



## Derek Paul Upchurch

December 27, 1981 - April 11, 2026

Derek Paul Upchurch, 44, of Montclair, Virginia, passed away on April 11, 2026. He was born on December 27, 1981, in Salinas, California.

Derek was a proud U.S. Army veteran who served during Operation Iraqi Freedom, a service he carried with great pride throughout his life.

Derek proudly served as an Inventory Management Specialist with the Drug Enforcement Administration, where he was known for his dedication and strong work ethic. He was also deeply proud of the friendships he built throughout his career.

He was a proud member of VFW Post 1503 and the American Legion Post 364.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Reuben Sanchez, Winnie Upchurch, and Ralph Upchurch.

He is survived by his loving wife of 19 years, Jennifer Upchurch; his son, Dylan Upchurch; and his daughter, Ellie Upchurch. He is also survived by his parents, Randall and Julie Upchurch; his brother, Joshua Upchurch; his sister, Jodie Upchurch; his nephews, Brodie and Bradley Holman; and his beloved dogs, Marlei and Boomer, who were part of the family. He also leaves behind

extended family and many friends who will miss him deeply.

The family will receive visitors on Tuesday, April 21, 2026, from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM, and again on Wednesday, April 22, 2026, from 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM at Miller Funeral Home, 3200 Golansky Blvd, Woodbridge, VA.

Funeral services will be held on Wednesday, April 22, 2026, from 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM at Miller Funeral Home.

Interment will follow at 1:30 PM at Quantico National Cemetery.

A celebration of life will follow at 3:00 PM at American Legion Post 364, 3640 Friendly Ln., Woodbridge, VA.

Derek was truly full of life and never met a stranger. He had a way of quickly turning everyone he met into a friend. He wanted to give his family the world and shared his love of sports in a way that brought people together. He was a huge fan of the Oklahoma Sooners, the San Francisco 49ers, and the San Francisco Giants, and loved cheering them on with his family. He will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

APR 21. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ESTq)

Miller Funeral Home & Crematory, Inc.  
3200 Golansky Blvd.  
Woodbridge, VA 22192  
703-878-CARE (2273)  
<https://millerfuneralhome.net/>

## Visitation

APR 22. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (ET)

Miller Funeral Home & Crematory, Inc.  
3200 Golansky Blvd.  
Woodbridge, VA 22192  
703-878-CARE (2273)  
<https://millerfuneralhome.net/>

## Funeral Service

APR 22. 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM (ET)

Miller Funeral Home & Crematory, Inc.  
3200 Golansky Blvd.  
Woodbridge, VA 22192  
703-878-CARE (2273)  
<https://millerfuneralhome.net/>

## Interment

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APR **22**. 1:30 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

National Memorial Cemetery at Quantico  
18424 Joplin Road  
Triangle, VA 22172

# Tribute Wall



“ Stormy, Dana, and Harold Martin purchased the *Beautiful in Blue* for the family of Derek Paul Upchurch.



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**Stormy, Dana, and Harold Martin** - April 21 at 04:12 PM



“ *Arrive in Style* was purchased for the family of Derek Paul Upchurch.



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April 21 at 02:09 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of Derek Paul Upchurch.



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April 21 at 12:40 PM



“ *Mike & Katie S.* purchased the *Sweet Liberty* for the family of Derek Paul Upchurch.



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**Mike & Katie S.** - April 21 at 08:56 AM

BH

“ *In Memory of Derek*

*A dear friend. A trusted colleague. A constant presence.*

*Some people walk into your life and quietly become part of the rhythm of it — so woven into your days that you stop noticing they're there, until they're not.*

*Derek was that person for me. For fourteen years, we shared the small, ordinary hours that most people never think about — the early mornings before the office came to life, the long afternoons, the end-of-day conversations that somehow always stretched longer than they were supposed to. He was the kind of colleague who made the work feel lighter, not because he made it easier, but because his company made everything feel more worthwhile. He had a way of showing up — not just physically, but fully. He listened when you talked. He remembered what mattered to you. He'd ask about your weekend on Monday, and he actually wanted to know the answer. In a world that moves fast and forgets quickly, Derek paid attention. That was one of his quiet gifts.*

*Outside of work, he was no different. The same man who was steady and dependable at the office was the same steady, dependable friend you could call when life got heavy. He didn't need a reason to check in, and he never made you feel like a burden. He was simply there — reliably, generously, warmly there.*

*Fourteen years is a long time to share a life with someone. Long enough to weather change together, to see each other through hard seasons and good ones, to become a part of each other's stories in ways neither of you planned. I am so grateful our stories crossed. I am richer for having known him.*

*The world is quieter without Derek in it. But his kindness — the easy laugh, the steady presence, the way he made ordinary days feel like something — that doesn't go away. It lives in the people he touched, in the small ways we carry him forward.*

*Rest easy, my friend.*

*You were one of the good ones and will be missed.*

*Bruce, Dana, Sean and Cheyenne Hill*

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**Bruce Hill** - April 21 at 07:40 AM

LC

“ Love the Carleys purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of Derek Paul Upchurch.



