

A PIGEON GETS A MLITARY MEDAL



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Tumbleweed Smith

"The pigeon was really the first email. It was the first form of fast communication." Dennis Graham of Brownwood spoke those words. He gives speeches about pigeons, something he's been involved with since he was a boy. When his dad went on business trips, he took one of Dennis's pigeons with him and released it to fly back home.

Tumbleweed Smith Recently Dennis attended a national racing pigeon convention in Florida.

"Out of several thousand birds one of my pigeons finished in the top ten percent," says Dennis. "Winning birds are calculated by yards per minute. My birds flew about 1,700 yards per minute. The winner flew about 1,800 yards per minute. Pigeons are fascinating. When I tell people I have racing pigeons, they always ask how do you race a pigeon. Then I explain it to them, how the field has changed with the new technology that makes it easy to determine the speed of these unique birds."

Homing pigeons were used in World Wars One and Two for communication and reconnaissance missions. Dennis knows about GI Joe, the pigeon that saved some British troops during World War Two.

"British soldiers were going into this small town in Italy, Calvi Vecchia and they were going to move the Germans out. They accomplished their mission ahead of schedule. So now they're in this village, knowing that the allies, the US, were getting ready to bomb the city, unaware that the Germans had already been pushed out. The British troops released a US Army homing pigeon called GI Joe carrying a message that said 'don't bomb us.' GI Joe flew 20 miles in 20 minutes to carry the message, avoiding German bullets and falcons the Germans turned loose to get the pigeons and landed safely at the air force base with the message just as planes were getting ready to take off and bomb the city."

More than one hundred British troops were saved, along with the village itself. The pigeon was flown to London and at a presentation at the Tower of London was given The Dickin Medal of Gallantry. The citation credits him with "the most outstanding flight made by a US Army homing pigeon during World War Two."

The award is also known as the equivalent to the Victoria Cross or Medal of Honor for animals. GI Joe was the first non-British recipient of the medal. In 2019 he was posthumously awarded the Animals in War and Peace Medal of Bravery.

GI Joe died at the age of 18 and died in 1961. He was mounted and is displayed at the museum at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, home of the US Army Pigeon Service where pigeons are trained for combat. GI Joe's nametag was Pigeon USA 43SC6390.

Dennis says pigeons have done a lot thru history; Romans used them years ago for communication.



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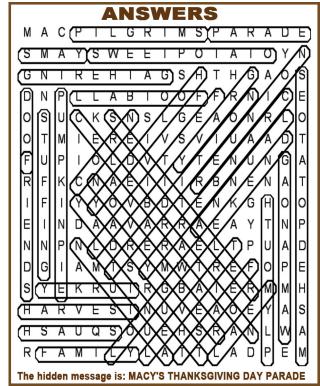
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Funeral services for Mindy Renae Wren, age 46, of Miller Grove, were held on Tuesday, November 22, 2022, at 11 a.m. at West Oaks Funeral Home Chapel with Rev. Hoyt Scogin officiating. Interment followed at Greenview Cemetery with Tres Sartin, Chris Sartin, Will Ray, David Tipps, Scott Wren, and Barry Parks serving as pallbearers. Honorary pallbearers were Jerry Cross Jr., and Rickey Cross. Visitation was held at 10 a.m., one hour prior to service time.

500 Hillcrest Dr., Sulphur Springs, Tx. 75482

Mindy passed away Friday, November 18, 2022, at CHRISTUS Mother Frances Hospital, after bravely battling cancer for several years. She was born May 25, 1976, in McKinney, the daughter of Shorty Parks and Kay Evans Sartin. Mindy married Jeff Wren, April 4, 2020, in Yantis. She was a driver for UPS for 8 years.

Mindy loved music, flowers, anything outdoors, anything in the shape of a heart, and she was very crafty. She once won yard of the month. She Loved life and she was a Fighter.

Mindy is survived by her husband, Jeff Wren; parents, Shorty Parks and wife Kathy, and Kay Evans Sartin and husband Phil; son Hunter Pogue (Morgan); granddaughter, Marley Pogue, sisters, Tina Ray, and Britni Parks; brothers, Tres Sartin, and Chris Sartin (Kim); father and mother-in-law, Dwayne and Kathy Wren, lovingly known as Paw and Maw; and many aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and cousins.

