



Bill Hiter Crabtree

January 9, 1938 - April 17, 2024

Bill (Hiter) Crabtree passed away at the age of 86 on April, 17, 2024.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Nonie Ellen Leffel Crabtree and Thomas W. Crabtree, an infant sister, Nona Lee, and his late wife, Maritza Stapanian Crabtree.

He was proud to have been born in a little log cabin in Tazewell County, Virginia and to have been named after his grandfather Crabtree whose Virginia roots go back to the 1700s.

Bill graduated from Graham High School in Bluefield, Virginia, in 1956. He completed the Cooperative Engineering Program in Electrical Engineering at Virginia Tech in 1961. After Air Force Summer Training, he was designated a Distinguished Military Graduate and commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Air Force. He then entered the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he was awarded the S.M., E.E., and Sc.D. degrees, all in electrical engineering.

In 1965, he entered active duty where he served in various aircraft, ballistic missile, and space satellite research and development programs before retiring as a Colonel in 1986. After his active-duty career, he served as a consultant to government and industry for the next twenty years.

Bill is dearly loved and will be missed by his loving wife, Bertha Jane, Bertha's sons, Brian and Bruce, Brian's wife, Tania, and daughters, Karis and Kady, and Bertha's siblings, Betty Jo Prater, James (Robbie) Robinson, and Douglas (Teeter) Robinson and their families and his extended Crabtree and Leffel families including surviving Crabtree family cousins Shirley Wheeler, Jackie King, Janice Whitt, Eddie Shrader, Bill Crabtree, Paul (Buddy) Osborne, Roma Jean Thayer, Barbara French, and Anita Bowman and Leffel family cousins Jennifer and David Alexander and Betty Leffel.

A Memorial Service will be held on Sunday, December 1, 2024 at 3:00 PM at Luther Memorial Lutheran Church at 600 Prices Fork Rd., Blacksburg, Virginia.

In lieu of flowers the family asks that donations be made to the Luther Memorial Lutheran Church, 600 Prices Fork Rd., Blacksburg, VA 24060, the American Heart Association, P.O. Box 5216, Glen Allen VA 23058-5216, or the Alzheimer's Association, P.O. Box 96011, Washington, DC 20090-6011. Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

DEC 1. 3:00 PM (ET)

Luther Memorial Lutheran Church
600 Price's Fork Road
Blacksburg, VA 24060

Tribute Wall

JL

“ I went to Graham High School at the same time as Hiter. I did not know him personally as he was a senior and I was a precocious 12 year old freshman. We shared the benefits of an 11 year school system. I remember seeing him in the halls with a slide rule on his belt. First time I had ever heard of a slide rule. He was the only person during my high school years with a slide rule. Rumor had it that he was very smart and was going to MIT. Seems VT and Air Force Intervened before MIT, but I see he made it nonetheless. I went to VT 8+ years and learned to use a sliderule well. Seeing Hiter with one made a lasting impression on me and in a small way influenced my interest in an engineering career.

I always wondered what kind of a career he had and just by sudden inspiration Googled him and learned of his recent passing. I was sad to see that his wife passed soon after. Glad to see a Graham High alumnus with such a good career and life. Condolances to his family.

Jack Litz
Kingsport, TN

Jack Litz - January 12, 2025 at 07:17 PM

EM

He was my second cousin. So sad to read of his passing. Didn't learn of it until I looked up his name today. Tried to stay in touch, but was unable to communicate that to Bert the last time I spoke with her on the phone. I think she was suffering from Alzheimer's.

Edwina Leffel McDow - July 09, 2025 at 04:12 PM