



## ***REUNION***

ALWAYS WE WILL THINK OF THEM IN SUNLIGHT.  
WHITE HATS TOSSED HIGH IN THE JUNE AIR,  
TURNING FREELY, BRASS SHIELD AND BLACK BILL,  
SHINY AS THE MOMENT.  
HELD ALOFT BY OUR COLLECTIVE JOY.  
IT SEEMED THAT THEY WOULD NOT COME DOWN,  
BUT REMAIN SUSPENDED AS WE TURNED BENEATH THEM  
TO GRASP EACH OTHERS HANDS.  
UP THERE STILL, AS WE SOUGHT A CERTAIN FRIEND  
TO SAY THINGS FAR TOO SERIOUS FOR YOUNG MEN.  
THERE STILL, AS WE HUGGED THE PEOPLE WE HAD LOVED  
TOO LONG APART.  
STILL THERE, MOVING WESTWARD,  
AS THE IMPATIENT PLANET SPUN BENEATH THEM.

IT WAS MARCH WHEN THE FIRST ONE FELL.  
  
SOILED AND TATTERED WITH NO HINT OF SUNLIGHT.  
OTHERS FELL.  
WE WERE YOUNG MEN, UNCERTAIN HOW TO GRIEVE,  
CLINCHING OUR JAWS AGAINST THE AWFUL ROLL CALL.

THE YEARS HAVE CHANGED US ALL.  
OUR RINGS ARE WORN SMOOTH  
BY THE FRICTION OF OUR OWN FLESH.  
YOUNG COMRADES HAVE BECOME COMPANIONS  
WITH THE SHARING OF OUR LIVES.

WE HAVE COME TO SHARE WITH YOU AGAIN,  
AS GROWN MEN, UNAFRAID OF SORROW,  
AND SO, UNAFRAID OF JOY.  
WE HAVE GATHERED FOR REUNION.  
TO WALK TOGETHER THE SPAN OF BLACK STONE  
AND SEE YOUR NAMES BLAZE WHITE IN SUNLIGHT,  
SEE THEM RISE ABOVE US TURNING FREELY,  
HELD ALOFT BY OUR COLLECTIVE LOVE,  
TO JOIN AGAIN THE WHITE HATS  
TOSSED HIGH IN THE JUNE AIR.

*Mark Hamilton '67*  
1997

'67 *Requiem* is a tribute to all of the deceased classmates of the West Point Class of 1967, as of April 2009. The intent is to publish in one location all of the memorial articles of our deceased classmates that have been written for inclusion in the West Point Association of Graduates magazines *Assembly* and, since 2004, *Taps*. Sadly, of the 59 Brothers we have lost this far, 16 still do not have memorial articles published in *Assembly/Taps*. In those few cases where I had an obituary from another publication I have included it here; however, it is fervently hoped that all of our deceased classmates will have memorial articles published in West Point's official alumni journal, so that the remarkable legacy of the Unsurpassed Class is available for all West Point graduates and friends to read.

...Freed Lowrey

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*The cover photo shows class son MAJ Robert Lenz, '93 proudly posting the class colors at the Vietnam Memorial during the class memorial exercise, June 2007.*



## Michael Brent Peterson

Died as a Cadet in Wichita, Kansas, 15 July 1965  
Interment: Lerado Cemetery, Kingman County, KS

In 2002, the Class of 1967 was preparing for its 35th reunion. In the 1967 *Howitzer* there is a full page photograph of a classmate with no name or identification and questions began to circulate about who this person was. It was a memorial photograph of Cadet *Michael Brent Peterson*, but the captioning had been inadvertently omitted at printing. Cancer took Mike Peterson from our ranks in 1965, two years before graduation. Many of us did not know him, and with the excitement of graduation, first assignments, Vietnam and 35 years of time, Mike had all but been forgotten. Now, his memory is alive with all of us.

Mike Peterson was from Kingman, KS, a small town west of Wichita, where his family lived on a farm southwest of town. In addition to his mother, Edna (Edie), and father, Dale, there was a younger sister, Brenda, and two brothers, Greg and Mark. Mike went to a two-room country school through the eighth grade and then attended Kingman High School in town, where he excelled in academics and athletics. He played football, basketball, and track. In his senior year, Mike was the third best offensive player on the football team, with 83 carries for 320 yards. This offensive record was good enough by some standards, but he also was the number one defensive player with 108 tackles, averaging 13 tackles per game. Teammates remember him as a “no-nonsense” player, which means if you were the opposing ball-carrier, you were in trouble.

Mike was the president of his senior class. Scholastically, he was the top senior boy in the class of 1962 and a member of the National Honor Society. Mike was selected by the Lions Club and American

Legion to represent Kingman, KS, at the annual Boy’s State convention. He was a member of the K Club, Spanish Club, Student Council, and Hi-Y. His classmates remember his friendly manner, pleasant smile, and sense of personal responsibility.

During his senior year, Mike made up his mind to go to West Point, but he was unable to secure a congressional appointment. So he elected to attend Kansas State University to take some engineering courses and ROTC to prepare for entry in 1963. One of Mike’s high school friends recalls the day that he was driving around the back roads of Kingman County, shooting jackrabbits from the back of a pick-up truck, and came upon Mike Peterson running down a dirt road in combat boots, getting in shape for Beast Barracks. Mike was a man committed to his goal.

Plebe year, Mike was a javelin thrower on the track team. He was known for his sense of humor and was always smiling, especially when eating on Corps Squad tables. He was in Company C-1 and was particularly proud that his company marched in President Kennedy’s funeral parade.

In the fall of our Yearling year. Mike was diagnosed with advanced bone cancer and was sent to Walter Reed Hospital for treatment. Classmate and fellow track teammate Michael Delleo recalls, “Mike must have had the cancer for quite a while before he went to Walter Reed. I have to admire his courage and tolerance for pain to have endured that disease for so long before he went for treatment. I would imagine that he had the tumor even when we were practicing and competing in the spring of Plebe year, but he never complained. That shows you what a special guy he was.” His girlfriend, Barbara Antrim of Kingman, KS, who had Mike’s A-Pin, dropped out of college to be with him.

Mike displayed his positive attitude and tremendous courage under extreme hardship in the following letter that he wrote on 19 Feb 1965 to his best friend, Michael Reiter, a high school classmate from Kingman, KS: “Thank you for the

lovely flowers. They really help to brighten up this ole room. It was most considerate to think of me, and I appreciate the thought. I feel very good so far. In fact, I think I feel too good for the hospital ‘cause they just can’t keep me down. Everyone has been real good to me. So as you can see I have nothing to complain about. What a life! I guess they decided to give me radiation. The doctor said I will be here another two or three weeks. Boy, I will be hurting like a soup sandwich when I finally go back to school. Well, I guess I should quit bothering you. Again, thank you very much for the flowers. It was very nice of you, Mike.”

A short time later, Mike was transferred to Wichita Veterans Hospital, which was close to his hometown of Kingman. Michael Reiter was Mike’s constant companion during his final days. Mike died on 15 Jul 1965. Mr. Reiter remembers the courage of his friend as the cancer took its toll with no hope for recovery. His funeral ceremony at the Kingman Methodist Church was attended by his Tactical Officer, CPT Michael Sirkis ‘56, and classmates Mike Kelley, Jim Brierly; Tony Cortese, and Lee Smith.

The Peterson family continued to experience tragedy when Mike’s younger brother Mark was killed in a car accident in May 1968. His father Dale died of cancer in September 1968. His mother Edna died in July 1987. Surviving family are a brother, Greg Peterson, and a sister, Brenda Peterson Schurle.

Michael B. Peterson is buried with his mother, father, and younger brother in the Lerado Cemetery in rural Kingman County, KS. His gravestone reads simply “Michael B. Peterson, Cadet, U.S. Military Academy.”

The people of Kingman have honored their favorite son by creating a display about Mike Peterson in the town museum. The display contains his picture, the burial flag, and Mike’s full dress uniform with its single Yearling stripe. He left us way too soon, and we still miss him.

– Kirk Alford ‘67 assisted by  
Mike Delleo ‘67, Mike Reiter,  
Greg Peterson, Brenda Peterson Schurle



## George Edward Perkins

No. 27226

Died near Greenville, Alabama, 9 November 1967

Interment: Forest Park Cemetery, Houston, TX

THE REGISTER OF GRADUATES *and Former Cadets* reads, "27226, George Edward Perkins, B-DE, 14Apr45: A-TX: Inf: D-(Auto acdt) nr Greenville, AL 9Nov67 2LT."

This short entry does not express the great loss experienced by those of us blessed with the opportunity to know George during his far-too-abbreviated life. "Butch," as most of us knew him, asked me to write his entry in the '67 *Howitzer*. At his funeral, his spirit and my conscience led me to promise his family that I would prepare this memorial article for ASSEMBLY. The fact that it has taken more than 30 years to finish it is not a reflection of a lack of importance, but more of a tribute to the loss that both his family and I feel. Leaving this earth at the age of 22 doesn't provide a great number of accomplishments to recant, however, George deeply influenced many.

George Edward Perkins was born in Delaware in 1945 but was raised in Baytown, TX. In July 1963, Butch arrived at West Point with a slow, east Texas drawl and a quick smile. Four years at West Point reduced the drawl but never dimmed that embracing smile. I first met Butch after Beast Barracks when we were assigned as roommates because of our study of German. He became our company hop manager and was actively involved with productions from Plebe Christmas through the 100th Nite Show. He joined the Sports Information Office detail that tracked the results of sports contests, ensuring that news releases were timely and accurate. First Class year, he was the Army "spotter" for the Army-Navy game and was silhouetted in a photo of the field taken from the press box.

Class of '67's motto, "None Shall Surpass '67 Class," was chosen before any members of the class had an opportunity to live up to it. We have some "firsts" and some significant "lasts" in our repertoire. The best known "last" was being the last class given the privilege of guarding West Point and running the Corps over Plebe Christmas. By staying at West Point over Christmas leave, I had the opportunity to get to know E. George and Betty Perkins and their other son. I always have treasured the Perkins family friendship. Butch also had a "first." He was the first cadet to be "found" in Military Psychology and Leadership (MP&L), one of those tenacious after-lunch-courses that were somewhat of a memory exercise. Butch had devoted his efforts to the more demanding technical courses and had to spend the June week before Cow year studying for a re-exam (and playing tennis!). I think I spent that month giving commands to trees preparing for "welcoming" the incoming Class of '69. Butch's smile was always bigger when we talked about that.

One autumn Sunday morning, after we had done our "duties" as ushers for Cadet Protestant Chapel and were relaxing in the basement, the topic of branch selection was raised. We pondered the question of where in our class "ranking" into branches would start and decided to answer that question. George may not have had an opportunity to work on great war plans, but he did get a taste of the process during this endeavor. Without the use of databases, e-mail, computers, or even calculators, we organized a questionnaire. It was based upon class standing at the end of Cow year, choices 1, 2, or 3 of branch choices, and a communication chain to disseminate and recover the questionnaire. We then correlated the input, manually with paper and pencil, and posted the results in the sallyport. The final predictions were within 10 classmates for each branch cutoff. Butch knew that Infantry would be in the "ranking" statistics by the time his chance came around. The Director of MP&L wanted our raw data because they hadn't

yet started to do those kinds of studies. In remembering Yearling year for Butch, it "turned out" that the raw data could not be found or turned over.

The last time I talked with Butch was the weekend before he started Ranger School. He was very excited about his summer and the future. He had traded his Pontiac Le Mans for a Triumph TR, had met a wonderful girl while on graduation leave, and was excited about getting to his first assignment after Ranger School. The day after George finished Ranger School, he was driving his TR to Texas for some well-deserved leave and relaxation. As he traveled over a section of interstate that was not finished and was routed onto a two-lane highway, Butch apparently fell asleep and ran into an oncoming semi. The Infantry School changed their departure policy with the next Ranger Class, requiring an extra day of rest before release. Again, Butch had an unknown influence on others.

I always will remember the pain, sorrow, and loss that was in the voice of Mr. Perkins when he called to tell me "some bad news about Butch." Now that I have sent my children off to college, I can really understand the pride that Mr. Perkins had and the extreme sorrow that a parent must have when they bury a child. George Edward Perkins may have only walked this earth for 22 years, but he had a profound impact on all of us.

Thank you, Butch, for making me a better person.

*— A classmate, roommate, and friend  
who has missed him all these years*





## James Robert Adams

No. 27113

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 20 March 1968

Interment: West Point Cemetery, West Point, NY

WITH THE PASSAGE of time, one begins to read the obituaries in *ASSEMBLY* with nostalgia. Through all of the memorials runs the thread of affection for one another which in some way explains the appeal that West Point has had for past and future graduates. Many of us in the Class of 1967 were proud to call Jimmy Adams our friend. Our most vivid memories of him were as a participant in the Brigade Open Boxing Tournaments. He had a unique style which was not necessarily taught by Joe Palone or Herb Creighton. He held his left hand low, fearlessly stuck his chin out and invited his opponent to wade in, only to receive a devastating counter punch. Jim would usually smile as he helped his opponent to his feet after his left hook.

All cadets seem to be pressed for time, but Jim was one of the few people that I ever heard of who managed to get access to a boat and would actually go bass fishing on the Hudson River and catch fish. He had a dry wit, a ready smile and very little tolerance for pretense or posturing. Those of us who were in the Infantry can recall the shared experiences of Infantry Officer Basic, Ranger School and then Airborne School. A large contingent of us were on temporary assignment to the 82d Airborne Division prior to volunteering for Vietnam a year to the day after graduation from West Point. Jim was anxious to assume his responsibilities as an officer, and the determination and aggressiveness he displayed as a boxer made him an outstanding infantry combat leader, leading from the front and by example.

After the Tet offensive in January 1968, many of the Class of 1967 found themselves precipitously deployed to Vietnam with the 3rd Brigade of the 82d

Airborne Division. This deployment occurred literally overnight, and there was no time for friends to say good-bye or to wish him well. Approximately one month after arriving in Vietnam, Jim was killed leading his men in combat near Hue. The History of the 3rd Brigade, 82d Airborne named this action, "Battle of the Candy Stripe." On 20 March 1968, Company A of the 1-505 came under heavy NVA fire from automatic weapons across a canal. The NVA inflicted heavy casualties on Jim Adams' platoon from entrenched positions. Jim spotted one of his wounded in the open, rushed to assist him and was killed in the process. He received the Silver Star and Purple Heart posthumously.

James R. Adams was born on 6 June 1942 in Little Rock, Arkansas. He was an avid outdoorsman and participated in the Boy Scouts. He entered the United States Air Force in August 1960, attaining the rank of Airman 2nd Class. Unknown to most of us at West Point, Jim served one year as a cadet at the United States Air Force Academy, with subsequent assignments at Hill Air Force Base, McGuire Air Force Base and, eventually, the USMA Prep School at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

With his reservoir of military experience, Jim stood out among his more callow classmates in basic military skills. He lent an experienced hand in explaining the nuances of spit shine and polishing brass to his less "spoony" classmates, but he never seemed to be bothered by the more mundane features of cadet life. He had a certain irreverence for the parade ground army which endeared him to his fellow snuffys. During the Bobby Knight years at West Point, it was not infrequent that the Army Basketball team participated in the NIT, then a premier event. Fortunately, one such appearance occurred when we all were plebes and there were no other representatives of the Corps because everyone else was away on Spring Break. The Class of '67 was present en masse at Madison Square Garden to cheer the cadets on to victory. The cheers were doubly enthusiastic because, if we

won, it meant another free evening in New York City for an appearance the following night in the Winner's bracket. Jim seemed not only to be able to lead us to cozy haunts in the environs of the Old Madison Square Garden, but also was point man on a speed march in a blizzard to the buses through a troop of New York City mounted policemen just in time to make the return buses back to West Point.

Time has obliterated traces of Jim's family and his wife Barbara, whom he married after graduation. West Point graduates have in common devotion to Duty, Honor, and Country. But what, over the years, has endeared one classmate to another is the individuality of each person. Each cadet has brought a thread to the mosaic that has made up the fabric of the Long Gray Line.

Jim's optimism, wit and courage made each one of us with whom he came in contact just a little bit better and a little bit happier. I am sure that his troops would say the same if they had the opportunity. Jimmy, those of us who served with you in those exciting, challenging and dangerous days, now say Good-bye, God Speed and Well Done.

— Joseph P Jackson Jr. M.D.  
1967

**Here dead we lie  
because we did not  
choose  
To live and shame  
the land from which  
we sprung.  
Life, to be sure, is  
nothing much to  
lose;  
But young men  
think it is, and we  
were young.**

**A. E. Housman - 1918**

# John Arthur Graziano

No. 27187

Died in Wildflicken, Germany, 15 April 1968  
Interment: West Point Cemetery, West Point, NY



IN THE EARLY morning of 15 April 1968 First Lieutenant John (Jack) Arthur Graziano's full 23 years of life came to a sudden end in a tragic car accident.

Jack was born in Cornwall-on-the-Hudson, New York on 1 March 1945, the son of Samuel A. (Sam) and Mary E. (Betty) Rhodes Graziano. From the spank that brought him into this world, to his first brace on 2 July 1963 he was destined to be a West Pointer. His home on Homestead Avenue in Highland Falls was the former Benny Havens Tavern. His parents both worked at West Point and his formative years were filled with the sounds of the Academy, reveille, retreat, taps and the echoing of "On Brave Old Army Team" cascading down from Michie on crisp fall afternoons.

As soon as he could walk he started to play sports. His hard work and commitment to excellence made him one of Highland Falls' greatest athletes.

After high school, Jack enlisted in the Army on 25 June 1962 with orders to the United States Military Academy Preparatory School (USMAPS) at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Here he applied himself diligently.

The orange sun of 2 July 1963 came early that day and with it came the dawn of Jack's ultimate mission in life. Jack was assigned to the 2nd New Cadet Company in North Area (48th Division) and would eventually spend two years in the "Lost 50's" in K-2. His B-4 cow and firstie years would be spent in Old North in the 27th Division.

Jack was described by his parents, friends and associates who compositely prepared this tribute as a warm, loyal, unselfish and caring friend; a fun loving, gregarious, humorous person; and a coachable, aggressive, competitive athlete.

He was many things to many people; but to most, he was a dear friend, who graciously provided smiles while collecting his fair share.

On Coach Dave Grubb's first ever in Academy history undefeated plebe soccer team, Jack's natural athleticism, aggressiveness and tenacity were melded with some basic soccer skills and his contributions were significant. The team's tenacity and cohesiveness resulted in three "Final Four" NCAA finishes over the next three years. Coach Palone named the 1966 squad as his finest team in his 30 plus years of coaching at West Point, and one of the reasons was Jack Graziano.

Colonel "Red" Reeder, upon learning of Jack's senseless death, wrote:

"Jack Graziano played a year on Colonel Red Reeder's plebe baseball team on the windswept diamond down by the river. As a fighting, undaunted, competitive outfielder, he established the fact that he could help our country when the chips were down."

Plebe baseball came to an end—plebe year was successfully completed and yearling year had begun.

At Buckner "Graz" proved his merits as a leader, a competitor and as a valued classmate. He earned his way onto Coach Palone's 1964 soccer team the fall after Buckner. Jack kept things loose and easy on our way to the "Final Four" all three years. Coach Palone summarized his feelings for "Graz" with these words:

"I had two fine sons, Pat and Mike, and Jack was like a third son to me. If I had been fortunate enough to have a third son, Jack Graziano would have qualified in every respect!"

Yearling and cow years were filled with numerous soccer victories, trips to Brown and St. Louis University for the NCAA Semifinals, daily academic challenges with a couple of turnout exams thrown in for good measure.

He earned a starting assignment at left fullback his firstie year. Our defense had jelled around our firstclassmen—Haas, Heimberg and Graziano. On the morning of the Army-Navy football game in Philadelphia, we beat Navy 3-1 about 15 miles across town. Immediately after

the game, we had a police escort to John F. Kennedy stadium and as we entered the stadium, the loudspeaker blared "In NCAA Soccer Quarterfinal action played earlier today at Temple Stadium, Navy 1 (the Brigade began to cheer and the Corps was deflated)—Army 3!!!" The Corps went crazy, the Army football team came onto the field and proceeded to whip Navy.

As we neared graduation, we were "drafted" into the Infantry Branch (both us would have picked Infantry anyway, so this simplified our decision). As we went through the Infantry Officers Basic Course and Ranger School in Georgia and Florida, Jackie kept us laughing. "Graz" went off to the Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 15th Infantry, 3rd Infantry Division in Germany in December 1967. Three months later he came home. His teammate and classmate John Boretti, accompanied him home. His soccer teammate, Mike Palone, a first classman at the time, presented Betty and Sam the ceremonial flag, which had been draped over his casket. The funeral procession marched at slow beat behind the casket from the Catholic Chapel to the cemetery. He was laid to rest next to Coach Palone's first wife's grave, as family, friends, classmates and teammates mourned his senseless loss. His parents donated Jack's class ring to the Archival Ring Collection in the USMA Library. On 30 August 1984, Jackie's classmate and NASA astronaut, Lieutenant Colonel Michael Mullane, requested an appropriate memento of the Class of 1967 be selected to accompany him on his "Discovery's" space shuttle mission. The memento selected and loaned to NASA for the maiden flight was the class ring of First Lieutenant John Arthur Graziano. This was fitting because no one soared higher, yet, in the end, had his feet more firmly planted on this good earth than "Graz."

He had lived too short a life, yet he had accomplished his ultimate mission, he had become a West Pointer—and one who gave as much to the Academy as he had received.

*MAY HE REST IN PEACE, AMEN!!!*

*— A Friend, Teammate and Classmate*



## Warren Michael Sands

No. 26749

Killed in the DMZ, South Korea, 17 May 1968  
Interment: Ft. Logan National Cemetery, Denver, CO

The last time I saw my brother, *Warren Michael Sands*, was in late September 1967. He had just graduated from Ranger training and was en route to the Korean DMZ. I was just beginning my First Class year.

As we sat together on the steps of the 1st Division at West Point on that late September afternoon, we talked at length. We had shared three interesting, memorable years at this historic institution. There was sadness in the chilly air because we weren't sure when we would meet again. The situation in Viet Nam loomed heavily, and our parents were in the midst of a bitter divorce, leaving behind a heavy wake of emotional turmoil. As the day grew longer, we departed with a handshake and a brief hug.

Although Mike had graduated 88th in his class and had considered the Corps of Engineers, he decided he could contribute the most to the Army as an Infantry officer. He decided to go to Korea, because he wanted command experience prior to an inevitable tour in Viet Nam.

Intermittently over the next eight months, we received Mike's letters from Korea. In March, he wrote that he was getting valuable experience as a platoon leader on the tense DMZ, where there were occasional firefights, never mentioned in the press, with the North Koreans. In his free time, Mike was helping teach mathematics at the Korean Military Academy. He felt confident about his leadership ability and preparations for his next assignment, Viet Nam.

On 18 May 1968, I received an ominous message to contact my tactical officer immediately. I was informed that Mike had died in Korea, 15 minutes after receiving a gunshot wound to the

abdomen. While conducting operations, Mike had been shot accidentally by one of his guards on the perimeter. His untimely death deprived his family and friends of a warm, bright, and talented son, brother, and compatriot. The Army lost a truly dedicated officer.

Mike and his twin brother Van were born at Scott Field, IL, on 5 Aug 1945, but they grew up in a number of locations throughout the US and in Europe. Our father, Warren, was a career Air Force pilot who was highly decorated in WWII, flying B-17s in the Pacific theater. He had worked with a number of West Point graduates and was consistently impressed with their abilities, dedication, and character. Our parents strongly encouraged us, directly and indirectly, to seek appointments to the Academy.

My talented brother Mike turned down a full scholarship to Stanford when he accepted a Presidential appointment to the Class of 1967. He had graduated from high school in western Oklahoma, where he was a class leader, All-District football player, and outstanding scholar.

At West Point, during his years in the 2nd Regiment, Mike continued to excel in academics and athletics in a quiet, unassuming manner. He lettered in 150-lb. football, played rugby one season, and was runner-up in the welterweight division of the Brigade Open Boxing Championship. While he had great respect for the USMA education, the honor code, and most of the other unique aspects of his four years on the Hudson, there may have been one or two rules that he did not faithfully and fully abide by.

In addition to his twin brother, Van, and me, Mike is survived by our younger brother, John; our younger sister, Margaret; and an adopted daughter born in 1967, whose whereabouts are unknown. Our parents, Warren and Frances, died in 1997 and 1998. Mike and Warren share a grave at Ft. Logan National Cemetery in Denver.

Margaret, who was ten years old at the time of Mike's death, recently commented, "Even though I was quite young, the inevitable assumption that Mike's death did not impact me is quite

wrong. In many ways, death for a child can be more frightening and painful than for a more mature adult. The pain lies not so much in the loss itself but in the destabilization of the world and the family structure around the child. I still remember the terrible silence that pervaded the house the day that Mother received the news of his death."

Our brother John added, "My immediate thoughts of my 'big brother Mike' are the compassion that I always felt from him for his little brother and his family. As a young boy, I was in awe of him [and] the respect he received from his peers, his leadership on the football field, the girls he dated, [and] the respect from his teachers, coaches, and mentors. His sense of duty to his family never failed. While attending West Point, or in training as a Ranger, or at his post in Korea, as time would allow he would either write home or call. I still recall . . . reading his letters and the pain I felt as he shared his hardships with us, and always at the end of his letters, [Mike would say] how much he loved and missed us. While we never talked much about the hardships of a family coming apart, I always felt his constant love for all members of our family. His love, compassion, duty, and honor during difficult times were a comfort."

We miss you a lot, Mike.

— By Art, John, Margaret  
and Van Sands

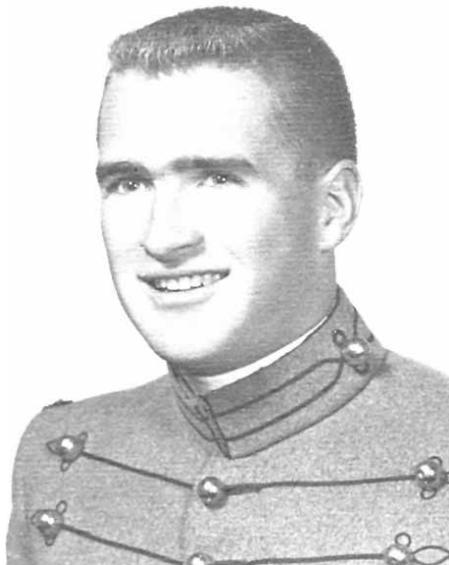


# John Patrick Brown

No. 26983

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 21 May 1968

Interment: Roseburg, OR



OUR WELCOME TO I-1, (Inquisition One to the Corps) was abrupt and true to its legend. It was late August 1963 and we had just marched into what was then "New South Barracks." A group of upperclassmen swooped down upon us and seemed to delight in our apprehensive change from new cadet to plebe. We found ourselves swamped, but one question stood out as an upper class favorite. Even the upperclassmen seemed to take notice to answers to this question: "Where are you from?" Out of the abrasive noise of plebe barking came the answer "Riddle, OR!"

My own ears, despite the barrage of questions I was fumbling with, heard those words. It is a small community nestled between the Pacific Ocean and the Cascade Mountains near Interstate 5, not far from my hometown. I said to myself, "Wow, another person from the Great Pacific Northwest! I have to find him." Find him I did.

John Patrick Brown, friend and classmate, was born at Tyndall Air Field, FL, the son of Donald and Elizabeth Brown. Don Brown was a warrant officer in the U.S. Air Corps. After the war, with the help of the G.I. Bill, he earned a degree in secondary education. Not long after that Don, Bette, and their children, John and Beryl, settled in Riddle, where John's second sister, Donnale, was born.

John was a friendly and intelligent child and often the combination would get him into trouble. Bette Brown related that at three years old he spoke in full sentences, fully capable of asking adults embarrassing questions. He loved to talk, laugh, and ask questions. He was a happy child, but there was a serious side to John as well-one that his sister Beryl confirmed.

He had little tolerance for people who were not serious about their schoolwork. If they did not work, he was the first to point out that they had failed to meet the minimum standard. John was a taskmaster.

His intelligence, love for people, and independent attitude marked him as a leader. His high school classmates noted this and elected him to various student body offices. He lettered in track and field four years and was the captain of the team as a senior, setting school records in the 100 and 200-yard dashes. His yearbook reveals that he did not play football until his senior year, but his tenacity and willingness to be all he could be was noted by the football coaches of the region. He was selected "Honorable Mention All-Conference." Although athletics were important to him, he found the classroom rewarding and loved a good argument. His ultimate ambition was to be a lawyer. Yet, he felt a higher calling, one that would lead him to apply for an appointment to USMA. The qualities his classmates, teachers, and adults from Riddle saw in him were reflected in his application and in their recommendations. Graduating from high school as valedictorian, John entered West Point on 1 Jul 1963.

John would enter Inquisition One with the same fervor that he displayed in high school. His early discipline, intelligence, and ability to focus allowed him to be successful in the classroom from the beginning. Others were not as focused and fell into trouble, but John had an uncanny way of being there for those who needed help. His classmates found a helping hand and a concerned mind. His athletic ability scored points for I-1 on the track, too.

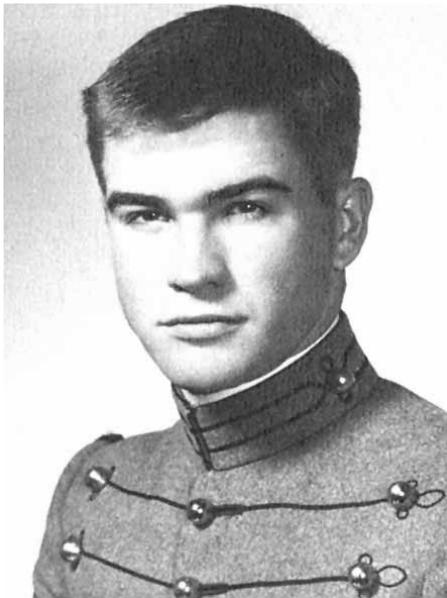
Dave Blanchard, I-1/F-3, said, "Building on the solid foundation provided by his loving family in Riddle and the lessons learned as a plebe and yearling in I-1, John brought a set of values and standards to Company D-1 that kept all those he touched on their toes for the next two years. Reflecting the proud traditions of his father, John was studious and intent on a quiet study environment so that all cadets in the stairwell might succeed academically. Independent, intelligent, and articulate, John was anything but

a passive follower. He was a man of his own who argued his point fervently until victory had been declared. There was no doubt about his independence, but he was also a true gentleman. John was loved and admired by all the D-1 Dogs. We knew John as a generous, friendly, and happy colleague who was always there for his friends."

