



Jeffrey Burton Clinger

May 29, 1960 - April 27, 2026

Jeffrey Clinger, age 65, passed away on April 27, 2026, leaving behind a life full of service, adventure, laughter, and unforgettable stories. Born on May 29, 1960, Jeff was known for his distinguished military and professional career—but just as much for his playful spirit, quick wit, and deep love of golf.

From an early age, Jeff embraced life with enthusiasm and humor. In high school, he was active in football and track, performed in school musicals, and never shied away from the spotlight. Even then, his personality was unmistakable—competitive, curious, and always ready to joke around. He had a gift for making people laugh and a tendency to keep things light, even in serious moments, traits that defined him throughout his life.

Jeff attended Grand Valley State University, graduating in 1983. While at GVSU, he continued his involvement in athletics as a member of the track team, competing as a pole vaulter—a challenging event that reflected both his athleticism and fearless nature. His time at Grand Valley remained an important chapter in his life and a source of lasting pride.

Soon after college, Jeff joined the United States Army, where he trained as a helicopter pilot. Over the course of his military service, Jeff advanced to the rank of Chief Warrant Officer Two and became a Cobra test pilot, a role requiring exceptional skill, discipline, and courage. His service took him to

duty stations across the United States and overseas, including Germany, where he met his first wife, Heike.

Jeff took great pride in fatherhood. While living in Europe, he loved coaching his son, Kevin Clinger, in football, enthusiastically supporting him from the sidelines and sharing his own love of the game. Jeff was especially proud and excited to see Kevin later move back to Michigan, play football at the Park, and graduate from the same high school Jeff himself had attended—a full-circle moment that meant a great deal to him.

Following his honorable military career, Jeff continued his service as a Department of Defense contractor, working on advanced training systems involving simulated computer warfare. He collaborated with senior military leadership from NATO countries, drawing on both his technical expertise and his ability to connect easily with others. His work took him around the world, including Romania, where he met his second wife, Catalina.

Jeff eventually ended his career with the Department of Defense while living in Florida, where he leaned fully into his greatest passion—golf.

Golf was far more than a hobby for Jeff; it was his sport of choice, his competitive outlet, and one of his greatest joys. He competed on the VGA Tour and played courses throughout Florida, earning respect as a skilled golfer and friendship as an entertaining and good-natured competitor. Jeff loved the challenge of the game, but even more, he loved the camaraderie, the banter, and the laughs that came with it.

Golf also connected Jeff deeply to his family. Each year, the Clinger brothers competed in an annual family tournament known as the Clinger Open, held in honor of their late parents, Sam and Ruth Clinger. The prize was a coveted little brown jug, fiercely contested and proudly displayed by its winner. Jeff's

name appears on the jug more times than either of his brothers, a fact he greatly enjoyed reminding them of. The Clinger Open was more than a competition—it was tradition, laughter, and family legacy, and Jeff was very much at the center of it.

Jeff also looked forward every year to returning to Michigan to participate in a golfing fundraiser with longtime friends—a tradition he deeply valued and never missed.

Above all, Jeff was playful, fun-loving, and full of life. He loved to tease, tell stories, and keep those around him smiling. He was intelligent and accomplished, yet never pretentious, and he had a way of making people feel comfortable and included.

Jeff is survived by his son, Kevin Clinger; his first wife, Heike; his second wife, Catalina; his older brother Randy (Sue) Clinger; and his younger brother Mark (Wendy) Clinger. He is also survived by numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, and nephews who will cherish his memory. He was preceded in death by his parents, Sam and Ruth Clinger.

Jeffrey Clinger lived a life defined by service, adventure, humor, and heart. From the cockpit to the fairway, from pole vault runways to football sidelines, and from family traditions to lifelong friendships, Jeff left behind a legacy of stories, laughter, and love that will endure.

In Lieu of Flowers the family is asking for anyone who wants to contribute to follow the link provided here:

<https://gofund.me/2fa269398>

Previous Events

Viewing

MAY 23. 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

A Community Funeral Home & Sunset Cremations
910 W. Michigan Street
Orlando, FL 32805
(407) 841-4424
<https://www.acommunityfuneralhome.com/>

Service

MAY 23. 4:00 PM (ET)

A Community Funeral Home & Sunset Cremations
910 W. Michigan Street
Orlando, FL 32805
(407) 841-4424
<https://www.acommunityfuneralhome.com/>

Tribute Wall

JC

“ Jimmy Casper lit a candle in memory of Jeffrey Burton Clinger



Jimmy Casper - May 16 at 12:46 AM

JC

Jeff was a good friend one more than one occasion. Love you bro, see ya again one day on the other side.

