2/8

Cavalry. Throughout intense combat operations, Rocky and his Soldiers pioneered never-before seen company sized ambush tactics that required strict discipline and attention to every detail. Rocky earned the Silver Star as well as six Bronze Star Medals, including one for Valor. Later in his career, as the Provost Marshal for the Berlin Brigade, Rocky led large scale force protection operations across the city of Berlin, Germany.

After retiring from Active Duty in 1983, he began his second calling, this time with the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office. In his 17 years of faithful and dedicated Service to his community, he achieved unprecedented success by rising from the rank of part-time Bailiff to the rank of Chief Deputy Sheriff, the highest non-elected position in the Department. Following his second retirement, Rocky completed another life-long goal when he authored "Company Grade: Memoir of an Angry Skipper" which chronicles intimate details of his time in Vietnam with emphasis on his time in Command of Delta Company, 2/8 Cav, 1st Cavalry Division.

Rocky enjoyed driving his red mustang, especially in parades, spending time with his American Legion Post 1799 friends, and spoiling his grandchildren.

Rocky is survived by his wife of 54 years, Janine, sons, Erik, Chris (Celinda), and Michael (Giselle) and his eight beloved grandchildren, Christopher Jr (22), Nicholas (22), Benjamin (20), Emma (19) Kate (17), Joey (13), Adeline (12) and Nora (6).

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to: Serve Our Willing Warriors (SOWW)

16013 Waterfall Road, Haymarket, VA, United States, Virginia

[willingwarriors.org](http://willingwarriors.org)



# Cemetery Details

## Arlington National Cemetery

Arlington, VA 22211  
<http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/>

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JAN 15. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (ET)

Pierce Funeral Home  
9609 Center St.  
Manassas, VA 20110  
(703) 257-6028  
[pfh@piercefh.com](mailto:pfh@piercefh.com)  
<https://www.piercefh.com>

## Funeral Service

JAN 15. 3:00 PM (ET)

Pierce Funeral Home  
9609 Center St.  
Manassas, VA 20110  
(703) 257-6028  
[pfh@piercefh.com](mailto:pfh@piercefh.com)  
<https://www.piercefh.com>

# Tribute Wall



“ Met CPT Colavita in Vietnam in 1969. We were both in the 1st Cavalry Division. A tough leader and great soldier. RIP Sir.

Chad Spawr - October 07, 2024 at 11:32 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Henry Joseph "Rocky" Colavita.



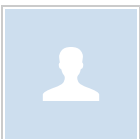
January 15, 2024 at 11:12 AM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Henry Joseph "Rocky" Colavita.



January 12, 2024 at 01:43 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Henry Joseph "Rocky" Colavita.



January 11, 2024 at 06:01 PM



“ Randal & Celinda Gardner planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Henry Joseph "Rocky" Colavita.

Randal & Celinda Gardner - January 11, 2024 at 06:01 PM



“ Sacred Duty Spray was purchased for the family of Henry Joseph "Rocky" Colavita.



January 08, 2024 at 01:43 PM



“ Your Family at KBR & KORD planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Henry Joseph "Rocky" Colavita.

Your Family at KBR & KORD - January 08, 2024 at 01:43 PM

WW

“ I was very saddened to here of Rocky's passing. My thoughts and prayers are with the Colovita family. He was a good man and leader. My father served under Rocky, and was killed in December of 1968. Not too long ago a mutual acquaintance introduced me to Rocky, and we had lunch together. He was troubled by the loss of his men. I believe he genuinely cared for them. I appreciated the time he spent with me...He provided a link to the past, of which I only have a couple (Rocky and one of his Platoon leaders). Only after we met did I find a YouTube video where he mentioned how the death of my father (really all of his men) troubled him. I then realized how much it must have taken to meet with me and face those troubling times again. Thank you Rocky. I pray that you are at peace with the warriors that went before you.

Chuck Williams

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William C Williams - January 07, 2024 at 08:00 PM



“ Crystal Cross Bouquet was purchased for the family of Henry Joseph "Rocky" Colavita.



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January 05, 2024 at 07:36 PM

RW

“ 1 file added to the album Tribute Wall



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Robert Dale Wyman - January 05, 2024 at 12:03 AM

RW

*Our dear friend Rocky at the 21 October 2023 Haymarket Day Parade!*

**Robert Dale Wyman** - January 05, 2024 at 12:51 AM

JG

*A bit late but I just saw the notice in the Virginia Tech mag... I was a freshman at VT living across the hall from Rocky. He was the T Company Commander and we both ran track. Most importantly, Rocky was a guy who helped everyone move ahead,, even a lowly freshman cadet. I knew he would be a warrior and while most of us went to VN, few could come close to being the leader he was. Rocky, you must be so proud to have given so much for your country and all who you touched. John Ghee*

**john ghee** - August 05, 2024 at 10:24 AM

IL

*“ I am honored to have known Rocky. Our deepest sympathies to his family.*

**Irwin Lazar** - December 30, 2023 at 10:33 AM

VM

*“ How sad..I have known Henry since Jr. high at Williamsburg...he was always a sweet and funny person. I saw him a few years ago at one of our reunions..he had never changed... I am so sorry for your loss and ours...sadly, this is becoming all to familiar to our group..May he rest in peace..he will not be forgotten  
Valerie Scott Matei*

**valerie scott Matei** - December 28, 2023 at 03:43 PM

CC

*Thank you, Valerie!!! He was a great man and an even better father!*

**Christ Colavita** - December 29, 2023 at 11:33 AM



*My husband, Ed, knew Rocky from their Vietnam (Angry Skipper) days. We enjoyed phone calls from him during the year and Ed looked forward to their Vietnam Vets reunions. He supported me in my writing career and we swapped reviews on each other's books. He was a very special man and will be missed by so many. Keeping the entire family in prayer. Edwin C. & Joyce T. Livingston*

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**Joyce Livingston** - December 29, 2023 at 05:58 PM

CB

*Rocky is a guy who when you met him as I did the first time a short time ago, you immediately know you have known him your whole life! He truly is numbered amongst the good guys of the land. BENE FACTUM (Well Done)*

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**Col Frank Boberek** - January 09, 2024 at 01:29 PM

BF

*I enjoyed spending time with Henry at the annual Sudley Manor car shows. At one of the shows, Henry described how Vietnam veterans greeted one another - it was a special greeting that I will always remember.*

*I also enjoyed having lunch with Henry and friends from the Manassas - Gainesville area. Henry had a lot of war time experiences that he shared with us.*

*Bill Fox, Manassas*

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**Bill Fox** - January 10, 2024 at 10:09 AM