John took great depth of character with him when he departed in June 1967 bound for a career as an infantryman. He became a frequent guest in my parent's home while stationed at Ft. Benning. His positive outlook, good upbringing, and natural charm quickly won the hearts of my mother and father. They cherished John's memory all of their remaining days.

His well-established qualities of adaptability and dogged determination propelled him through Ranger and Airborne schools and on to the 82d Airborne Division in January 1968. Growing bored with garrison life, John shipped out to the 101st Airborne Division in Camp Eagle in the Republic of Vietnam. In May 1968, John Patrick Brown, a gallant and daring warrior, left the comforts of a peaceful land to give his last full measure of devotion in defiance of a North Vietnamese force. An officer of the highest principles, a warrior with great courage, a distinguished gentleman, a warm and loving friend, John's spirit visits us often even after 30 years. His life, though tragically brief, serves as a high standard against which we continue to measure our progress as officers, gentlemen, and patriots of this great land.

— Dave Blanchard '67  
and Earl Hughes '67



## Ronald Lloyd Frazer

No. 26985

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 24 May 1968  
Interment: West Point Cemetery, West Point, NY

“If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams,” said Henry David Thoreau, “and endeavours to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with success unexpected in common hours.” Ron achieved the “success” described by Thoreau, but not only during common hours. He lived the life he had “imagined” and proved himself a brave man and good during some of the most uncommon of hours. The thought of that Frazer smirk helps the lump in our throats go away.

Ron Frazer was born at Ft. Sumner, NM, the second of Lewesa and Lloyd D. Frazer’s 8 children. While in the 5th grade, Ron saw *The West Point Story* and decided that his goal was to graduate from the Academy.

Ron was a perfectionist and excelled in academics, civic contribution, and athletics. He was a member of the National Honor Society and vice president of both his junior and senior classes at Lincoln High School in Cambridge City, IN. He also was an outstanding wrestler and linebacker on the varsity football team.

In 1963, Ron won a competitive Congressional appointment to West Point through the Honorable Ralph Harvey. He entered the Academy with the Class of '67 on 1 Jul 1963.

Although academically prepared for West Point and in superb physical condition, plebe year was rough for him. Landing in D-1 (a company notorious for its strict treatment of plebes) was bad luck for Ron but good luck for those of us he would influence by his tenacity and unfailing good humor. Ron loved life, so from time to time that love of life and recognition of the absurdity that confronts

plebes would cause Ron to smirk, grin, and laugh out loud at the red-faced tirades of some misguided upperclassmen. Inevitably, this led to efforts on the part of those same misguided but more senior cadets to make life slightly less wonderful for Fourthclassman Frazer.

Throughout his ordeals, Ron never lost his sense of humor. He never got discouraged. His positive attitude, determination, and natural unselfishness served as an inspiration to his classmates. By Recognition Day, the whole company, especially the upperclassmen, was more than ready to pay special tribute to Ron’s example.

Academics were not a problem for Ron. Despite the harassment and intramurals (wrestling and football), he easily attained passing marks in all of his course work. And he even found time to participate in the annual Association of Graduates Essay Contest, winning third place one year with a character sketch entitled, “Jefferson Davis, 1828.”

Ron enjoyed his remaining stay at West Point and his role as a stable and wise company member, always calm in a crisis and willing to assist or encourage anyone having difficulties.

By 1965, it was clear that the Class of '67 would be called to action in Vietnam. Ron knew that he would become an infantryman and participate in the conflict at the earliest possible moment. He had no desire to delay and relished the opportunity to serve his country. Ron graduated with his class on 7 Jun 1967, achieving his childhood goal. After Infantry Officer, Ranger, and Airborne training, he was assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion, 508th Airborne Infantry Regiment of the 3d Brigade, 82d Airborne Division at Ft. Bragg, NC. Approximately two months after joining the brigade (with 24 hours notice), the 3d Brigade was ordered by President Lyndon Johnson to immediately deploy to Vietnam. 2LT Frazer served as a platoon leader in C Company and soon experienced the Infantryman’s “baptism of fire” in early 1968. Ron was one of the

first members of his class to see action. His unit helped force the North Vietnamese Army from its attempted siege of Hue back into the A Shaw Valley, where the NVA continued to be pursued by the 3d Brigade and units of the 101st Airborne Division.

Though still a second lieutenant, Ron replaced the C Company commander after he was killed. Ron and his company were flown by helicopter to an area where retreating elements of the 22d NVA Regiment were known to be hiding.

During intense fighting, 2LT Ronald L. Frazer was killed in action with his radio operator on 24 May 1968, less than one year after graduating from West Point.

For his gallantry, Ron was awarded the Silver Star and another Silver Star with Oak Leaf Cluster. His other combat decorations were the Bronze Star; Purple Heart, and Combat Infantryman Badge. He is survived by his mother, father, and many brothers and sisters, all of whom he loved very much. Ron always will be remembered as the young man who led his Plebe Class in Company D-1 through a difficult introduction to military life with a smile on his face, humor in his voice, and determination in his heart.

— Ron’s classmates





## Hugh Bernard Brown III

No. 27218

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 20 July 1968  
Interment: Talladega Cemetery, Talladega, AL

HUGH WAS BORN and raised in Talladega, Alabama, the only son of Hugh and Katherine Brown, along with his two sisters, Kay and Trudy. Hugh's father was a member of the Army's last horse-drawn artillery.

As a teenager, he was very active in the Methodist Youth Fellowship, serving as its president for northern Alabama. Hugh also was active in high school sports: punting for the football team, playing on the tennis team, and receiving his varsity letters in each of these sports. He played cornet in the high school band, was president of Mu Alpha Theta fraternity, vice president of Hi-Y, a member of the honor society in mathematics (more about math later), and he participated in many other student activities. He was also a member of the Sons of the American Revolution.

Hugh was raised with a strong belief in family, God and country. He became motivated at an early age to attend West Point and, following high school graduation, attended Columbian Prep School in Washington, DC for a year.

At West Point, he was active in sports, including squash, tennis, golf and triathlon, and was a member of the Glee Club and Rocket Society.

Each of us who knew Hugh developed a sincere respect for this fine southern gentleman. He was a quiet but cheerful friend. When his roommate needed help with PE boxing, John "Hosk" Hoskins (USMA '66) took them to the gym. Hugh volunteered to step into the ring and serve as a punching bag. In return, he got some much needed help with math. Obviously, he got the tougher end of the deal.

Hugh got a lot of ribbing for being

prematurely gray, but he took it with the best of humor. As a plebe, he had a little trouble explaining to the upperclassmen why he had to wear "long-handled underwear" to get through his first winter on the Hudson. He often used his t-shirt to polish his shoes. The next time he wore it, when (and if) it came back from the cadet laundry, he looked like a leopard or a dalmatian.

Hugh volunteered for the Infantry and, following graduation, married his high school sweetheart, Shirley, and attended Airborne and Ranger schools at Fort Benning. He served as platoon leader in C Company, 1-10 Infantry, in the 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) at Fort Carson, Colorado before volunteering for duty in Vietnam with the 1st Infantry Division. He was highly respected by his soldiers and fellow officers.

Hugh arrived in-country on 3 July 1968 and became a platoon leader in C Company 1-16 Infantry in Binh Duong Province. On the afternoon of 20 July 1968, he led his first patrol as his company conducted a reconnaissance in force to destroy a Viet Cong base camp. When the patrol was engaged in a fire fight in the enemy bunker complex, he led the assault, running from bunker to bunker throwing hand grenades to protect his men. He was mortally wounded by enemy mortar fire and died within minutes on the field of battle. His company held a field memorial service to honor his memory. Hugh was posthumously awarded the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, the Combat Infantry Badge and the Purple Heart.

All who knew him in Talladega packed the First Methodist Church to pay their final respects. None of us who have been touched by his life have ever forgotten him.

His son, Hugh Clark Brown, was born in November 1968 and graduated with a degree in Industrial Engineering from Auburn University in 1991. He is a fine young man who keeps Hugh's memory alive for his entire family.

Hugh was as fine a roommate as

a cadet ever had. I think of him often, certainly every time I hear a song that goes:

*I'll speak my Southern English,  
Just as natural as I please.  
Cause I'm in the heart of Dixie,  
Dixie's in the heart of me.  
Someday when I make it,  
I know God will find a way.  
Somewhere high on Lookout  
Mountain,*

*I'll just smile with pride and say:  
My home's in Alabama  
No matter where I lay my head  
My home's in Alabama  
Southern born and southern bred.*

Smitty, F-2

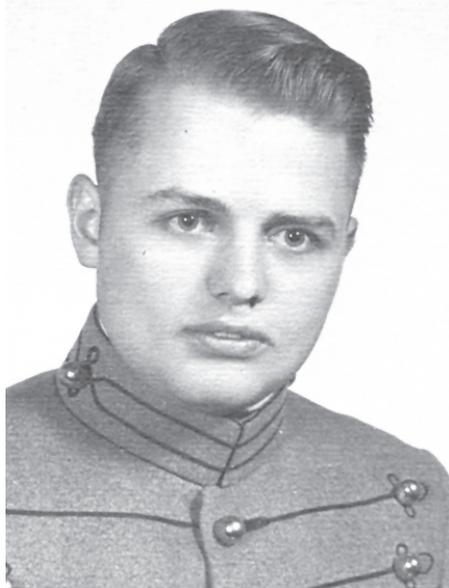


# Daniel Leo Neuburger

No. 26965

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 14 August 1968

Interment: Ellis, KS



The only things Dan Neuburger loved more than West Point were his wife Susan, his family, and his baby girl Danielle Lee whom he never did see. He griped as did everyone during those four years, but to those who knew him closely Dan's four years were just the prologue to what would have been a long and great military career.

He came to the Plain of West Point from the Plains of Kansas determined to overcome whatever obstacles Plebe Year presented. He found an outlet for his zeal and enthusiasm in the gymnasium where he spent a good portion of his time. If given the opportunity, Dan would have lived in the gym. It was here that he could let loose his desire to excel with his fierce sense of competition. For Dan there was no such thing as a game. Every sport he ever played was played to win. This strong desire to win was one of the things admired most about him.

Run-ins with First Captains and haircuts with electric shavers were a thing of the past as Yearling year began. When he wasn't in the gym or class, he would be reading. Dan kept a good number of the New York book stores in business, and there was a good chance that if you needed a book, he had it in his library. He could voice convictions now a little more frequently than in his first year although Dan never really let the status of a Plebe restrain his opinions. Dan always said what he felt. There was no guesswork about it, and you always knew where you stood with him. Everyone respected him for being a man of his word and convictions. It was during "Cow year" that he was to meet Sue, and it wasn't hard to tell to

whom all his attention would be directed for the rest of his life.

Dan was as anxious for "Firstie year" as all of us. He would finally be able to direct all his harnessed enthusiasm for his country. Artillery was the branch he chose, and Vietnam the place. The time after graduation went all too quickly for him—leave, Basic School at Fort Sill, Ranger School at Fort Benning, marriage to Sue in Chicago 16 December 1967. Dan was assigned to the 6/20 Artillery at Fort Carson as an Executive Officer. July found him, in Vietnam where he was last to exercise his enthusiasm and zeal. He served with the 6/29 Artillery, 4th Infantry Division at Dak To and the impression this soldier made in his brief tour is best described in his citation for the Bronze Star Medal. "Whether serving as a forward observer or marking targets, Lieutenant Neuburger maintained his personal standards and contributed significantly to his company's mission. His cheerful attitude coupled with his concern for the welfare of his fellow soldiers, earned him the respect and admiration of the entire battery and attached company. On 14 August 1968, Lieutenant Neuburger was mortally wounded during a mortar attack, while organizing defensive fire around the infantry company perimeter near Kontum City. First Lieutenant Neuburger's exceptional courage, outstanding performance, and exemplary devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army."

Besides his widow and daughter, Dan is survived by his parents Mr. and Mrs. Edward Neuburger, and eight younger brothers and sisters: Glen, Tom, Mark, Dean, Kathleen, Donetta, Mrs. Kenneth Waldschmidt, and Mrs. Emmett Fuller. Those who knew him and loved him seek solace in the fact that Dan died doing what he wanted most. We could feel the desire at school, and no human was going to deny him the opportunity of fighting for his country as soon as he could.

Kansas was his birthplace and Kansas is his resting place . . . the little town of Ellis, the town that watched him grow from a boy, a son, a big brother, a cadet at St. Joseph's Military Academy, to a cadet at West Point, an officer, a husband and a father. The golden Kansas wheat, silhouetted against the crimson sun, stood a little prouder 14 August 1968 knowing that one of its sons had died in the service of his country. The memory of Dan Neuburger and everything he stood for will linger with those of us who knew him until the black dirt of Kansas ceases to yield men of conviction and valor . . . never.

— *Kenneth J. Leonardi, Classmate*

Give me your hand, my  
brother, and search my face.  
Look in these eyes lest I  
should think of shame.  
For we have made an end of  
all things base.  
We are returning by the road  
we came.

Your lot is with the ghosts of  
soldiers dead,  
and I am in the field where  
men must fight.  
But in the gloom I see you  
laurelled head,  
and through your victory I  
shall win the light.

Siegfried Sassoon — 1918



## Jose Manuel Peña

No. 27133

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 25 August 1968  
Interment: West Point Cemetery, West Point, NY

ON 25 AUGUST 1968, JOSE PENA was serving as a platoon leader with Company B during a combat operation near the village of Thon Hai, seven miles west of Tam Ky City, in Quang Tin Province, Republic of South Vietnam. At approximately 4:00 p.m., Jose was mortally wounded when the company received small arms fire and enemy grenades.

Jose was born in New York 6 February 1944, two months after his father passed away. This event brought me courage in my difficult moments.

From his early years he showed his

sense of independence and responsibility. He loved school, sports, especially sailing, and was an avid reader. In 1956 we moved to Puerto Rico. After completing elementary and high school at the Academy of Immaculate Conception in Mayaguez, he attended the College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts for one year, prior to his appointment to West Point. His teachers and classmates admired his willingness to help the underprivileged. He was an inspiration to many.

While at the Academy of the Immaculate Conception he belonged to the Boy Scout Group. In high school he joined the Civil Air Patrol where he earned the grade of cadet captain. At the College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts he joined the ROTC. His ambition was to make the Army his career,

On 1 July 1963 Jose joined the Corps of Cadets USMA. While at the Academy he enjoyed every minute of his stay.

At the late President Kennedy's inauguration, he was proud to be chosen

with other USMA cadets to go to Washington and take part in the Funeral Parade. In 1965 he also was chosen as an exchange cadet to represent the United States in Greece. From that trip he gained wonderful experience and many friends. His happiest moment was on 7 June 1967 when General Bennett presented him with his diploma and his commission as an officer of the United States Army.

After completing the Regular Army Infantry Officer Basic Course, Airborne Course, and Ranger Course, he was assigned to Hawaii and from there to Vietnam. He was very happy to go, confident that he was going to do his duty to his country and to help make this a better world to live in.

He showed his love of country by giving his life. His generosity will make this a better world. He will live in our hearts forever.

God bless you.

– Mom





## Michael Leo Nathe

No. 27195

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 29 August 1968

Interment: Redstone, MT

MICHAEL L. NATHE was born in Scobey, Montana, on 27 May 1944, a son of Mr. and Mrs. Mike Nathe of Redstone, Montana. Mike's early years were shaped by his family with whom he remained close throughout his life. He spoke often with pride of his parents, brothers and sister.

His character was formed by the teachings of his family. He was taught to be unselfish with his time and talents to help others. His parents set the example through voluntary service in community, country and statewide organizations. Growing up on a ranch taught the value of hard work and the necessity for trust and trustworthiness. Instilled in the Nathe family early was the drive toward self-improvement. All of his brothers and his sister attained a college degree and several went on to graduate work at such places as the University of California at Irvine, Creighton University, Notre Dame and the Harvard Business School. All are still active in their communities and the oldest son, Dennis, recently was a Montana State legislator. The Nathe family clearly exemplified the theme of service to their fellow man.

Mike attended grade school at Redstone then entered Assumption Abbey at Richardson, North Dakota, for his four years of high school. At Assumption Abbey he was an honor roll student, and he won three wrestling championships and was chosen all-conference for three years. Two times he was chosen all-conference in football and in 1961 was selected as the most valuable lineman on a highly successful team. His team was one of the most powerful teams in North Dakota

high school history going undefeated and unscored upon that year.

After graduation he attended Carroll College for a year and played varsity football. Then it was on to West Point. From early youth Mike wanted the military life. This desire sprang from his wish to serve his fellow man as exemplified by his parents, brothers and sister, the patriotism of his family and the military service of relatives dating from Custer's Last Stand to the Korean War.

The hard work of plebe year was something to which Mike had long been accustomed, so he had few problems adjusting to the rigors of cadet life. He made the plebe wrestling team and the varsity squad the following year. Classmates and upperclassmen recognized early his quiet and mature determination, and he soon had their respect. Mike was popular, well rounded, strong in every sense, but still touched with kindness. His honest sincerity, generosity of self, sense of humor and reliability marked him as a revered friend who would always be counted upon. He had the friendship of all and was the soldier one wanted to be fighting beside.

Mike's parents and all of his brothers attended his graduation at West Point. The pride of the family was clearly evident that June Day. On the way home to Montana tragedy struck as Mike's father died of a heart attack. This was a terrible blow to a close knit family who treasured so much their relationships with one another.

Mike volunteered for duty in Vietnam as his first assignment. After completing the Infantry Basic Course and Ranger School he was stationed at Fort Carson, Colorado, for six months. He visited home the last time in May 1968 with his fiancée, Miss Lynn Madden. In early July he left Redstone to visit his sister en route to Oakland, California, and Cu Chi, Vietnam.

Upon his arrival at the 25th Infantry Division in Cu Chi he became a platoon leader in Company B, 14th Infantry. At 0100 29 August 1968 Mike's platoon came

under an intense enemy attack. He was wounded by an incoming mortar round but refused medical attention. While maneuvering from position to position giving aid to others and directing return fire he was mortally wounded by another enemy mortar round.

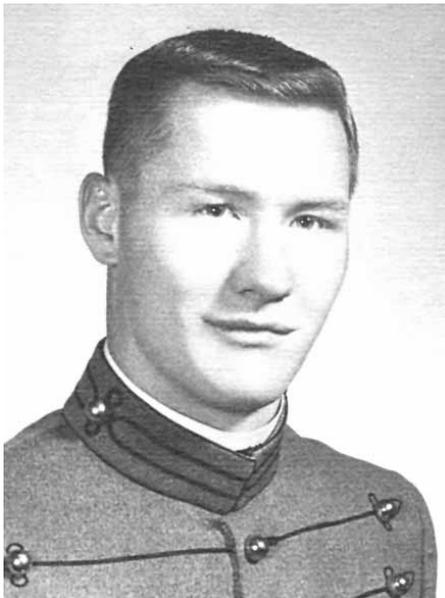
Mike was posthumously awarded the Silver Star; Bronze Star; Purple Heart; National Order of Vietnam, 5th Class; Gallantry Cross with palm, and the Combat Infantryman's Badge. A scholarship fund has been established at Assumption Abbey as a living monument and tribute.

Mike was buried on the plains of eastern Montana where he had grown up. Befitting a true soldier's resting place there is a flagpole on a nearby hill overlooking his grave where a flag is raised on national holidays for the memory of Mike. It waves across the amber fields as if ...

To keep alive an old belief  
That on some distant shore  
Far from despair and grief  
Old friends shall meet once more.

— JS, MH, PE, Classmates  
and dear friends





## John Thomas Corley, Jr.

No. 27050

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 8 September 1968  
Interment: Greenlawn Memorial Park, Columbia, SC

JOHN THOMAS CORLEY, Jr., was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on 7 December 1945 while his father (USMA '38) was serving in Europe with the 1st Infantry Division. The oldest of seven children in a devoted Army family, John lived most of his life on Army posts.

John's first home was the Quarters next to the Catholic Chapel at West Point. From there he traveled to Fort Leavenworth and Governor's Island. When his father was ordered to Korea at the beginning of the Korean War, the family moved to Cape Cod where John assumed responsibility far beyond his five years in caring for his four younger brothers and sisters. From this early age John knew the meaning of "Duty First."

On subsequent tours John saw much of the United States and Europe, but his home in the Army was Fort Benning. It was here while his father was commanding the Rangers that John formed his impressions of the professional Army that caused him to choose Infantry as his branch of service.

John spent his freshman and senior years at Pacelli High School, Columbus, Georgia. During the interim years, he attended Schools in Wiesbaden, Germany, and Dreux, France.

His great interest during his high school years was sports. His big six foot-four, 200 plus frame together with the red-headed determination of a fighting Irishman earned him letters each year in football and basketball. As a senior he was named a "Georgia All-State Tackle."

John received his appointment to West Point from Congressman John Rooney, Brooklyn, New York, and

stepped into Beast Barracks determined to stay. His years at West Point were not easy. Academics he managed in stride, but he soon became a familiar figure on the area. A classmate wrote of John's Cadet years in the HOWITZER: "He should be a candidate for the Olympic Walking Team if what they want is experience. But his determination has won him much respect. John's interests are divided between girls and golf, not necessarily in that order. He has always been a tough competitor, being a top contender among the Brigade Heavyweight Boxers and always ready to accept a duel to the death be it with lacrosse stick or golf club. He was the man to see when you needed a friendly word. His drive and perseverance in seeing a job through will certainly make him an asset to the Officer Corp."

It was indeed a proud and memorable moment on Graduation Day when John's father swore him in as a Second Lieutenant, United States Army. His orders to Fort Benning for Ranger and Airborne School were like going home. After proudly qualifying for the Ranger Tab and Parachute Badge, John was assigned to the 82d Airborne Division at Fort Bragg. Three months later he was on orders for Vietnam. There he joined Company D, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry, 25th Division which he described as "the best unit over there."

From his arrival in Vietnam on 9 May 1968 until his death on 8 September, John gave his country the best that was in him. As a platoon leader, he spent four months in the field making daily sweeps and nightly ambushes in the fifty-mile radius around Saigon. He was commanding the 1st Battalion Reconnaissance Platoon when he was killed. His citation accompanying the Silver Star reads: "While on a reconnaissance in force operations, Lieutenant Corley's platoon came under intense small arms fire from two well concealed bunkers. With complete disregard for his own safety, Lieutenant Corley moved forward to investigate the situation and found the

point man critically wounded. Despite heavy communist fire, he rushed forward and threw a grenade into one of the bunkers. As Lieutenant Corley raised up to throw another grenade he was fatally wounded by hostile fire. First Lieutenant Corley's personal bravery, aggressiveness, and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service."

His other decorations include the Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster and "V" device.

A West Point roommate wrote: "When I think of John, I think of all the good things of life. John was one of the good people of the world. He loved life and helped others to enjoy it. His positive, optimistic attitude helped him make the most of any bad situation. He was always ready to lead, to lend a hand or to talk. He was compatible with life in a very particular way that was noted and envied by all who were privileged to know him."

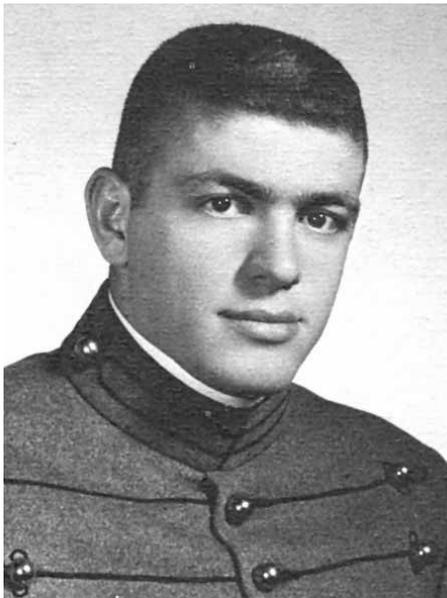
Though John seemed to live with a youthful passion for the moment, his letters home were filled with his dreams and ambitions for the future. He was very much a part of the great humanism of his generation. But to John love and duty were one total commitment.

"To love life and live it joyfully,  
bravely and faithfully,

Surely, this is the way to eternity."

— *The Family*





## Raymond James Enners

No. 27213

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 18 September 1968

Interment: West Point Cemetery, West Point, NY

“ENCOURAGE US IN OUR ENDEAVOR to live above the common level of life.”

These words from the Cadet Prayer embrace the code by which Ray Enners lived and died. Certainly on 18 September 1968, half a world away in the jungles of Vietnam, Ray “lived above the common level of life” when he laid down his life to save a wounded comrade. His sacrifice was in every way consistent with his life and concern for his fellowman.

Ray was born 5 November 1945 in Rockville Center, New York. It was at Half Hollow Hills High School that he initially displayed those attributes that were to mark his later life. He achieved honors as Class President, Student Council Member, National Honor Society member and recipient of the Long Island Press Scholar Athlete Award. Ray was also active in sports; it was as a member of various athletic teams that Ray first displayed his determination and love for his fellowman. Ray’s personal standards were so high that he excelled in all the sports he tried. By the close of his senior year Ray had been selected as captain of the football and lacrosse teams, was All Suffolk County Athlete in both sports and earned nine varsity letters in football, basketball and lacrosse.

Those who knew Ray at all during this period will never forget him. He exemplified the traits of courtesy, responsibility and determination at their finest. To his coach, friends, school principal, teachers, as well as athletic opponents, he is the memory of a man who excelled not only as scholar and athlete, but also as a human being. These

people, years removed from Ray’s high school days, have honored his memory by establishing the First Lieutenant Raymond J. Enners Memorial Award for the Outstanding Senior Boy, athlete and scholar, at Half Hollow Hills High School; and the Suffolk County Lacrosse Coaches Association (Special Award) for the Outstanding Senior Lacrosse player in Suffolk County.

Ray’s life began a new phase when he entered West Point in the summer of 1963. Leaving behind friends and family, and fresh from an honored and rewarding high school experience, Ray might have been uneasy about the step into this new military life. Yet with the same determination and spirit that marked his high school days, Ray tackled West Point.

One of the most vivid memories of Ray that comes to mind occurred that first hot July day when he bid his parents farewell and entered North Area, lacrosse stick in hand, head held high, only to be indignantly received by a member of the beast detail. He was ready, proud to be one of those facing this new challenge.

His experience at West Point had a profound influence on Ray, as well as those who knew him. It was not always an easy period but was constantly an enjoyable one. At times the academic road was particularly rough for him. Yet through extraordinary personal effort he managed to overcome this hurdle where others would have stumbled. His love for sports, especially lacrosse, consumed most of his time away from study. Again, it is through athletic experiences that Ray’s nature may best be described. Still vivid over a span of years are the many wonderful memories of “Iggy”; his quiet joy at victory when his face lit up and he grasped his teammates; his utter disbelief at defeat, as he sat, still in uniform, with tears welling in his eyes; his help and advice to his teammates; the spirit he displayed as a competitor on the field (he won the team award as the “hardest driver” on the squad); his love of the game and his respect for all. Never to be forgotten also, was Ray’s deep faith in

God; as a church acolyte in his home town church and at West Point he manifested this faith and trust. Ray’s devotion was not known to many. He wasn’t obtrusive. It was, however, this faith that sustained him through many ordeals. In every way Iggy was an unforgettable man.

How can he be described during those four years at West Point? His easy manner, twinkling wit, and never-give-up spirit combined and matured there. As a Cadet Captain, Company Commander, and All American lacrosse player, Ray demonstrated that he had adjusted well to the military atmosphere at West Point. Those who knew him then loved and respected him. There were never unkind words for Ray Enners.

A good illustration of the respect that he gained is shown in an incident that occurred at the 1967 Army-Navy Lacrosse Game. (Ray was hospitalized the night before the game.)

Although unable to play, he insisted on being in uniform and on the bench. Those who were in the locker room at halftime will never forget the vow made by an underdog Army team to win that game so that Iggy could step on the field and earn a star for beating NAVY. Ray’s example, then, as always, was above the common level. He was an inspiration to us all. Again to demonstrate the esteem with which he was held, his family, friends, and his coach, Jim Adams (who had a profound influence on Ray), have honored his memory by establishing the Raymond J. Enners Memorial Award, which is presented to the most outstanding lacrosse player in the nation. This “Heisman Trophy of Lacrosse” serves as a most fitting award to honor Ray’s name and those others who deserve to be called “the best.”

After graduation, and the North-South All Star Game (Ray still could not play due to his illness, so he served the team as team manager), Ray entered the active Army as an Infantry Officer. By July of 1968, after Ranger School and a short but intensely rewarding tour at Fort Carson, Ray followed his destiny to Vietnam.

During the three months preceding his death he distinguished himself in combat, again earning the respect and admiration of his subordinates, contemporaries and his superiors. On 18 September, Ray joined his God while saving another soldier's life. This final sacrifice earned him his country's second highest award for valor, the Distinguished Service Cross.

On 7 June 1969, in the Office of the Superintendent, United States Military Academy, West Point, the award was presented to Ray's parents, his sister Sandy, and his brother Richard (Class of '71). The citation accompanying the medal reads in part: "Helplessly trapped by raking fire from the enemy gunners, the badly bleeding squad leader called for help, but the deadly hostile fire kept anyone from reaching him. Lieutenant Enners, hearing his cries, began moving forward to rescue him. He crawled forward through the rice paddies and leaped across the intervening dikes, dodging through continuous bursts of enemy fire until he reached his forward squad leader. He and the squad leader then jumped over the dike and ran forward...but they were forced to turn back when the North Vietnamese began throwing grenades. Braving the rounds scorching the air around them, they raced again to the injured man's position and took cover behind the dike. Lieutenant Enners picked up the injured man and again disregarded the risk to his own life to carry him back across the battlefield to the care of medical aidmen ... he later rejoined his platoon maneuvering them to within fifteen meters of the enemy before he was fatally wounded by hostile machine gun fire."

