

UCF's Veterans Legacy Program



VA



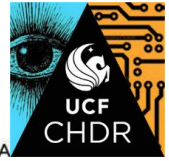
U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs
National Cemetery Administration



UCF

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Department
of History



Clarence Williams III

1988 – 2012

Specialist: US Army

Persian Gulf, Afghanistan

*Please note that news articles published online often exist behind paywalls and require a subscription to access digitally. We have provided links, but have not reproduced them here. Similarly, many families have created remembrance pages. Again, we have provided links, but have not reproduced any images without express written permission from the family.

“U.S., Veterans’ Gravesites, ca. 1775-2019,” database, *Fold3* (fold3.com: accessed July 28, 2023), entry for Clarence Williams III.

<https://www.fold3.com/record/715444424/williams-clarence-us-veterans-gravesites-ca1775-2019>

This source, an index held at the online military records database Fold3.com, includes information on Williams’ gravesite location at Florida National Cemetery. It also provides information like his rank, military branch, and birth and death dates.

“Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) Casualties,” database, *Fold3* (fold3.com: accessed July 28, 2023), entry for Clarence Williams III.

<https://www.fold3.com/record/630022086/clarence-iii-williams-operation-enduring-freedom-oef-casualties>

A casualty listing for Clarence Williams III, indexed at the military records database Fold3.com. Williams died while serving in Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. This source provides information on Williams’s military unit, rank, date and place of death, and residence location in the US.

“Quiet Respect for Two Bay Area Sons,” *Tampa Bay Times*, July 13, 2012, A1 (accessed July 28, 2023).

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/364079091/?terms=Respect%20for%20two%20Bay%20area%20sons&match=1>

A brief article about the return of Williams’s remains to the US after he was killed in a roadside bombing in Afghanistan. This article also includes a photograph of Williams’s casket as it is transferred off of a plane at Dover Air Force Base by six military personnel.

Tony D’Andrea, “Fitting Tribute,” *Tampa Bay Times*, July 17, 2012, A10 (accessed July 28, 2023).

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/364080531/?terms=Respect%20for%20two%20Bay%20area%20sons&match=1>

The above source is a Letter to the Editor thanking the *Tampa Bay Times* for publishing a tribute to Clarence Williams III on page one of their July 13, 2012 issue.

Tony Marrero, “As He Would Like It, a Revival,” *Tampa Bay Times*, July 18, 2012, B1 (accessed July 28, 2023).

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/364091461/?terms=A%20service%20with%20music%20and%20praise%20&match=1>

The above article includes details about a memorial ceremony held for Clarence Williams III shortly after his death in a roadside bombing in Afghanistan. Williams’s family and friends attended the ceremony. The article details that Williams’s sister, Abrill Edwards, led the crowd at the ceremony in an a cappella gospel tribute to her brother.

---, “Music, Praise Fill Air at Service for Fallen Soldier,” *Tampa Bay Times*, July 18, 2012, B8 (accessed July 28, 2023).

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/364091915/?terms=A%20service%20with%20music%20and%20praise%20>

This article continues the above article’s content from page B-one of the same edition.

“A Revival for Fallen Soldier,” *Tampa Bay Times*, July 18, 2012, B8 (accessed July 28, 2023).

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/364253466/?terms=Spectators%20line%20streets%20for%20procession&match=1>

A brief article in the *Tampa Bay Times* about a memorial service held for Clarence Williams III, including a photograph of his parents mourning their son.

“Final Tribute for a Soldier,” *Tampa Bay Times*, July 19, 2012, B1 (accessed July 28, 2023).

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/364092003/?terms=Final%20tribute%20for%20a%20soldier&match=1>

An article that describes the ceremony for Clarence Williams III’s remains when they arrived at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa shortly after his death. The article also includes a photograph of his family and friends as they look on at Williams’s casket.

Molly Larmie, “Remembering a Fallen Soldier,” *Tampa Bay Times*, July 22, 2012, B1 (accessed July 28, 2023).

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/364092568/?terms=Clarence%20Williams%20III&match=1>

The above article details Clarence Williams III’s funeral service at Living Waters Worship Center in Ocala, FL, and also includes a photograph of his flag-draped casket as it is carried by six US military personnel at the service.

Toni Gross, “Don’t Forget Families who Paid Highest Price,” *Tampa Bay Times*, October 6, 2012, A15 (accessed July 28, 2023).

