



## Michael "Hobbs" Vasserot Merle

July 11, 1945 - August 12, 2025

MICHAEL "HOBBS" VASSEROT MERLE

7/11/45 ~ 8/12/25

Michael "Hobbs" Vasserot Merle, resident of Napa, left this mortal realm on August 12, 2025. Our beloved cousin and friend succumbed in hospice care in Petaluma just one month after attaining the lofty age of 80. His health had been declining and he was ready to go home.

A San Francisco native, Hobbs grew up in Burlingame, where he attended Our Lady of Angels School and Burlingame High School. Upon graduation, he joined the U.S. Army, honorably serving for three years as an armorer at a coveted duty station in Italy.

Upon his return, Hobbs embarked on a rich and colorful career in the restaurant business. He was a talented server and legendary bartender whose patented patter behind the plank pleased many a tippler. Most notable gig was his storied residence at Nepenthe in Big Sur during the height of the counterculture era. Hobbs dabbled in other ventures but his misty dream of establishing Mickey's Pub in Ireland remained just beyond his fervent grasp.

Sadly, Hobbs' modest Napa home was destroyed by fire in December 2021.

That tragedy was compounded when he lost both of his brothers in short order, Thomas on January 11, 2023 and Martin on March 30, 2023. He showed remarkable strength and fortitude throughout these challenges.

Hobbs was a true original, refreshingly unique, a character in the best possible way. Irish poet John O'Donohue would call him "one who awakens your life in order to free the wild possibilities within you." He would disarm you with his dashing good looks, flashing smile and debonair demeanor. There was a certain courtliness about him, a hint of old world flavor. Once you were charmed, he might delightfully twist a word, drop a historical oddity, twiddle his fingers like Oliver Hardy, demonstrate his yodel or mimic the yowl of his house cat. This was a merrymaker of the highest order.

At Catholic grade school in Burlingame, Hobbs forged lifelong friendships with classmates in the confession line. His love of comedy and mischief developed into an 8th grade humor column and a comic strip, Walnuts. He admired W.C. Fields, Alfred E. Neuman, Pryor, Carlin, R. Crumb, Lennon, Wavy Gravy, Robin Williams, Hunter S. Thompson. When he met his idol, Jonathan Winters, the comic asked him, "Are you someone's evil younger brother?" Hobbs' lively sense of humor served him well through high school, the Army, and his long reign as go-to philosopher/mentor/muse.

Always a generous soul, Hobbs spent many years mentoring a young man in a program similar to Big Brothers. He extended his warmhearted and kindly nature to all and his caregivers adored him for it. He took people in. He loved family, friends, funny names and foreign phrases; pens, classic films, dogs, tea and toast, Niners and Giants, words, odd sounds, and even boasted a distinctive whistle that announced his arrival. His extensive vinyl collection included everything from Sing Along With Mitch to Wolverton Mountain to Nina Simone.

Hobbs was a seminal member of BUKA, a free-floating network of celebrants, and also starred as the primary subject of an art blog called The Weekly Hobbs back in the day.

A curious student, he was also an avid teacher of history. You'd learn more over a brandy & soda and a good cigar than in any classroom. He was revered as a gifted raconteur, hilarious mimic, wily poker player and impassioned lover of all things Irish. A lilting tenor, he once warbled "Streets of Laredo" to an enthralled Irish family before a flickering peat fire.

At the end, when asked what he would say to his friends, Hobbs replied, "Thank you."

Hobbs was predeceased by his parents, Oliver "Hobbs" Vasserot Merle and Patricia Finigan of San Francisco and Burlingame, and his two beloved brothers mentioned above. He is survived by many cousins and a host of devoted friends.

A military committal service will be held at Sacramento Valley Memorial Cemetery in Dixon on September 26, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. A celebration of life for all the Merle Brothers is contemplated for a later date.

In lieu of flowers, a donation may be made in Hobbs' memory to your favorite charity.

The family wishes to extend our deepest gratitude for the gracious and extraordinary service provided by Treadway & Wigger Funeral Chapel in Napa.

(I wouldn't be surprised if Huckleberry Hobbs is peeking over my shoulder at

his own obituary, that rascal. Love you, pally! ~ cousin Matt Regan.)

# Cemetery Details

## Sacramento Valley National Cemetery

5810 Midway Road  
Dixon, CA 95620

# Previous Events

## Committal Service

SEP **26**. 1:00 PM.

Sacramento Valley Memorial Cemetery

# Tribute Wall

MM

“ 6 files added to the album Memories Album



mmregan - September 18, 2025 at 01:47 PM

RW

“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



rick werner - September 18, 2025 at 12:17 PM

MM

“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



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mmregan - September 17, 2025 at 12:12 AM



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



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Treadway & Wigger Funeral Chapel & Crematory - September 16, 2025 at 03:23 PM