Other tributes, besides those already mentioned, have been received by Iggy's family. One letter that was especially meaningful to Ray's parents was from the Air Force Academy. During his tour at Fort Carson Ray had the pleasure of coaching the Air Force Academy Plebes in lacrosse. Cadet Terry L. Woods expressed the sentiment with which Ray was held by those young men, writing, "Unselfishly he gave time to teach me and my classmates the finer points of lacrosse. He could have done many other things on those afternoons, but he didn't. He saw some people who needed some help, so Lieutenant Enners gave us some assistance.... I have never seen such standards as Lieutenant Enners displayed. Our world needs so many more Lieutenant Enners."

Ray never saw himself as a hero. It was alien to his personality to consider himself different from others. Yet he was different. He embodied qualities of unselfishness, kindness, appreciation of others.

Ray desired only to continue serving God, marry, and live for his family. Yet his life had another path to follow. Ray loved his country and was willing to sacrifice for its ideals. He would have, and did, do anything for his fellowman; he was definitely a hero.

A visitor to the West Point Cemetery can sense the fulfillment of life and will find there the peace which Ray sought and died for. Both love and peace compose the tranquility of Ray's final resting place high above the Hudson. There the vigor and youth of countless young men in gray

will provide a living memorial to those ideals by which he so earnestly sought to live. The lacrosse men of tomorrow will pass by him with some of that dogged determination to excel that Iggy so amply demonstrated. His death was a tragic, unbelievable loss to his family and many friends; there is a void never to be filled, but always bridged by fond, wonderful memories of an outstanding soldier, an uncommon man, and a loving son and friend. We are all proud to have known him; these words do not fully describe the kind of man that is Ray Enners. He "lived above the common level of life."

"Every man is bound to do something before he dies. If it be that to which he is called, then death is but a sleep."

— Chris Pettit

**40<sup>TH</sup> REUNION**  
West Point Class of 1967

Once again we've gathered here  
Upon The Plain of yesteryear  
To reconfirm, reflect, renew,  
To add another link or two  
To chains of brotherhood that grew  
When we were young and going through  
Parades of days, a march of years,  
That brought us here today.

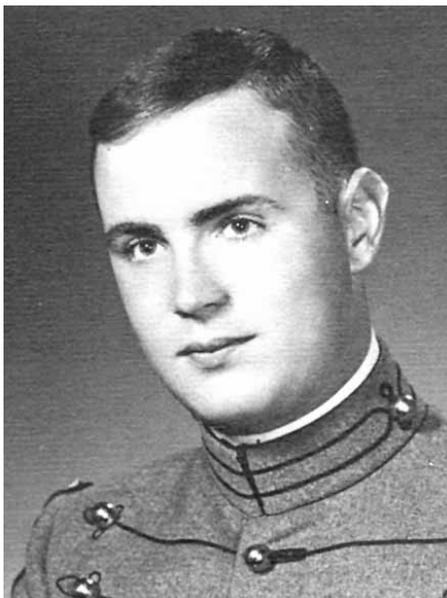
Was there a time we could have known  
The depth to which the seeds were sown  
Of Duty, Honor, Country grown  
So deep within our souls?

The laughs we've shared, the tears we've shed,  
The grief so deep as brothers bled;  
On distant shores we fought and led,  
Yet, tirelessly our boots still tread  
To gather here today.

We treasure each and every heart  
That grew together from the start;  
We forged the links, we're each a part,  
Unbroken to this day.

Forever fused by memories past,  
The shadow long our swords have cast;  
The forty years so quickly passed,  
That Long Gray Line so unsurpassed,  
The bonds of steel a lifetime last  
And bring us here today.

Written by Diane S. Doty  
Wife of Steven E. Doty, West Point Class of 1967  
September 2007



## Roger Alan Fulkerson

No. 27139

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 25 September 1968

Interment: Oakwood Cemetery, Troy, NY

FIRST LIEUTENANT ROGER ALAN FULKERSON gave his life in the service of his country at Duc Lap, Vietnam on 25 September 1968. A man of high ideals and courage, Roger volunteered for Vietnam prepared to lay down his life if necessary and in an act of duty, responsibility, and selflessness made that supreme sacrifice. His dedication to duty, bearing, professional knowledge, ability, and sense of honor all added to make the man and officer that Roger was.

Born on 19 June 1945 in Utica, New York, Roger attended elementary and high school in Troy, graduating as an honor student from Troy High School in 1963. Sports were of prime interest in his life. He was a member of school football and swimming teams in both elementary and high schools. Another source of great enjoyment to him was his participation as a drummer in school and dance bands. Rounding out his extracurricular activities, he served as editor of his high school yearbook and graduated with the respect and admiration of classmates and teachers alike. As a prelude to his military career, Roger was a Boy Scout for his entire boyhood years, attending the National Jamboree in 1960. His ability and background made him more than equal to meet the rigors of cadet life.

Roger entered the Military Academy on 1 July 1963. He had received a congressional appointment from the State of Illinois, where his paternal grandparents resided on extensive land holdings. This land was accumulated at the close of the Civil War by Colonel William H. Fulkerson, an ex-West Point Cadet, of the 63d Tennessee Regiment, CSA.

Roger's years at West Point and his brief career as an officer were the culmination of a lifelong ambition. He kept his humor and good nature intact through most of the trying times of his years at the Academy. Indeed, his calm, mild manner served as an inspiration to those more excitable and less able to withstand the tensions that are a part of a cadet's life. The remarks made by David R. Hadly in the HOWITZER summarize perfectly the qualities that dominated Roger's character. "Rog will always be remembered for the calm and deliberate manner in which he approached trying situations and his outstanding sincerity that could not help but win him friends. His forte was his tremendous ability to get along with and understand others. Rog has a 'swing' and a unique ability to initiate and appreciate humor that will contribute greatly to the success that he is surely to achieve." Although cadet years presented a challenge to Rog, his enthusiasm for life did not diminish. He enjoyed the exertion and relaxation that athletics provided him. While at the Academy his favorites were football, lacrosse, and tennis although he participated in many others. He spent much of his free time pursuing these interests. Social life rated high with Rog. Dating was one of his favorite activities, and whenever possible he took advantage of an opportunity to date. He amazed his friends because he always "dragged so pro."

Following graduation on 7 June 1967, Roger was commissioned in the Field Artillery with Vietnam his first assignment. He attended Airborne School at Fort Benning during his leave time, and then went to the Officer's Basic Course at Fort Still. Following Officer's Basic he successfully completed Ranger School and was assigned to Fort Hood, Texas. While at Hood he attended and completed the twelve weeks course in Vietnamese. Roger arrived in Vietnam on 8 July 1968 and was assigned as a forward observer with Company C of the 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry, 4th Infantry Division. His

contribution in the defense of freedom was well stated in the letter from his commanding officer after his death. "On 25 September Roger was forward observer with Company C of the 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry during operations six miles southwest of Duc Lap in Vietnam's south central highlands. At 0910 hours his company position was heavily attacked by an estimated North Vietnamese Army company using small arms and rockets. Roger immediately adjusted the fires of three artillery batteries onto the enemy. The effectiveness of his employment of friendly fires later completely disrupted the attack. At 1005 hours an enemy B-40 rocket round detonated near Roger's position, and fragments struck him in the head, killing him instantly. Roger was regarded as an outstanding officer and individual by all whom he served, and his loss is a great shock to all of us."

Citations accompanying the Bronze Star Medal with V Device (First Oak Leaf Cluster), awarded posthumously, state: "Lieutenant Fulkerson provided the supported infantry with continuous Artillery fires, braved the intense enemy fire with complete disregard for his own safety . . . with flawless accuracy, adjusted the artillery on the advancing enemy,



stopping their advances.” In addition to the Bronze Star Medal his awards included the Purple Heart, the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, and the National Order of Vietnam, Fifth Class including Gallantry Cross with Palm.

Roger’s heroic and untimely death was a great personal tragedy to each of his family and friends. The grief experienced by William and Dorothy Fulkerson in the loss of an only son and by Amy in the loss of an only brother was compounded by extremely close family ties. Roger lived every moment of his life giving of himself fully. Whether at work or at play he strove

for perfection and could always be counted on to perform admirably. He enjoyed life and people and his qualities of honesty and sincerity earned him many devoted friends. Basically quiet, his warmth and generosity could only be appreciated by those who knew him well. His wonderful wit and sense of humor were of constant enjoyment to those privileged individuals.

First Lieutenant Michael P. Kurtgis, attached to a sister company in Vietnam, wrote following Roger’s death: “Roger and I shared the same feeling for our work and our men, and I can’t help but feel that a part of me will always be with him as I know Roger will always be with me.”

The true measure of life is not how many days, weeks, months, or years one may live, but how well one lives out his allotted time. Roger gave his utmost for the country he loved, and the way of life he fervently believed in. To me, Rog was all a friend and companion could be. I know I will never forget him and the kind of person he was. One can never replace his best friend. His memory will endure in all who knew him and will serve to inspire them to emulate all the qualities he possessed.

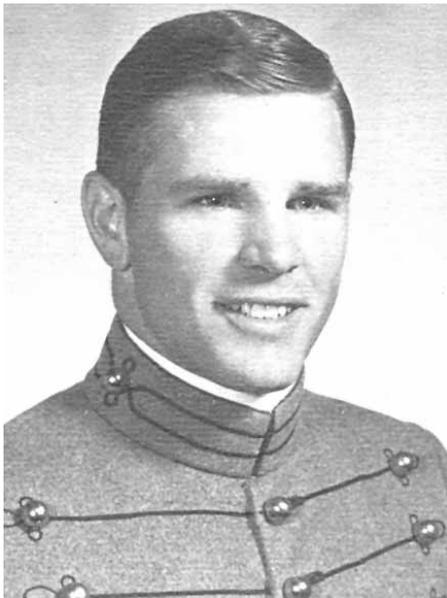
– James P. DeSantis  
Friend and Classmate

### *Without their Sacrifice*

*Feel the black, cold slate. Names  
engraved into the granite block,  
engraved in memories. Identified  
by dog tags, far away from home,  
wishing to be called ‘son’ once more.  
Each has two families, one at home,  
and the band of brothers  
united through tragedy and war The grey  
rain masking the tears on the faces of the  
remembering; bleak clouds matching the  
moods of many. Blades, bullets, and bombs  
of fire have taken the lives into their grave.  
Once known roommates, fathers, brothers, and sons,  
now have been commemorated in stone.*

*Ah, but here comes the sun. Reflecting the faces  
in the stone of the remembered. Celebrate, for they  
remain, they shine down with warmth,  
reminding the visitors, I’m here, I’ve never left.”  
The clouds push away and the rain stretches  
into a bow. Without their sacrifice, where would  
we be now? Be grateful, the sun always stays.*

*Poem Written By:  
Brittany Kuyck, ‘67 Daughter*



## Richard Oliver Bickford

No. 27054

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 18 October 1968  
Interment: West Point Cemetery, West point, NY

“NEVER ASKING MORE than he is willing to give himself, no more can be said but he is a true man and true friend.”

These words from the 1967 HOWITZER summed up how Rick approached life both at West Point and as a combat leader in Vietnam. Rick died as a result of injuries when he was struck by the rotor blades of a scout helicopter which he was guiding into his unit's forward position. Rick was always stepping forward to give himself to tasks which were not his responsibility to perform. Rick had preplanned his life from his early youth to his more aggressive young manhood when he fulfilled his goal upon entering West Point.

Rick, better known to his West Point classmates and friends as “Rit,” was born in New Canaan, Connecticut, on 8 May 1943. Rick was always an aggressive young man in accepting all challenges. He manifested love and compassion for his fellow men, personal friends, and family. He worked hard, he took on all comers, avoided the pitfalls that trapped many less dedicated individuals, appreciated knowledge and its importance, believed in both physical and mental fitness in order to achieve his goals in life. These character traits enabled Rick to effectively handle the mental problems that faced him as a youth so that he could achieve his ultimate goals and fulfillments. Rick was a driver, very forward, yet he never was selfish in that he was always able to lend a hand to anyone that needed his help. Rick lived and practiced this credo based on his belief in his family, country, and his God.

Rick's desire to attend West Point began at the age of ten when he decided

that this was to be his ambition in life. His family, realizing Rick's love of the Military Academy, made it a yearly ritual to visit West Point, its grounds and buildings, which provided an opportunity to absorb its traditions.

Rick was a graduate of New Canaan High School. He was the president of the National Honor Society's local chapter, a member of the Athletic Society, and president of the school's Letterman's Club. He participated in Varsity football, baseball, basketball, and hockey. He was designated all-State in football in his junior year and in basketball in his senior year. He attended Wesleyan University on the early admission plan. He received his appointment to West Point by Representative Abner W. Sibal. Rick had entered Wesleyan University on a four-year scholarship where he participated in all sports. Rick was selected for this appointment based on the recommendation of a panel which determined that Rick had qualities and attributes to be admitted to the Military Academy, serve the Army and his country over all other applicants. Rick had again surmounted high odds to come out on top in the pursuit of his lifetime goal. Rick was a member of the C3 Company and was known throughout his four years at the Academy as a sincere and open-minded individual. Rick excelled in the social sciences and tolerated what he called the “exact” sciences. He was active in the Debating Society, Ring and Crest Committee, Dialectic Society, the Newman Forum, the HOWITZER Staff, and the Culture Club. He participated in baseball during his Second and First Class years.

Upon graduation, Rick attended the combat platoon leader's course at The Infantry School followed by successfully completing Ranger training. Rick then served at Fort Campbell and Fort Bragg and then was ordered to join the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) which was operating in Quang Tri Province in Vietnam. Rick was first assigned as the Reconnaissance Platoon Leader

of the 2d Battalion, 12th Cavalry, and performed in an outstanding manner as the leader of this organization during operations in Quang Tri province. During this period, Rick's great professionalism and leadership abilities were manifested during intense independent small unit operations. Rick's concern for what was right for the Vietnamese people was exemplified in his refusal to tolerate any abuse and destruction of the Vietnamese people and their properties by not only his own troopers, but by those of the Army, Republic of Vietnam units.

Based on his outstanding performance, Rick was selected to be the Executive Officer of Company A, 2d Battalion, 12th Cavalry. Rick's service in this assignment can be described as outstanding in every respect. He was respected by the troopers in the company as an officer who was concerned for their welfare, stood for and exhibited high standards and ideals in his dealings with them, and could be counted on in a combat situation. His company commander describes Rick as a “great soldier and friend who was admired by all troopers in his company.”

While performing duties in this



capacity, Rick's untimely death occurred when he moved forward to guide a scout helicopter forced to land in his company's forward position due to severe weather conditions. The helicopter pilot lost control of his aircraft after he touched down and when it pitched forward, Rick was struck by the rotor blades. Another helicopter flew him to the evacuation hospital to Quang Tri. The effort proved futile as Rick died en route. In keeping with the Army tradition of honoring fallen comrades, a memorial service was held for Rick in the forward position of the 2d Battalion, 12th Cavalry. Father Black, Battalion Chaplain, conducted the service with dignity and compassion, as he also was Rick's good friend.

Rick would have gone far in the Service if he had lived to accomplish all his aspirations. He was a West Pointer, a man of his family, God and his country. He was a man of his own convictions. His parents recall their son Richard in this way, not only as a son but a brother who was a man in his own right who always looked objectively both inwardly and to

others with whom he came in contact. He built his character around the concern and the rights of others not only to better himself but to better all with whom he came in contact. His life ended at a young age, yet he fulfilled more than most young men are able to do. He achieved youthful ambitions, demonstrated concern for his fellow men, conducted his life with firm convictions which enabled him to overcome mental and physical hurdles that confronted him. He died with honor for himself, his family, his country, and the Corps. He died with the creed of West Point's "Flying High," with that drive of life which he exhibited so that others may live in freedom and not repression and under suppression of any alienated outside force.

Rick's family also contributed greatly in keeping with his high ideals and dedication to duty and country. His brothers, David E. and Peter H., were in the Air Force when Rick was killed in Vietnam. His sister Terry Lynn joined the Air Force after Rick's funeral and burial at West Point. She joined the Air

Force not only to support her country but to help complete Rick's mission, which he so strongly believed in, as well as those of her brothers who were serving their country. Rick's mother personifies one of those gallant women who raised their sons and daughters to have high ideals and dedication to their family, God and country. Rick's father also had served with the Combat Engineers in Italy during World War II. Rick's youngest brother, Alfred L. is also in the Air Force since 3 June 1976 (a whole service family).

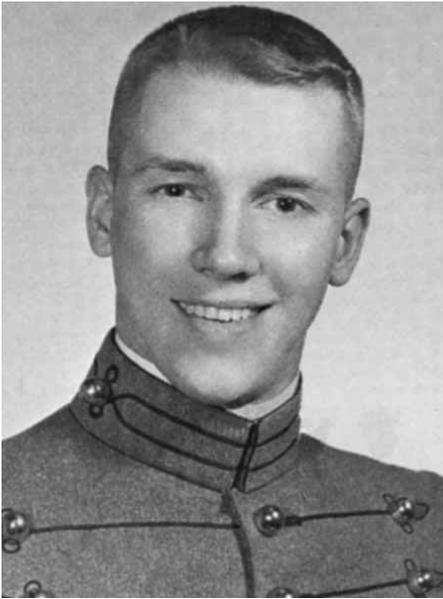
Rick's family, despite their grief and anguish, state that "our beloved son will always be with us in death as he was in life. We revere our family as a unit to love, protect, and help all that is in need of protection, love and divine guidance." They are very proud to speak of Rick in death or in life by saying, "Life is but for a moment, yet death is eternal life."

*— Mr. and Mrs. Edgar P. Bickford  
Colonel James W. Dingeman,  
Commander, 2d Bn, 12th Cav,  
1st Cav Div (AM), 1968-1969*

### **Verse from Benny Havens**

May the Army be augmented, may  
promotion be less slow,  
May our country in the hour of need be  
ready for the foe;  
May we find a Soldier's resting place  
beneath a Soldier's blow,  
With room enough beside our graves for  
Benny Havens, Oh!

anonymous



## Michael Gramling Parr

No. 27096

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 27 November 1968  
Interment: West Point Cemetery, West Point, NY



MICHAEL GRAMLING PARR was born into the United States Army on 13 June 1945 in York, Pennsylvania. Being an "Army Brat," his first overseas journey was made at the early age of 13 months. In July 1946, he accompanied his mother to Germany to join his Dad who was stationed there. In July 1968, at age 23, First Lieutenant Mike Parr made another trip to a foreign shore. This time to Vietnam. He volunteered to go and was proud of his uniform with Ranger Patch and Parachute badge which he earned while serving with the 82d Airborne Division at Ft. Bragg, N.C.

On 27 November 1968 as Commander of A Company, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division, Mike was killed in action. He died the way he lived: thinking of others first. For Gallantry in Action, he was awarded the Silver Star, and for Meritorious Service in connection with Military Operations against a hostile force, the Bronze Star Medal. He was a loyal, brave and dedicated soldier and citizen. Duty, Honor, Country were the values he always defended during his life. The Silver Star citation reads: "On 27 of November 1968, after landing near a suspected Communist Base Camp, Co. A came under an intense volume of Viet Cong fire sustaining several casualties. Lt. Parr immediately organized a small force and led them forward to extract the wounded. As they were evacuating the wounded, the rescue element came under withering hostile fire. With complete disregard for his own safety, Lt. Parr exposed himself to the deadly insurgents fire as he led an element against the aggressors. While he was leading his men forward, Lt. Parr was

mortally wounded. His valorous actions were responsible for the saving of several lives and the defeat of the hostile force. Lt. Parr's personal bravery, aggressiveness and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the Military Service."

From early boyhood, while living on numerous Army posts, Mike always said he would like to go to USMA and become a "career soldier." While living at Fort Bragg, he especially enjoyed being able to watch the men of the 82d Airborne Division make their parachute jumps. When he returned there ten years later as a Second Lieutenant, it was like going home. He became a jump master and enjoyed jumping as often as he could on the same landing zones he had gone to so often before, as a wide-eyed young spectator. It was while living at Fort Bragg as a youngster that he became interested in baseball, scouting, and rifle shooting. Throughout his young life, his leadership qualities were evident. He was always ready and willing to help, and could be depended upon by his adult leaders to instruct and lead others. In high school he was a member of ROTC, and in his senior year was the Cadet Colonel in his unit. He was on the drill team and the rifle team. He earned his numerals as a member of the rifle team as a Plebe at the Academy. He was a Life Scout and an Explorer Scout and always enjoyed the frequent camping trips.

Mike was an idealist, and as the song "The Quest" from the musical version of Don Quixote says in part: "To dream the impossible dream; To fight the unbeatable foe; To bear the unbearable sorrow; To run where the brave dare not go; To right the unrightable wrong; To love pure and chaste from afar; To try when your arms are too weary; To reach the unreachable star." This was Lieutenant Mike Parr; beloved son, brother, grandson, uncle, and friend.

In June 1967, he was filled with pride to be sworn in as a Second Lieutenant, U.S. Army by his father. It was also a memorable day for his family and friends when General Ted Conway, a classmate of Mike's Dad, presented him with the Class

of '33 gift that each son receives upon graduation. It was a beautiful graduation, one that will be remembered by all who were there. The Class of '67 looked so fine as they marched in to receive their diplomas. It had been four years of long, hard work for Mike, but he had always been loyal to the Corps.

Mike was always considerate of others, and even with problems of his own, his main concern was of his family and friends. The Rt. Rev. Bishop Barnds said of him, "He was a very thoughtful young man. While he was at West Point, he always sent me a Christmas Card and note." A classmate wrote, "Ever since I met Mike three and a half years ago, I have admired and respected him as a quiet, intelligent, capable and loyal friend. He managed to look upon all situations with a calm and an insight that inspired success. I truly believe that his presence helped account for the betterment of all situations of which he was a part."

Not only did Mike serve his country, but he was faithful to his God. Before entering the Military Academy he had always been an Acolyte in Army Chapels, and as a member of Trinity Episcopal Church in Fort Worth, Texas, he served as Crucifer. Another friend wrote: "You must certainly be strengthened by the knowledge that Mike died in the Service of his Country, a task which he courageously embraced with a sense of Duty, and that finally he has won a great victory in the achievement of a true peace."

On 9 December 1968, Mike was laid to rest with full Military Honors at West Point. He has joined the Long Gray Line along with his other brave classmates, and a former roommate, who gave their lives in Vietnam. He will be missed greatly by his family and friends, but his memory will always be strong in our hearts and minds.

"He is not dead-he is just away" "Rest in Peace, Michael dear, Till we meet again"

– *Your family and friends*



## James Kenneth Brierly

No. 26774

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 12 December 1968

Interment: Riverview Cemetery, Streator, IL

James Kenneth Brierly was born in Streator, IL, the first of two sons of CPT (USMC) Kenneth and Mary Brierly. Jim was proud of his family, and they were very important to him. As the son of a Marine, Jim called many places home in his early years until the family finally settled in Carlsbad, CA, in 1958.

Jim made friends easily and immediately became a class leader in student government. He was good at all sports he tried. Jim loved surfing and sailing and lettered multiple years in football, track, and basketball. He also enjoyed the rigors of academics, graduating high school with a 3.9 grade point average. Jim's entrance to the Academy came through his father's service, which allowed Jim to compete for a presidential appointment.

Jim's Plebe year was pretty much like everyone else's. During Yearling summer at Buckner, Jim's friendliness and his inexhaustible energy are well remembered. Proof of this is evident in a picture in the *1967 Howitzer*, in which everyone in the picture is exhausted except for the big man with the huge smile leaning over the porch—Jim. His father was always a source of pride to him, and Jim carved "USMC" into the M-14 field stock he was issued for Recondo. The cadre was not impressed. During the summer before Cow year, Jim was a squad leader during Beast Barracks. He had a competitive nature and would continually pit his squad against any brave enough to challenge them. Although he hated losing and rarely did, Jim was always gracious in defeat.

Jim loved sports and, throughout his four years, participated in football, lacrosse, and rugby, which was just catching on at West Point. Jim made the starting A team. His play was spirited and ferocious, yet he always seemed to be smiling. He led the forwards and played Number 8, the guy at the back of the triangle of forwards who engages the opposing pack in the scrum down to start play. There was a trick play where Jim would fake a release of the ball, but control it with his foot so the opposing scrum half was drawn offside. It was good for a penalty kick once or twice a game. He was a great jumper, and if the team really needed to get the ball in the lineout, it was thrown to Jim. In those days, there was no lifting, and the jumper had to propel himself skyward to collect the thrown ball. Jim was relentless, always encouraging his teammates, always in the thick of things.

It was the same way in academics. He did well. Initially, he wanted to be a Marine like his father, but later he focused on becoming an engineer. He worked hard on his studies, and he was able to select the Corps of Engineers. It was even rumored he taught others how to study with the radio on and not get caught.

Jim knew when to be serious and when to have fun. He stepped naturally into leadership roles with his calm, even manner. Jim was someone upon whom you could always rely, and he commanded a great deal of respect from everyone. A religious man, Jim had the habit of bending his knee and praying beside his bed before retiring for the night. It was genuine, and it just seemed like a natural thing for him to do.

He was handsome and large in stature, but larger in personality and friendship. "Big Jim," the multi-talented surfer from California, graduated in the top quintile of the class; was a cadet captain; a member of the choir, debate team, and various sports teams; and helped package the *Howitzer*.

Ever proud of his father's service in WWII and Korea, Jim took his service

to country very seriously. He wanted to get involved as soon as possible and volunteered to go to Viet Nam. After Ranger training and officer basic (some say he received higher marks in partying than engineering), he went to the 19th Combat Engineers at LZ North English, which was about as far north in the II Corps area as one could go in Binh Dinh Province. This was considered a very dangerous area, since the 19th operated in both I and II Corps and received very little Infantry support on mine sweeps and other activities. Jim's unit pulled mine sweep every morning and repaired roads, culverts, and bridges. As throughout his life, Jim maintained his religious beliefs. He considered the possibility of dying, but he had faith and was not afraid.

On 12 Dec 1968, Jim had to do a "Report of Survey," requiring him to travel to a remote location. Jim had a high sense of duty, and instead of waiting for the regular daily traffic to follow mine sweep and ensure safe travel of the road, Jim and his driver proceeded just minutes behind the mine sweep. A trick of the Viet Cong snipers was to hide while mine sweep went through and then pick off a target directly after. Jim died instantly of a single sniper bullet through his heart. His driver braved repeated AK-47 fire and drove fast to get help, but it was already over.

Jim was laid to rest next to his father and was joined by his mother in 1999. The Pony League baseball field in Carlsbad was renamed "Lt. James K. Brierly Field" and rededicated in 2003 by the Carlsbad mayor, who was Jim's high school football coach.

This tribute is not about the death of a brother, but instead about the life of an extraordinary young man who had such a positive impact on so many during his 23 years with us. Semper Fi. Duty, Honor, Country. Into your arms, Lord, our brother.

— Phillip Brierly and Classmates



## Thomas Donald Thompson, Jr.

No. 26833

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 2 March 1969

Interment: Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Glendale, CA

THOMAS DONALD THOMPSON, JR. was born 14 July 1945, in Los Angeles, California, a few weeks before the end of World War II. His military heritage included his father, a regular Air Force Officer, and his father's brother, Second Lieutenant Frederick Miller Thompson, U.S. Army, tenth in his Class 1937 at West Point, who was killed in an aircraft crash during pilot training at Randolph Field, 7 June 1938.

"Tommy Jr." attended schools in California, Guam, Washington State, Florida, Thailand, and graduated from Wakefield High School, Arlington, Virginia, in 1963. He was an Explorer Scout, active in all sports and an outstanding student . . . perfect candidate for West Point. When his family left for Argentina for an Attaché assignment, he was employed as a lifeguard at the Army-Navy Country Club in Washington, D.C. He won a competitive exam for a Congressional appointment from California, and entered the Academy in June 1963 at 17 years of age.

There was no plebe leave in the summer of 1964, but in 1965, he made it to Panama, where he met his father. They flew back together to Argentina in the Attaché plane, Tommy Jr. sitting in as co-pilot for his dad, with layovers in Lima, Peru, and Santiago, Chile. Diplomatic receptions followed, with trout fishing in the Andes; exotic game bird shooting over the family's Brittany spaniel; and hunting for black-buck. This was not his first big game hunt since he had hunted with his dad in India when he was thirteen and where he got his first black-buck trophy.

During that summer of 1965, he

made side trips to Paraguay and Brazil. His family and friends were pleasantly surprised by his excellent command of the Spanish language; he also displayed his mastery of the guitar, self-taught during his first two years at the Academy. He made many Argentine friends, including some famous race drivers, and even got to try out their cars.

His love of adventure resulted in four years on the West Point Sky Diving Team, and a trip to Europe during the summer of 1966 with his classmate, Chad W. Keck. They toured the continent in a sports car they bought on arrival, and "followed the bulls" all over Spain, in the Hemingway tradition.

He remained on the Dean's List during his entire four years, and excelled in fencing and tennis. On graduation, he was a cadet lieutenant on the staff of the First Regiment, First Battalion.

His family had completed the Argentine tour and were stationed in Washington, D.C., during the latter part of his First Class year. Weekends, the streets in front of the family home resembled the "pit stop" at Indianapolis Speedway, because he and his classmates parked the newly acquired sports cars there, Corvettes then being the majority choice.

The entire family was present for his graduation on 7 June 1967, when his father swore in his only son as a Second Lieutenant, U.S. Army. His grandfather, a World War I Marine, his grandmother, and his sister were there to share this proud day.

As a graduation present, he and his dad took leave, and went on a first class safari to Kenya, East Africa. During this memorable trip, he shot an elephant with magnificent ivory tusks, each weighing over 100 pounds, as well as leopard, Cape buffalo, kudu and many other species.

From Africa he went to Fort Bragg for Ranger and parachute training. He was then assigned to A Troop, 1/17 Cavalry, 82d Airborne Division, from May to December of 1968.

After Armor School at Fort Knox,

he received his orders to Vietnam. A final Christmas visit was made to his family in the mountains of Northern California, where they were building their retirement home. He caught steelhead on the Klamath River, and went duck hunting before departing for Travis AFB, where his family saw him off.

On arrival at Bien Hoa, he was assigned to the "Lighthorse Cavalry," 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry, of the 25th Infantry Division, where his classmate, Philip A. Hogue Jr. was the Executive Officer. He took over the 3d Platoon of B Troop, and immediately went into combat in the Boloi Woods, on the Cambodian border.

