



Bob France

November 10, 1940 - August 9, 2025

Charles Allen “Bob” France

November 10, 1940 – August 9, 2025

Charles Allen “Bob” France stepped into the gates of heaven on August 9, 2025, at the age of 84. He was born November 10, 1940, in Fontana, California, to Charles Lane France and Juanita Faye Allen France.

In 1958, Bob married Joyce Chambers in Chino, California. Together they raised three daughters, Linda, Carrie, and Teresa. Life with Bob was never short on stories. In 1962, he and Joyce bought a farm in Thomasville, Missouri completely sight unseen. With a dream of being a farmer and enough courage to back it up, Bob moved his young family to the Ozarks.

The farming years gave way to public service and in 1963, Bob joined the West Plains Fire Department, prompting the family’s move from Thomasville to West Plains. A year later, he became a deputy for the Howell County Sheriff’s Department under Sheriff Brack Pace, serving until 1968. In the midst of it all, Bob also started the first rural fire department in Howell County.

In 1967, Bob founded France Fire Extinguisher Company with \$100 and a few fire extinguishers in the trunk of his car. He traveled the region making sales calls and servicing extinguishers. Bob’s mix of determination, resourcefulness,

and charm grew into a business that remained family owned and operated as France Fire Extinguisher for 56 years. Today it still serves the community under a new name, carrying on the work Bob began.

Bob eventually “retired” from France Fire Extinguisher in 1999, with Joyce then taking over the day to day operations, but sitting still never suited him. Soon Bob’s Handyman Service was born, keeping him busy and connected to people for nearly 20 more years.

Outside of work, Bob’s life was full. He began flying fixed-wing planes in the late 1970s and later took to the skies in gyrocopters in the mid-80s. He was a lifelong Civil War history buff, a devoted collector of guns and knives, and a man who never lost his curiosity for how things worked.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents and his beloved grandparents. He is survived by the mother of his girls, Joyce France; daughters Linda France, Carrie McFarland, and Teresa Skinner; grandsons Chris Herbolsheimer, Holt Skinner, and Luke Skinner; brothers Leon France and Mickey France; and several nieces and nephews.

A celebration of Bob’s life will be held at 6 p.m. on August 21 at the Historic Post Office in West Plains.

Bob’s story is one of hard work, taking chances, and investing in people. Whether you met him as a young fireman or deputy, a determined salesman, a pilot in the open sky, the handyman who could fix almost anything, or the teller of a truly questionable joke, you knew you had crossed paths with someone unforgettable.

He will be fondly remembered and sorely missed.

Arrangements by Always Faithful Memorial Services, West Plains, Mo

Previous Events

Celebration

AUG **21**. 6:00 PM (CT)

The Historic Post Office
204 East Main
West Plains, MO 65775

Tribute Wall

ML

“ *Much love from California, Lori purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Bob France.*



Much love from California, Lori - August 21, 2025 at 10:32 AM

TF

“ *The Philip Cooper family purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Bob France.*



The Philip Cooper family - August 20, 2025 at 05:58 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Bob France.*



August 20, 2025 at 01:27 PM

DP

“ *Dolores, Bill, Dana, John, Dawn, & Paul purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Bob France.*



Dolores, Bill, Dana, John, Dawn, & Paul - August 19, 2025 at 04:19 PM

TF

“ *Torres Family purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Bob France.*



Torres Family - August 19, 2025 at 01:08 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Bob France.*



August 18, 2025 at 09:03 AM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Bob France.*

August 18, 2025 at 09:03 AM

LF

“ *I'm so proud of my dad and his life accomplishments. He moved his young family to MO in the early 60s, not knowing a soul in the Ozarks. Within 10 years, he had built a thriving business, built my mom her dream home, got his pilots license and a Cessna 172, and made a good name for himself. He loved his family and friends, his years in law enforcement, his time as a fireman, building his business, fixing anything and everything, and flying. Especially flying. Fly high amongst the clouds Dad. I'll see you in Heaven.*

Linda France - August 17, 2025 at 08:55 PM

ST

Linda and France Family-

I have say how it was a great honor to meet Bob France, visit him several times over the years! All While I did visit, spent some time there, yes, (Ozarks) - visiting from Tucson...It was such a pleasure to be around Bob, to know him a bit and experience myself of the family stories, history and upbringing of the France girls and familia! I recall how he was on a job working in his Handy Man days..., he gladly took time to visit. Then as we hung around a bit, got to see him in his craft. How he enjoyed! All I learned from Linda and family, I really see how proud they are and all blessings he brought to all. Many blessings, prayers and Love.

Steve Torres and All of the Torres familia!

Steve Torres - August 18, 2025 at 03:29 PM

LF

Thank you for those kind words Steve. Dad asked about you often. I'm glad you got to spend some time with him over the years.

Linda France - August 18, 2025 at 10:32 PM

RH

“ *Bob France 1959, Chino California.*

Bob was my neighbor, his parents Juanita and Chuck brothers Leon and Mickey were awesome, as neighbors we were more like family. Bob was a teenager maybe 18 or 19 years old and Leon maybe 17 years old. We all being 8 or 9 years old looked up to Bob and Leon big time. Mickey and I were best friends growing and still to this are best of friends, we were classmates all through school.... Family to this day. One summer day I came home from Little League practice and no one was home so I went outside to practice catching fly balls by myself. Things were pretty much quite with no one around so I starting pretending to be a Dodger, throwing the ball high in the air and saying " Sung on and belted to left, back goes Davis, Tommy Davis Dodger Leftfielder back to the wall and makes the catch"... That phrase, screaming little boy's voice alerted Bob France who was pinned underneath his car, pinned underneath a heavy transmission. Bob started to moan out loud over and over, I'm just a little boy not knowing what I am hear so I walk to the edge of my yard then onto Bob's carport, the moaning was louder and desperate when I looked under the car and saw Bob in bad shape, I freaked out then Bob told to get help!.... I ran to the neighbor's house and got Jim Ramos to come help Bob. Jim took over and called the Fire Department, police and Para Medics. By now I remember being freak out and tears streaming, mercy. I thought Bob was going to die for sure. Bob was my hero and in the Army Nation Guard! I recall thinking one day I will be like Bob in the Army.... Bob made it thank God and life was good, he later moved back east and that's the last time I saw Bob...Bob was my Facebook Friend and we followed each other..and spoke to each other on Facebook....Rest in Peace Bob, Love you Brother.....My heartfelt prayers to Joyce, Family and Friends ... to Bob's Daughters just know that your Father was an awesome Man and he touch many throughout his Beautiful Life and I am one.

Raymond Herrera - August 16, 2025 at 12:02 AM

LF

Thank you for sharing that story Raymond. I had never heard it before. And thank you for your kind words about Dad.

Linda France - August 17, 2025 at 08:39 PM

CD

“Corky and Evelyn Dowell planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Bob France.

Corky and Evelyn Dowell - August 15, 2025 at 10:44 PM

CD

“Corky and Evelyn Dowell purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Bob France.



Corky and Evelyn Dowell - August 15, 2025 at 10:44 PM

CA

“Connie France Atkins purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of Bob France.



Connie France Atkins - August 14, 2025 at 02:58 PM