

DOUG DRIVER, 1947-2020

Here is Doug Driver's obituary --- forwarded to the Weekly Sun by Warren Grimes --- that the retired DEA group sent to the family (DEA is the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration):

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of highly decorated DEA Special Agent Douglas Driver on December 15, 2020 in Jacksonville, Fla. Doug was 73 years old.

Doug joined BNDD (Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, DEA's predecessor) in 1971 and retired from DEA in 2004 at 57 years of age. A total of 33 years of service. Doug's assignments included Washington, DC, New York, Jacksonville, Florida, Panama City, Panama, Los Angeles, Denver, Colorado, and Savannah, Georgia.

While assigned to the Jacksonville Resident Office, Doug was the case agent of the 10-year investigation of one of the founding members of the Colombias Medellin Cartel, German-Colombian Carlos Enrique Lehder Rivas. In the late 1970s Lehder, after meeting American George Jung, launched a plan to smuggle tons of cocaine from Colombia to the U.S. They were the first to do so and it ignited the cocaine craze in the U.S. from 1977 through the 1980s.

Growing his drug smuggling operations, Lehder purchased property on the island of Normans Cay in the Bahamas and intimidated the other residents into leaving the island so he could grow his drug operation for the Medellin Cartel. Soon thereafter, Doug launched his DEA investigation of Lehder.

In May of 1988, Lehder was convicted and sentenced to Life in Prison plus 135 years. Later, Lehder's testimony resulted in the DEA conviction of Panamanian General Manuel Noriega.

Post-DEA, Doug worked as a Contractor assigned to Special Forces in remote areas of Afghanistan. Doug was 62 years old at the time, but Special Forces nicknamed him Superman. When on R&R in Kabul, Doug exercised by swimming in a pool with a parachute on his back.

In Afghanistan, Doug (pusued) two Taliban brothers who made an IED which killed two members of his Special Forces unit. On December 4, 2009, when Doug and his team moved in for the arrests, Doug was injured when the brothers set off another IED. Doug suffered a major stroke and went into a coma. The injury left him unable to see, hear, talk, walk or use his arms.

Doug eventually returned home to Jacksonville and for the next 11 years was attended by his wife Becky and a 24/7 medical staff. Doug remained determined to recover and walk. He did regain his sight, hearing, and movement of one arm. He learned to walk

short distances with assistance of a special apparatus. He was an avid tricyclist, who on a special tricycle designed for him rode in several military/law enforcement races.

Awards included U.S 1988 Attorney General Award for Excellence (Lehder case).

Awarded the 1999 HIDTA Group of the Year for three years in a row in Los Angeles for most Meth Labs seized in the U.S. (over 50 Meth labs).

Doug had many other successful major investigations in Las Vegas, Savannah, and elsewhere.

For those who had the honor to know and work with Doug, we will always remember his laughter, positive attitude, his bull doggedness when pursuing criminals, his inner-strength and dedication. Even during the years Doug was severely handicapped, Doug loved to tell jokes and would often start laughing before finishing them.

Doug was a warrior throughout his career and remained so until the end. We will all miss him.

Doug is survived by his wife Becky and his son, Douglas L. Driver III (Sonny), a former Captain in the U.S. Marines (who) after obtaining his master's degree now works for Ernst & Young in the Washington, DC area.

Friends of Doug and Becky can contact and send condolences to their son Sonny Driver at dldriver47@gmail.com.

The family will have a memorial gathering early next year with family and friends and then Doug's ashes will be spread near Jacksonville Beach. More information to follow at a later date.

For those who would like to make a charitable donation in Doug's name, they asked that your donation be made to:

AFNA Foundation at www.afnafoundation.org (donate via credit card or check).

Healthy U Now Foundation <https://healthyunow.org/>. Checks can be made to: Healthy U Now Foundation and mailed to 3800 Joe Ashton Road, St. Augustine, FL 32092.