Love the Carleys - April 20 at 07:09 PM

MF

“ Mark & Patti Kidd & Family purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Derek Paul Upchurch.



Mark & Patti Kidd & Family - April 20 at 06:55 PM

YB

“ Julie & Randy, I have no words to fully express my condolences. Sincerely,  
Yolanda Borges



Yolanda Borges - April 20 at 06:01 PM



“ Treasured Lilies Spray was purchased for the family of Derek Paul Upchurch.



April 20 at 05:05 PM

TF

“ *The Gardner Family purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Derek Paul Upchurch.*



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**The Gardner Family** - April 20 at 04:21 PM

BH

“ *Bruce & Dana Hill purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Derek Paul Upchurch.*



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**Bruce & Dana Hill** - April 20 at 01:50 PM



“ *Magnificent Life Spray was purchased for the family of Derek Paul Upchurch.*



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April 20 at 11:09 AM

JF

“ *I enjoyed talking to Derek about college football since I've been an official for so many years. Very sad to hear about this. Praying for him and his family.*

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**John Farrell** - April 20 at 10:28 AM



“ *Sacred Duty Spray* was purchased for the family of *Derek Paul Upchurch*.



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April 17 at 01:29 PM



“ *Love Uncle Clay & Aunt Sandra* purchased the *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* for the family of *Derek Paul Upchurch*.



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**Love Uncle Clay & Aunt Sandra** - April 16 at 02:15 PM

TW

“ Terrible news to find out my friend, battle buddy, and adopted brother Derek Upchurch passed away unexpectedly. We deployed together, pounded sand together, and came home together to build our lives. Everywhere one of us went, you could find the other. When I was pinned E-5 in that C-141 he pounded those stripes on my collar until my neck bled and told me he'd follow me anywhere. He was fearless. Best HMMWV driver on the planet. He drove me through Fallujah downtown in broad daylight countless times in a soft-skin before we ever even heard of condition: black or knew what an up-armored HMMWV was. Smiled the whole time, playing Kenny Chesney's "Boys of Fall" as loud as he could get that little janky speaker plugged into his Walkman to go. He was my AG on the 241 bravo but would drop the belt and go in a room first if we weren't sure it was clear. For three days we lived in a blown-up post office in An-Nasiriyah and he watched my back and carried my gear the last day when I couldn't hardly move with food poisoning, his only request was that he got to shower first when we made it back to Talil. Laughed at everything, smiled at everybody, and never complained. God I'll miss this guy.



Toby Willis - April 15 at 01:52 PM

TK

“ Toby, Lori & Kids purchased the Treasured Lilies Spray for the family of Derek Paul Upchurch.



Toby, Lori & Kids - April 15 at 01:50 PM

TK

“ Toby, Lori & Kids planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Derek Paul Upchurch.

Toby, Lori & Kids - April 15 at 01:50 PM

UN

“ UNCLE P.J. AUNT BRENDA AND NANA purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Derek Paul Upchurch.



UNCLE P.J. AUNT BRENDA AND NANA - April 15 at 11:59 AM

TC

“ The Halladay Family & CRIT purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Derek Paul Upchurch.



The Halladay Family & CRIT - April 15 at 08:05 AM

FH

“ From John & Kayla Holman purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Derek Paul Upchurch.



From John & Kayla Holman - April 14 at 09:20 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Derek Paul Upchurch.*



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April 14 at 02:26 PM



“ *Beautiful Whisper was purchased for the family of Derek Paul Upchurch.*



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April 14 at 02:19 PM



“ *From abel american tree llc and family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Derek Paul Upchurch.*

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**From abel american tree llc and family** - April 14 at 01:02 PM



“ *From abel american tree llc and family purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Derek Paul Upchurch.*



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**From abel american tree llc and family** - April 14 at 01:02 PM

JW

“D-Wreck! This still doesn't feel real. I still expect to see you roll in somewhere, loud as hell, talking trash, and making sure everyone knows you're there within about 30 seconds.

*That was you. No half measures.*

*But in all seriousness, the love you had for your family wasn't loud for show, it was just real. You were proud of them, especially Jennifer, and you never kept that quiet.*

*That's what sticks.*

*Miss you.*

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**Joellen Welch** - April 13 at 11:12 PM

SE

“Derek, you will forever be remembered as a true warrior, friend, pain in the ass, and one of the few people that can be counted on to help anyone who needed it. You will forever live through those who knew and loved you. This country and community is better because of you. Thank you, you are loved and missed dearly.

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**Samantha Etzweiler** - April 13 at 11:10 PM

JW

“American Legion Post 364 expresses our deepest condolences to the family and friends of Derek. He will certainly be missed at the Post.

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**Jessica Wangner** - April 13 at 10:29 PM