He was slightly wounded on February 28, and was killed by hostile fire on 2 March 1969. He was loved by his family and friends. A few excerpts from the many letters received by his family:

From Lieutenant Colonel Robert S. McGowan '52, commander, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry, Vietnam: "Tommy was a magnificent leader of men, so proud of his heritage and training, so able to lead by example. His track was in front, leading and showing the way for the rest of his platoon and troop. Tommy was killed when enemy fire struck him from his place of command as his platoon was attacking the enemy bunkered position through which B Troop was maneuvering."

From Captain Michael D. Jackson, commander, Troop B, 3/4 Cavalry, Vietnam: "Tom's bravery and coolness in battle were an inspiration to all who saw him. He was a professional in the best sense of the word, and no higher tribute can be paid to him than to say that he was a first class combat leader."

From Sergeant First Class Robert Maxey, Troop B, 3/4 Cavalry, Vietnam: "He was more than just another officer to us. He was a good friend. The men were able to talk to him in their own manner and respect him for his ability in the field. It is not often in 24 years of service that a man is privileged to serve under as fine an officer and gentleman as Lieutenant

Thompson was. Maybe in a way this is not right because all our future platoon leaders will be judged on how they compare to him. He was that well respected and liked. The last time he and I were together in battle was on 28 February, when our platoon accounted for 20 of 29 North Vietnamese killed. He and the men were really outstanding.”

From Sergeant Lee Justice, A Troop 1/17 Cavalry, Fort Bragg: “I was his Platoon Sergeant and I guess I knew him better than anyone else here in the Troop. Lieutenant Thompson was a good soldier and believed in what he was doing. His main desire was to get to Vietnam and get in the fight. He was a natural leader in the field, but he didn’t care much for garrison duty. He was like a part of my family.”

From Captain Edward R. Kennedy, U.S. Army (Retired): “To a soldier, a soldier’s brother, a soldier’s wife and a soldier’s parents: How many years we get on this earth is not so important as what we do with them. You packed more

experience and living into Tom’s few years than most people get in three score and ten. The hazards of the profession of arms are well known to those of us who have experienced them. We mourn the death of a Cavalry officer of the United States Army. We grieve in the loss of a loved one. The former must overshadow the latter. Our family sabre is unsheathed, in the tradition of the old Corps . . . The black knot affixed at the hilt. This is our mourning to a man who died with his boots on. And every inch a man and soldier dedicated to the highest sense of duty, honor, country. Tom kept his honor bright. And that luster will be kept untarnished by generations past, present and future, who tread the Gray Line across the Plain at West Point. I salute the fallen soldier son of very dear friends, as only a veteran combat officer knows how . . . To The Corps.”

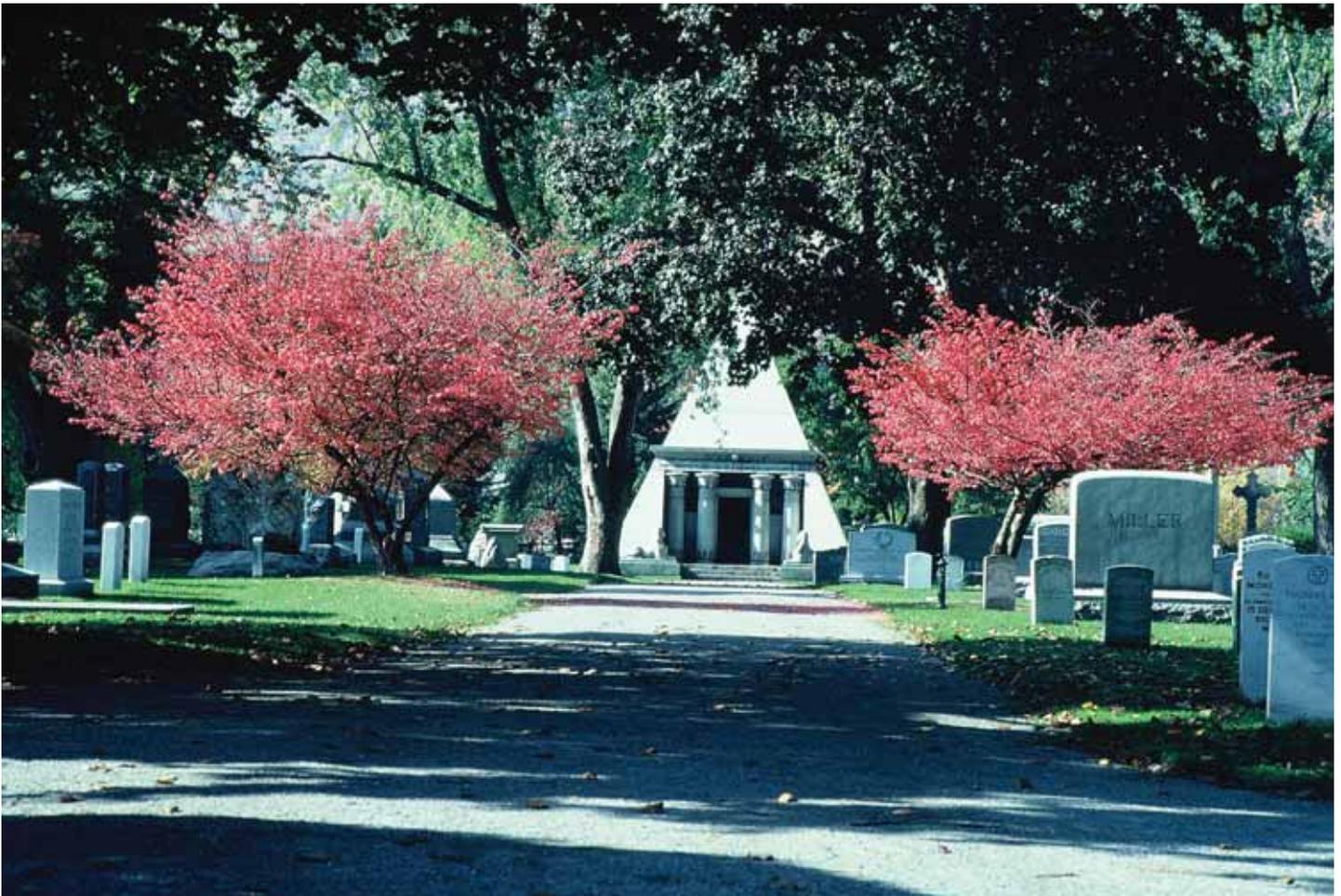
A memorial service was held in the field, and all the men of his squadron were present. A family service was held at

Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, California, on 12 March 1969. His remains were placed in the Thompson family niche with a simple plaque . . . his rank, name and the parachutist wings.

His decorations include: The Silver Star for gallantry in action with First Oak Leaf Cluster, Bronze Star Medal with First Oak Leaf Cluster for heroism, Army Commendation Medal for heroism, Purple Heart, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, National Order of the Republic of Vietnam, and Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Palm.

The Lieutenant Thomas D. Thompson Jr. Memorial Award was established by Captain Edward R. Kennedy, and is presented each year to the graduating West Point Cadet who has excelled in English.

Tommy Jr. is survived by his sister, Patricia A. Dupell, and by his parents, Lieutenant Colonel and Mrs. Thomas D. Thompson of 9312 Azalea Drive, Etna, California 96027.





## Leonard Lee Preston, Jr.

No. 26996

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 21 March 1969

Interment: Lexington Cemetery, Lexington, KY

FROM THE BEGINNING, his classmates knew there was something very special about Leonard Lee Preston. It showed the minute “the man in the red sash” started yelling as he and his classmates walked through the sally port on that hot July day in 1963. Lee, unlike most of his peers, retained his calm demeanor and certainty of purpose. He was an “Army brat” after all, and he knew more than most about such military things as “spit shining” shoes, GI “whitewall” haircuts, and “hurry-up and wait.”

But beyond his own self-control in chaotic situations, such as Beast Barracks, there was a clear sense that Lee placed the welfare of his classmates and friends before that of himself. It was this characteristic of caring and sharing that was to benefit his classmates and win their genuine friendship and respect in the coming four years. Lee’s versatility had many facets, thus making it easy for him to lend help to all those in need. He was an excellent student who often tutored those who had difficulty composing English essays or balancing equations in chemistry. The *Howitzer* committee greatly benefited from Lee’s organizational and writing skills during all four years.

His love for sports—particularly tennis and squash—was deep and a source of great personal pleasure. Lee’s athletic abilities contributed to many Army victories over its opponents during his two years as a letterman in tennis and his four years as a standout letterman in squash. Lee was driven to win, yet gracious in victory and quick to give praise to his opponent in defeat.

The moral and character traits that

Lee exhibited at West Point were forged in the years before his donning cadet gray. He was born in Lexington, KY, the first son of Mary P. Preston, an English teacher, and Leonard Lee Preston, Sr., an Army Infantry officer. His mother taught him about academic excellence, as well as about tolerance and compassion. His father, having been a collegiate football star at the University of Kentucky, taught him the value of teamwork and the rewards of determination. Lee experienced sacrifice when his father was seriously wounded at the Chosin Reservoir in Korea. He learned his lessons well and became the ideal role model for his younger brother Bill and his sister Beth. The family moves to Germany and Japan served to whet Lee’s appetite for travel and for sharing in, and appreciating, the customs of other nationalities.

Lee’s four years at West Point passed by quickly, and suddenly it was time to choose his branch of arms and first duty assignment. Ever mindful of the evolving events in South Viet Nam, he joined his classmates in the spring of 1967 in Thayer Hall to make his selections. Without fanfare, Lee chose Armor as his branch and volunteered for South Viet Nam as his first assignment. His choices came as no surprise to his classmates, for we had come to know that if there was a challenge, that’s where we would find Lee.

After graduation leave, Lee went on to excel at the Armor Basic Course and Ranger School. There was a short assignment in an Armor battalion at Ft. Knox, KY, before he received orders to South Viet Nam. He loved the duty, and his soldiers quickly responded with their respect and admiration for him. In May 1968, Lee reported to the 2-8 Cavalry Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Division, in Viet Nam. He was assigned as a platoon leader and soon distinguishing himself by his gallantry in close combat with North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces. Having performed with valor in the field, Lee was selected to become the 2-8 Cavalry Regiment S-2. Shortly thereafter, on 21 Mar 1969, Lee and several other members

of the battalion staff lost their lives when hostile fire caused their helicopter to crash while performing reconnaissance over enemy controlled terrain. Lee’s body was recovered and laid to rest at Lexington Cemetery in Lexington, KY—his birthplace.

The final sentence in Lee’s biographical sketch in the ’67 *Howitzer* reads, “One can certainly say that Lee never met a man he didn’t like.” The same can be said of all those who were fortunate enough to meet Lee. To know him, was not only to like him, but to be indelibly influenced by his generosity, kindness, and sincere dedication to his country, his family, his classmates, and his many friends.

### TO MY FRIEND (With An Identity Disk)

If ever I had dreamed of my dead name  
High in the heart of London, unsurpassed  
By Time forever, and the Fugitive, Fame  
There seeking a long sanctuary at last —  
Or if I onetime hoped to hide its shame,  
— Shame of success, and sorrow of defeats, —  
Under those holy cypresses, the same  
That shade always the quiet place of Keats,  
Now rather thank I God there is no risk  
Of gravers scoring it with florid screed.  
But let my death be memoried on this disk.  
Wear it, sweet friend. Inscribe no date nor deed.  
But may thy heart-beat kiss it night and day  
Until the name grows blurred, and wear away.

Winfred Owen (1893-1918). Owen was killed on 5 November 1917, just six days before the Armistice. Here he contemplates his own death and how he wants to be remembered — not in honor or glory, but simply that his surviving comrades wear his identity disk. This memorial is the identity disk of our dead.



## Tom Emerson

No. 26863

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 24 March 1969  
Interment: West Point Cemetery, West Point, NY

Tom Emerson was born in St. Joseph, MO, and died in the Republic of Vietnam. In between, he did a heap of living along life's highway. Even though we remember Tom as an "Okie" (and Tom was proud of that), he spent his first 10 years in Missouri. His older sister, Camille, recalls that his red hair was apparent from day one, as was his devilish spirit.

He spent great years climbing to the tree house he built, racing the soapbox derby car he designed, attending elementary school, and starring in a role in an educational movie about Tom Sawyer, a role he fit to a "T."

It was after the family's move to Oklahoma, while Tom was in high school, that he became interested in attending West Point. His German teacher, COL Caldwell, sparked this interest by spending most of his class time speaking about his own Army experiences. COL Caldwell appreciated Tom's classroom abilities as well as his antics outside of the classroom. One of the many pranks for which Tom is remembered in high school was encouraging his male friends to dress as female cheerleaders and try out for the squad. Tom and his friends ended up talking to the principal about their inappropriate dress and cheer!

Following high school graduation, Tom spent a year at the University of Oklahoma in Norman awaiting his appointment to the Academy. It came in 1963, and Tom immediately fell into step at West Point.

He fit right in as a dedicated, hard-working, talented cadet—but with a twinkle in his eye. George Dials, Tom's Beast Barracks roommate, recalled that

Tom was more mature than most of his classmates and was held in high regard by them. George was one of Tom's teammates on the 150-pound football team. Tom was strong, hard-hitting, aggressive, and smart. He did well but making weight was a problem, especially after Plebe year. Tom liked food more than football and settled back in Company A-I.

By the time Cow year rolled around and his move to Company B-1, Tom's reputation as not only gifted but rambunctious was solidifying. There were rumors in the Tactical Department about a red-haired cadet traveling the underground heating tunnels and surfacing in the Administration Building. Although never proven, Tom told many tales about those trips. His Firstie year TAC, then-MAJ George Stapleton, recalls being alerted by other officers to keep an eye on the clever fox. "Stapes" never knowingly had a problem with Emo and developed a lot of respect for his enthusiasm, spirit, and ability to date some of the best-looking girls around.

He did well with academics, athletics, and especially in escaping the long arm of the Tactical Department. His father had been in the horse cavalry and Tom followed in his footsteps by choosing Armor—really Cav—as his branch.

Following graduation leave and Ranger School, Tom attended the Armor Officer Basic Course at Ft. Knox. His first assignment was at Ft. Bragg. Former B-1 classmate Bill Obley and his wife Joan were nearby. Bill remembers Tom's enthusiasm for active duty and his endless appetite for good, home-cooked meals.

Tom was reassigned to the 3d Squadron, 5th Cavalry, 9th Infantry Division in Vietnam as platoon leader of 2d Platoon, A Troop. In February 1969, he sent his last letter to his sister, filling her in on his situation and heaping praises on his brand new red-haired niece. He liked his job. His letter was reassuring, with a message that things were fine and not to worry. Nevertheless, sisters, moms, dads, and friends did. Aside from worry,

classmates carried an eerie, foreboding feeling about their brother-in-arms. Late-night phone calls were worrisome. Mike Hood remembers the phone ringing in his Ft. Benning apartment at 3 A.M. Peggy Stapleton, the TAC's wife, was on the other end. "Is it Emo?"

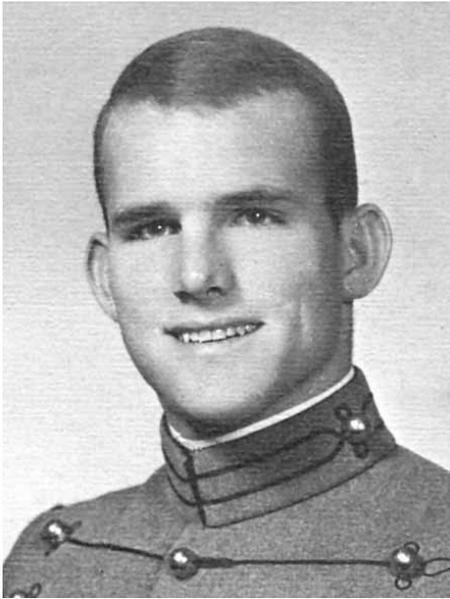
"Yes." Hood hung up.

When Ranger Hale heard of the circumstances of Emo's death, he remarked that Tom died as he lived—charging hard. His posthumous Silver Star citation read, "LT Emerson distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous action on 24 Mar 1969 on a reconnaissance mission in Quang Tri Province. After his unit became heavily engaged with a large, well entrenched enemy force, LT Emerson courageously led his men in an assault against the hostile emplacements. Maneuvering through intense enemy fire, he repeatedly exposed himself to the fusillade to direct his men and personally fire against the enemy. Although seriously wounded during the assault, he continued to lead his men until the enemy had been forced to retreat, but then he succumbed to the wounds he received."

Time passes, memories fade, but things happen that spur thoughts of old friends. Kirk Alford remembers that, as roommates, we mixed up our gear on occasion. He has one of Emo's coat hangers with his handwritten name on it. Every few years he comes across it in his closet, and the memories come rushing back.

We all have our enduring images of old buddies. Andy Komblevitz commented, "Tom, the square-jawed Oklahoman, looked and acted like a leader. When I watched James Garner, a fellow Oklahoman, on television, I always thought of Tom. They both carried themselves so well. When it came time to be serious, they performed. True cowboys. You could count on them. True friends. They just never let you down. It wasn't their way."

—John Severson, Ron Naples, and a host of people who enjoyed their journey down life's highway with their friend Tom



# Wayne Keith Shaltenbrand

No. 27242

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 14 May 1969  
Interment: Vista Memorial Gardens Cemetery, Hialeah, FL

*To date no Assembly/Taps memorial article has been published for Wayne. The following information was provided by his brother Lee.*

Point in 1961.

During his four years at West Point Wayne competed on the swim team as a diver.

He graduated in 1967 as a Second Lieutenant.

Wayne was sent to Vietnam December 29, 1968 and served as an advisor with the Military Assistance Command. Wayne was killed May 14, 1969 in Giang, South Vietnam by enemy forces, while on an operation with his advisory team. Wayne was promoted posthumously to the grade of Captain effective May 13, 1969. Wayne was flown home with my brother Ray as his escort and was buried near

his childhood home, in Vista Memorial Gardens Cemetery, Hialeah, Florida.

I am Wayne's younger brother, the youngest of four children. Wayne was the third born, the second son. The oldest was our sister. Wayne and I were very close. In fact our entire family was a close knit family. When my oldest brother Ray went to West Point, Wayne set his sights on following in his footsteps. My parents couldn't afford to send four kids to college so this was a way my brothers could receive a good education. Like my brother Ray, Wayne excelled in high school and was very competitive on the high school dive team.

Wayne Keith Schaltenbrand was born August 22, 1945, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. At an early age our parents moved to Hialeah, Florida where Wayne was raised. He graduated from Miami Jackson High School in 1963 and received an appointment to West Point by Congressman Claude Pepper. Wayne entered West Point in 1963, following his older brother, Ray, who entered West





## Karl William Mills

No. 26742

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 11 June 1969  
Interment: West Point Cemetery, West Point, NY

Tall, lanky, bright, caring, deep thinking, energetic, self-motivated, loving, dependable, with a permanent grin. Those words and phrases continually resonate from a diversity of individuals describing their memories of Karl William Mills from the days of his childhood until his premature death. While Karl's core values and basic leadership skills began during his early life at home, he gradually blossomed at West Point and greatly strengthened these values and skills. Marriage amplified his sense of compassion and love for others. As a young officer, Karl met the challenges of a new career and a combat tour, not only with competency and professionalism, but also in a manner that clearly demonstrated his ingrained sense of "Duty, Honor, Country."

Karl W. Mills, son of William and Dorothy Mills, was born in Columbus, OH. His mother died shortly after his birth, and later his father remarried. Karl grew up in a typical, mid-America family and neighborhood. His older sisters, Kathleen and Karen, helped start Karl on his way. He served as a good example and shining star for his younger brother Ken. Throughout high school and Karl's time at West Point, the mutual admiration and bond between brothers deepened. Recently Ken summed up his feelings for their relationship by saying, "Karl was all a brother could be."

Karl attended Eastmoor Junior High School and Senior High School in Columbus. He excelled in academics and participated in numerous extracurricular activities. While not thought of as an athlete, Karl was a competitor on both the football and wrestling teams. During

that time, he also was a member in DeMolay. His willingness to reach out and help anyone in need earned him the lifelong admiration and respect of many. He graduated in the top two percent of his high school class. In his senior year, he won a prestigious Harvard Book Award for academic achievement, was president of the student council, and was a representative at Buckeye Boys' State.

During high school, Karl began to consider the service academies, initially motivated by both the financial incentive of a free education and because of the quality education that was offered. He developed a plan and began working to secure a Congressional nomination. In quick succession, he received nominations both to the Air Force Academy and to the United States Military Academy. West Point became the winner, when Karl was disqualified from the Air Force Academy for being too tall.

In June 1963, Karl was sworn in as a new cadet along with over 800 classmates. The initial cultural shock of Beast Barracks and his own lanky, uncoordinated "all-knees-and-elbows" frame proved to be a challenge, which he met with stubborn determination, quick wit, and a positive attitude. Once the academic year started, Karl began to excel. The success he found in the classroom seemed to build his self-confidence in all aspects of his life as a cadet. In intramural competition, he quickly became a stalwart on the K-1 wrestling squad. His initial physical awkwardness disappeared as he adjusted to cadet life, improving to the point that he served on the regimental color guard during his First Class year. The fact that Karl always was in the top 15 percent of his class was not as impressive as the fact that he unselfishly helped countless less academically-gifted classmates survive their individual academic struggles. While most of his classmates were intent on just surviving, Karl demonstrated his intellectual abilities in another area.

Beginning early in his Plebe year, and lasting all four years, he served as a

hop manager. Karl had learned quickly that the hop manager worked closely with Mrs. Holland, the cadet hostess. This positioned him to be among the first to meet all of the single members of the fairer sex as they arrived without escorts for the various West Point dances. This fact might have partially accounted for the constant grin Karl had on his face.

Karl made several important decisions that set his future path. Leading up to Branch Selection Night, Karl was torn between the Corps of Engineers and the Signal Corps. When his time came, he proudly stood up and pro-claimed, "Field Artillery, Sir!" Earlier that year, as a favor to an E-1 classmate, Chris Vissers, Karl accepted a blind date with an attractive young coed from Douglass College. Her name was Nancy Dabinett and she had accompanied a girlfriend for a weekend at West Point. A serious relationship was far from either's mind when the date was arranged, but, from that first meeting, a spark was kindled that neither had anticipated. Friendship turned to love, and the two were married in the Cadet Chapel on 23 Dec 1967 with several classmates in attendance. A stateside assignment took them to Ft. Sill, where the young couple tried to maximize their time together while orders for Viet Nam were pending. A pre-departure leave allowed them to move back east and get Nancy organized for her final year at Douglass College while Karl was overseas. During that time period, they were chosen to appear on a New York television game show for newlyweds called Dream House. About midway through Karl's tour, the two were reunited in Hawaii for a wonderful R&R that was dampened by its all too short duration. In the spring of 1969, Nancy graduated from college and returned to her parents' home to wait for Karl's return.

Dreams do not always come true, as CPT Karl Mills became one of the 29 fatalities suffered by his class during the Viet Nam War. In the early morning hours of 11 Jun 1969, eleven miles northwest of Tam Ky in Quang Nam Province, Karl and

approximately 130 American soldiers were defending an Americal Division location, known as LZ East (Hill 488). The position came under a devastating attack by units of the North Vietnamese Army, led by sappers and flamethrowers, who quickly overran the position before being driven back. A bunker Karl was occupying was destroyed during the initial onslaught. As he emerged from the rubble to confront the enemy, Karl suffered a fatal shot at close range. In all, 17 American soldiers were killed and 34 were wounded. Karl only had a few short weeks left in country.

In a recent phone conversation with his former Artillery battalion commander, COL Edouard Peloquin said, "Karl was one of those rare individuals who was admired by his peers, his superiors, and his subordinates. The loss of this bright, promising young officer was a tragedy to all that knew him." His military awards and decorations included the National Defense Service Medal, the Viet Nam Service Medal with one Bronze Service Star, the Viet Nam Campaign Ribbon, the Ranger Tab, and the Marksman Badge with rifle and automatic rifle bars.

Posthumously he was awarded the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart.

Karl is buried among other classmates at West Point. The impact that Karl had on the lives of others is evident in the strong feelings and memories that continue to be expressed individually by his cousins, his siblings, his widow, his special high school friend, his fellow soldiers, and his West Point classmates. The years continue to age all of us, but in our hearts and minds, our memory is clear. Karl's image remains forever young with a permanent grin.

Driving in from Billings, the fields are full of hay rolls,  
Huge golden cylinders, lying like beads from a giant necklace.  
I'm going to Cody to meet friends of nearly four decades,  
Soldiers then and now, and so I see these hay rolls differently.

Dropped from the baler in rows and spaced like a unit on the move,  
Wrapped tight to be their own defense against the elements,  
Positioned and prepared to be sustenance in the winter that always comes.

Near Cody the hills are wind-scored, deep lines etched in rock,  
I will soon see more of this in the weathered faces of strong men.  
This weathering adds character, and both men and rocks are more beautiful for it.

In the camp we are reminded that there will only be fewer of us in the years ahead.  
We all know this and are less surprised than saddened to hear the latest news of our  
collective mortality.

Some day there will be only one, tired with the weight of 90 years or more.  
They will ask him to West Point to watch the Corps pass to his review.  
His eyes will look through the ranks and settle on a sally port  
And see, somehow, through the blurring vision of watery eyes,  
And the magic of shared souls, all of us, everyone smiling his approval  
And waiting for the ultimate reunion.  
He will seem to others bent and old, to us all the more beautiful for the weathering,  
They will think he sees cadet battalions formed upon the plain,  
But he will see in the shiny breast plates, with all of us,  
Golden bales, disciplined tight to be their own defense against the elements,  
Positioned and prepared to be salvation  
In the awful winter that always comes.

Mark Hamilton '67, 2001



## Gary William Carlson

No. 27088

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 19 June 1969  
Interment: West Point Cemetery, West Point, NY

GARY W. CARLSON entered West Point on 1 July 1963 from West Bridgewater, Massachusetts. He was an outstanding example of the type of individual that West Point looks for to develop into leaders for the U. S. Army. Gary grew up on a small farm and was quite accustomed to the rigors of a long day filled with multiple requirements. He was secretary of the National Honor Society at West Bridgewater High, played on numerous athletic teams — cross country, basketball, and gymnastics — and was an active member of the Student Council. In addition, he was a member of Demolay and attended the Trinity Baptist Church in Brockton. Gary also possessed those magical qualities of a cheerful disposition, a warm smile and a kind word for everyone, which insured that he would attract a host of friends. He was a truly wonderful child and never could do enough for his family, friends, church and community. His enthusiasm for helping others was infectious and brought him to the forefront as a leader.

His four years at the Military Academy were merely refinements and improvements of the concepts that he brought with him. West Point proved to be a formidable challenge, but Gary was equal to every task. He expanded his activities in all directions. He was a member of the Pistol Club and the Pistol Team and later became the club's treasurer. Always a hard, enthusiastic worker, he filled the halls with smiles and stories of life in Massachusetts and was affectionately known by all as "the hardest working goat in the Corps." A member of the Cadet Band, he displayed the musical talents he inherited from his mother. He was an active member of the Baptist Student Union throughout his four years.

After graduation, Gary married Dhana L. Kent in a wonderful ceremony at the Holy Trinity Chapel at West Point and then departed for Ranger School at Fort Benning, Georgia, which he completed in November 1967. Gary next attended Armor School at Fort Knox, Kentucky, where he also had his initial troop assignment. In November 1968 he departed for the Republic of South Vietnam and was assigned as a platoon leader of Troop B, 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry, 25th Infantry Division, operating out of Cu Chi.

Gary W. Carlson was the class of 1967's most decorated graduate. His Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, and seven Bronze Stars for valor were demonstrable proof that he was an uncommon man, an individual with rare command talent. However, let it not be assumed that Gary Carlson was a man of violence or war. He was a man of peace, dedicated to serving his country and God and willing to support America's position of moral responsibility and the right of self-determination for the people of South Vietnam.

Gary received a Purple Heart that fateful day in June 1969 when he was fatally wounded in the act of saving others in his platoon and company. His reconnaissance force was under severe attack. The battle was one of the bloodiest that US forces engaged in that year, encountering extremely large North Vietnamese Army combat units. The most significant reason for all of Gary's awards and decorations was the selflessness which characterized his life. While in junior high school, Gary tried in vain to rescue a drowning schoolmate. On 19 June 1969, he again placed others above himself, attempting to rescue them at any cost, including that of his own life.

Gary was survived by his Mom, Dad, brother, sister, wife and daughter, who was only three months old when he died and whom he never had the pleasure to see. As fate would have it, the impact of his death on his family was compounded within the next two years with the suicide of his older brother and his father's debilitating stroke. His mother, Rebecca and his Wife, Dhana

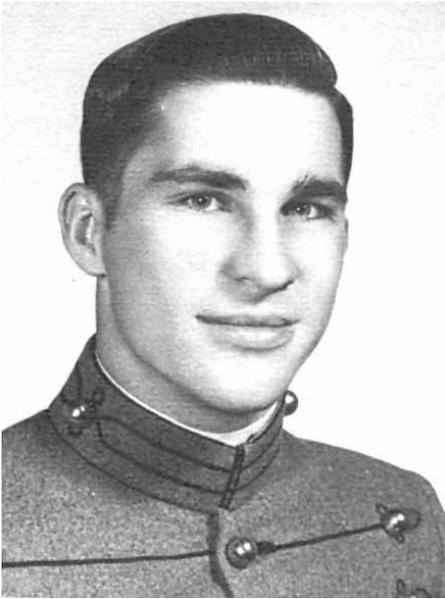
held together and recovered from these tragedies. Jennifer, his daughter, graduated from the University of Virginia in 1991 with an Engineering Degree and is completing her Master's degree in Nuclear Engineering and Applied Nuclear Science at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Gary Carlson is remembered by many in his community. The Mother's Club of West Bridgewater, Massachusetts annually awards a scholarship to a deserving high school senior in Gary's memory. In May 1990, a clock tower in the town's new library was dedicated in his memory. Visitors to the library are sure to recognize Gary's commitment to the West Point ideals of Duty, Honor, Country, the frailty of our own existence, and the importance of our own families, friends and community. The Bible portrays his beliefs and dedication best of all in John 15:13:

*Greater Love hath no man than this,  
that a man lay down his life for his friends.  
Rest in peace 'til we meet again.*

*— His Mother, Wife, Daughter, Sister,  
Classmates and Friends*





## Hampton Allen Etheridge III

No. 27150

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 15 July 1969

Interment: Crossett, AR

Honor Society, Student Council Youth Center Board, Science Club, and Mixed Chorus; attended Boys State; and edited the 1963 school Annual. Kind of hard to imagine any one person being able to do all of this and still find time for school. Out of all of this, Allen did and graduated in 1963. He then received an appointment to the United States Military Academy and entered in July 1963.