Jimmy Casper - May 16 at 12:48 AM

GH

“ Jeff will always be remembered as a person who was there to assist and help in any way he could. I will always think back on the time when I first met him in Schweinfurt as he became our newest member of the Aviation group of Trainers and it was my pleasure to bring him onboard to the new task at hand for his new position with our SIM World and Aviation Maneuvers. He was very happy to bring his background Aviation history into the SIM world and make it a vital part of all lives as we set out to Train the military who visited our Simulation facilities throughout Germany and Italy. Thank you for being a friend and Comrade as we traveled Europe and spread the Aviation specialty. I will miss you as a friend and our SIM family will miss you too. God has taken you way too early in life and we also know that his will be done and he knows best for us all and has now taken you to fly in heaven with the rest of the angels he has from our friends and family. Safe flying !!!!

George Hunter - May 14 at 11:03 AM

SA

“ Jeff was one of the people you needed on your team. When he signed on, you knew you had someone who would devote himself to being an expert. You also knew you had someone who would be the technical expert you could lean on. He was also someone you could depend on sticking to his values. He would not bend to make something bad look better. He would not brush legitimate concerns under the rug. And while some might have found this prickly, it was a breath of fresh air to have someone say 'how it is'. I worked with him over 3 different projects for almost 15 years, and in all that time I had more faith to get a straight answer from him than anyone else. You will be missed, and the job will be that much harder.

Sam - May 12 at 01:21 PM

KP

“ Jeff was a co-worker, fellow aviator, Soldier, and friend! He lived large, worked hard and played harder! He will be missed by many! I will keep Jeff and his family in my thoughts and prayers. Ken (Disco Duck) Pruitt

Ken (Disco Duck) Pruitt - May 11 at 05:57 PM

LC

“ I loved my nephew Jeff and I was so shocked to hear of his passing. He was getting better and I and all of his extended family were praying for his recovery. I know Jeff believed in Christ and now he is with all of his love ones who passed before him. REST IN PEACE MY DEAR NEPHEW.

Linda Clinger - May 11 at 01:54 PM

PG

“ I'm truly saddened to hear of Jeff's passing. I had the pleasure of working with and calling him my friend, when we worked in Germany, as DoD Contractors. He was a great man with many talents, I can't say enough nice things about him, things I'm sure I didn't say loud or often enough when we worked together. Rest in Peace my friend, your tour is done.

Paul Gahley - May 11 at 03:11 AM

HW

“ I will always love you.
Dankw

Heike Walter - May 09 at 04:02 PM

SC

“ Kevin, Randy and Mark, I am so sorry for your loss. We continue to keep you all in our prayers for strength and healing during this difficult time. I always remembered your father Kevin as a kind and loving person and he always put a smile on everyone's face. Sending our love and hugs.

Shelley Clinger - May 09 at 09:22 AM

HW

Our heartfelt condolences from the
Heartfelt condolences from mother-in-law Margret, Ralf, Anke with family
You were a great person

Heike Walter - May 09 at 02:10 PM

HW

I'm incredibly sad

Heike Walter - May 09 at 02:11 PM

HW

*Mark, Randy und Familie ich bin in Gedanken bei euch
Liebe Grüße Heike*

Heike Walter - May 09 at 02:12 PM



“ *Guiding Light Bouquet was purchased for the family of Jeffrey Burton Clinger.*



May 09 at 04:33 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Jeffrey Burton Clinger.

May 09 at 04:33 AM

PH

“ *My deepest condolences to Jeff's family, friends, and all who loved him. Jeff and I worked together for several years, and I will always cherish our small chats and the warm smile he shared every day. He was such a capable and passionate person with so many fascinating interests. I'll never forget him sharing his micro-plants with me and teaching me how he grew them—he was truly one of the most pleasant people I've ever had the pleasure of working with. Rest in peace, Jeff. Wishing his family peace and love during this difficult time.*

Phillip Han - May 06 at 07:12 PM

HW

I am infinitely sad. He was always very warm-hearted and always had a smile on his face. He was also a wonderful father to Kevin. Jeff was always there for our son. Jeff, I'll never forget you. We will all miss you very much. With great gratitude Heike

Heike Walter - May 09 at 04:46 AM

DB

“ Jeff and I worked together for many years on the Army SCORE Program of Record. During this time we both traveled between each other's work locations. On one such trip to Kansas, Jeff came back in contact with another co-worker of mine. This man was named Fred and Fred was the man who trained Jeff on flying helicopters. Fred and Jeff were two old pilots who had endless Army tales that amazed me beyond words.

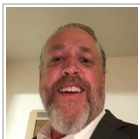
You father was a great man whom I enjoyed working with and I had the privledge of calling him my friend. I am certain Jeff and Fred are up there in heaven laughing and yelling stories right now.

David Bachman - May 06 at 11:58 AM

BC

“ Jeff and I worked together for over 3 years on an Army contract in the Orlando area. He grew micro greens and brought them in to share. He was a great team member and always willing to help in things even if they were outside his lane. Always a great smile. He was a really sweet guy to work with.

Bari Clark - May 06 at 07:28 AM



“ What a great man. I met him while in junior high school 78er football. He was at GVSC and coached football with his father taught me to snap a football back to the kicker. Saw each other around the world. He was a great pilot. Miss you brother. RIP

Timothy Hedgecock - May 04 at 12:09 PM