



Jay Keenan

M-10545

Jay Keenan, 77 of Middletown, Virginia passed away on December 17th, 2025. Jay was awarded his qualification as a Special Forces Communications Sergeant in 1968 and assigned to the 7th SFG(A). In 1969 he was reassigned to the 5th SFG(A) in Vietnam where he served with Detachments B-40 (IV Corps Mike Force) and A-402. Returning stateside in 1970 Jay was honorable discharged from active duty. Among his awards and decorations are The Purple Heart, the Bronze Star, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, and the Parachutist' Badge. After his discharge, Jay worked as the manager of The Copper Mine nightclub for twenty years. A graveside service was held at the Winchester National Cemetery in Winchester, Virginia on January 28th, 2026.

Jay L. Keenan

December 17, 2025 (Age 77)

Middleton, Virginia

5th SFG(A) Vietnam

SFA Mem# M-10545

Jay Lawrence Keenan, 77, of Middletown, Virginia, passed away on December 17, 2025. Born on June 2, 1948, in Winchester, Virginia, to the late John Lincoln Keenan and Mildred Judy Keenan, Jay was a lifelong resident of the Shenandoah Valley community of Middletown, with the exception of his military service and later years spent in Petersburg and Hopewell. A graduate of James Wood High School, Jay earned a Bachelor's degree from James Madison University on August 8, 1980.

Jay served with distinction in the United States Army from August 30, 1967, to September 16, 1970, attaining the rank of Staff Sergeant (E-6). As a Green Beret radio operator assigned to the elite 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), he trained initially with the 7th Special Forces Group before deploying to Vietnam from September 18, 1969, to September 16, 1970. Serving with Company D and Detachments B-40 and A-402, he was part of the IV Corps Mobile Strike Force-known as the "Mike Force." These multinational rapid-reaction units operated from forward bases such as Moc Hoa in the demanding riverine terrain of the Mekong Delta, conducting high-risk missions to disrupt enemy supply lines, reinforce threatened camps, and perform reconnaissance and direct action deep in contested territory. For his courage and service in combat, Jay was awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star Medals.

Following his honorable discharge, Jay carried forward the same quiet strength and dedication in civilian life. For twenty years, he served as an indispensable manager and trusted right-hand man at The Copper Mine nightclub in Petersburg, Virginia, from its opening day until its closure, working closely with owners "Big Don" Quicke (who predeceased him in 2019) and Don Allen. Music remained a lifelong joy; Jay played drums in several bands during high school and, after his return from Vietnam, with local groups including The Urge, Sausage Tater, Goezynya, and Jack Slash. An enthusiastic bowler with his team, the Channel Cats, he proudly bowled a perfect game, and earned membership in the 750 club. Jay was, above all, a true gentleman-kind, quick-witted, and profoundly compassionate. Family, immediate or extended, was always his highest priority.

After his Army service, he kept one or two cats as companions, but he could never turn away an animal in need. Over the years, stray and abandoned cats found their way to him; rather than ignore them, he fed them, arranged spaying/neutering, and provided consistent veterinary care-gradually welcoming them into his home until he was caring for 12 rescued cats, each treated as family with exceptional attention. After his passing, his longtime friend Richard Cadmus relocated all of them to his 4-acre property in rural Tennessee, ensuring they continue to receive the same devoted care.

Jay is survived by his many cousins and loved ones in the area to include the families of Ed Judy and Lou Ann Thompson.

Jay will be deeply missed by his many dear friends in Hopewell, including Harry Clary, Michael Laning, and the Quicke family-Don, Rebecca, Donald, and Lillie-as well as by all whose lives he touched with his generosity, humor, and steadfast belief in making the world around him a better place.

A graveside service will be held at 11 AM on January 28, 2026, officiated by Rev. Alan Gray, with full military honors and interment following at Winchester National Cemetery, 401 National Ave., Winchester, VA 22601.

Family and friends will gather afterward at the Wayside Inn Tavern, 7783 Main Street, Middletown, VA 22645.