Only a few days after his twenty-fourth birthday, Captain Hampton Allen Etheridge III was killed in Vietnam when his unit was hit by an enemy rocket and mortar attack.

Allen was born 29 June 1945 in Crossett, Arkansas. He showed the "stuff he was made of" during his high school years. Allen lettered in football, basketball, and track; was Vice-President of his Senior Class and President of the Key Club; was awarded the sportsmanship award when he graduated, was a member of the National

It was my pleasure to be able to room with Al for two full years. His continuing bouts with the Academic Departments were well known among his associates. But he still always had time to help a friend in need. Never one to take the easy road, Al naturally made the hardest events in track his specialty.

No one looked forward to mail any more than did Allen. Most of the time his mail was from Susan Smithers whom he married on 7 June 1967, the second member of our Class to be married in the

Cadet Chapel.

After attending several Army schools, which included Ranger and Airborne training, Al was assigned to the 82d Airborne Division, Fort Bragg. While there, Al was trained as a Pathfinder. He later received advisor training before going to Vietnam in December 1968. I am sure that Al must have thought that this was best for his country.

Allen is survived by his wife Susan, his parents Mr. and Mrs. Hampton Allen Etheridge Jr., his brother Samuel A. Etheridge, all of Crossett, a twin sister Mrs. Wiley W. (Susan) Dugger Jr. of Dallas, Texas, his grandparents Mrs. Ruth Shaver and Mr. and Mrs. Hampton A. Etheridge, also of Crossett.

Probably nothing could better describe Allen than the caption under his picture in the school Annual, "No matter how tough the going, Allen always gave all he had."





## John Edward Kelly, Jr.

No. 26727

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 25 July 1969

Interment: Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, VA

Jack was born 14 September 1943 at Fort Benning, Georgia. Yes—Jack was an Army brat.

In his youth he lived in many places from Germany to Hawaii, including a few years at West Point, shortly after World War II. The Academy made a lasting impression on the future cadet who (although very young at the time) thrilled to the parades on the Plain.

While in Germany in 1950, Jack broke his right leg below the knee. The leg healed well but at an angle so that his right foot pointed markedly outward. This interfered with running and engaging in sports. More over, because he had already set his sights on West Point, he wondered how he could have his leg straightened. The only answer was to have his leg re-broken and set properly. With much trepidation and his parents' approval, he opted for this course of action. After the operation and months in a cast, the leg was straight and subsequently grew at the same rate as his left leg.

And he was growing—tall and spindly. West Point was still his goal, especially after his elder brother entered the Academy in 1958. He worried about his eyes since his vision was no where near 20-20. Much to his relief, however, his eyes passed the minimum basic requirements and with glasses were correctable to 20-20. Now, all he had to do was pass all the examinations with high marks and get an appointment. This he did and was “in.”

Jack entered West Point in July 1961. His dream had come true. He was a cadet. Of course, he was only a Plebe, in fact only a “Beast,” but he was where he wanted to be. He was sublimely happy

despite the terrors of Beast Barracks. But the dream slowly turned into a nightmare. He could not seem to organize his time to do all he had to do on time each day. He was seventeen—a very youthful seventeen, who always tried to look on the bright side of life. Academically he was having no problems. However, he could not escape the mounting demerits and in late November, 1961, with one demerit to go, he submitted his resignation. He could not bear to be “found.”

The end of a dream! A crestfallen disheartened young man returned home to try to gather up the wreckage of his aspirations and start over again. But for the strong of heart, a dream does not die and, after a few months of aimless activity, when asked what he wanted to do, he said, “I want to graduate from West Point.”

Many cadets enter West Point immature and “wet behind the ears.” Some cannot adjust to the tough regime at the Academy. In those days, when a cadet failed in an academic subject and was “found,” he was usually given the opportunity later to take an examination for readmission. If he passed, he was then reinstated and started over again in the following class.

There was no similar procedure for a cadet who was dismissed or who resigned because of disciplinary failings. This did not thwart Jack. He tried to figure out a way to take a disciplinary test for re-admission, and came up with an idea. He applied to the Academic Board with the following plan. He would enlist as a private in the Army and apply for admission to the West Point Preparatory School at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. If accepted, he would take the course at the prep school. He further proposed that if, as a soldier and student, he did well enough at the prep school to warrant a special commendation for readmission to West Point, he would hope the Academic Board at West Point would look favorably on his request for readmission. He knew he would have to go through Beast Barracks again; go through Plebe year; go through all the “hazing”

and suffer all the problems he had before, but still he said “I want to graduate from West Point. I want to try again.” West Point agreed with his proposal.

So Jack enlisted and happily was accepted by the Preparatory School. At Fort Belvoir he did exceptionally well and was highly recommended to West Point. He took the entrance exams and passed at the top of his class with the result that he received a Presidential Appointment and was approved by the Academic Board for readmission to the Military Academy.

So in July 1963, Jack started Beast Barracks again. However, the young man who went through “Basic,” attended the Prep School and entered the Academy as a Plebe again in 1963 was far different from the immature 17 year old stripling that tried and failed in 1961. At West Point he gained the top of his Class academically and became a cadet captain and deputy regimental commander in his First Class year. He had been given another chance and succeeded far beyond his hopes.

It was a particularly bright day in 1965 when, looking through a college year book that belonged to a classmate, Jack spotted a picture of a beautiful girl named Eileen McGowan. He kept leafing back to that picture and finally decided, after much baiting by his classmates, to write a letter to Eileen. Other letters followed; dates followed; and after graduation in 1967, Jack married Leenie. What jubilation! What happiness!

After jump school and Ranger training at Fort Benning, Jack and Leenie went to Germany and there, Colleen was born in 1968. Then came orders for Vietnam and the young captain, after leaving his small family in Alexandria, Virginia flew out to Southeast Asia, where he joined the 101st Airborne Division. On 16 June 1969 he was given the command of an Infantry company in the jungle near Hue. He was killed at 11:30 a.m., 25 July going to the aid of some of his men who had been ambushed on a jungle trail.

After his death, Jack's family received condolences from friends all over the

world. They were all welcomed—especially from those who had know Jack in Vietnam shortly before he died. From these we have culled a few extracts to describe further Jack’s qualities of dedication, leadership and compassion.

His battalion commander: “I know of no other young leader who gained the respect, loyalty and love of his men as did Jack.”

His brigade commander: “I hope there will be some comfort in the knowledge that John was held in the highest regard by

everyone with whom he was associated. He was truly the most outstanding young officer in the brigade.”

A chaplain: “He was with us a short time in Vietnam; and I lived with him three days at Eagle Beach, but I felt like the windows of eternity were opened. We talked a great deal about philosophy, ethics, morals, credit and buying, military discipline and religion. I found it stimulating and refreshing. In fact I had the feeling and the thought somewhat like Pilate as he listened to Jesus. Pilate said, ‘I

find no fault in you.’”

Jack would have been deeply embarrassed had he read those words. He did not look on himself as exceptional—but he was. He did not think he was an outstanding leader—but he was. He could not have conceived that his death would affect so many people so emotionally and so deeply—but it did.

We still miss you Jack, very much.

– J.E.K.

## The Corps

The Corps! Bareheaded salute it,  
With eyes up thanking our God  
That we of the Corps are treading  
Where they of the Corps have trod –  
They are here in ghostly assemblage,  
The men of the Corps long dead,  
And our hearts are standing attention  
While we wait for their passing tread.  
We, sons of today, we salute you –  
You, sons of an earlier day;  
We follow close order behind you,  
Where you have pointed the way;  
The long gray line of us stretches  
Through the years of a century told,  
And the last man feels to his marrow  
The grip of your far-off hold.  
Grip hands with us now, though we see not,  
Grip hands with us, strengthen our hearts  
As the long line stiffens and straightens  
With the thrill that your presence imparts.  
Grip hands – though it be from the shadows –  
While we swear, as you did of yore,  
Or living, or dying, to honor  
The Corps, and the Corps, and the Corps!

Bishop H. S. Shipman  
Former Chaplain, USMA



## Frank Allen Hill, 3d

No. 26924

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 3 August 1969  
Interment: St. Anne's Cemetery, Cranston, RI



He sought a commission in the Infantry, and upon graduation from Ranger School and the Infantry Officers Basic Course, served as a platoon leader in the 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry, in the 24th Infantry Division in Munich, Germany.

When GEN Westmoreland returned to visit the Corps while Frank was a cadet, he inspected during a Saturday morning parade in Central Area and addressed the Corps in the Mess Hall, stating, "March to the sounds of drums, gentlemen."

Frank did that, serving in Viet Nam as a company commander and, later, as a battalion intelligence officer in the 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry, 11th Infantry Brigade of the Americal Division. He discussed his experience over cokes on a hot afternoon in Quang Ngai with our classmate, Jim Stewart. Shortly thereafter, on 3 Aug 1969, just a few days after this picture was taken, he conducted an intelligence mission with one of the battalion's companies. The unit came

under intense enemy fire. An American soldier and Frank's Kit Carson Scout were with him near the head of the attack and seriously wounded. Being the man he was (the *1967 Howitzer* described him as one who seldom took himself seriously, but always took life seriously and lived by the Golden Rule), in total disregard for his own safety, Frank returned fire, twice moving forward to drag his wounded comrades to safety and administer lifesaving first aid to them. In doing so, he was hit by several rounds of enemy fire, succumbing to his wounds.

Some of his friends and classmates felt that if Frank had not become a soldier, he would have become a priest. But he chose to be a soldier, making the ultimate sacrifice on the altar of freedom, receiving the Silver Star for his heroism and the Purple Heart.

– Smitty and wy A-4 '67

FRANK ALLEN HILL III, was born in Warwick, RI. He grew up in a close family, being very active in his church and school activities. He was particularly active in sports — especially track — debate, and student government.

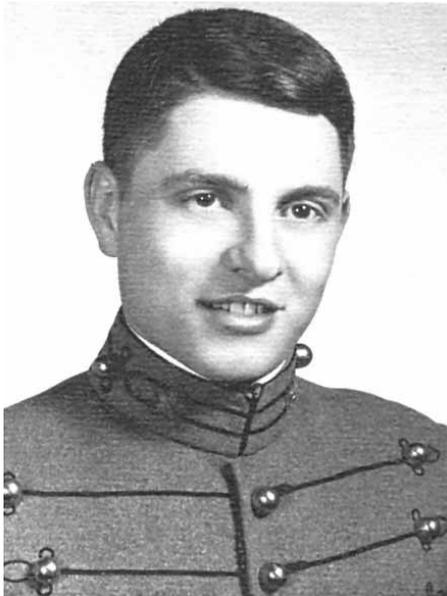
Frank's spirit and imagination were very much captured in the "Camelot" years of John F. Kennedy and the Green Berets. He sought an appointment to West Point, where he continued his interests in track, debate, Student Council for United States Affairs, and the Cardinal Newman Forum. He took his academics in stride, staying comfortably in the middle of his class.

### From These Gray Walls

*From these gray walls, a thousand heroes sprung  
Have trod the field of Mars. These battlements  
That frown upon the plain, to ancient wars  
Have sacrificed the bravest of their sons.  
They too were men. They were the mortal sons  
Of fathers and of mothers whom they loved.  
They too had gazed on dancing, sparkling eyes  
And kissed the lips they loved. Their spirit moved  
To the harmonies that stir our souls today.  
They loved the shining waters, and the skies,  
The plains and rugged hills that were their home  
Now they have drunk the icy wine of death!  
Bravely they gave the life for which they yearned,  
And now their shades, on twilight pinions hung  
Speed through the silent void of space, their flight*

*Wrapped in the sable shroud of endless night,  
While we are free! O, Thou, whose outstretched  
arm  
Gives us our life, to Thee we make a prayer.  
When our time comes, when ringing call to arms  
Sends us headlong to that vague frontier,  
Give us the strength to pay the debt we owe,  
To rise in triumph above the tide of fear.  
When lightnings crash, and martial thunders roll  
When the great deep shrinks from the blinding  
fires of Hell—  
Then give us nerve to face the blazing steel  
To bear the battle like the men that were,  
May we fall like them, knowing we have done  
Our duty to our country and to our home.*

– Bugle Notes



## Norman Louis Nesterak

No. 26672

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 3 September 1969  
Interment: West Point Cemetery, West Point, NY

PROLOGUE: MANY PEOPLE have helped contribute to this memorial for Norman Louis Nesterak. The efforts of his classmates and his widow Brenda have been compiled here in a letter to his son, who was barely six months old at the time of his father's death.

Dear Norm Jr.,

Your father was killed on 3 Sep 1969 as the result of a helicopter crash secondary to hostile ground fire. This occurred outside of Quan Loi, Viet Nam, and everyone on the helicopter perished. He was a captain in the Army, newly assigned to the 8th Engineer Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, and had been in the country a very short time.

Your father had just completed an assignment as a company commander with the 78th Engineer Battalion in Germany, where you were born in March 1969. Prior to that assignment, he graduated from the Army Ranger School in Ft. Benning, GA, followed by the Engineer Basic Course at Ft. Belvoir, VA.

Your father and mother Brenda married in Coaldale, PA, on 10 Jun 1967,

only three days after his graduation from West Point. They were childhood sweethearts. Brenda grew up around the corner from your father in Coaldale, and they began dating in high school. Your mother and father continued to date all through his four years at West Point, as Coaldale, in eastern Pennsylvania, was not far from West Point.

While at West Point, your father graduated as a "star man." This is an honor given to the academic top five percent of each class. He was a star man every year, graduating 12th in his class of 583.

Your father's eastern Pennsylvania roots brought him up Catholic. He sang in the Catholic Choir while at West Point, where he was the lead First Tenor. He enjoyed the Catholic Choir trips to New York City, where he would sing at St. Patrick's Cathedral. It seemed that most of the time Brenda also was there, either in New York or at West Point. She and your father always belonged together. While in New York City, his favorite hangout was either Mama Leone's or Tad's Steakhouse, where he could get a steak and a big baked potato for \$3.95. Norm always showed up at St. Patrick's on time, which was a continuation of his Catholic upbringing. He had been an altar boy at his hometown Lithuanian Catholic Church, where he went to mass every day.

Your father's academic standing was very high his entire four years at West Point. He helped a tremendous number of his classmates with their academics,

a direct reflection from his hometown upbringing. His father began a home schooling business after he stopped working in the local coal mines. He helped his father with his home schooling tutorial programs and even tutored some of the home schooled students of his father's clientele. This tutoring, assistance, and willingness to participate in all activities followed him for the rest of his life.

Your father was always one with a quick smile and would always listen to his classmates and their questions. He had a way of explaining very complex things, to those of us who were "Goats," in a way that we would understand. He never stood out in a crowd but was always there to help.

Coaldale is a small town, where he was born in 1945. He graduated from high school in Coaldale first in his class of 30. He maintained his small town roots throughout his life. His high school sport activities were football and being the basketball team trainer. He wanted to participate in sports at all times.

In Coaldale, he learned dedication and service to others that he exemplified throughout his life. He came from coal miner's roots in a small town to enter the Academy and married his high school sweetheart shortly after graduation. Two words best describe your father—dedication and service.

—Love, Mom and classmates

I have beheld the agonies of War through many a weary season; seen enough to make me hold that scarcely any goal is worth the reaching by so red a road.

Thomas Hardy



## Donald William Dietz

No. 26849

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 17 September 1969

Interment: Oakland Cemetery, Little Rock, AR

RALPH WALDO EMERSON USED the following words in closing his "Self Reliance."

"Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but triumph of principles."

This idea expressed by Emerson could be the yardstick to measure the life of Don Dietz. Don was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, on 23 March 1945, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Charley Dietz. He was educated in the Little Rock Public Schools. He was recognized by his peers as a leader. This was demonstrated by his many endeavors. He was chosen President of the Student Body during the ninth grade. In high school he served on the Student Council, the Debate Team, was a member of the Beta Club, National Honor Society, and he lettered in football, basketball, and track. He was an active member of the Pulaski Heights Presbyterian Church.

The following words were written by Don on 18 September 1960. This was written for a part of his permanent record the year that he entered high school. "My sense of values may be like some and different entirely from others. I like an intelligent person, and this does not necessarily mean schoolwise. Common sense, used at the right times, is the best thing a person can have, whether or not he is book smart. A sense of humor is a mark of a well-rounded person also, but having respect for other people will get you the most friends. I only hope I can hold these values all of the time, because that is part of my goal."

This paper contains many more words of praise for his family and compassion for mankind. This early attitude indicates

that Don was travelling down the road of Emerson's dream. His peers saw this quality in him and turned to him for leadership. Don became interested in West Point during the summer vacation of his junior year. He applied for admission through all of his congressmen and senators. He was awarded two principal, one competitive, and one alternate nomination. He accepted his appointment in 1963 from Senator John L. McClellan. Don fully accepted the life of a Cadet. Due to an injury he was to miss most of his Plebe football year. He did letter all three years on the varsity team and was invited to play in the North-South, All-Star Game at Miami, Florida. He was also selected on the All-East team during his senior year.

Don met Ruth Darrow at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, while he was on a tour of U.S. Army Camps. She was a student at Oklahoma State University. They were married in December 1967. Don's first military assignment, after graduation from the Academy in 1967, was in Germany. He and his wife spent a little over a year in Germany. This tour was followed by an assignment in Vietnam. Captain Dietz arrived in Vietnam in May of 1969. He was assigned to the Mekong Delta as an Artillery Liaison Officer with the 5th Battalion, 60th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division. Captain Dietz spent a great deal

of his duty time in a command-control helicopter where he coordinated Artillery fire for the American forces.

On 17 September 1969, Captain Dietz and his Brigade Commander were on a control flight. Their helicopter was fired on by a fusillade of enemy fire. In attempting to avoid this attack, the aircraft was maneuvered accidentally into an observation helicopter. The two crafts crashed and burned. Captain Dietz was one of twelve Americans to lose his life in this crash.

Before his death he had been awarded the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with one bronze star, Vietnam Campaign Ribbon, Aircraft Crewman Badge, and the Ranger Tab.

Don was posthumously awarded the Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross, eighth and ninth Air Medals, and the Purple Heart. How many times will the words of Plato echo across the globe? "The only peace for the soldier is when he is dead and in his grave." This "echo" was heard by: Ruth, who lost a loving companion; Mr. and Mrs. Dietz, who lost a devoted and loving son; Alex, who lost a brother and an admirer; many, who lost a friend; and by a nation that lost one that exemplified "Duty, Honor, Country."

— Sam Kent

*A friend and teacher*



# George Ronald Sutton

No. 27162

Died in Birmingham, AL, 4 October 1969  
Interment: Calvary Cemetery, Pittsburgh, PA



BUILD ME A SON, O LORD, who will be strong enough to know when he is weak, brave enough to face himself when he is afraid; one who will be proud and unbending in honest defeat, humble and gentle in victory.

Build me a son whose wishes will not take the place of deeds; a son who will know Thee – and that to know himself is the foundation stone of knowledge.

Lead him, I pray, not in the path of ease and comfort, but under the stress and spur of difficulties and challenges. Let him learn to stand up in the storm; let him learn compassion for those who fail.

Build me a son whose heart will be clear, whose goal will be high; a son who will master himself before he seeks to master other men; one who will learn to laugh, yet never forget how to weep; one who will reach into the future, yet never forget the past. And after all these things are his, add, I pray, enough of a sense of humor, so that he may always be serious, yet never take himself too seriously. Give him humility, so that he may always remember the simplicity of true greatness, the open mind of true wisdom, the meekness of true strength.

*(by General Douglas MacArthur)*

Had this been the prayer of my husband's father, I am confident that he would have known its fulfillment in Ronnie. I also know that General MacArthur's eloquent words form the spiritual legacy that Ronnie has left to our son.

By their kindness, I know that all of our family and friends share my loss and feel we are all better for having known

and loved my husband. Bob Kessler, a close friend and classmate of Ronnie, thoughtfully offered to write the following account.

Ronnie accepted the challenge of an appointment to West Point with a determined attitude and an open mind. He was determined to complete successfully the curriculum prescribed by the Academy, keeping an open mind to the unique and regimented life he was to find there. He achieved his goals primarily because of the wonderful human qualities that went into his being George Ronald Sutton.

Ronnie's pre-Academy years were spent developing his love for music and sports and life itself. He became an accomplished guitar player. He excelled in baseball and basketball at Hewitt Trussville High School in Trussville, Alabama, six miles east of Birmingham. His classmates there chose him the "Most Likely to Succeed," and Ronnie was never to disappoint anyone. In his senior year he competed for and won a Congressional Appointment to West Point.

Ronnie's life at West Point was rewarding both to him and to the many friends he established there. Classmates and friends remember that they would depart from a visit to his room with that special warmth only derivable from such a sincere and tender person. Ronnie usually conveyed a relaxed atmosphere except prior to those too rare occasions of a visit to Pittsburgh. It was there, on a football trip Plebe Year, that he met Mary Carole Scheib. From that point on, his thoughts were divided between the regimen of West Point and her.

June of 1967 found Ronnie a proud graduate and a beaming bridegroom. A childhood illness had left him with a previously undetected heart murmur which denied him a commission, so he accepted his diploma and marched back to civilian life.

The love of his family, the roar of the football fans at Legion Field, and the more favorable climate of the South prompted Ronnie to take his new bride home to

Birmingham. There he accepted a position with United States Steel Corporation in a Management Trainee Program which, after successful completion in August 1968, gained him a management title and a position at the Fairfield Works of United States Steel Corporation.

Surely death itself must have no conscience to claim this well-loved young man at the height of his success and happiness. The late summer of 1969 found happiness for Ronnie and Mary Carole, settled comfortably in life and love, eagerly awaiting the birth of their first child. The early fall of that year brought only tragedy. Ronnie's fatal illness began with pneumonia and led to the discovery of a broken aortic valve which, with other heart complications, led to heart failure and death on 4 October 1969.

Photographs of Ronnie capture his warm and tender smile, for it seems he always wore one, fostered by that intangible gentleness and kindness from deep within him but ever visible to all who knew him. Born on 4 December 1969 was a continuance to that great love of life—George Ronald Sutton Jr.

We pray that Ronnie Jr. will return to us that tenderness and love made absent by his father's passing. God bless you, Ronnie, and God give us the strength to carry on, not without you, but with the fond memory of you ever near.

"To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die."

*– Family and friends*





## Donald Homer Dwigkins, Jr.

No. 26986

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 9 November 1969

Interment: National Cemetery, Salisbury NC



DONALD HOMER DWIGGINS, JR., was born in Durham, NC, to parents who had been high school sweethearts. Together with his older sister Judith, they nurtured and loved each other and were deeply aware of the freedoms they enjoyed as Americans. Don worked two jobs during high school to help his family, and, ultimately, he bought and maintained a 1946 Ford. After failing to enter West Point immediately after high school, Don enrolled as a nuclear physics major at North Carolina State University. His efforts paid dividends when he received an appointment and earned math validation. Don flourished as a cadet, teaching Sunday School and serving as a Hop manager.

Don and Lynn had known each other since grammar school but did not meet again, nor date, until he left for West Point. After Don's Yearling Year, she moved to Highland Falls. Classmate Rob Herb and his wife Judy describe Lynn and Don as very special people. Judy stayed in Lynn's apartment several times while Don and Rob were cadets. Both couples married soon after graduation and traveled together to Kitzingen, Germany, for their first duty assignment. The last package Don sent from Viet Nam was a charm of praying hands for his one-month old goddaughter, the Herbs' first child.

Classmate Dan Jinks recalled, "Don cared deeply about three things—Lynn, North Carolina, and becoming an Armor officer. When he talked about Lynn or North Carolina, his face seemed to light up. He was extremely pleased to receive his branch choice and he talked about Armor as though it was the "one, true" combat arm. During Recondo at Camp

Buckner and Ranger School, we were often miserable. Despite his own exhaustion and weariness, though, Don encouraged others. Physically, we had a lot of trouble on forced marches or training runs, but he always would help others in distress by carrying their equipment, keeping their spirits up, and providing a word of encouragement."

After arriving in Viet Nam, Don was a battalion S-3 air and S-5 before commanding a company. There was only one tank company in the 25th Infantry Division—A Company, 2d Battalion, 34th Armor. He waited for his command, patiently but not passively. He received the Soldiers Medal for saving a man in his battalion and protecting a disabled armored personnel carrier under enemy fire. As he flew overhead, he used the helicopter's mini-gun to suppress enemy fire, saving the surviving crew from capture and death. Sadly, Don learned later that his classmate, CPT Gary Carlson, had died during the attack.

Don and Lynn were in Hawaii for rest and relaxation three weeks before he was killed. On 29 Oct 1969, Don wrote his parents, "I have my company now, and I guess I'm as happy as I could possibly be in Viet Nam. Everything went wrong the first two days, but for the last 30 minutes and 15 seconds everything has been running smoothly!" Nine days later, Don received fatal wounds. CSM James Craft recalled, "CPT Dwigkins was a refreshing change because he cared more about the welfare of his soldiers than the previous commander. We were on a mission at the base of Nui Ba Den Mountain when one of CPT Dwigkins' tanks hit a land mine. CPT Dwigkins jumped off his armored personnel carrier to see if any of his men had been injured. At that moment, his own APC struck a mine."

Upon the return of his body to the U.S., the 2-34th dedicated a memorial to Don at Ft. Riley, KS. On 5 Dec 1969, the Executive Vice President and Vice Chairman of the Board of WRAL-TV in Raleigh-Durham, NC, presented the

following: "10 Apr 1963, the U.S. Atomic submarine, *The Thresher*, sank in the North Atlantic, carrying the entire crew of 129. Two years later, a handsome young cadet at the U.S. Military Academy sat down and began to write, 'A schoolmate of mine was lost with *The Thresher*. If he could speak to me now, he would ask me to see that nothing happened to his family and friends...he was defending when he died...'"

"'A defender of freedom' he wrote that evening, 'loves peace (as much as) any other man. It is because we love peace and freedom that we prepare to fight, to do whatever is necessary. And when we can no longer fight, others will hear the whispers of our ghosts and they, too, will become defenders of freedom.'

"The thoughts set down that October evening of 1965 by the West Point cadet found their way to the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge, and the following year he was presented their award in recognition of his spirit of devotion to America. One month ago, this young cadet died of wounds in Viet Nam. CPT Donald H. Dwigkins, Jr., 25 years of age, no longer fights for freedom. But he is a guiding spirit, a symbol of why freedom must endure, and why it must be preserved. We visited briefly one recent morning with his mother, a gallant lady with heartbreak heavy upon her. Hers has been an agonizing loss, but she has proud memories of a son who unhesitatingly did his duty with the kind of unselfish courage that made America great. Many mothers these days have less than she to be thankful for.

"CPT Dwigkins' personal effects had been shipped home from Viet Nam, and a notebook described his concept of duty. All around him, he had seen death come to young men who were in Viet Nam in defense of their nation. 'Many serve' he wrote, 'and some die. It is for these men that I now write. We were born in freedom; we have a debt to our children, and to our children's children, to see that they are permitted to live in freedom.'

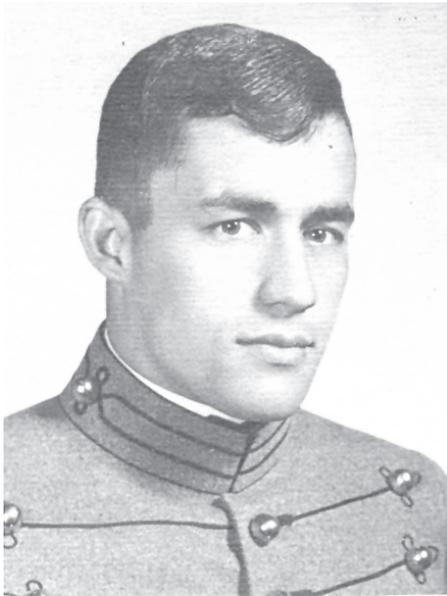
“One can imagine CPT Dwiggins, sitting amidst peril in Viet Nam, reaching for the words to measure the meaning of being free. He would not, he wrote, ‘trade his short 20 or 25 years in a free society for a hundred years or more in an oppressed society.’

“On the very last page, one senses he heard the news of demonstrations and moratoriums back home. The unfinished sentence read, ‘It seems very strange that...’ and always those were the last words he wrote—and they possessed a haunting eloquence. The next morning,

CPT Dwiggins’ young life ended as a land mind exploded near an obscure village in faraway Viet Nam.”

The newsman who personalized the sacrifice of our friend and classmate was Mr. Jesse Helms, who became a U.S. senator.





## Douglas Taylor Gray III

No. 27093

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 9 December 1969  
Interment: Oakhill Cemetery, Fredericksburg, VA

*To date no Assembly/Taps memorial article has been published for Doug. The following reminiscence was recently provided by his widow Mary Ellen.*

Doug is buried in Oakhill Cemetery here in Fredericksburg, VA. I would write the article myself, but I was only involved with the West Point life for his last year and then only had two and a half years in the army with him before he went to Viet Nam. The names and relationships Doug

had at West Point and in service are better known and described by his classmates. What I can tell you is that we have a wonderful son, Doug (the fourth), who has an adorable five year old daughter named Saylor. Even though "Dougie" was only 8 1/2 months old when his father left for Viet Nam and really was not directly influenced by his father's love for the outdoors: skiing, fishing, and boating, he has proven that the genes do prevail. Doug

loves a good party and has some of the same dance moves as his father. Looking at him I can see the essence of the man I married over 40 years ago and it's a good thing...it makes me smile to remember that part of our lives. Saylor is most definitely her "father's daughter". She has been fishing since she was 18 months old, loves to boat and swim, plays T-ball and soccer, and loves to dance. She is outgoing and has her grandfather-Doug's smile!

### BURY ME WITH SOLDIERS

I've played a lot of roles in life;  
I've met a lot of men,  
I've done a lot of things I think,  
I wouldn't do again.  
No longer young, I'm old enough  
To know someday I'll die.  
And to think about what lies beyond,  
Beside whom I would lie.

