



Jeffrey C. Matthews

April 2, 1954 - April 29, 2018

Jeff died of natural causes at his Benicia residence early Sunday morning.

He was a farrier and received his training in Virginia. Jeff had many clients and worked at several stables in the area. He cared greatly for the horses, sometimes not receiving pay for the work he did

so that the horses would not suffer.

He was active in Civil War re-enactment as a member of the California 100 and National Civil War Association.

Jeff liked to give living history presentations about the life of a Civil War soldier at the local schools, and would dress in his uniform for the children, but sometimes his sword would cause a stir. Two of his most

memorable re-enactments were when he was at the massive Gettysburg re-enactment and was part of the filming for the 2003 motion picture "Gods & Generals," where he helped re-create the battle of Antietam.

Jeff later became a volunteer in the restoration of the SS Red Oak Victory museum ship berthed in Richmond.

He was very interested in US and military flag history and liked the challenge of investigating their designs and sewing his own copies, many of which he then donated to the SS Red Oak Victory and various Civil War units.

Jeff was born to John William and Kirby Lucille (Adams) Matthews in Venezuela while his father was working as a chemical engineer. At the age of 5 Jeff moved with his family to New Jersey where he attended elementary school, and then when his family moved to California he attended junior and senior high schools in the East Bay area. He later received an associate degree from DeVry Institute in Phoenix, Arizona and then worked as an electronics technician before changing careers to work outdoors.

He is survived by his sister Ann Llewellyn and brothers John Kirby, Patrick Hiram and William Arthur, step-mother Maria Teresa Matthews and step-brothers Edward and Julio Plata, and his horses Chester and Push.

A service in his memory will be held at a later date. Memorials may be made to the SS Red Oak Victory of Richmond, California.

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Comments



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Rhonda Lucci - June 01, 2018 at 12:18 AM



“ I was shocked to hear of Jeff's passing. He was such a nice guy and a peaceful person. He was so generous to the Benicia Historical Museum through the years. He participated in our events including his demonstration of what a Farrier does to shoe horses. He donated items to our museum for a number of years. Whenever I ran into Jeff, be it at the Martinez Peddler's Fair, Benicia Peddler's Fair or just at Safeway or on the street, we got into a conversation about history. He was so well versed on the Civil War history, but knew about other historic moments as well. He will be missed. God Bless him.

Beverly Phelan



Beverly Phelan - May 07, 2018 at 11:46 AM



“ Jennifer Morris lit a candle in memory of Jeffrey C. Matthews



Jennifer Morris - May 04, 2018 at 05:38 PM



“ I enjoyed my time talking with Jeff as he visited with our family. A wonderful, and always interesting fellow, I felt enriched spending time with him. Brian Walker

Gigi Walker - May 03, 2018 at 09:56 PM



“ Gigi Walker lit a candle in memory of Jeffrey C. Matthews



Gigi Walker - May 03, 2018 at 07:56 PM



“ Ford Motor Company purchased the Basket Full of Wishes for the family of Jeffrey C Matthews.



Ford Motor Company - May 03, 2018 at 02:31 PM



“ Jeff Mathews has been my Farrier for the past 14 years. I guess that means that I met up with him ever 8 weeks for 14 years! We talked about all kinds of amazing things. He always told me that my horse , Ruby Begonia was his Favorite horse, after Chester and Push. I know it was a compliment even if he said that to all his other clients. I learned much from him about many things especially that horse shoeing won the Civil War! I can not exactly remember why. I had him come and talk to some young horse students about horses in the Civil War, they loved hearing him talk about it, he even brought dress up uniforms and a saber, he was their hero that day. He just came to put my young horses first pair of shoes on a week befor his death, he looked very healthy and had a great new beard style. I really thought he would be around for ever, I knew he was not 100%. But he had so many things he was excited about. Over the years he became a friend, he took exceptional care of my horses and we will all miss him very much. He will not be replaceable. My deepest sympathy to his family, friends, clients and horses

With Love

Robin Cooper

Ruby Begonia

And Leon

robin cooper - May 03, 2018 at 12:21 PM



“ My cousin Jeff, the farrier and Civil War re-enactor.

I scoffed, to myself quietly, when he first told me about doing the re-enactments, the research into details like what kind of portable wood stoves were used, the uniforms and the variations, even down to underwear. If you were serious about doing it right, you wore exactly the same clothes and carried the right gun and sword and ate the same food and slept in the same tent that men used back in the 1860's. I understood the research and the details and the appreciation of history, and how Jeff could relate to all that, but really, camping out for a weekend in heavy wool suits and bad underwear, and going through the drills and battle formations, over and over again? Just foolish, I thought.

Then, one weekend in Fremont, California, I went to see how it goes, and I was astonished. In action, it was so much more than a sum of all those parts. Frankly, it was scary. I was standing on the sidelines when the Cavalry thundered by me within a few feet of where I stood. These were teams of horses pulling cannon and ammunition, galloping at full speed into battle. Suddenly I understood why he did this; you don't know what it's like until you act it out in real time. I came away with a new, profound appreciation of what historical re-enactments are all about.

Jeff, I'm sorry to learn of your early passing, sad to know I'll never see your fb posts, sad to know you'll never return to the horses you cared for and their pasture. I love you, Jeff, may you rest in peace.

-Alan

Alan Gwinner - May 03, 2018 at 09:16 AM



“ So saddened to read of Jeff's passing. As our farrier for the past several years, I was aware of his health challenges and we always made his work station as comfortable as possible. He is missed by humans and horses! My condolences to his family. May you find peace in happy memories of Jeff and times you shared.

Amy Drake, Fairfield, CA

Amy - May 08, 2018 at 04:11 PM