She was preceded in death by her grandparents.



Joe Wheeler

Joe was born in the Gafford Chapel Community on January 11, 1934, to Ebb Kellogg Wheeler and Vada Reed Wheeler. Joe graduated from Sulphur Springs Senior High School in 1952. After graduation, he attended East Texas State Teachers College where he majored in Pre-Engineering for two years and graduated with a major in Industrial Education and a minor in Mathematics in 1956. He married Janet Perkins at her parent's home in Sulphur Springs on June 11, 1954.

Joe is survived by his wife, Janet Wheeler; a sister, Mary Ann Mathews; and two children, Jeannie Kay Taylor and husband, Richard, and Terry Joe Wheeler and wife, Carrol. He is also survived by his grandchildren, Lindsey Kay Honeycutt, Colton Ryan Wheeler, and Victoria Faith Wheeler. He was preceded in death by his parents, Vada and Ebb Kellogg Wheeler; two sisters, Patsy McKinney and Juanita Wallace; and brother-in-law, Travis Mathews.

After graduation from college, he was employed by the Texas Highway Department in Sulphur Springs as a Civil Engineer for nine years. Later, he was employed by E-Systems Inc. in Greenville, Texas as a Mechanical and Structural Engineer for 30 years. After retirement, Joe stayed active in the cattle and horse business while helping his son, Terry, with his dairy business.

He was an active member of the Messengers Sunday School Class at the First United Methodist Church in Sulphur Springs, where he served on the Official Board and various committees. Joe was instrumental in the design and construction of the church administration building. Funeral services were conducted at 3 p.m. Tuesday, November 22, 2022, at West Oaks Funeral Home Chapel. Visitation was held at 2 p.m.,

prior to service time. Interment was in the Sulphur Springs City Cemetery for the immediate family. Pallbearers were Dale Brem, Mike Midgett, Charles David Sewell and Richard Taylor. Honorary pallbearers were the Messenger Sunday School Class, Harold Cowley and Ken Butch.



LaJuana Ruth Young

Funeral services for LaJuana Ruth Young, age 73, of Pickton will be held at 11 a.m. Wednesday, November 23, 2022, at West Oaks Funeral Home Chapel with Bro. Mike Haun officiating. Interment will follow at Pine Forest cemetery with Austin Rodriguez, Joe Rodriguez, Mack Walters, Richard Bain, Cameron Bain, Kason Barnhart, Ted Matlock, and Blake Bain serving as pallbearers. Honorary pallbearers will be Hunter Childress, Conner Childress, Tanner Childress, Kelyn Bain, Tyler Bain, Matt Bain, Michael Post, and Tyler Childress. A visitation will be at 10 a.m., one hour prior to service.

Mrs. Young passed away on Saturday, November 19, 2022, at Rock Creek Health and Rehab. LaJuana was born December 22, 1948, in Sulphur Springs, the daughter of Noble Eugene Bain and Edna Faye Johnson Bain. She married Earnest Young March 4, 1977, in Pickton.

LaJuana had several jobs, including Como Feed Store, Alliance Bank, Cannon Craft Shutters where she was in accounts receivable, and she was a licensed beautician for 7 plus years.

Lajuana loved sewing and cooking. She won several pie contests and Ice Cream contests. She loved playing games including Canasta and 42 dominoes, she won many 42 tournaments. LaJuana also loved vacations, and her favorite was the Alaskan Cruise. LaJuana completed her bucket list which included going to Mount Rushmore, an Alaskan cruise, her pick of her a new car, a big diamond ring, and seeing the Grand Canyon. She retired in 1997 to enjoy life and family. She loved deer hunting and has bagged some big bucks. LaJuana also loved Christmas and collecting Hallmark ornaments.

She is survived by her husband, Earnest; step-daughter Tracy Rodriguez and husband Joe; brothers, Calvin Bain of Pine Forest, Bobby Bain and wife Gale of Pine Forest; grandchildren, Austin Rodriguez of North Carolina, Ashley Rodriguez of Sulphur Springs, Luke Walters of Nelta, Lucy Walters of Dallas, Kaci Barnhart and husband Kason of Como; great-grandchildren, Madden, Bradley, Abigail, and Sadie Barnhart, all of Como.



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