Perhaps it doesn't matter much:  
Still if I had my choice,  
I'd want a grave 'monst soldiers, when  
At last death quells my voice.  
I'm sick of the hypocrisy  
Of lectures of the wise.  
I'll take the man with all the flaws,  
Who goes, though scared, and dies.

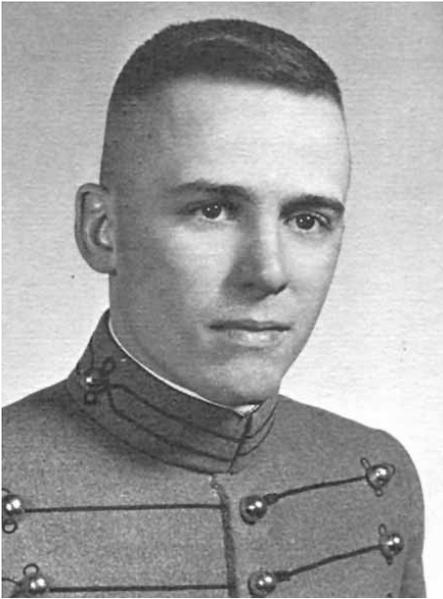
The troops I knew were commonplace  
They didn't want the war;  
They fought because their fathers and  
Their fathers had before.  
They cursed and killed and wept...  
God knows:

They're easy to deride...  
But bury me with men like these;  
They faced the guns and died.

It's funny when you think of it,  
The way we got along;  
We'd come from different worlds  
To live in one where no one belongs.  
I didn't even like them all;  
I'm sure they'd all agree.  
Yet I would give my life for them,  
I know some did for me.

So bury me with soldiers, please  
Though much maligned they be.  
Yes, bury me with soldiers, for  
I miss their company.  
We'll not soon see their likes again;  
We've had our fill of war.  
But bury me with men like them  
For no one else does more!

- Author Unknown



## Gus Blakely Robinson

No. 26910

Killed in Action in Vietnam, 12 April 1970  
Interment: West Point Cemetery, West Point, NY



GUS BLAKELY ROBINSON, son of Walter Robert and Margaret Blakely Robinson, was born in Ryan, OK. He came from a large and caring family—the third of 8 children. Growing up in Henrietta, TX, he attended public school there through 7th grade and was an exceptional student.

Gus spent a lot of time with his cousin Herb Vest, playing “soldier” and learning together in Henrietta. They were very close and both wanted to be Army officers. Herb also was serving in Vietnam at the time of Gus' untimely death and was the escort officer who brought Gus back for interment at West Point.

The Robinson family moved to Hemet, CA, when Gus was 14 years old. Continuing to excel, he graduated from high school after achieving a distinguished academic record. He applied for a congressional appointment to West Point, but his congressman's quota was filled for that year. Reapplying the following year, he joined the Academy with the Class of '67 on 1 Jul 1963.

Gus quickly proved to be an outstanding cadet friendly and popular with all of his classmates. His upbeat attitude, despite the rigors of Beast Barracks, was an inspiration to his classmates and a great help in “weathering the storm.” When “Beast” ended, Gus moved into Company A-1, where he proved to be a constant source of inspiration and mischief for his classmates. His good nature seemed always to prevail, regardless of the hardships of plebe year. His sense of humor found the bright side of every challenge.

Gus met the love-of-his-life, Denise Berg of Bergen, NT, in his plebe year.

She was attending Ladycliff and worked in the Hotel Thayer gift shop. They spent countless hours planning their future together, and she was the reason Gus lived for each weekend. They knew they were destined to marry and have a family. They married after graduation and daughter Suzanne Michelle was born on 31 Aug 1969.

Gus was commissioned into Armor. After a short honeymoon and graduation leave, the endless schooling began. First Ranger, then branch school and, after the obligatory one-year assignment to an Armor unit, Gus and Denise travelled to Mineral Wells, TX, where he began training as a helicopter pilot. Completing the training in an exemplary fashion, Gus took additional training and qualified in the AH-IG Cobra.

Reporting to Vietnam in November 1969, he was assigned to A Troop, 7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry at Pleiku. Although recently trained in the AH-IG, as a young captain, he served as the Scout Platoon Leader and qualified in the OH-6. He quickly learned the techniques and pitfalls of this very dangerous mission; hovering over suspected enemy positions, looking, and probing for the elusive enemy in a machine always on the edge of its performance envelope. Gus did it well, with absolutely no hesitation, with a smile and friendly comment, as he embarked on each day's mission, but not without his share of encounters with withering enemy fire. His personal courage and leadership were an inspiration to his platoon members and kept up the morale of these young men, who were so often and so deeply in harm's way.

The day of 12 Apr 1970 dawned like most spring days in the Highlands of Vietnam. April had been a particularly bad month for A Troop; at least two regiments of NVA had been laying siege to the SF camp at Dak Seang, just north of the fire base at Ben Het in Kontum Province. Nothing moved in or out and the area was strewn with the remains of aircraft downed by enemy fire. A Troop

was working out of Dak To, in support of the local South Vietnamese Ground Forces in a very mountainous region west of the SF camp, looking for the NVA and always finding them. In the center of the area was Hill 763, a nondescript name for a very ominous mountain. Gus was leading his scouts as they searched near the top of Hill 763 for the NVA. He lost his young life in the courageous performance of his duties. The NVA and Hill 763 claimed a good man on that fateful day. It took 3 days and heroic efforts from his A Troop companions and many others before Gus was returned to his loved ones and friends. His observer, riding with him on that fateful day, remained a POW until his safe return in March 1973. Gus was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, 17 Air Medals, and the Purple Heart.

We mourn the loss of our friend and classmate, taken so young from his promising life. Never again would he see his daughter Suzanne, only 3 months old when he left for Vietnam, or fulfill the plans that he and Denise had made such a short time before at West Point.

Ruth Blakely Powers, his aunt, wrote this poem for Gus after attending his funeral.

### *A Tribute to a Soldier*

*We said good bye to you with tears upon our faces. Our tears were wiped away with the pride we felt for you. You stood so proud and straight as a soldier should do. You were going off to war in the jungle of a far-off place. All alone we stood the lonely days—awaiting the long year through.*

*You came home today and tears were upon our faces. Our tears were wiped away with the pride we felt for you. We all stood proud and straight as a soldier would want us to. As we left you in the marble jungle of a far-off place. All alone we'll stand the lonely days—awaiting this long life through.*

— Gary and Ed '67



## Terry Lee Ketter

No. 27212

Killed in Action in Cambodia, 10 May 1970

Interment: Exeter Memorial Cemetery, Exeter, CA

2 Apr 2002: As I approached the Viet Nam Memorial from the Mall, I first saw outlined through the trees a dark shadow starting low on the left rising to a pinnacle then falling off to the right. I knew I had reached the most sacred site where my brothers have been memorialized forever. The name, **Terry Lee Ketter**, is carved into Panel 10W, line 12. Stark, simple, and forever remembered.

Terry was born in Canal Fulton, OH, to Robert Ketter, a father who was a soldier, and Lela. Both became teachers. Family, education, and a faith in God influenced his youth. Sensitivity was his hallmark. His sister Roberta remembered when his pet beagle was killed, Terry carried him home and buried him. While constructing a cross, a neighbor's dog began to bark. "Terry instructed me to go out and put my ear to the ground over the grave and listen to be sure it wasn't our dog. After he was convinced he hadn't buried his dog alive, we had a funeral. Terry read from the Bible, and I cried."

In 1959, the family moved to Exeter, CA, where he would attend high school and spend one year at the College of the Sequoias. In high school he excelled academically; he participated as an athlete in football, basketball, and swimming; he was a student leader at school and in the local Methodist Church. His teachers and fellow students recognized his leadership skills and allowed him to hone those skills in the student council, the California Scholastic Federation, and Boys' State. He considered several options for his life's work. Becoming a pastor and a teacher were among his primary choices, but his appointment to West Point in the spring of

1963 would settle the matter.

He was creative, which manifested itself in sketches and exquisite photos. The 1967 *Howitzer* read, "Terry's collection of pictures tells the story of a frustrated artist with an abundance of talent, but with no time to work. He knows what he wants and has the competency to get people to do exactly what he wants them to do. We're all proud to know and work with Terry." Terry's gifts were many, but his concern and love for people shone through every action. Whether it was in the classroom, the barracks, or the playing fields, he gave 100 percent of himself.

In the spring of 1965, he would meet the love of his life: Fran Burzymowski, a Vogue Modeling School graduate from Trenton, NJ, who came to West Point through the auspices of her uncle, a staff sergeant assigned to the Academy. They met and the search for love was over. "We didn't date anyone else, either one of us," said Fran.

Terry's bent for drawing and his drive to understand God and the *Bible* beckoned him to *The Pointer* and to the Protestant Chapel. His journalistic talent led him to be designated the editor of *The Pointer* in his First Class year. For four years he participated in Chaplain James Ford's Protestant discussion group and taught Sunday school. Chaplain Ford wrote to his parents after hearing of his death, "We knew Terry so well and thought so highly of him. Surely he was unique and gifted, and he made such a marvelous contribution to our Sunday school. He had a 'feel' for the little children and they responded to him. We had several long talks about philosophy and religion, and his comments were a great inspiration to me. I thought of Terry as a friend—one who was sensitive to the needs of people." Bob Lenz and this writer considered him as our best friend, and we still do. He radiated confidence, respect, and eternal friendship.

Terry married Fran on 8 Jul 1967 in Trenton. After a honeymoon in the Poconos, they headed for Ft. Benning,

GA, where he experienced Infantry Basic School and earned the covered Ranger Tab. His first assignment was to Ft. Davis in the Canal Zone, where he later commanded an Infantry company. Kelly Lee Ketter, their daughter, was born in Panama. Fran remembered Terry's delight with the birth of Kelly. "He was just very excited about her. I can remember him walking Kelly all around outside as she got a little older and would say 'tree, grass, flower.' That's just the way he was, and if you read his letters, all throughout, he always focused on the smallest of things, always the little things, never the big things."

As it did for most of us from '67, Viet Nam called. Fran and Kelly went home to New Jersey, and Terry reported to the 27th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division, where he would be assigned to command E Company. MG Edward Trobaugh '55, his battalion commander, wrote a letter to Fran describing the action: "I was really pleased to have him in the battalion and, on 15 Apr 1970, during the attack on Fire Base Atkinson, he quickly proved that he was an outstanding soldier."

MG Trobaugh continued: "Terry was killed [10 May 1970] while extricating a squad that was pinned down. His platoon leader, LT Jim Stokes, was gravely wounded and was forward of the remainder



of his platoon. Terry moved forward, established a base of fire under which LT Stokes was recovered and then maneuvered the remainder of Stokes' platoon to assist the squad that was pinned down. He had just moved the squad back when he was mortally wounded." Terry was posthumously awarded the Silver Star, the Bronze Star for valor, the Purple Heart, the Air Medal and the Combat Infantryman Badge.

Fran told me how she would like us to remember what he meant to her: I will remember Terry most for his LOVE. He showed it. He said it. He wrote it. He loved me as a friend, as a girlfriend, and as a wife. He loved his daughter, his family, his friends. He loved his slippers, his pipe, and his popcorn. He loved to read the Bible, Shakespeare, and Charlie Brown. He wanted to be a journalist, a minister, an artist and a photographer.

What Terry wanted to be, he was!

On 6 May 1970, one day before the 1st Cavalry moved into Cambodia, Terry wrote his last letter to his beloved Fran:

*"I love you much, and I can't wait to come home to you every evening. Buy you flowers every now and then. Taking you and Kelly out to eat once in awhile. Eating supper with the two of you. Working on the budget. Cutting the grass. Making bookcases. Buying a couple of books now and then. Even reading a few of my books. Listening to the stereo. Popping popcorn. Does Kelly like popcorn—she better!*

*Love you two, much!  
Terry"*

Terry, we all love you. Thank you for your life.

*— Dave Blanchard '67 assisted by Fran (Ketter) Buhler,  
Barry Buhler, M.D., Roberta (Ketter) Dunnicklif,  
MG (Rd.) Edward L Trobaugh '55, Robert Lenz '67,  
Steve Frankiewicz '67, and Bill Graham '67*

## *THE LOST AMERICAN DREAM*

*For George Dials and his  
West Point Classmates, the Class of 1967*

*The black wall pulling  
Across Washington Park is not  
Granite, but fifty-eight thousand  
Bodies from Viet-Nam.  
I brush my fingers back and forth  
Along the wall trying to recognize  
My father's face,  
Press my body against the cold  
Stone, feel the bombs shake  
The earth, knocking down huts,  
Mothers embedding their faces in muddy  
Rice fields as machine guns shower,  
A wet August day. Looking  
Beside me I see a young pregnant  
Woman, staring in as though  
She might find her unborn child's name.*

*Ewan John Collins  
June 7, 1987*



## Ellis David Greene

No. 27172

Killed in Action in Cambodia, 23 May 1970

Interment: Ft. Logan Cemetery, Denver, CO

Ellis David Greene was born in Cleveland, OH, one of twin sons, to LTC (Ret.) Monty P. and Helen C. Greene. He attended George Washington High School in Denver, CO, where he lettered two years in gymnastics, and received a congressional appointment from Representative Bryan G. Rogers, State of Colorado, District 1. He entered the Academy as one of the youngest members of the Class of '67.

At West Point, he succeeded in many things but met with one frustration. As he pursued gymnastics excellence, he was plagued by something beyond his control—he kept growing. By Yearling year, he was nearly 6'4", a considerable height for a "free exercise" competitor. But height turned to his favor, as he was constantly the companion of attractive young ladies caught up with this tall, dark, handsome cadet.

Not enamored with academic pursuits, Ellis knew how to do "well enough" to ensure plenty of time for extracurricular activities, trips off post, and a spot on the Goat football team. He enjoyed horses and rode the "Purple Sage" as a member of the Cadet Riding Club.

Perhaps his greatest enjoyment at the Academy came from membership in the Jewish Chapel Choir and teaching Jewish "Sunday School." Ellis had a good voice and was a leader in the choir. To give the choir a larger look, all Jewish cadets, regardless of voice credentials, traveled with the choir. Those who couldn't sing were to remain silent and mouth the words. A classmate, quite tone deaf but unwilling to admit it, recalls singing lustily, especially as a Firstie, only to be chided into silence by Ellis. The Jewish

Chapel Choir was a fraternity unto its own, accepting of all. Short years later this same classmate would ache to the core upon learning of Ellis' death. In later years, he would remember his friend dearly upon emotion-filled visits to the Vietnam Memorial.

Events moved quickly for Ellis following June Week and graduation. In September, after completing the Infantry Officer Basic Course, he shipped off to Europe, where he served as a platoon leader in Company B/2-36 Infantry, 3d Armored Division, near Kirch Göns, Germany.

During this tour, he perfected his French and developed a keen interest in French music, wine, and clothes.

Before long, he met his beloved Judith-Ann, who was employed by the American Embassy. In January 1969, after a 6-month courtship, they married in Switzerland.

After serving as a general's aide and receiving a waiver for a back problem, he began rotary-wing flight school in April 1969 at Ft. Wolters, TX. Promoted to captain in June, he completed helicopter training at Hunter Army Air Field, Savannah, GA, in December 1969.

On 7 Nov 1969, his son Ari was born, named after the lead character in Leon Uris' book *Exodus*.

Shortly after graduating, he received orders for Southeast Asia. Of his flight class, one in 3 would give their lives in the Vietnam War.

On 1 Mar 1970, he arrived in Vietnam and went to Company C, 227th Aviation Battalion (Assault Helicopter), 1st Air Cavalry Division (Airmobile). On 1 May 1970, two months after joining his unit, Ellis distinguished himself on a combat assault mission into the Republic of Cambodia. Piloting his UH-1H helicopter with a full complement of ground troops, he maneuvered through intense antiaircraft weapons fire, inserting the troops and departing the area safely.

During the balance of the day, he participated in two more assaults and 3 other missions. Ellis' performance that day was conspicuous. He was awarded

the Distinguished Flying Cross for exceptionally valorous actions and outstanding flying ability. In the short time that followed, Ellis also earned the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, the Air Medal (1st through 13th award), and the Purple Heart, symbolic of his ultimate sacrifice.

On 23 May 1970, as Assistant Flight Leader for another combat assault mission into Cambodia, Ellis again distinguished himself by his heroic actions and extraordinary sense of duty. Inserting ground troops in an area of Cambodia known as Parrot's Beak, approximately 30 miles from Song Be, Vietnam, he observed that the troops were immediately engaged by a numerically superior enemy force. Ellis instinctively responded to the situation. In a voluntarily action, he returned to base camp to pick up reinforcements. Returning to the landing zone, he was able to safely insert the fresh troops, but, before he could clear the area, his aircraft was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade. Ellis was mortally wounded, and the earthly life of this brave, skilled, and selfless soldier was over.

In 1986, Jewish War Veterans Post No. 344 was established in Denver in the name of CPT Ellis D. Greene.

At the time of this writing, his son, after completing college and moving to Denver (about two miles from where his father was raised), continues the care previously given by Ellis to his handicapped twin brother Laurie.

The 27 years that have passed since Ellis' death have not lessened by one measure the memory of this man and valiant soldier. Words cannot express the loss felt by those who knew and loved this husband, father, brother, son, friend, and classmate. Ellis, your family and friends remember you, your classmates salute you, and we are all comforted in the knowledge that you are at peace and with God. "Grip hands with us now, though we see not ..."

— *His family and classmates*



## **Lawrence Hugh Marlin**

No. 26830

Died at Walter Reed Army Medical Center,

26 August 1972

Interment: Unknown

*To date no Assembly/Taps memorial article  
has been published for Larry.*



## **Gary Lee Hyde**

No. 26842

Died in Wisconsin, 29 May 1976

Interment: Unknown

*To date no Assembly/Taps memorial article  
has been published for Gary.*

"I now know why men who have been to war yearn to reunite. Not to tell stories or look at old pictures. Not to laugh or weep. Comrades gather because they long to be with the men who once acted at their best; men who suffered and sacrificed, who were stripped of their humanity. I did not pick these men. They were delivered by fate and the military. But I know them in a way I know no other men. I have never given anyone such trust. They were willing to guard something more precious than my life. They would have carried my reputation, the memory of me. It was part of the bargain we all made, the reason we were so willing to die for one another. As long as I have my memory, I will think of them all, every day. I am sure that when I leave this world, my last thought will be of my family and my comrades. Ahh, Such good men."

-- Author Unknown



## Richard Paul Kokonowski

No. 26995

Died in Boston, MA, 9 October 1976

Interment: St. Patrick's Cemetery, Chicopee Falls, MA

PAUL RICHARD KOKONOWSKI was born 7 September 1945 in Springfield, Massachusetts, to Walter and Winifred Kokonowski. He was appointed to West Point by Representative Edward Boland after graduation from Chicopee High School, Chicopee, Massachusetts. Paul was one of my Beast Barracks roommates, and, as such, I quickly came to admire this soft-spoken man with the dry wit who did not seem to be fazed by the demands of new cadet barracks. I remember his talent as a guitar player and his support when I became discouraged. Paul was quietly competent and a truly kind man. After Beast Barracks I lost touch, with Paul going to the Second Regiment and me to the First. The *Howitzer* shows that Paul earned Century Club status as a yearling, quite an achievement considering the competition he had from other classmates who likewise ran afoul of the Blue Book.

He found time to participate in SCUSA and as Vice-President of the Portugese Club. He dated his future bride, Fran (Choop), when not on the area. Paul's father died in his first class year, leaving his mother with three young children at home. Overwhelmed by the untimely death of her husband, his mother took her own life, leaving Cadet Kokonowski as the oldest brother in a family of four young boys. His initial reaction was to consider resigning from West Point. Assistance was provided from West Point staff to close his home and help with funeral arrangements. The youngest brother, age 16 months, and a 12-year-old brother moved to West Point and stayed on Post with staff. His oldest brother stayed with Fran.

It is a tribute to Paul and Fran's love and to Paul's determination that he was able to graduate and complete branch qualification in Air Defense Artillery while keeping his family together. Paul was unable to get the Army to recognize the status of his brothers financially, so he accepted a hardship discharge in 1967. He completed a six-year Reserve obligation. Paul worked as a congressional liaison for Congressman Boland and simultaneously completed Western New England Law School in 1975. He and Choop had two children of their own, in addition to

rearing Paul's brothers. In October 1976, while serving in the Carter Presidential Campaign, Paul's car was struck by a hit-and-run driver and he died from injuries before reaching the hospital.

Paul left a legacy of perseverance, love, humor and integrity for all of us to follow. I am sure that most of his classmates never knew of the difficulties of his family or of the support given him by the staff and faculty at West Point. The take-home message from Paul's life is that we need to know and love one another more, not only as brother officers, but as fathers, sons, daughters and husbands. There is always room for more kindness, support and consideration for others amid the demands of military duty.

Paul, your classmates say a fond farewell and a hearty well done. We share the pride in you that your son Matthew, your daughter Cate, your wife Fran, and your brothers Mike, Tom and David feel. Your accomplishments distinguish you as a man who knew where his duty lay, upheld his family's honor and served his country, both in and out of uniform, with distinction.

— *Dr. Joseph P. Jackson, Jr., classmate,  
and Mrs. Fran Kokonowski*

***Think where Man's glory most begins and  
ends and say my glory was I had such friends.***

***William Butler Yeats***



## Michael Dirk Kelley

No. 27015

Died in Huntington Beach, CA, 8 September 1980

Interment: Good Shepherd Cemetery, Huntington Beach, CA

ACCORDING TO THE United States Military Academy Form 14-3, Mike Kelley was a 146-pound, blond-haired, five-foot-nine-inch tan native of Kansas when he arrived at West Point on the morning of 1 July 1963. He reported to his New Cadet Company which was located in a division of Old North Barracks, affectionately designated "Hell's Kitchen." It was here that his Irish temper and infectious humor asserted themselves as the trademarks of an individual no acquaintance would ever forget.

When I first met Mike, it was the evening of the second clay of our New Cadet Barracks. He had not been in West Point for forty-eight hours but he was in an argument with an upperclassman. I felt then that if this individual could make it through the summer he had more stamina and stick than any of us. No one in the Class of 1967 will forget the last Christmas spent by a plebe class at West Point. No one will forget Mike escorting his sixty-year old mother about the grounds—with his crazy grin and she with her full-length cast on her leg. Neither of them missed an event or a laugh. Only four years

later, in the spring of 1967, Mike had his chance to wear a full-length cast. His was the result of a gymnastics accident that possibly cost him the National Collegiate Athletic Association title that year. But he endured his loss with good humor and wit; characteristics he and his mother had demonstrated four years earlier. He was still laughing and teasing as he begged rides back to the barracks from "Snuffy's" each Saturday night.

His vitality had not abated as he and I shared a long, midnight airplane ride from Seattle to Cam Rahn Bay in the fall of 1968. In the night skies over the Northern Pacific, we re-lived all of our memories and heartaches as we pledged eternal friendship. He returned from Vietnam in 1969 to Fort MacArthur and settled into a Southern California lifestyle that carried into his civilian status in 1971. Mike attacked several vocations successfully until he found an appreciative organization that supported him to the fullest. He became one of the most prominent district sales managers in the history of Wang Laboratories. As he and I visited together in the spring of 1978 at his home in Huntington Beach, California, I was delighted that his spirit was unchanged. If anything, he was more positive than ever. He was very happily remarried with a person that loved and supported him. Beverley fulfilled Mike's life as no one ever had done in years previous.

Although I was crushed to receive the news of his illness in March of 1980, he was still convinced he could defeat this

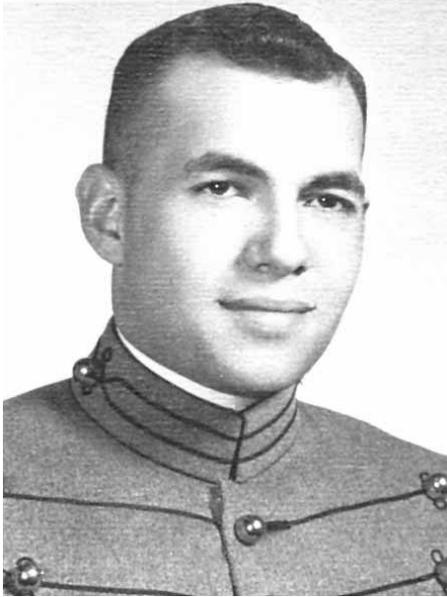
new foe as he had done so many in the past. As he and I sat by his pool in July of 1980, we discussed his impending fate. He knew he was dying but he persisted in his lively spirit and positive attitude. He continued to laugh and smile until the end. He fought his adversary harder than all of his earlier confrontations. During the last verbal exchange we shared, he told me a joke to cheer me up. Mike passed away in September of 1980. He is survived by Beverley and his three children, Kara, Shani, and Mathew.

For the rest of my life I will cherish those moments with Mike, and I will try to be as good-spirited as he. He lived every minute of his existence as hard as he knew how. As I sit here in the warm Atlanta sunshine I reflect on all of those memories that Mike and I experienced. I think of everyone with whom Mike shared experiences and how they feel without him. The last time he and I exchanged laughs, he was wearing a tee-shirt—it read, "Life—live it to the fullest."

We love you Mike ... and we'll miss you.

— Dana M. Groover





**Robert Jacoby Mengert**

No. 27029

Died in Pennsylvania, 1 July 1981

Interment: Unknown

*To date no Assembly/Tapsmemorial article  
has been published for Bob.*



**David Michael Bishop**

No. 27132

Died in a military aircraft accident  
Near Atlanta, Georgia, 19 October 1983

Interment: Atlanta, GA

*To date no Assembly/Taps memorial article  
has been published for Dave.*

**CLASSMATES**

*Some have stars, others do not  
Some are rich, others are not  
Some came home, others did not  
All are accepted, believe it or not*

*Suffered together, we learned a lot  
What we learned, can't be taught  
What we feel, can't be bought*

*Fate bonded us, forever for life  
Share our joy, comfort our strife*

*Gather together, years on end  
Classmates for sure, most of all friends*

*John Severson '67*



## Philip Anthony Burkett

No. 27048

Died in San Antonio, TX, 12 April 1985

Interment: Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery  
San Antonio, TX

Phil was born 1 January 1946 in Fullerton, California--the first baby of the New Year in Orange County, California. Starting with big headlines and lots of attention, Phil's life was continually happy and filled with friends. As part of a military family, Phil lived in many places, including Bermuda and the Azores.

Phil graduated from Bossier High School, Shreveport, Louisiana. As a senior, he attained a high scholastic average. He was editor of his high school yearbook; a member of the student council; elected to the Quill and Scroll, a national honor society for high school journalists; a member of Mu Alpha Theta, a national high mathematics club; and president of the debate club. An avid equestrian, in the full western sense, Phil was president of the Barksdale Riding Club. Evidence of his skill was that Phil was the only person able to successfully ride Rebel, his favorite but high strung steed.

Phil entered West Point in 1963 and, like many of his classmates, did not know what to expect. One of Phil's Plebe Year roommates recalls, "Life was extremely tough in Company A-1. What impressed me and everyone was how Phil could take more static than anybody else and yet hang in there when others would have quit."

Nothing was too hard for Phil while a cadet. His attitude epitomized "can do." He always had time to help another classmate who had trouble with academics, or just to sit and listen. Phil's personality allowed him to see only the bright side of things, no matter how gloomy they appeared to others. His love of horses and riding ability made him instrumental in starting the riding club at West Point.

Following graduation, Phil attended several Army schools, including Airborne and Ranger. As an Infantry officer, his first assignment was with the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He arrived in Vietnam in 1968. Citations he received included the Bronze Star with "V" Device both in 1968 and 1969; the award of Regimental Commendation by the Republic of Vietnam; and the Brave Eagle Coin given by the 101st Airborne Division as a special recognition for valorous actions. His Bronze Star was for personal bravery exhibited during ground combat on 16 June 1968 when, as a platoon leader in Company, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry, engaged in clearing a well-fortified enemy bunker, Phil was seriously wounded but continued leading his men and giving first aid to the wounded, saving several lives. He received the Purple Heart.

Phil was recruited by Ross Perot and left the Army in 1972 to work for Electronic Data Systems. He decided to attend Harvard Business School in 1977. Perot gave Phil a great recommendation for Harvard, despite his desire that Phil not leave. Upon completion of his studies, he served as a vice president of CitiBank in New York before forming his own software company in 1982. Unfortunately, Phil became ill with lymphatic cancer and had to sell his business, going home to his parents in San Antonio, Texas in 1985. During Phil's illness, we became aware of how many friends he had. Their concern, love and visits were of great comfort to Phil and his family.

Phil was a happy, caring person who brought a sense of fun to every situation and to everyone with whom he came in contact. One of his classmates from West Point remembered Phil's pride as a firstie in his new GTO convertible. Family and friends remember when he bought a large dog to sit up beside him in the GTO. The picture in Phil's mind of a proud dog with ears flowing back in the wind never materialized, as the dog cowered down at Phil's feet every time he got in the car. One

of the few defeats Phil ever suffered!

The fun always started with Phil's arrival, but it was his generosity and caring attitude that made this a better world. His memory will always be in our hearts.

Phil is survived by his parents, LTC and Mrs. R. E. Burkett, U.S. Air Force (Ret); a brother, MAJ Ronald W. Burkett, U.S. Army Reserve; a brother, MAJ Michael L. Burkett, U.S. Army (Ret); and his sister, Carole L. Burkett.

Rest in peace, dear Philip.

– Your family and friends





Benjamin Rodriguez was born in Coachella, CA, to Ralph and Valentina Rodriguez. The oldest of his siblings, he was affectionately known as “Benji”. Extremely talented, industrious, and independent, as a young entrepreneur he had two paper routes at the same time with a total of 190 customers.

He received the Outstanding Student Award Medallion in recognition of superior achievement in citizenship, leadership, and scholarship, and gave the commencement address to his graduating class at Coachella Valley High School in Thermal, CA, in 1963.

Athletically inclined, he played basketball, football, and baseball. In the National Forensics League, the Physics Club, Student Council, and the Associated Student Body Organization, he was a class officer his sophomore, junior, and senior years, and emceed his high school’s 20th reunion. Being a leader came naturally to Ben.

A member of his high school band and jazz band, he was first chair in trombone. Winning the John Phillips Sousa Award his junior year, he participated in a summer camp for top musicians.

