

**SOUTH DAKOTA  
FALLEN HERO**



*Your  
Memory  
lives on in  
our hearts.*



*In Loving Memory  
SPC Estell Lee Turner*



*Stoupe Falls, SD*

*US Army*

*3-14-1965 to 7-02-2008*

*Afghanistan*

## *A Military Family*

*Estell Lee Turner was born 14 March 1965 in San Francisco, CA to the late Clarence Estell Turner and Gloria White Turner of Jackson, KY. Estell graduated from the Buckhorn High School in Buckhorn, KY in 1983. Immediately after High School he opted to become the third generation of his family to enlist in the Military.*

*Estell's father, Clarence Turner, served eight years in the Navy during Vietnam aboard the USS Hornet as a Radar Technician. While his paternal grandfather, Estell Turner, was a Paratrooper in the Army during WWII. During the Battle of the Un-Named Day (D-Day) at Normandy Beach, he was wounded and awarded the first of his two Purple Hearts.*

*At the age of 18, Estell joined the Army and went thru Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training (AIT) at Fort Sill, OK. Once finished, Estell received orders to C Company, 1/30 Infantry Division in Germany and was assigned as a Radio Repair Operator. While assigned to Charlie Company, Estell's buddies called him "E.T".....long before the movie came out. Estell completed his enlistment in Germany with an Honorable Discharge in 1986 and returned home to Hazard, KY. After his return home, Estell's family and friends referred to him as Lee.*

*After returning to Kentucky Lee tried his hand at various jobs before finding his niche as an auto mechanic and moved to Lexington, NC. He continued to enjoy his hobbies, especially playing the guitar. He was self-taught when it came to playing the guitar, even thou he couldn't read music, but he was able to play any instrument and learn any song just by listening.*

*In April of 2001, while at the Fayetteville Speedway, Lee had the pleasure of meeting Leah Shumaker. Lee courted Leah for two years before asking for her hand in marriage; they married in August 2003. After the wedding, Lee found humor in being issued a Military Dependent Identification card since his wife was on Active Duty in the Army. If ever asked to show Identification, that was the card he'd produce every time. Both families had even more to celebrate that month, at the beginning of Lyda's, Senior year of High School, she legally changed her last name from Shumaker to Turner.*

*Family and holidays were the most important things to Lee. He loved spoiling Lyda and his nieces, Jessica, Molly and Julianne, and the only nephew, Jonathan, who just happen to be born on Veteran's Day. On special holidays like Valentine's Day, Easter, St. Patrick's Day, Lee would mischievously assist Leah in filling treat bags full of candy and the noisiest dancing figures they could find. His favorite time to take the gift bags to his brother's house was in the middle of the week around 8:00 pm. and getting his nieces and nephews riled up and on sugar highs, and all the while laughing on his way home.*

*Halloween was Lee's favorite holiday, spending an entire day the first weekend of October putting up decorations. Halloween night was always a rush putting the finishing touches on the decorations, he and Lyda taking turns drawing chalk outlines of each other in the street and up the driveway and pouring fake blood everywhere. Lee always liked dressing up, sometimes the kids didn't stop screaming till they were halfway down the street, more often than not, it was the parents that ran off screaming, leaving their kids behind! Sometimes the older kids would come back four or five times just so he'd scare them and each time bringing different friends back with them.*

*Thanksgiving and Christmas were no different for Lee and Leah, who always took a turkey, appetizers and desserts to the Guar Force at the Special Operations Command building where Leah was assigned. The Chief of Guards for the Command never had a problem having volunteers to work the holidays if they knew Lee was deep frying a turkey for them. Lee also volunteered at Family Readiness functions for Leah's unit. He made props for Halloween parties, painted faces and helped with the set-up and clean-up.*

*In June 2006, the Army transferred Leah to a unit in Sioux Falls, SD. Lee, not letting an opportunity pass, gave up his position as auto mechanic at a dealership to move to South Dakota and begin a new chapter in their lives. While Lyda opted to stay in North Carolina to continue her college education.*

*At the age of 42, and after being out the military for more than 21 years, his strong military ties and beliefs led him to very happily reenlist in the Army on 7 March 2007, as a Private E-2. Lee went through a Basic Training refresher course at White Sands Missile Range in White Sands, NM and to AIT to re-class as a Motor Transport Operator. After completion of his training he was assigned to E Company, 1/506 Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, KY.*

*When Lee first arrived at Fort Campbell, the chain of command, not being aware of his situation, weren't overly thrilled to have a 40+ Private First Class assigned to them, but within a month he was their "go to guy". Once again Lee was given a nickname, but this time, he wasn't the only Turner in his platoon, so to make the distinction between them, Lee was nicknamed "Old Man Turner" or "OMT" for short. And Chris Turner was known as "The Other Turner" or "OMT's son". Both Lee and I met Chris' parents the night before the unit deployed and discovered that both their dad's were originally from the Valdosta, GA area and most likely related.*

*In March 2008, Lee and E Company left for Afghanistan. In late June, while sitting as gunner on a return mission, Lee's convoy encountered an IED, Lee was fatally wounded and the driver, Specialist Matthew Peopple, were both badly wounded. Both were medavac'd to Washington DC. Lee was sent to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD and Specialist Peopple to Walter Reed Medical Center, who was eventually able to re- turn to duty. Lee passed away from his injuries on 2 July 2008. President George W. Bush spent time with Leah, Lyda and Lee's brother Johnny the day after Lee's passing and in a private Ceremony at the National Naval Medical Center, President Bush awarded all three Lee's Purple Heart.*

*Lee's wife, Leah, is a Staff Sergeant with 19 years of Service in the United States Army, currently assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Training Brigade, Fort Bragg, NC. Lee's brother, Johnny Turner, retired from the United States Army in August 2009 as a Master Sergeant with 21 years of service with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Special Forces Group, Fort Bragg, NC.*

*Specialist Estell Lee Turner was laid to rest at the Camp Nelson National Cemetery in Nicholasville, KY with full Military honors on 11 July 2008. Lee completed 60 missions and was awarded the Purple Heart, Bronze Star, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, NATO Medal, War On Terrorism-Expeditionary Medal and the Combat Action Badge for his time in Afghanistan. While already having received the Army Good Conduct Medal, Overseas Service Ribbon, War On Terrorism Medal, Army Achievement Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster and the National Defense Service Medal.*

Lee and his motorcycle  
2003.

