



Mark Blair

April 2, 1958 - March 14, 2026

Visitation for Mark Blair of Ottertail, will be held at St. John Lutheran Church in Ottertail at 9:30a.m. on Saturday, 21 March 2026. The funeral service will be at 11:00a.m. followed by interment in St. John's Church Cemetery with military honors provided by MNARG Honor Guard, assisted by Elmer Goche VFW Post 3922.

~~~~~

You are invited to watch the service via live-stream by going to Schuller Family Funeral Homes' Facebook Page or YouTube Page

~~~~~

Mark William Blair, age 67, of Ottertail Minnesota was called home to the Lord Jesus Christ on Saturday, 14 March 2026, while surrounded by the love of his family. Mark's call home came earlier than might otherwise have been anticipated due to malignant brain cancer.

Mark was born on Wednesday, 02 April 1958, at Wesley Hospital in Wadena, a small town in rural central Minnesota. Mark was the second son and third child of William Edward Blair and Pauline Esther (nee Cloeter) Blair.

Mark spent his formative years in Wadena where he grew up along with two brothers and a younger sister, as well as a large extended family of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. He enjoyed many outdoor activities such as long-range marksmanship, hunting, fishing, and golf. Mark attended

the local public schools, graduating from Wadena Senior High School in March 1976 in the upper 10% of his class.

Mark enlisted in the US Army in April 1976, and attended basic combat training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. After graduating from basic training, Mark remained at Fort Jackson for the first portion of his Advanced Individual Training (AIT) in strategic communications systems, before transferring to Fort Gordon, Georgia for the second portion of AIT. During AIT, Mark received an academic promotion to Private First Class, and upon graduation as the class leader, a second promotion to Specialist Fourth Class (SP4). Following AIT, Mark was assigned to duty in Frankfurt, Germany, where he served until his return to the United States, where he was honorably discharged in late April 1979.

Mark briefly attended the University of Minnesota at Minneapolis. But after a few months sitting through mandatory general education courses involving subjects he had already mastered in high school, Mark decided to return to the military. Mark re-enlisted in the US Army in February 1980, keeping his prior service rank of SP4. After training at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, where he studied Morse code intercept, tactical communications systems, and Radio Direction Finding, Mark was assigned to duty in Augsburg, Germany. During the course of his assignment Mark progressed from SP4 to Sergeant (E-5), becoming a squad leader, a site chief, and eventually a Staff Sergeant (E-6), serving as the detachment commander of a remote deployed High Frequency radio direction finding site in Italy. In October 1984, Mark was again honorably discharged from the US Army.

Mark was hired by the Central Intelligence Agency in September 1985. He retired from the Agency in May 2008, at the rank of GS-15, (equivalent to a full colonel in the US Army), with a total of 32 years of federal service. Mark spent nearly his entire CIA career working in the Directorate of Science &

Technology, where he was involved in Counterterrorist Operations, Insurgency and Counter Insurgency Operations, and Counter Narcotics Operations.

In 1988, Mark spent time in Mogadishu, Somalia during the time that the US Marines were trying to distribute relief supplies to those most negatively affected by the ongoing civil war in Somalia. In fact, he said that he was actually there before the Marines came ashore, actively monitoring communications for threat information to ensure the integrity and safety of the US Marine Corps' landing operations.

During the early 1990s, Mark spent time in Columbia assisting in the search for Pablo Escobar after he escaped from his opulent prison. Escobar was the leader of the Medellin drug cartel and known at the time as "the King of Cocaine". Ultimately, Escobar was shot and killed by the Columbian military and police forces.

From 1995-1996, Mark was assigned to Beirut, Lebanon, working with a foreign government liaison service targeting Palestinian terrorist organizations. During this assignment Mark also served over 60 days as the acting Chief-Of-Station (COS). The COS is the senior US intelligence official in a foreign country. This is a position that is very rarely accorded to any officer who is not part of the Directorate of Operations career service.

Mark spent time in Tuzla, Bosnia in 1996, supporting the NATO led Implementation Force (IFOR), a peacekeeping group whose operations were intended to establish and maintain stability between the various secular factions of the population. Mark's specific IFOR support mission involved monitoring communications systems to identify any outside entities and determine if they were attempting to adversely influence the course of events in that volatile area.