Ben showed a keen interest in attending USMA. Former California Congressional Representative D.S. Saund appointed him to the Academy. Elated, Ben was determined to graduate.

His first two years at the Academy in Company C-2, he conveyed the impression that any problem, given time, could be resolved. Plebe year was an ordeal every cadet would like to forget, but for Ben it was only a minor obstacle on the road to success. Scrambled to Company A-2, his positive attitude and quick wit won him new friends. Known by his classmates as “The Rod,” he is remembered for his “never-say-die” attitude.

## Benjamin Rodriguez

No. 27107

Died in Houston, TX, 14 September 1990

Interment: Riverside National Cemetery  
Riverside, CA



Throughout Ben’s life, he always had a classy sports car sitting in his garage and a fine collection of music in his den. Graduating in 1967, he immediately purchased his first sports car, a 1967 blue corvette. Stationed at Ft. Hood, TX, he served as a platoon leader in the First Battalion of the 66th Armored Regiment and was awarded the Army Commendation Medal. Foreseeing the need for Army aviators, he attended flight school at Ft. Wolters, TX, and Ft. Rucker, AL, in 1969, and was awarded Army aviator wings. Returning to Ft. Hood in November 1969, he was an aviator with the Third Brigade of the famed First Cavalry Division as a battalion S-1. In March 1970, he was reassigned to the 55th Aviation Battalion of III Corps as Battalion S-4.

In August 1970, Ben was a platoon leader of Company A, 101st Aviation Battalion, of the 101st Airborne Division in Vietnam. He was later the Battalion S-4.

He received the Bronze Star Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with two Bronze Service Stars, the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Army Commendation Medal (7 Oak Leaf Clusters), the Army Air Medal with Numeral Seven, the Valorous Unit Award, the National Defense Service Medal, The Overseas Service Medal, a Presidential Unit Citation, and Army Aviator Wings.

Always rescued, Ben was shot down while piloting helicopters on 3 occasions. In his first crash, Ben used his fists to smash through the canopy of the Cobra assault helicopter he was flying, breaking the stone in his class ring. From then on, it was his “lucky piece.”

Returning to Ft. Hood, he was S-4 of 13th Aviation Battalion and Company Commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 13th Aviation Battalion.

Realizing it was time to open another chapter in his life, CPT Rodriguez resigned from the Army in September 1974. It was one of the toughest decisions he ever made. He had dreamed of making the Army his career.

He started a civilian career with Exxon Company, U.S.A., in Corpus Christi, TX, in their production department. Determined to be a successful businessman, he was a perfect match in Human Resources with his easygoing manner and positive attitude. Achieving excellent results, his industriousness resulted in a transfer to Exxon’s marketing department in Houston, TX, as an employee relations supervisor in 1976. After meeting Joanne Resh of Pittsburgh, PA, he transferred to Los Angeles, CA, in Exxon’s production department, Western Division, in 1978. Joanne later joined Ben in Los Angeles and they married.

Ben relished helping Exxon move forward as a leader in the energy business. In June 1985, Ben went back to Houston as human resources advisor in the production department and upstream exploration department.

Ben was diagnosed with germ cell cancer in May 1989. He valiantly fought the hardest battle of his life. His wife, parents, siblings, and friends remained by his side until the end. Ben joined the Long Gray Line and was returned to California. Interred at Riverside National Cemetery with full military honors and a 21-gun salute, when the bugler played “Taps” there was not a dry eye.

Ben lived “Duty, Honor, Country” throughout his life. He had a quick wit and constantly wore a smile. He made friends easily and was admired for the kindness and goodness in his heart. He is survived by his wife Joanne; mother and father Valentina and Ralph; siblings David, Margaret, Frank, Daniel, Virginia, Ralph Jr., and Andrew; and beloved nieces and nephews.

The 1967 *Howitzer* noted, “The world will have to reckon with ‘The Rod.’” Surely it did. He is deeply missed by family and friends and will forever be remembered by all whose lives he touched. Ben, we miss you and wish you were here with us.

— Joanne Resh Rodriguez,  
Margaret Rodriguez Alcantar,  
Richard L. Kight, Randall M. Pais '67



## Harry Oliver Taylor

No. 26839

Died in Fairfax Station, VA, 14 February 1991

Interment: West Point Cemetery

West Point, NY

HARRY OLIVER TAYLOR was born at sunrise on 18 July 1945, a hot 104-degree morning, at Muroc, California, to Sergeant Smith H. Taylor and Eva W. Taylor. Harry would be called “Hots” by his friends, an appropriate nickname in view of his initials, the temperature at the time of his birth, his nearly flawless self-confidence and his ability to smile in the face of adversity. He was raised in the Fairmont, West Virginia and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania areas and grew up participating in boy scouts, church choir and little league. Twice his little league team went to the national championships at Williamsport, Pennsylvania, where they were runners-up: two of very few contests where “Hots” would not come up a winner.

After receipt of a congressional appointment from the 26th District of Pennsylvania, “Hots” entered West Point and quickly established his place in the Class of 1967. Quick to grasp plebe survival skills, he could produce the requisite number of “chins” while his face glowed a bright crimson. Only a slight twinkle in his piercing blue eyes suggested that he might not be totally awed by the whole process. It might be said that “Hots” had a great sense of balance. Balancing between the priorities of the Academy and his private life became more challenging after his future wife, Miki arrived. Then it was a balance between Miki and academics, Mike and handball, Miki and bridge, weekend leave and weekends with Miki. His ability to maintain a good academic level, while playing hard and sustaining his close relationships and sense of humor, was an impressive feat.

“Hots” graduated from West Point and was commissioned on 7 June 1967 in the Corps of Engineers. He was married shortly after to the “First Lady” in his life, Miki. After completion of Ranger training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and the Engineer Officers Basic Course at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, he was assigned to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. There they lived for the next one-and-half years, during which the “Second Lady” in his life, Judi, was born. It was at Fort Leonard Wood that golf and poker came to replace all previous avocations.

In July 1969, “Hots” was assigned to the 39th Combat Engineer Battalion, south of Chu Lai, in South Vietnam. During his one year tour, he earned the Bronze Star and Army Commendation medals. He concluded his military career by serving as an ROTC instructor at the University of Delaware.

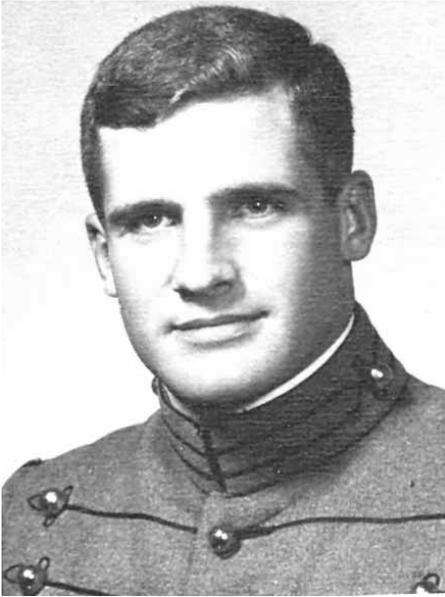
His second career began 5 December 1971, when he joined the Mobil Corporation. Spanning nearly twenty years, his work included increasingly responsible positions from Engineering and Operations Manager to International Marketing Advisor. “Hots” was known as a man of his word; he instilled loyalty and trust in those with whom he worked and demanded honesty and simplicity from those who worked for him. He commanded the respect and devotion of his subordinates, not for reason of his position, but rather for reason of his accomplishments, and he accorded himself no special privileges. “Hots” rewarded those who assisted him in accomplishing the mission and will be remembered always as a leader who sacrificed a degree of personal fame in order to share the spotlight with his team.

However, “Hots” would be the first to admit that life in the limelight and in the fast lane rather agreed with him, though it was not without risk. For “Hots,” risk was the price of improvement. Never one to accept complacency in himself, he could accept limitations in others without lowering his standards of performance. He was a leader who fostered demonstration of leadership

traits in those who worked for him. His skill at taking risks was remarkable. Seldom losing a bet, he accepted loss with grace and humility. His affinity for risk periodically manifested itself in the placement of a wager or two on a game of chance. A round of golf, a raise on a poker hand, setting the spread on a Monday night football game...his uncanny ability to “pick the right horse” was consistent, and this ability to choose a winner served him well in business. Arrogantly graceful, yet humble and considerate, his only outward expression of victory was a grin, a wink and, occasionally, a cigar.

The final years of his career afforded him opportunities to travel internationally. No island or continent was too remote for the Hots traveling road show. He challenged himself to do for his new associates what he had done for those who had worked with him in the United States. After his death, these same people responded with cards and letters attesting that he had in fact inspired them with his personal management style and human kindness. They expressed their sadness at losing a close friend and respected leader. A colleague in Australia, in a letter to Miki, said it all with the words, “if ever I had a hero in life, it was your husband.” He was known by everyone who had been close to him as a loving and devoted husband and father, a trusted confidant, a supportive colleague, and the dearest of friends. He is sorely missed, yet he will never be far from our thoughts. May he rest in the knowledge that he gave more than he received, that he was a contributor to all he touched. “Well Done, Harry; Be Thou At Peace!”

– His roommate, Greg Mohler;  
his colleagues, John Zimmer and  
Bill Helfrich; and his bride, Miki



## Claude Paul Herman

No. 27081

Died in Incline, NV, 12 November 1992

Cremated and ashes scattered around

The Lake Tahoe region, CA



The last time I saw Claude Paul Herman was on the Friday evening of our class's 25th Reunion.

The class cruised down the Hudson River from West Point to New York City, enjoying dinner and the sights along the river and renewing old friendships. Claude was there with his wife, Bev, whom I was meeting for the first time. As we sat reminiscing, Claude and I had that familiar classmate's feelings of being able to rejoin our lives and friendship as if we had seen each other only a day or so before. It was a magical night of conversation, laughter, and fun. Then, in exactly two short weeks from that wondrous night, Claude was unexpectedly and suddenly taken from us, his family, friends, classmates, and peers. We will never understand why, only that "His course on life was run."

Claude came to West Point with us almost immediately after his graduation from Notre Dame High School in Chattanooga, TN, where he excelled as both a student and an athlete. Born in 1945, he was the son of Paul and Mary Herman, and was raised in Chattanooga. Claude had two younger brothers, Joe and Ralph.

He came to West Point to play football, and succeeded, playing on the team all four

years. In addition, drawing upon his many other talents, he was the sports editor of the 1967 *Howitzer*, and the art editor of the *Pointer*. Claude represented Company A-1 on the class's Car Committee and was active in the Catholic Chapel Choir.

The *Howitzer* notes that Claude "has more ability than he knows, and when he and the world discover that ability, there will be no ceiling for this multi-talented man." And again, "He has not chosen to share a great mind with the Academic Department, but will shine if he gets into the medical career he wishes." Both comments were prophetic.

Claude was commissioned into the Artillery and immediately began his efforts to enroll in medical school. As with most of his endeavors, he was successful, enrolling in the University of Tennessee Medical School in 1968 and graduating in 1972. At his graduation, Claude was recognized for his excellence with the college's Surgery Award. He was commissioned into the Medical Corps with the rank of major. His first assignment was at Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii. In 1977, Claude was reassigned to MEDDAC in Augsburg, Germany, and returned to Ft. Ord in Monterey, CA, in 1980. While at Ft. Ord, Claude resigned from the Army as a lieutenant colonel and moved into private practice in Incline Village, NV, in 1981.

In private practice, Claude became quite renowned for his expertise as an orthopedic surgeon, specializing in knee and shoulder surgery. As a fellow of the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons and a member of Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society, Claude

received honors for his advancements in arthroscopic surgery, completely fulfilling that 1967 prophecy from the *Howitzer*.

Claude's first marriage, to Mary Huddleston, did not last long, and they had no children. However, while stationed in Hawaii, he met the love of his life, Beverly Brackett, at that time a student at The University of California-Berkeley. He pursued her until they married in 1976. Claude and Bev had two children, Bryce, born in 1977, and Kristen, born three years later.

Claude's family truly was the fulfillment of one of his dreams and he provided wonderful surroundings and a quality of life for them. He shared his two passions, golf and boating, with them. Claude came home regularly to golf with his children and he took every Wednesday off from his practice so that he, Bev, Bryce, and Kristen could go boating on Lake Tahoe, often spending the night on Emerald Bay. The last years of his life were spent in building a ranch, complete with stables and horses for Bev and their children. Unfortunately, he spent little time there, finishing the ranch just before his death.

In his eulogy at Claude's funeral, his son Bryce said, "I dream about dad, I miss him, I will use him as my model." A fitting tribute to our fallen classmate, renowned physician, friend, husband, and father, about whom it can truly be said, "Well done."

– *Classmates Jeff Madsen and Vic Pangle*

# Thomas Norman Swett

No. 26718

Died in Milwaukee, WI, 23 February 1993

Interment: West Point Cemetery

West Point, NY



“IT IS NOT THE YEARS IN YOUR LIFE, but the life in your years that counts.” This statement epitomizes Tom’s philosophy of living every minute to its fullest through his dedication to career and family.

Born in a small town in Maine, Tom was the youngest child of Thomas and Thelma Swett. They supported and encouraged him in every aspect of life, helping him to excel in academics and sports. At the suggestion of his high school principal, he applied to West Point. He was intrigued by the challenges and possibilities it presented.

Receiving a congressional appointment to the Class of '67, he began what would be his lifelong passion for the Army. June 1967 marked both Tom’s graduation and marriage to Nancy. He realized that he had two passions and responsibilities that motivated his decisions.

As a result, he selected a tour in Germany, rather than his first choice of Vietnam, knowing that he also would fulfill that duty soon.

In Germany, Tom developed personally and professionally. He had the opportunity to prepare further for his career in the Army, in addition to receiving a real sense of unity through the birth of daughter Stacy. Expectedly, Tom was assigned to Vietnam in June 1969.

With the same mixed emotions that many had during that era, he willingly accepted the position in order to utilize his training but wished for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Returning to the States, he attended the Engineer School at Ft. Belvoir and then the University of Pittsburgh. He earned master’s degrees

in civil engineering and public works. In addition, he was blessed with a second daughter, Kelly.

Utilizing his new training for the Corps of Engineers in Seattle, he felt fortunate to be a part of two projects: the fish ladder in Seattle and a post office in Montana.

In 1974, he was excited and honored at the offer to return to West Point to serve in the Dean’s Office. Tom never tired of telling prospective cadets of the great opportunity one would realize by attending the Academy. The whole family felt that their experience at West Point was both fulfilling and enjoyable.

Next, Tom made the difficult decision of accepting a civilian engineering position at Miller Brewing Co. Unwilling to completely sever ties with the military, he joined the U.S. Army Reserves. Having the “best of both worlds,” he felt content that he had made the right choice for his career and family.

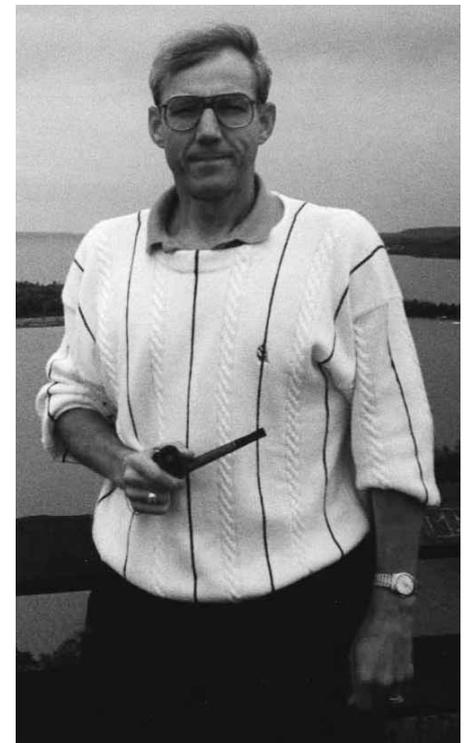
Dedicated and talented, he excelled in both jobs. Nevertheless, he was a committed husband and father, always attending Stacy’s dance recitals and Kelly’s sporting events. He was proud of his family and was fortunate to see his daughters grow into fine young women.

Tom will be missed as a loving husband, compassionate father, and admirable individual, whose strong character had an impact on all of those around him. The following memories are from three important people in Tom’s life. COL Palmer John Penny III, classmate and friend, remembers, “Tom was an intelligent, dedicated, concerned individual who never did anything halfspeed. His years as a cadet and Army officer were characterized by a strong focus on the mission at hand. His superb physical and mental talents enabled him to contribute significantly to those around him, who often looked to Tom for the leadership and strength that seemed to be so much a part of his strong character. Tom understood people, difficult concepts, and he cherished the opportunity to excel.

“Professional soldiers felt comfortable with Tom, knowing that they could trust him to be there when the going got tough. Technically and tactically proficient, being a soldier was more than a job, an ideal that he took with him from the active to reserve forces. His dedication to country, self-discipline, and focus enabled him to excel as a leader of American soldiers.

“As a friend, Tom was special. His intensity for life carried over to cement strong, lasting relationships with those he loved and respected. His confidence and strength, always evident, were tempered by a man who was fun to be around. He loved to compete, engage in lively debate, and share his time actively participating in myriad activities. It was special to be a friend of Tom’s because it was not a relationship that he undertook casually.”

Mary Deany, a coworker at Miller Brewing Co., remembers, “Many adjectives can be used to describe Tom—honest, fair, intense, ethical, driven, sensitive, hardworking—the list goes on and on. As a subordinate and coworker of Tom’s for more than ten years, I came to know



him very well. He pushed himself to the limits of his potential and encouraged his subordinates also to do so. He acted as a mentor to many people who worked for or with him. No matter how busy, he always made time to listen to people's concerns and offer advice and encouragement. People valued his ability to step back and look at the 'big picture: and, thus, there was always a long line of people at his door, waiting to talk to him."

"There are not many people who worked harder than Tom. He spent long hours at work and at home. He rarely used

his lunch hour to eat, choosing instead to run, work out, read, or just continue working. His work ethic was one that his peers and subordinates tried to emulate. We miss Tom. There are not many people like him."

COL Peter Pochowski, coworker at the 84th Division, USAR, remembers, "COL Tom Swett was the most genuine person I have ever known. He had quiet confidence that immediately commanded respect. And respected he was by everyone, regardless of rank. He could easily adapt from a formal setting with general officers

to sharing a few moments chatting under a shade tree on a firing range with a private, his ever-present pipe in hand.

"I miss Tom for a lot of reasons. Selfishly, I had not finished learning from him. Every moment with him was another lesson, and I had hoped for many more years of his mentorship. The void he left has never been filled, and I doubt it ever will."

– *His wife, Nancy Swett, and daughters Kelly and Stacy*

## In Their Eyes

Rich Adams '67

Ere cloaking Hudson mist gave birth to pensive early dawn  
And warming sun imbued the day with color's magic wand  
Some walked the quiet of that time recalling what had been  
When younger then, they too were called, a country to defend

So much the same, the sight and sound and scent upon the wind  
Roused memory of former times, sweet chapters deep within  
When first the Corps assembled there uncertain what to be  
Til men of worth and men of faith saw clear its destiny

Three hallowed words would cross their lips, a motto ever be  
The first was DUTY, selfless love, to serve a nation free  
Then HONOR came, a guarding shield against the tempter's sting  
And COUNTRY followed, filial trust, of which they'd often sing

The river's might, the circling hills, beneath God's brilliant arch  
Called forth to mind those harried times when they, too, formed to march  
When shoes and brass were made to shine and belts the purest white  
Were donned on black trimmed coats of gray, beneath a dress hat bright

Behind them lay so much of life since first they wore the gray  
When light their step and clear their eye, they savored each new day  
Those happy times of West Point years, when bonds for life were made  
Til oaths were sworn and forth they went their mettle to be weighed

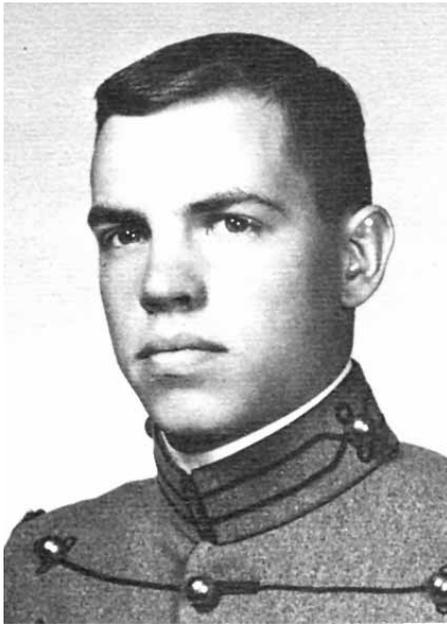
Still on they walk on legs grown old, with eyes that strain to see  
But gaining strength with every step infused by history  
By classmates gone whose deeds on earth live on in mind and heart  
Remembered friends in marbled stone who bravely did their part

What's that they hear from on the plain, but sound of fife and drum  
As turn they all to join a class whose time to march has come  
And march they do with heads held high before the grateful throng  
And with them wait for freedom's band to call the new guard on

Then granite walls release their hold and free the waiting Corps  
Young men and women marching forth to martial music score  
They pass the Line, their span of years, as eyes look right to see  
And in their eyes catch full a glimpse of who they'll one day be

All sense a spirit in the air, a bond across the stage  
As eyes grow moist and hearts beat fast uniting all in age  
The young march off and leave the plain, the stirring music dies  
But those who stay, inspired so, renew their life-long ties

God grant them mercy in your will, the Black and Gold and Gray  
To find a servant's resting place when comes the final day  
With family, friends, The Long Gray Line, eternity to share  
Immortal life by heaven's grace for all who gather there



## John Anthony Yankus

No. 26754

Died in Salisbury, MD, 27 October 1994

Interment: All Hallows Cemetery

Snow Hill, MD

John Anthony Yankus was born to Frank and Helen Yankus in Jamaica, NY. John attended public schools and graduated at the top of his class from Hempstead High School in June 1963. John entered West Point in the summer of 1963 and graduated four years later on 7 June 1967, ranking 93rd out of a graduating class of 583. John's stay at West Point was memorable. He was extraordinarily competent. If it needed to be designed, built, constructed or just plain had to get done, you gave it to John. There was no one more forthright and loyal. John always told it like it was, the good, the bad, and the ugly. If he was your friend you were a very fortunate person. His loyalty never wavered.

Upon graduation, John chose the Infantry as his branch of service. As with all things, John was dedicated to his branch and to the men with whom he served. John attended and graduated from Jungle Warfare School, the Airborne School and Ranger School.

Chuck Sankey, Class of '67 associate, tells this story about John's leadership and comradeship with his classmates and those he served with while in Ranger School. "We were winter Rangers, late November 1967 to late January 1968. I got to know John and his classmate Cotton Ruthven pretty well. Their respective leadership did much to get our class through Ranger School.

"One day in the Florida phase it was extremely cold, wet, and very dreary. Cotton was selected as patrol leader and he tagged John (his Ranger buddy) as his platoon sergeant for the crossing of the Yellow River. It was truly an awful day. What made it worse was the fact that Cotton was extremely ill with the flu. He was so sick and cold he actually turned blue, but he refused to go for medical treatment until the patrol was done. John's

leadership and butt-kicking with his good humored nature got our platoon to rally around Cotton, cross the river effectively and accomplish the mission. The coordination and cooperation between John and Cotton that day was perhaps the best I ever saw in Ranger School.

"What impressed me most was how John took care of his ranger buddy while accomplishing the mission. John's good nature insured things got done and that everyone was taken care of. To this day, I can see John near the bank of the river with his arms around Cotton trying to keep him warm, all while Cotton was giving the operations orders for the crossing. A chilling environment—warm sight!"

John later served as a combat infantry company commander with the 1st Infantry Division and with MACV in Viet Nam during 1969-70. While in Viet Nam, John was awarded two Bronze Stars, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry for heroism, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Army Commendation, and Air Medals.

On 15 Oct 1968, John met Jacqueline Parks while he was back at West Point for homecoming. Jackie was attending Ladycliff College. He knew right away this was the love of his life and on 26 Oct 1968 they were married and departed to John's first assignment in the Panama Canal Zone. Two beautiful children, Jason and Jessica, were born to John and Jackie in 1978 and 1985. Jason graduated from the University of Maryland in 2000 and Jessica will graduate from Stephen Decatur High School in 2003. John resigned from active duty in 1971 and was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army Reserve in 1986.

In 1971, John and Jackie moved to Ithaca, NY, while John attended graduate school at Cornell University on a full scholarship. John completed his master's degree in regional planning (MRP) in 1973. They then moved to Maryland's Eastern Shore while John served for two years as the town manager of Pocomoke City, MD.

In 1975, John was hired as Worcester County, Maryland's first Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), a position he held until his untimely death on 27 Oct 1994 after he and Jackie waged a valiant eight month struggle with kidney cancer.

John received many accolades for his

performance as Worcester's CAO. It is fitting, however, to remember who he was as a person, not what he accomplished. The following quotes from those who served with John provide a testimonial to his legacy:

The county's attorney said: "When I think of John and all of his traits and characteristics, two stand out, intelligence and loyalty. I have never dealt with anyone at any level of government more intelligent, more practical than John. He understood the law better than any layman and for that matter, better than most lawyers. Invariably, when we would have dealings with bond counsel, financial consultants, auditors, engineers, legal counsel and other experts, I would hear things from them like, 'John Yankus is really impressive' or 'You are certainly fortunate to have him.' Of course, I already knew that.

"John's loyalty, however, may have even surpassed his intelligence. I don't think he was 'blindly loyal.' He would often strongly make a case with the commissioners but once a decision had been made, then he was truly like Stephen Dacatur—to paraphrase: 'My country, may she always be right, but right or wrong, my country.' Worcester County was John's country."

John's secretary penned this statement: "If ever there was an individual who deserved a Nobel Prize for true dedicated, hardworking, self sacrificing, professionalism, John Anthony Yankus is that person."

As a final gesture of Worcester County's regard for all that John had done, a memorial service dedicating the courthouse addition in his honor was held on 4 Jun 1996.

John was a consummate professional in all that he did. He was a man of great intellect and integrity. He loved his family. He was loyal and dedicated to his friends and associates.

John is survived by his wife Jackie, son Jason, daughter Jessica, mother Helen, two brothers Michael and Robert, and his sister Christine. As John's son Jason, then sixteen, said at his funeral, "Dad lived by this motto 'Duty, Honor, Country.'"

Those of us, who were fortunate enough to have known John, heartily agree.

— A classmate



## Thomas Christopher Pettit

No. 26832

Died in Maine, 15 Feb 1997

Interment: St. Charles Cemetery,  
Farmingdale, Long Island, NY



*To date no Assembly/Taps memorial article has been published for Chris. The following obituary was provided by his widow.*

“Things do not happen in this world, they are brought about by people who are concerned and who become involved. I know that we can have the courage to affirm life by our involvement in living.”

The words are from the graduation speech of Thomas Christopher Pettit, or Chris, as he was more commonly known. And in one sense, they marked the accomplishments of a young Huntington man who by 1963 — as captain of the Huntington High School lacrosse, football and basketball squads, and as GO president — had already achieved much.

But in another sense, those words were also to reflect on the adult accomplishments Chris Pettit would achieve.

After learning of Chris’ death in a snowmobile accident in Maine, one of his brothers reflected on those valedictory words. “The things Chris said in that address show how ahead of his time he was,” said Any Pettit.

Fifty-one year old Chris Pettit, an investment banker who resigned last year as president of Lehman Brothers, died in a snowmobile accident when, according to published reports, the snowmobile he was riding went out of control at 11:20 p.m. on Saturday night near his winter home in Windham, Maine. The long-time Huntington resident fell from the device and the helmet he was wearing was said to have become dislodged as he landed. Bob Goodrich of the Maine Medical Examiner’s office in Augusta said as press time that while reports remained incomplete pending receipt of lab tests, the preliminary indication was that death was due to severe head injuries.

The death of Pettit was the second to hit the family in just five months. Last Oct. 13, Huntington mourned the passing of Walter “Rusty” Pettit, also a three-sport athlete at Huntington High of a brain tumor. After graduating in 1965 — two

years after Chris — Rusty continued his lacrosse career at the University of Maryland, where he was a member of the 1967 national championship team. “We really haven’t gotten over Rusty yet,” said on family member. “And now, Chris. It’s just too much to even grasp.”

“All Outstanding Athletes”

Chris Pettit was a member of a large family with roots going far back in Huntington’s history. He was one of five boys and two girls who were reared in Huntington and who attended Huntington schools. Kenneth Mellinger of Northport, a guidance counsel at Huntington High School, recalls Pettit as “part of an important family in the life of the school — all outstanding athletes. One of my colleagues was his counsellor and mentor and always spoke well of him.”

Getting into service institutions was “a great difficulty” for many, said Mellinger, “but Pettit got into West Point without any difficulty.” According to Chris’ brother Andrew, he also was accepted at Harvard that year — but opted, for financial reasons, for the academy.

His West Point record is studded with accomplishments — twice all-American, leading scorer, captain of the lacrosse team. And after distinguished service in the military, he went with his brother, Walter (Rusty) Pettit, to work with a high school friend at a Chicago firm. Later, they all returned to Huntington and were co-owners of Finnegan’s Restaurant and Tap Room, a local landmark.

But in 1977, Pettit moved on to the world of finance — specifically, to Lehman Brothers, then known as Lehman Brothers Kuhn Loeb. Pettit’s brother, William, noted that it was Chris’ attitude that led him to his rise to prominence at the firm. “He was a very valuable asset,” said William. “Chris’ attributes were very important to them in building their programs.” Among them? According to daughter Lara Pettit, who works at Lehman, her father was an extremely motivated and enthusiastic leader — but he treated everyone like he was at their level. He never made people feel like they

were different from anyone.” Furthermore, said Lara, “wherever he was, he put his all into everything. He’d give his shirt off his back to anyone or anything. There were no boundaries in what he would give of himself.”

Published accounts indicated that Chris Pettit was instrumental in improving profitability at Lehman after it became a public company through cost controls, and spearheaded the company’s move to independence from American Express Co. He was CEO of the company until just about a year ago, noted William Pettit, but stepped down from his position because of “an internal disagreement.”

