



Sammy Howard Cardwell

No. 21725 Class of 1958

Died 22 February 1961 in an aircraft accident off Okinawa Island, aged 24 years

SAMMY HOWARD CARDWELL - "Strictly top-notch," according to the write-up under his graduation picture of the Class of 1958, top-notch in "aptitude, academics or rock and roll." He loved friends and had many who returned that love to him.

It is with great bereavement that I, his beloved wife for such a short time, write of the instant death of Sammy when his plane dived into the East China Sea off Okinawa on 22 February 1961, while heading back to Kadena Air Force Base after a routine training mission.

Sammy was born 10 November 1936 to Mr. and Mrs. E. H. (Jack) Cardwell of Palo Pinto, Tex. Even as a child he was a leader, having constantly stayed at the head of his class throughout elementary and secondary school days, finishing as valedictorian of his class at Mineral Wells (Texas) High School. He entered into all the sports and came out tops. Football was perhaps his favorite sport for he spoke of it often. He gave his all to everything he did.

His determination to do the best he could never left him. He proved his stability and scholarship through West Point from his entrance in the summer of 1954 through graduation in 1958 when his scholastic standing was among the best.

Sammy was always the hit of the party wherever he was. He could and would entertain in any way possible. His favorite pastime was playing his guitar, an ability that was self-taught. I saw him many times with crowds of people around him simply telling jokes and plunking his guitar, or singing songs by the hour and never repeating one. What better love or satisfaction can a person get out of life than to know he is bringing pleasure to others? Sammy spoke to me many times of wanting to give something to humanity to help others, to help our country. This was his goal in life.

You and I who knew Sammy can hold our heads high with pride, knowing he did give something for our country. If it were not for the job he was performing (along with the many others who have loved and served their country) the United States would not be the great nation it is. Sammy was proud of the job he was doing and, therefore, let us be proud of him.

He was married just four months before his death. It was a very short but complete marriage and lifetime. He spoke to a major just before climbing into his plane that fateful morning and said, "I have never been so completely happy."

Sammy gave his faith and love to God before going about any task. He spoke many times in a very firm voice, "God, please give me the humility to understand Thy ways."

I would like for his friends to join me in pride and respect for I hold my head high knowing he is now serving God in a much greater way.

My deepest love, respect and compassion go to his mother and step-father, Mr. and Mrs. E. F. Snoddy of Palo Pinto, Tex. Their loss is great but their pride boundless.

"God, please give us the humility to understand Thy ways."

-Mrs. Sammy H. Cardwell