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/363885903/?terms=Don%27t%20forget%20families%20who%20paid%20the%20highest%20price&match=1>

This Letter to the Editor, published in the *Tampa Bay Times* about three months after Williams’s death in Afghanistan, urges readers to not forget about the sacrifices Veterans have made in recent years. It specifically mentions the death of Williams, and honors his life and memory.

Howard Altman and Chip Osowski, “Spc. Clarence Williams III Arrives in Tampa,” *Tampa Tribune*, July 19, 2012, 13 (accessed July 28, 2023).

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/342472774/?terms=Comrades%20mourned%20&match=1>

A brief article published in the *Tampa Tribune* which reports on the arrival of Clarence Williams III’s remains to the US shortly after his death in Afghanistan. The article includes a photograph of Williams’s casket, carried by six military personnel, as his family looks on.

Steve Otto, “The Forgotten War,” *Tampa Tribune*, July 22, 2012, 20 (accessed July 28, 2023).

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/342467657/?terms=Maybe%20that%20sounds%20unfair&match=1>

A brief article published in the *Tampa Tribune* almost three weeks after Williams’s death, in which the author wonders if any speakers at the approaching Republican National Convention will mention the sacrifices of Williams and the other five Veterans who died in Afghanistan earlier in the month.

“Road Dedication for Fallen Soldier,” *Tampa Bay Times*, October 25, 2012, H1 (accessed July 28, 2023).

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/363898694/?terms=Will%20hold%20a%20road%20dedication%20ceremony&match=1>

This brief article, published three months after Williams’s death, announces that Yontz Road in Hernando County, FL, will be dedicated to Clarence Williams III.

Howard Altman, “Gold Star Families Respond,” *Tampa Bay Times*, August 2, 2016, A1 (accessed July 28, 2023).

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/365061007/?terms=Only%20a%20small%20fraction%20of%20American%20families&match=1>

Published four years after Williams’s death, this article responds to comments made by then-presidential candidate Donald Trump about the family of fallen Muslim Army Captain Humayun Khan in 2016. Trump had spoken critically of Muslim immigration into the US. This article includes a quotation from Williams’s mother, Talisa, who responded to Trump’s comments and remembered her own son fondly.

“Honor the Fallen: Army Spc. Clarence Williams III,” *Military Times*, 2018 (accessed July 28, 2023).

<https://thefallen.militarytimes.com/army-spc-clarence-williams-iii/6568256>

The *Military Times*’ Honor the Fallen project aims to commemorate Veterans who died while serving their country. Williams’s page includes information on the circumstances of his death, as well as his military unit and rank. It also provides the names of the other five Veterans who lost their lives in the same roadside bombing that killed Williams. Their names are Army Spc. Erica P. Alecksen, Army SSgt. Ricardo Seija, Army Spc. Trevor B. Adkins, Army Spc. Alejandro J. Pardo, and Army Spc. Cameron J. Stambaugh.

"Fallen Warrior: Spc. Clarence Williams III," *Keesler Air Force Base*, February 4, 2022, accessed July 28, 2023.

<https://www.keesler.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2924281/fallen-warrior-spc-clarence-williams-iii/>

As part of their Fallen Warrior series, Keesler Air Force Base publishes a brief biography honoring one fallen US Veteran a week. For the week of February 4, 2022, they published a biography of Clarence Williams III. It includes information about Williams's death nearly ten years earlier, and mentions that Williams was awarded the Purple Heart.

"Clarence Williams III," *Iraq/Afghanistan War Heroes*, accessed July 28, 2023.

<https://iraqwarheroes.org/2012/williamsc.htm>

The above link navigates to an online memorial page created to honor Clarence Williams III. It includes information like his military rank, birth and death dates, military unit, and several photographs depicting Williams in his Army uniform as well as his flag-draped casket as it returned to the US. This page also provides a selection of obituaries and articles about Williams that were previously published elsewhere.

Tony Marrero, "Rain-Soaked Crowds Honor Fallen Brooksville Soldier Army Spc. Clarence Williams III," *Tampa Bay Times*, July 18, 2012 (accessed July 28, 2023).

<https://www.tampabay.com/news/military/rain-soaked-crowds-honor-fallen-brooksville-soldier-army-spc-clarence/1240898/>

An article published on the *Tampa Bay Times* website which details a funeral procession for Williams organized ten days after his death. Dozens of people stood along the procession route in Hernando County FL, despite heavy rain, to pay their respects to Williams, his life, and legacy.