Mark also spent time in Afghanistan with an Agency Ground Branch team based out of Chapman Army Airfield in Khost, Afghanistan. The Ground Branch team had a company of Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers that accompanied the team during forays through Paktika and Paktia provinces searching for anti-coalition militants and America's most wanted man, Usama Bin Laden. Chapman Army Airfield is where a Jordanian doctor detonated a suicide vest that killed six Agency officers in 2009, a year after Mark retired from the Agency.

In addition to his many overseas TDYs (temporary duty assignments), Mark had two PCS (Permanent Change of Station) assignments to Thailand during his career. He was stationed in Bangkok as the SIGINT (Signals Intelligence) Liaison Officer from 1997- 2000 and again from 2005-2006. All told during his career, Mark lived or worked in approximately 40 different countries spread over five continents, never having made it to Australia or Antarctica.

On 06 October 2006, Mark married Monrawee (Noke) Jewjaidee. Noke is a native of Thailand and a naturalized US citizen. Mark and Noke had two sons, William Prasert Blair born on 03 July 2009 and Paul Kamolphop Blair born on 22 August 2011. Both were born in Reston, Virginia. While Mark was involved in many noteworthy and historical incidents during his career and lifetime, Mark's enduring legacy will be his two young men.

Mark was predeceased by a sister, Kay Marie Blair, and his father, William Edward Blair. He is survived by his mother, Pauline Blair Riemer, spouse, Noke, his sons William and Paul, siblings Robert (Marina), David (Pam), and Rachel (Jeff Christenson), and many cousins, nieces, nephews, and friends.

Cemetery Details

St. Johns Lutheran Cemetery - Ottertail

31861 CR 61
Ottertail, MN 56571

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 21. 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

St. John's Lutheran Church - Ottertail
31963 Co Hwy 61
Ottertail, MN 56571

Service

MAR 21. 11:00 AM (CT)

St. John's Lutheran Church - Ottertail
31963 Co Hwy 61
Ottertail, MN 56571

Burial

MAR 21. 12:00 PM (CT)

St. Johns Lutheran Cemetery - Ottertail
31861 CR 61
Ottertail, MN 56571

Tribute Wall



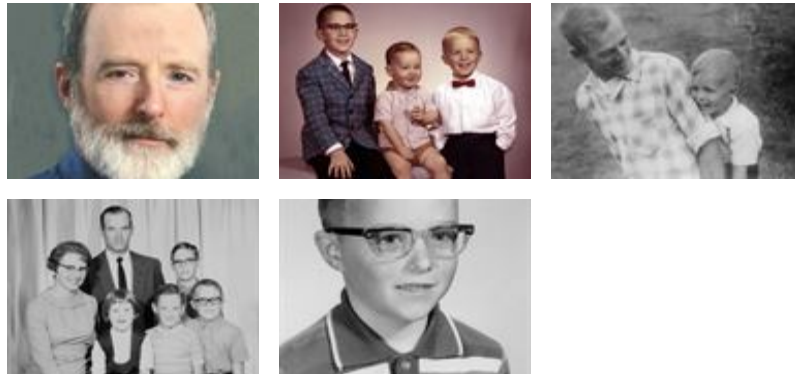
“ *Schuller Family Funeral Homes created a Tribute Video in memory of Mark Blair*



Schuller Family Funeral Homes - March 20 at 11:25 AM



“ *44 files added to the album Life Tributes*



Schuller Family Funeral Homes - March 20 at 11:22 AM

KO

“ *Many hugs and prayers to you all. Very sorry for your loss!*



Katie Opp - March 19 at 09:23 AM

CS

“ So sorry to hear of Mark’s passing 🙏🙏



Cheryl Speed - March 18 at 10:32 AM

SM

“ Shirley Malone lit a candle in memory of Mark Blair



Shirley Malone - March 17 at 12:06 PM

BP

“ Aunt Pauline and family - my thoughts and prayers are with you all. Mark is resting in Jesus' arms - and is there with you also. Love and hugs - Becki

Becki Peloquin - March 16 at 12:22 PM

PH

“ Prayers for all



Peggy Haman - March 16 at 11:55 AM

KM

“*KarenThomson Munson lit a candle in memory of Mark Blair*”



KarenThomson Munson - March 16 at 08:20 AM

RN

As a neighborhood friend of Mark, I wish to honor his years of service to our nation and offer comfort to his family, What a fine man he was and an outstanding family
Randy and Lisa Nicoll

Randy Nicoll - March 16 at 03:33 PM

JH

Mark's was a life of service, and a life of adventure. Sending his family condolences and strength during this difficult time.

John Hamerlinck - March 16 at 06:22 PM