



## Charles William Atwell

October 27, 1933 - October 14, 2022

Charles William Atwell "Bill" of Stevensville, MD, passed away on October 14, 2022. He was 88 years old.

Bill was born October 27, 1933, in Washington, DC, the middle son to the late Carolyn Louise La Dow and Hugh Enfield Atwell.

Bill is survived by his brother, Rick Atwell, of Sarasota, FL, and a niece, Shay McElroy, of Dallas, TX.

Bill graduated from Northwestern High School in Adelphi, MD.

Bill took his first airplane ride in 1951. The flight only lasted 10 minutes, but so inspired him that he immediately purchased a 50-cent logbook and went back up for his first lesson. Soloing after seven hours, Bill went on to qualify for his Private Certificate in 1952.

A year later he joined the Navy and spent a year on the Battleship USS Newport News. He then changed his mind and went directly to the bottom in the submarine USS Sea Leopard for the next three years. He continued to fly extensively in the Norfolk and Suffolk area and made a few flights from St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands.

Four years later, Bill returned to Hyattsville, MD, and civilian life. After attending Montgomery Jr. College for two years, he went on to further his studies at the University of MD. After working in the family cabinet making business, Bill finally decided on a position with the Trailways Bus Company and stayed with them for 20 years. He had many adventures taking the Boy Scouts to their jamboree out West, the Great American Car Race, taking trips to the ski slopes in New Hampshire, and he even transported the Rolling Stones when they performed in Washington, DC.

On June 10, 1963, Bill and Barbara Ann McMahon married in Prince George's County. They were blissfully wed for 55 years until Barbara's passing in 2018.

In 1963, his love of flying finally came back. He bought his first airplane, a Piper PA-12. After nine months of hard work rebuilding this plane in his parents' basement, he finally took to the air again. Bill had found a new passion, aircraft restoration. Selling the Piper PA-12, Bill drove to Ohio to check out a Piper J-3 in need of his talents. This new project kept him occupied until 1968, when he heard about a Piper J-5 in need of some TLC. Selling his Paper J-3, Bill goes off to the garage once more. The Piper J-5, after more than a year of work, was ready to fly. An avid flier as well as a rebuilder, Bill preferred his long cross-country trips without radio gear. Bill and Barbara took many trips in that Piper J-5 all over the country.

In 1977, Bill found a brochure about the Kentmorr Airstrip and bought some property there. The first thing he bought to start the construction of his home was his backhoe. Over the next two years, he completed construction, and he and Barbara were able to move into their new home in 1979. Over the years, Bill became known as "Backhoe Bill" and was always ready to help out with anything he could using his backhoe; he put in septic systems, plowed out driveways in the winter, planted palm trees at Kentmorr Restaurant, got friends out of the ditch, and many other projects over the years.

Bill was a master woodworker refurbishing most of the wooden furniture in his home, putting down the hardwood floors in his home and keeping them polished, rucking seats on chairs with perfection, an artist with oil paints and charcoals with most of his paintings and drawings, his works were displayed in his home.

In recent years, Bill participated in the Elks Lodge Chili Cookoff many times being a winner most of the time. He was always looking for the hottest hot sauce to add to his chili.

Over the years, Bill was a member of the VFW Post 7464 in Grasonville, American Legion Post 278 in Stevensville and, most recently, the Elks Lodge in Stevensville.

He has been reunited with his wife, Barbara Ann Atwell (McMahon); older brother, Sonny; his parents; and many friends and relatives who predeceased him.

A Celebration of Life will be held at Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home in Chester, MD, on Saturday, December 3. Visitation will be from 10am to 11am, and the service will start at 11am. A luncheon will immediately follow and be announced at the service. Burial will be in Arlington Cemetery at another time in the near future.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Compass Hospice at <https://compassregionalhospice.org/donate/>

# Cemetery Details

## Arlington National Cemetery

Arlington, VA

# Previous Events

## Gathering

DEC 3. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Fellows, Helfenbein, & Newnam Funeral Home, P.A.  
106 Shamrock Road  
Chester, MD 21619

## Memorial Service

DEC 3. 11:00 AM (ET)

Fellows, Helfenbein, & Newnam Funeral Home, P.A.  
106 Shamrock Road  
Chester, MD 21619

# Tribute Wall



“ *Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Charles William Atwell*



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**Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home** - November 09, 2022 at 02:48 PM



“ *Charles William Atwell*

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October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ *Charles William Atwell*

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January 28, 2023 at 12:44 PM



“ *Charles William Atwell*

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January 28, 2023 at 08:03 AM



“ *Bill was a wonderful artist with a paintbrush and a front end loader! We knew him for many years and he always had a friendly smile. We saw the lovely celebration of life piece in the Bay Times and enjoyed learning more about him. Many of us will miss him.*

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**Jacque and Ned Rodman** - November 24, 2022 at 12:25 PM

JN

*Guess we were wrong about the equipment he used so well. Make that a backhoe instead of a front end loader! We should have known...he helped us with several projects through the years.*

Jacque and Ned - November 24, 2022 at 12:30 PM

PA

“ *Met Bill at the VFW we will miss him RIP Sir  
Pam & Joe Frantz*



Pam - October 19, 2022 at 01:24 PM

LH

“ *Lynn Hirschauer lit a candle in memory of  
Charles William Atwell*



Lynn Hirschauer - October 18, 2022 at 01:59 PM

CN

“ *Met him and worked with him at VFW for many years, Great Guy,  
and years ago I ran Ski Trips and he was always our Bus  
Driver!!!!!!He will beMissed by Many.....* 🕊️❤️🇺🇸

charly naill - October 17, 2022 at 08:06 PM



“ *Cynthia Dill lit a candle in memory of Charles William Atwell*



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**Cynthia Dill** - October 17, 2022 at 04:06 PM