Tony Marrero, “Clarence Williams’ Sister Recalls Faith of Army Soldier Killed in Afghanistan,” *Tampa Bay Times*, July 10, 2012 (accessed July 28, 2023).

<https://www.tampabay.com/news/military/clarence-williams-sister-recalls-faith-of-army-soldier-killed-in/1239693/>

This online article, published just two days after Williams’s death, includes an interview with Williams’s sister, Abrill Edwards. Edwards explains that she had just spoken with her brother over the phone hours before Williams was killed in a roadside bombing in Afghanistan along with five other US Veterans. She describes how her brother had told her that serving in Afghanistan had reaffirmed his Christian faith.

“Clarence Williams III Funeral,” *Ocala StarBanner*, July 21, 2012 (accessed July 28, 2023).

<https://www.ocala.com/picture-gallery/news/local/2012/07/21/clarence-williams-iii-funeral/851965007/>

The above article is a photo essay that includes a collection of photographs of Williams’s family and friends, and members of the public as they honor Clarence Williams III at his funeral in Ocala, FL. Each photograph is accompanied by a caption which explains context for the image.

Molly Larmie, “Many Pay Tribute to Fallen Soldier,” *Ocala StarBanner*, July 21, 2012 (accessed July 28, 2023).

<https://www.ocala.com/story/news/local/2012/07/21/many-pay-tribute-to-fallen-soldier/31906354007/>

The above link navigates to an online article that details the funeral for Clarence Williams III, held nearly three weeks after his death in Afghanistan. The article includes quotations from Williams’s family and friends, as well as a collection of photographs which depict mourners as they honor Williams’s life and legacy.

Sgt. Michael Sword, “978th MPs Honor 6 Killed in IED Blast,” *Defense Visual Information Distribution Service*, July 14, 2012 (accessed July 28, 2023).

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/91941/978th-mps-honor-6-killed-ied-blast>

This online article, published by the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service about a week after Williams died, details a memorial ceremony held by the 978th Military Police Battalion stationed at Forward Operating Base Airborne in Wardak Province, Afghanistan. The ceremony honored the six US Veterans who were killed during a roadside bombing on July 8, 2012, including Williams. The article includes several quotations from US servicemen and women who spoke about and fondly remembered their fallen comrades.

Brittany Mulligan, “New Monument Outside Hernando County Courthouse Honors Local Servicemen,” *Suncoast News: Pasco, Hernando, North Pinellas*, January 27, 2021 (accessed July 28, 2023).

https://www.suncoastnews.com/news/new-monument-outside-hernando-county-courthouse-honors-local-servicemen/article_778ac306-60cd-11eb-85e6-87ad4d9c009e.html

This article, published nearly nine years after Williams’ death, provides information about a monument commemorated in Hernando County, FL in 2021 which honors five local servicemen who died while serving in either Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom. The Monument includes the name of Clarence Williams III.

Taylor Simpson, “Fallen Soldier Clarence Williams III Was Remembered by Family, Friends and Bikers,” *ABC 20WCJB*, February 26, 2022 (accessed July 28, 2023).

<https://www.wcjb.com/2022/02/26/fallen-soldier-clarence-williams-iii-was-remembered-by-family-friends-bikers/>

The above link navigates to an online article published ten years after Williams’s death in a roadside bombing in Afghanistan. It details a procession consisting of about sixty bikers, part of the organization Tribute to the Troops, who rode their motorcycles through Tampa in honor of Williams and the five other US Veterans who died in the same roadside bombing.

Nate Rawlings, “Honoring the Fallen: One Photographer’s Witness to 490 Dignified Transfers,” *Time*, May 26, 2014 (accessed July 28, 2023).

