



Cpt. Bernard James 'BJ' Franklin, USMC, Retired

March 1, 2026

Cpt Bernard James 'BJ' Franklin, USMC, Retired., 82 of Oxford, passed away on March 1, 2026 at his home surrounded by family.

He is survived by his wife of 34 years, Kittie Ann Franklin; children, Christine Gaskill, Michael Franklin (Tosha), Heath Franklin, Josh Franklin; grandchildren, Brianne, Weston, Chrisany, Donna, Tanner, Milo, Ella; 12 great grandchildren; most beloved pets, Allie, Cider, Jazzy; sisters, Denise Krzyzanowski (Joe), Kris O'Neill, Terry Loeffert, Laurie Franklin, and a host of extended family members and numerous friends.

He is preceded in death by his son, Jeffery Franklin, parents, Benjamin and Margaret Franklin, and his sisters, Barbara, Donna, Kathy.

BJ was a proud Marine. He served and loved his country with all he had. He was a true Marines Marine.

He also loved all things sports. He played multiple sports, was a referee, and enjoyed doing sports photography. BJ's favorite sport to play currently was golf.

BJ was an all around wonderful man. He was a friend to many and an amazing husband and father.

The family would like to give a special thank you to Tammy, Heather, Kelsee, and Maddi with Gentiva Hospice and to all the friends that showed love and care to BJ and his family.

A future service will be held at Arlington National Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to Gentiva Hospice in BJ's name.

Tribute Wall

NA

“ BJ Franklin. Our friend. Friend to may. A man of honor and love. BJ's friends always enjoyed his humor, his honesty and his belief in "good". He served honorably in the United States Marine Corps for 27 years and was respected by all. After retiring from the Marines, he became a successful business man. There wasn't anything BJ couldn't do AND do well. He will be SORELY missed and I'm truly thankful we could be friends with him and his wife Kittie for many wonderful years. BJ - don't fret. We promise to take good care of Kittie. May you rest in peace. We love you.
Craig & Nancy Aldrich

Nancy & Craig Aldrich - March 12 at 02:12 PM

CA

“ Gary and I live in the neighborhood where BJ and his wife lives. He was always taking pictures of our little dog Allie and Gary as they rode on our golf cart during the afternoons. I made he and his wife a cake several months ago because I found out that he wasn't feeling well. They both were so appreciative and I remember talking to him when he returned the cake plate. He was all smiles as we spoke and I have never met such a kinder soul. He will be greatly missed by the Cider Ridge community and all of us who had the pleasure of knowing him. Our deepest condolences to his wife, family, and friends. May you find peace and comfort with our Heavenly Father during this difficult time.
Gary and Cindy Austin



Cindy Austin - March 06 at 11:24 AM

HH

“ My name is Harry Hansen. I first met BJ Franklin in Pittsburgh when we were both enlisting in the USMC. 8 of us were boarded onto a very slow train for a ride to Parris Island where we would spend the next 13 weeks of recruit training. BJ and I stood beside each other in front of our bunks. BJ was known to be a guy who couldn't hold his emotions and would sometimes (under his breath) say something disagreeable to our Senior Drill Instructor, Gunny Sgt Stanford. The Gunny went ballistic on BJ. Screaming and ruffing him up quite a bit. I'm petrified wondering if he is going to attack me next. Stanford and the 3 other DI's all worked us hard as they shaped us into Marines. When I was finally contacted by BJ IN 2019 via another Marine from our platoon, John Barry I was elated to have reconnected with BJ since graduating boot camp in January 1961. As BJ filled me in on his 27 year career my respect for him was overwhelming. BJ, a young man, raised in abject poverty as I also was, reached the honor of being an Officer in the USMC. I couldn't have been more proud and happy for his accomplishments. He was a great friend and an inspiration to many. I miss you BJ, may you rest in peace.

Harry Hansen - March 04 at 09:15 PM

BB

“ BJ and I met at Cherry Point North Carolina in 1980 while playing for the Marine Corps Air Station All Star team in Volleyball. I was a young Sergeant and he took me under his wing and convinced me to apply for the Warrant Officer program, he helped me write my application and I was accepted the first time applying! We both then transferred to Iwakuni Japan where he continued to mentor me. I strongly believe he was the most influential person in my life to care about me and help me grow! I know his love and mentoring made me successful in my personal life, work life and spiritual life! I Love you BJ and always will! Everyone I met who new BJ never had anything but praise for him. I know I will see you again in Valhalla!

Bill Bowen - March 04 at 05:03 PM

JN

“ I can honestly say that BJ changed my life. As my officer in charge in multiple duty stations, he both challenged me and guided me, on and off duty. We played softball and racquetball together, made a band together, did martial arts together and toured Japan's local offerings together. Ultimately, he took me under his wing and was a huge part of me making the USMC a career, ending up with where and what I am/have today. I won't forget you sir... thank you for everything... I'm eternally grateful.

Jeff Norman - March 03 at 03:10 PM

SS

“ BJ we will miss you. I miss our times at Randys. Goodbye too a good Friend

Sam Skinner

Sam Skinner - March 03 at 11:18 AM

RC

“ So sorry to see this. He was a legend around here. He was my idea of a true American hero. I always thought he would out live all of us. Tough guy, very intelligent, great sense of humor..... God needed a tough military guy.....He now has another one. Rest in peace my friend.

Robert Carter, Mgr. Randy Wood Guitars

Robert Carter - March 03 at 10:35 AM

DF

“ Hi, my name is Donald Franklin. I'm the son of BJ's father's brother, which makes me BJ's cousin. I only got to meet him one time in my life at a family reunion at North Park in Pennsylvania, but I will tell you it only took that one time for me to know that he has al'm the son of BJ's fathers brother, which makes me BJ's cousin. I only got to meet him one time in my life at a family reunion at North Park in Pennsylvania, but I will tell you it only took that one time for me to know that he is a wonderful person. I wish Katie and the family my condolences and just know that BJ is in a better place walking with Jesus God bless your family.

Donald Franklin - March 03 at 04:29 AM

K(

“ I was so sorry to hear of BJ's passing. I knew BJ from BJ's Billiards in Havelock, NC. BJ was a lovely man. I was only a teenager and I'd finish my shift waitressing and I'd go hang out at BJs. The afternoon crowd was mostly retired Marines and buddies of BJs but they let me share space and time with them there in the afternoon and I will always treasure those afternoons. In creating BJ's Billiard, BJ created an iconic spot in Havelock. When I think back to my perfect 90's teenage days, nearly every memory is tied up with BJ's Billiards. BJ, thank you for that. Thank you for sharing so much of yourself with our community. You were the heartbeat of Havelock in the 90's and 2000's to so many people. How lucky were we to have you?

My deepest condolences go out to BJ's family. Miss Kitty I remember when you'd walk into the bar and BJ would just light up. I was only a teenager but was very clear even to my teenage eyes just how very smitten and in love he was with you. Take comfort in knowing that love is forever and everywhere.

You are all in my prayers.

Katie Cowart (Tamayo) - March 02 at 10:15 PM