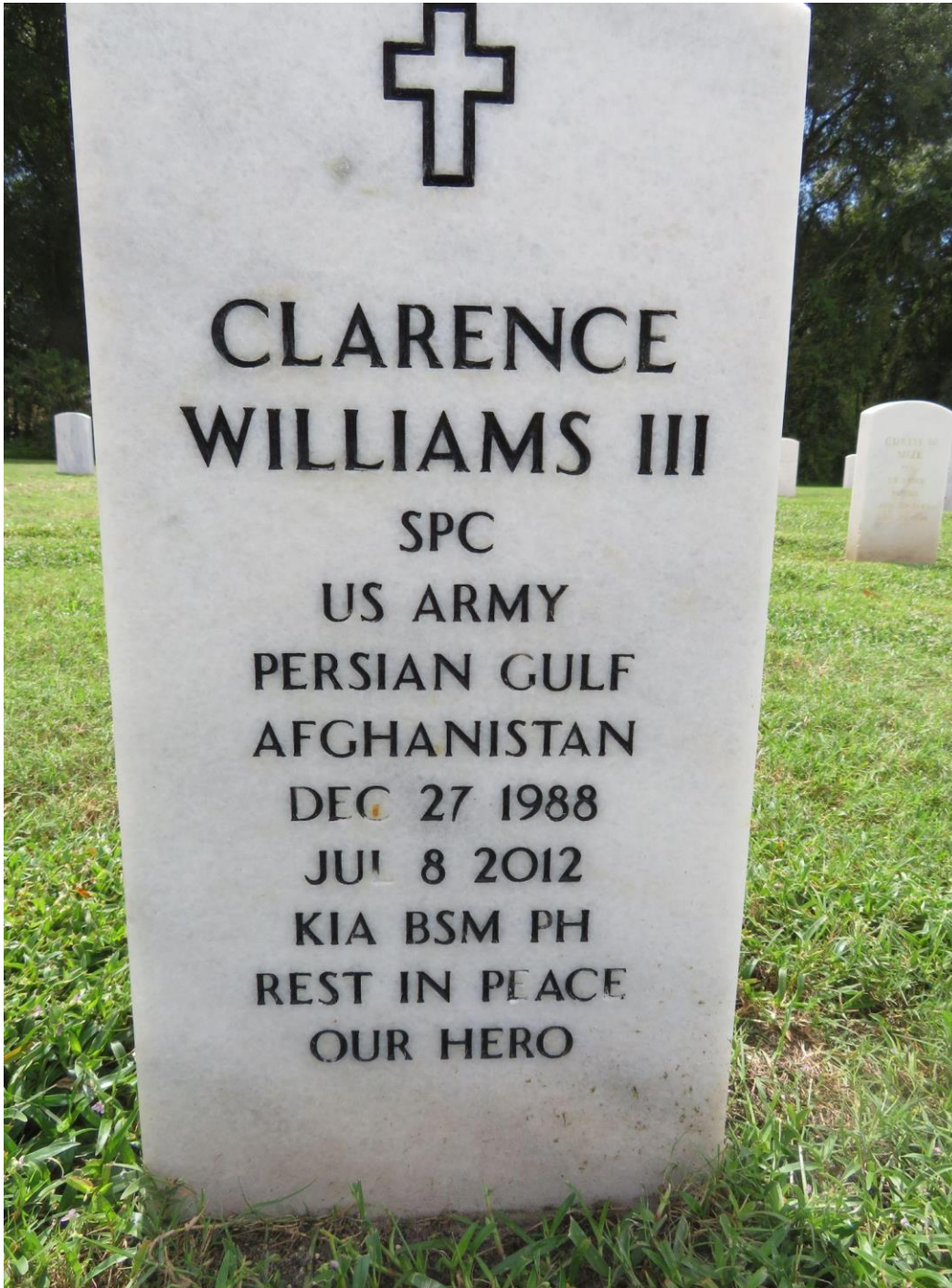
<https://time.com/3799840/honoring-the-fallen-one-photographers-witness-to-490-dignified-transfers/>

This photo essay, published online on *Time* Magazine’s website, includes photographs of fallen Veterans as their caskets containing their remains return to the US via Dover Air Force Base. The essay includes over two hundred photographs, including one of Williams’s remains as six men in military uniforms carry his casket off of a plane. The photograph depicting Williams’s transfer is on page 144.

“SPC Clarence Williams III,” *FindAGrave*, July 10, 2012 (accessed July 28, 2023).

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/93425393/clarence-williams/photo>

Clarence Williams III’s page on findagrave.com includes information on his birth and death dates, military service, and burial location. It also includes a selection of photographs which depict Williams in his military uniform and while deployed in Afghanistan, as well as his headstone at Florida National Cemetery. As of August 2023, thirty people had left digital flowers on his page, which honor Williams’s memory and service to his country.



Clarence Williams III's Headstone in Florida National Cemetery

UCF Veterans Legacy Program, *Headstone for Clarence Williams III*, photograph, 2023, Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell, FL.

BSM (Bronze Star Medal) & PH (Purple Heart)