Back home in the Huntington community, Pettit was well known for his involvement in the world of youth sports. Some of those contributions were well known — he was a founder of the Cold Spring Harbor-Huntington Youth Lacrosse Club and coach of the 1973 girls Windjammers soccer team, for example. “He was a tremendous leader — and he was one of most competitive people I ever saw,” recalls son Chris Pettit, a freshman lacrosse player at the University of Maryland. “He used to go to the elementary schools to encourage people to play lacrosse. All of us in the lacrosse programs at Huntington and Cold Spring Harbor high schools learned from him.”

For his lifelong work in the field of lacrosse, Chris Pettit was named to the Long Island Lacrosse Hall of Fame, and his name will be added to the Suffolk County Hall of Fame as well. Those recognitions are well deserved, according to Paul McDermott, Huntington High School’s lacrosse coach: “The things he’s done for his program, from PAL all the way up, it’s just amazing. He has helped out tremendously. Chris was a long-time supporter of the program.”

But other contributions made by Chris Pettit were more quiet — in particular, his widespread philanthropic work. “You never had to go looking for Chris — he came forward,” said Joe Gian, athletic director for Huntington High School. “Chris basically gave something to the

program annually and he was very helpful during the time we were in austerity. No one knew about that. Everything he did for us was strictly anonymous.” Furthermore, said Giani, all of Pettit’s gifts to the program were “unconditional. He never wanted his name on the wall. He just wanted to do what was best for the program.”

Traces of that sense of philanthropy go back to Pettit’s Army days when, as a combat officer in Vietnam (he earned two Bronze Stars in-country) he helped establish a national award in the name of a teammate on the lacrosse squad. “It was Chris’ high school rival, Ray Enners, who also attended West Point and played lacrosse,” said Andy. “They became best friends and Ray was later killed in Vietnam.” According to Andy, Pettit established, with his West Point coach, a national award for the outstanding college player in the country, and at the high school level in Suffolk County.

Later, Chris Pettit engaged in widespread, yet anonymous, acts of benefaction which ranged across many interests. For example, he was a contributor to cancer research, through the Dorothy Rodbell Cohen Foundation for Sarcoma Research, a New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center affiliate.

An Avid Outdoorsman

And acting on his life-long love for outdoor life and conservation, Pettit

was also a contributor to the Student Conservation Association, a national outward-bound style program.

According to Suzanne Pettit, one of his daughters, her father’s interest in the outdoors and conservation was not only behind his contributions to the SCA, but to her current work at Yosemite National Park. “When I was little, every Saturday we went hiking to Jayne’s Hill or Caumsett,” she recalls. “Later he took us to Africa where we lived in tents and hiked every day.”

By 1990, he had introduced Suzanne and her sister, Kari, to the SCA. “The first summer I worked in Kings Canyon. The next summer, in Wyoming. And the following year, to Yosemite. Now I’m there nine months out of the year doing wildlife research. There’s no way a girl from Long Island would want to work outside in the woods, or live in a tent, if it hadn’t been for my dad.”

As for Kari? She went to Glen Canyon and worked in Peregrine Falcon conservation. The experience was so strong that she transferred out of her school and became a veterinary major. Last year she worked in Uganda with kidnapped chimpanzees. Now in her third year of vet school, she wants to concentrate on wildlife conservation.

Chris Pettit’s love of conservation and outdoor life, said Andy Pettit, also led to

a close friendship with Teddy Roosevelt IV, with whom he worked at Lehman. Roosevelt, contacted by the Long-Islander on Wednesday, recalled Pettit fondly. “The outdoors was a bond that we shared in common,” said Roosevelt. “I think he was happiest striding up a mountain, looking at wildlife. Through my family we introduced him to a scout who helped them travel downriver in Africa. He also loved to introduce young people to it. He was ardent about the SCA, and the SCA loved him for his imagination, his caring and his vision.”

Across his adulthood, Pettit’s intense approach to living revealed itself in his rise to prominence on Wall Street, in his acts of quiet generosity, in his love of outdoor life — and perhaps above all, in his devotion to the world of sports — which helped shaped his life. From his home in Narberth, Pennsylvania, William, the oldest of Pettit’s siblings recalled that it was sports that gave Chris Pettit direction. “And he was happy to give some of that back to his children — and anybody else — to help experience the kind of things he did. It was discipline and good competition and you get a lot out of it.”

“As far as sports go, I wouldn’t be anything without what my dad did for me,” added son Chris Pettit this week. “He was my idol.”





## **Richard Wesley Platt, Jr.**

No. 27116

Died in Virginia, 18 July 1997

Interment: Sunset Memorial Gardens

Fredericksburg, VA

*To date no Assembly/Taps memorial article  
has been published for Dick.*

### ***The Strength of a Man***

*The strength of a man isn't seen in the width of his shoulders.  
It's seen in the width of his arms that circle you.*

*The strength of a man isn't in the deep tone of his voice.  
It's in the gentle words he whispers.*

*The strength of a man isn't in how many buddies he has.  
It's in how good a buddy he is with his kids.*

*The strength of a man isn't in how respected he is at work.  
It's in how respected he is at home.*

*The strength of a man isn't in how hard he hits.  
It's in how tender he touches.*

*The strength of a man isn't in the hair on his chest.  
It's in his heart...that lies within his chest.*

*The strength of a man isn't in how many women he's loved.  
It lies in how true he is to the one woman he loves.*

*The strength of a man isn't in the weight he can lift.  
It is in the burdens he can carry.*

*Unknown*



COL Vernon Parker Saxon, Jr. seemed to be a natural test pilot, born to fly. His father was a Berlin Airlift pilot and, as a youth, Vern flew Strategic Air Command aero club planes. Edwards Air Force Base eventually became home for 17 of Vern's 30 years in the Air Force. Vernon, in fact, was believed to be the only person to have defended Edwards in a fully armed F-15, ordered to track and shoot down NASA's Boeing 720 remotely piloted test aircraft if it broke formation and headed for populated areas on or off base.

Vern's career in the Air Force almost did not happen, however. A severe injury threatened to end his West Point "experience" before it began, but, as his sister Martha Jean recalls, he seemed to will himself well in record time. She said his determination to achieve his goals was a big part of his character.

Vern arrived at West Point in 1963, eager to serve his country and quick to make friends with his steady demeanor, sense of teamwork, and quiet confidence. He excelled academically and developed lifelong leadership traits. Classmates said Vern always seemed the most mature person in the group, giving birth to the story he had been born an adult.

A *gray hog* in the most positive sense, during the cold and windswept days in Company K-2's barracks in the *Lost Fifties*, classmates recalled that Vern seemed to welcome publication of the Plebe duty roster—another opportunity to serve. Even on leave in civilian clothes, he unfailingly and proudly stood at attention for the National Anthem.

Cow and Firstie years in C-2, he was a role model: firm but fair, and he spoke up when something was unfair or not right. A perennial *star man*, he was always available to help others. Mike Kush, a C-2 classmate, stated, "if Vern

## Vernon Parker Saxon, Jr.

No. 26697

Died in Edwards, CA, 27 April 1997

Cremated, Private Inurnment



hadn't been around Cow and Firstie years, I don't know how I would have survived Mechanics, Juice and Ordnance. He was always there to help, and I know that Vern had his own work to do."

Another classmate, Carroll Howard, remembers Vern as a true team player: "During our last year, we decided we wanted a company Firstie Day Room and got approval. The catch was six firsties had to go into two rooms versus three to free up a room. Vern was first to volunteer to 'triple up.' Although that does not sound like much now, it was a big deal then." Other memories abound of Vern's selfless spirit.

A leader in the company, Firstie year Vern coached the C-2 intramural volleyball team to the regimental championship. He also had a keen sense of humor. Brian Hayes recalls Vern's often making a seemingly innocuous comment that, upon reflection, brought belated smiles, relaxed tensions, and caused his companymates to appreciate Vern's character.

Following commissioning into the U.S. Air Force, Vern flew the A1-E in the Special Operations Wing, Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Base. He later became an O-2 Forward Air Controller at Bien Hoa Air Base in Viet Nam.

Back stateside in 1970, Vern was selected as the Outstanding Flight Instructor at Sheppard AFB. Throughout North Texas, he spoke on POW/MIA issues, also meeting and marrying USAF ILT Claire Lyn Newton, creator and co-speaker of the three-officer speaking team. Their daughter Jennie was born at Sheppard. Their son Jeff was born in 1974, while Vern was earning his astronautical engineering master's degree at the Air Force Institute of Technology School of Engineering, which honored him as the school's Outstanding Student. During these years, he published plans in *Sky & Telescope* magazine for the "Saxon Drive," an inexpensive telescope drive, that helped amateur astronomers track objects during night photography.

He then joined the Navstar-Global Positioning System Joint Project Office in Los Angeles during the establishment of the GPS program. Vern was Outstanding Graduate of his USAF Test Pilot School class at Edwards. He also excelled as a

student at the Air Command and Staff College (1981), the Air War College (1985), and at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (1988).

At the Air Force Flight Test Center at Edwards, he served as Director, F-15 CTF; Director, Center Safety; and Commander, 6510th Test Wing. He was also Director, Programs and Resources, Deputy Chief of Staff for Test and Evaluation, Headquarters AFSC at Andrews AFB, MD.

Off duty Vern was active in choirs and musicals. He was the headliner in the High Desert Players productions at Edwards. He recorded John Denver's musical rendition of John Gillespie Magee, Jr.'s famous poem "High Flight" for the Flight Test Historical Foundation's "Legacy of Pancho Barnes" video soundtrack.

A member of the Society of Experimental Test Pilots, Vern was active on the Board and charter member of Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) 1000. The granddaddy of all of his projects was his work with fellow craftsmen and EAA members to redesign and construct his own full-size aircraft: a two-seat Sonerai II, nearly complete at the time of his death.

By August 1996, when he was medically retired from his position as AFFTC Center Vice Commander, Vern's record included more than 4,000 hours as a command pilot, including 789 combat hours and service in 34 different aircraft. His decorations included the Legion of Merit, two Distinguished Flying Crosses, two Meritorious Service Medals, fifteen Air Medals, the Joint Services Commendation Medal, and the Air Force Commendation Medal.

Classmate Karl Sakas provided this wonderful reminiscence: "Vern was one of the most dependable, reliable and honorable persons I have ever known. I think he believed in and tried to live by the principles of West Point every day of his life. Vern was something of a character with real Character. He was always a loyal and true friend. You could not ask for anyone better."

Vern's family invites everyone to visit the *Colonel Vernon P. Saxon, Jr., Aerospace Museum* in Boron, CA, near Edwards Air Force Base.



## Michael Francis Lascher

No. 26971

Died in Seattle, WA, 20 July 2000

Interment: Holy Sepulchre Cemetery  
Coram, NY



Michael Francis Lascher was born to Charlotte and Frank Lascher in Bay Shore, Long Island, the older brother of sisters Jane, Nancy, and Charlotte. In 1963, he graduated with honors from Bay Shore High School, where he wrestled and played soccer all four years, captaining the soccer team his senior year. The only thing Mike ever failed at as a teenager was his first road test, which delighted his parents! Mike entered West Point on 1 Jul 1963 and graduated as an Artillery second lieutenant on 7 Jun 1967. As the result of an untimely accident, Mike took his last breath at the young age of 55.

Mike's passion was sailing. His parents bought him a sailboat when he was 14, and he crewed on the boat that won the Great South Bay Racing Championship in 1960. His West Point classmate and sailing teammate, Marty Harmless, remembers, "Mike's knowledge, patience, and ability to teach made him the best skipper I ever had. The event I remember most occurred when the Army Sailing Team competed at Annapolis. The wind that day was gusty and very strong. Boats started capsizing one by one, but somehow—maybe because of our training on the unforgiving Hudson, but most assuredly due to Mike's firm hand on the tiller—we stayed up, and beat all the Navy boats that day...He was a gentle soul and a fine teacher."

West Point roommate Bill Freccia and Mike's oral surgery partner, Joe Mulrean, eulogized Mike's life at his funeral mass on 28 Jul 2000.

Bill wrote, "After I prepared this eulogy to my best friend, it occurred to me that our gathering here to pay tribute to him is many years too premature. At

West Point, we learned early on to be in the right place, in the right uniform, at the right time. Mike was in the right place—on a bike path; he was in the right uniform—he was wearing his helmet; it just wasn't the right time for him to leave us.

"The author of a current best seller quotes a man he loves and admires saying: 'As long as we can love each other, and remember the feeling of love we had, we can die without ever really going away. All the love and memories you created are still there. You live on—in the hearts of everyone you have touched and nurtured while you were here. Death ends a life, not a relationship.' Our relationship with Mike will not end, it will be strengthened. Our memories of all the good times we shared with him will live on as fond memories we will cherish forever.

"Mike epitomized 'Duty, Honor, Country.' Academically, he graduated high enough in the class to select a coveted first assignment as an Artillery second lieutenant with the 82d Airborne Division at Ft. Bragg. As Mike would say, 'As fate would have it: he was deployed with the 82d's 3rd Brigade to Viet Nam in March 1968. His military career spanned over 30 years as a cadet, as an Artillery officer, and as a Dental Corps officer, who was called to serve in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War.

"In conclusion, Mike was always there for us and with us—at christenings, confirmations, weddings, reunions, dinners, and so on. To all who knew him, Mike was a beloved son, and a loving big brother and godfather...He was a gifted teacher and role model, a trustworthy colleague and partner, a talented and caring oral surgeon, and a dedicated soldier. General Douglas MacArthur proclaimed, 'Old soldiers never die, they just fade away.' While we mourn Mike's passing, let us celebrate that he is being greeted not only by God, but by members of the Long Gray Line who have preceded him to their eternal resting place."

Joe Mulrean remembered, "I met

Mike 16 years ago when he picked me up at the Frankfort airport. He was holding a sign like a limousine driver with my name on it. He wore such a friendly smile that I knew instantly we would be friends. What I didn't know was the extent to which that friendship would grow.

"Mike had many remarkable gifts. His memory was one of the best I have ever seen. Once you were under the care of Mike, he never forgot you or your name. He took you under his wing and protected you. What made Mike a great surgeon were his mind and his hands, but what made him a great doctor was his heart.

"One of Mike's true passions was physical fitness. He loved to run, bike, golf, and ski. Mike never boasted. He was a private man, with a booming voice, who never revealed all that he had accomplished. Mike's accomplishments were not what was important to him. What was important to Mike was being a friend. If he could have earned a degree in friendship, Mike would have had a Ph.D."

At a memorial service held at Ft. Lewis for Mike, COL Ev Newbry recalled, "I feel fortunate to have worked with Mike...Mike was a soldier's soldier, a talented surgeon, and a wonderful mentor—the ideal officer to be teaching our young residents. Mike would always fight for his causes, and would bring his wisdom to every meeting. When the discussion was done, he'd salute and execute the order. Always upbeat and cheerful, he had a stabilizing effect on the entire staff. Mike was a scrapper, a fighter, and never stopped fighting until God called him to his final reward—far too early."

To quote the "Alma Mater," "And when our work is done, our course on earth is run, may it be said, 'Well done: Be thou at peace.'" Well done, Mike.

— Roommate Bill Freccia with contributions from family and colleagues



As we entered Ranger School in October 1967, David Kennedy Hewitt and I were paired as Ranger buddies. Together, we experienced the early morning runs, the pits, the never-ending marches, and the long patrols that bonded us unlike any other experience. If it had not been for Dave's strong presence, I would not have completed the course. We were partners, and we knew it. His strength affected others, too. Ray Heath remembered Dave pulling him along on a morning run. Our life-long friendship was melded in the pride of accomplishment, as we stood together and the ranger tab was pinned to our shoulders.

David was born in Baltimore, MD, to Alberta and Oscar Hewitt. She was a nurse, and he was a career warrant officer in the Army. The Hewitt family was close, and Dave had a special relationship with his only sister, Sue, and their dog, Skipper. Sue fondly remembers adventure and laughter—adventure because of the different places they lived, and laughter because Dave enjoyed being the prankster of the family. While attending Warwick High School in Newport News, VA, he was a member of National Honor Society and an athlete, winning letters in football, basketball, and baseball. He considered the Citadel and Auburn University, but won an appointment to West Point.

The *Howitzer* reads: "Dave's easy-going nature won him many friends, and his athletic abilities won him their respect. Whether it was a slipstick or a lacrosse stick, Dave gave it his best. His sense of humor and sense of duty will stand him in good stead in the years to come."

Upon graduation, Dave was assigned to Korea, where he led a platoon in the 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry. Returning home, he was assigned to command Company C, 1st Battalion, 3rd Infantry, "The Old Guard."

## David Kennedy Hewitt

No. 27221

Died in McKinney, TX, 20 March 2001  
Cremated, Inurned in Coral Gables, FL



Dave's wife, Carol, an American Airlines flight attendant, was assigned to Washington, DC, shortly after Dave returned from Korea. She lived in the same apartment complex, one floor below him and roommates Chad Keck and John Murrell. "David was so easy to be with, caring and loving," she remembered. They found enjoyment in each other and fell in love. When he received his orders for Viet Nam, rather than wait for his return, they chose to marry.

What a wedding it was! With classmates, family, and friends in attendance, they dedicated their lives to each other on 1 Aug 1970. After their first month together, he left for Viet Nam, where he served as an advisor with the Military Assistance Command-Viet Nam. He saw his share of combat, earning a Bronze Star the Combat Infantry Badge. Carol and he enjoyed a week of R&R in Hong Kong, and being an airline employee, she was able to swing a pass and a visa and flew back to Viet Nam with him. This allowed her an extra week with Dave in the village of Hoc Mahn in Tay Ninh Province. Carol remembers it as an extraordinary experience, which created lifelong memories she continues to cherish.

After Viet Nam, Dave resigned his commission and headed to Northwestern University in Chicago, where he completed his MBA. While in school, he worked for Procter and Gamble. In 1978, he and Carol left the Windy City and headed for sunny Coral Gables, FL, where he accepted a position as manager of energy planning and conservation for Ryder Truck Rental. His contributions were rewarded when James Ryder, founder of the organization, decided to leave Ryder and form another corporation, asking Dave to go with him and naming him director of energy management for Jartran, Inc. It was a time of change and growth and ultimately led to an executive position with Florida Power and Light, where Dave had an active role in making positive changes in its operational output. Upon early retirement in 1995, Dave and Carol moved to McKinney, TX, just north of Dallas. He became vice president of sales and marketing with RamQuest, a position he held until his untimely passing.

Early in 1978, Dave lost a cousin in

an automobile accident. The cousin had an eight-year-old daughter, Dawn. Dave and Carol hoped for a family, and the opportunity to adopt Dawn was welcomed by both. Dawn joined them in Coral Gables, and a special relationship grew between Dave and Dawn. He was deeply proud of her and enjoyed his role as her father.

Dave and I would be teamed again in 1982. Upon the request of the ACTION Agency, we organized the Florida Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program, and Dave became an active member of the Board of Trustees. His organizational skills and leadership were paramount in the success of the organization. It was a not-for-profit, volunteer organization, dedicated to seeking out successful veterans from the Viet Nam era, publicly espousing their successes, and networking job opportunities for unemployed veterans.

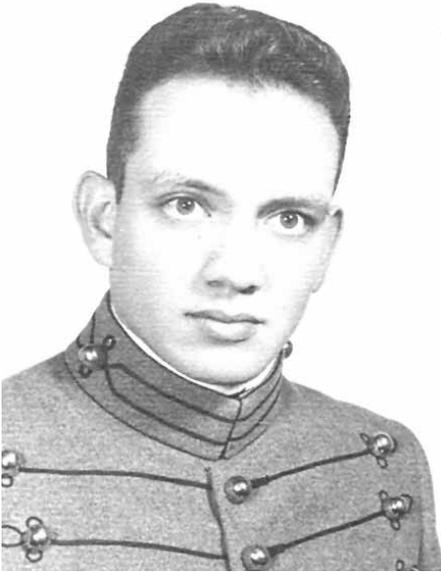
Dave was a special person to all of us—to Bob Kunselman, who shared the rigors of Beast Barracks and admired Dave's character; to Mike Spinello, it was soccer and "the bond we speak of sometimes casually endures as few others understand;" to John Murrell, it was serving together in Korea and in the Old Guard, where "the fond memories of that time are cherished and will be with us always.

Finally, friend and classmate GEN Tom Schwartz wrote. "We all will remember Dave for many reasons, but one in particular: he always provided a calming spirit." Dave, more than anyone, had a sense of spirituality and calmness we admired. He always displayed a deep-rooted sincerity, and his focus was never on self. At West Point, as well as in all the years to follow, his character traits stood out. He, more than anyone, had time for others. He personally helped me with so many academic battles. Dave, the message is clear—the victory is yours, my great friend! Your love of others remains forever in our hearts. Your gentle spirit lives on in us.

And in Carol. He was her love, her life, and her best friend.

Thank you, David, from all of us.

— Your Ranger Buddy



## Arnaldo Cano Arosemena

No. 27170

Died in Panama City, Panama, 26 July 2000

Interment: Unknown

*To date no Assembly/Taps memorial article has been published for Arnie.*



## Edwin Neil Jordan, Jr.

No. 27186

Died in Nebraska, 1 March 2003

Interment: Cedar Dale Cemetery, Papillion, NE



*To date no Assembly/Taps memorial article has been published for Ed. The following obituary was published in his funeral program.*

Edwin Neil Jordan Jr. was born 2 April 1945 in Montgomery, Alabama, the son of Edwin Neil and Margaret (Warren) Jordon Sr.

He graduated high school in Montgomery in 1963. He attended the US Military Academy at West Point, graduating in 1967 and serving 28 years active duty in the United States Army. He later earned his MBA from Webster University.

Ed served in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969. During his distinguished career, LTC Jordan earned many military honors including the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, Meritorious

Service Medal (4 awards), Army Commendation Medal (2 awards), Army Achievement Medal, Joint Meritorious Award, National Defense Service Medal (2 awards), Vietnam Service Medal with 2 bronze stars, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon (2 awards), Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation with Palm, and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal. He also earned the Combat Infantry, Parachutist and Air Assault Badges and the US Army Ranger tab. He retired in 1995 from the United States Strategic Command.

At the time of his death, Ed was Professor of Military Science for the JROTC at Girls and Boys Town of Omaha. He was an active and beloved member of

Overland Hills Baptist Church, serving as an Elder, teaching Sunday School, mentoring youth and greeting all with an outstretched hand and smile.

Edwin was preceded in death by his father Edwin Neil Jordon Sr. He is survived by wife Janet Folvag Jordon; son John Neil Jordan; daughter Emily Christine Wagoner; son-in-law Kurt Robert Wagoner, grandsons Alexander David Wagoner and Isaac Aaron Wagoner, all of Papillion; mother Margaret Jordon of Alabama; sister and brother-in-law Elizabeth and C.S. Clark of Alabama; brothers and sisters-in-law Joe and Mary Simmons of Arizona, Bob and Carol Crowley of Florida; and several nieces and nephews.



## Lawrence Leonard Izzo

No. 26683

Died in The Woodlands, TX, 25 October 2003

Interment: West Point Cemetery

West Point, NY

*To date no Assembly/Taps memorial article has been published for Larry.*

We gather here in this house of God this beautiful morning to honor, to remember and to celebrate the life of Lawrence Leonard Izzo, eldest son of Rose and Len, brother of Rosemary and Lenny, husband of his beloved Terry, father of Tina, Lenny and Larry and doting grandfather of Cole, Cade and Tristan. Dear friend of all present.

I apologize up front for failing to capture in a few brief moments what Larry Izzo meant to all of us. He was so many different things in so many wonderful ways; there are no words that capture his full measure. He was a scholar, a soldier, a leader, a patriot, a devout family man and son, an outstanding athlete in his youth and like most of us, a lousy golfer later on. But more than all that, he was the greatest friend anyone could have.

He glowed with an inner fire and intensity that caused him to excel at everything he touched. Above all, he just simply loved the challenge of life and lived it at full throttle. Whether that meant beating Navy as a cadet at West Point or leading soldiers in combat, or driving a construction project to completion or leading a chorus line of young ladies, including all of our daughters in our own rendition of "New York, New York" at Lenny's wedding to Stacy and Tina's wedding to Robert. You'd expect nothing less from a kid who spent his early life on Mulberry Street in Little Italy. Larry and Mara, we will uphold that legacy come February.

When you add it all up, the only thing I ever did better than Larry was carry a tune. It was that incredible energy level and passion for life that made us love Larry so dearly and causes his passing to be

such a struggle for all of us.

For Larry and many of us here today, the watershed event in our lives was stepping across the Plain on the First of July 1963 and joining the West Point Class of 1967. We volunteered to serve our country by trying to become "leaders of character," worthy of leading American soldiers in battle. In the ensuing, challenging four years of our cadetship, our class became a band of brothers, forever united by our Cadet experience and our love for each other. We graduated 584 strong, with newly minted 2nd Lieutenant of Engineers, Izzo standing 22nd overall. I remember that day quite well. We graduated in order of merit. Larry went across the stage just after the National Anthem and Mike Hood and I made it just before the sun went down.

Larry was a brilliant scholar, varsity lacrosse athlete, and young leader eager to prove his mettle. And proving your mettle in those days meant one thing; combat in Vietnam. And character in those days wasn't built, as some suggest, it was put on display in times of crisis and those crisis came daily. And leadership meant accomplishing the mission and caring for soldiers, even at the possible cost of your life. Larry saw that challenge very clearly and stepped up to it. Not two months ago, Larry led our class in honoring one of our brothers killed in Vietnam, Ray Enners. In typical Izzo fashion, he climbed up on a chair and talked about Iggy's courage, selflessness and dedication to duty, how Ray aspired to be an outstanding leader of soldiers. Larry said, "Ray was his hero." Every word said of Ray Inners by Larry, every single man of our class would say of him. He was a leader of character, wounded in action caring for his soldiers, a patriot and hero to us all.

Later on in his Army career, because of his scholarly credentials, Larry had to

make a choice between becoming a permanent professor at West Point or continuing to lead soldiers. Needless to say, I was never faced with such a dilemma. Larry, after appropriate consultation with Terry, turned down the professorship for a battalion command in the 82nd Airborne Division. At his core, Larry Izzo was first and foremost a soldier who loved being a leader. Our Army and our Nation were blessed by his service.

And then came the business world and The Woodlands, Texas. I remember like it was yesterday deciding to throw my lot in with some crazy guys named Wing and Kelly who were trying to conquer the world building power stations, with one small problem; none of us knew how to build one; but Larry Izzo sure did. So I implored Larry to come and he was eager to do so with two reservations: Terry had to agree, and the guy we then called "Little Larry" had to have a chance to play football. With Larry the family was always first. Well, the rest is history; Terry agreed; the Izzos came to the Woodlands, and Number 26 of the Highlanders became Number 37 of the Rice Owls who grew into Number 53 of the Patriots. Two Pro Bowls and one Super Bowl Ring later, Larry plays on with an intensity and dedication true to his dad; a father never had better children than Tina, Lenny and Larry.

And that famous Izzo intensity and dedication drove Larry's business career. Only one guy on the face of the earth could have gotten Teesside built on time, half-pint legend and all; Larry Izzo. One of life's great moments was in a muddy parking lot at three in the morning, Izzo and White laughing about the exposure of £385,000 per day of now terminated liquidated damages. And the creation from scratch of Enron Engineering & Construction, driven by Larry. All the engineers

here know, and many have the scars to prove, what it was like to be on the other side of the change order argument from Larry. The project always got done. Larry was money in the bank.

And when it came to families and love of his children and grandchildren, and every other young person with whom he came in contact, Larry Izzo was unsurpassed. The memories come in a flood: 4th of Julys on Lake Conroe, the grill master serving one and all; the Suttons, Whites and Izzos trying to get a single boat working between us for the fireworks. And all the extra sons and daughters, our sons and daughters who looked upon Larry as their second father. The attraction was his sheer love of life; the fun of being around him, and every one of those young people is a better person because they knew Larry Izzo. And always there was the love of his life, Terry. She was the perfect match for Larry; Army wife, mother and at times moderator of the famous Izzo temper. There was no question who had the ultimate say.

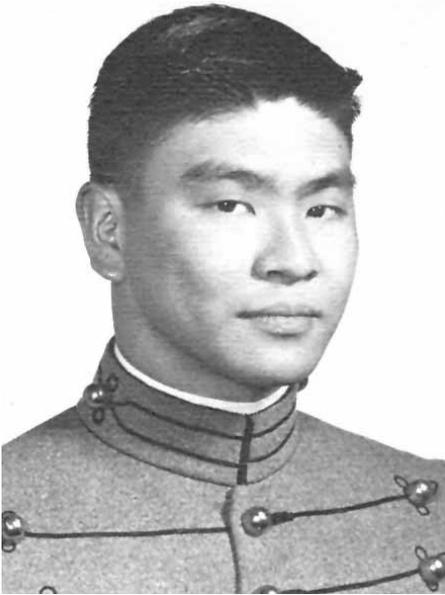
And he was the best friend any of us guys ever had, and our fiercest competitor. What started out on the fields of friendly strife at West Point in Lacrosse and 150 football ended up with the Saturday morning golf game. But the rules never changed over those years even if the game did; no quarter asked or given, fight for every last buck. What a wonderful escape it was. It didn't matter what happened during the week, how many challenges were confronted, how many difficulties encountered, just get to the Saturday morning game with the guys and life would be good. Larry was a charter member of our game. He played for the last time just two months ago. We were putting on the 2nd green when a ball landed in our midst, a serious breach of etiquette, even for our group. It was Izzo. Up he strode announcing he was in the game, and in character fashion, demanding more than his usual allocation of strokes, which of course, he did not get. Seven holes later, he walked off with some money. By God, we will all miss him.

And so my dear friends, we celebrate the life of Larry Izzo, which has touched every one of us here, and hundreds who could not be, in such profound ways. I can feel him with me now, telling me to wrap this thing up; he was the most impatient man I ever met. And I will heed his advice because he is right, as usual, and he will be with me, and all of us, in our hearts always. And in return, we will be there, all of us, to love and support the Izzo family in the days and years ahead. Friends are forever.

We will lay Larry to rest at West Point on Friday, on the most hallowed ground in our country; the ground reserved for patriots, the ground reserved for soldier-leaders, the ground on which our classmates, who have gone on ahead, rest. It is where Larry belongs. Our Class Motto, adopted some 40 years ago, is "No One will Surpass '67 Class." In those 40 years, no one ever surpassed Larry Izzo. No one ever will.

I know my friend Larry is with God.  
Amen.





**Michael Noburu Nii**

No. 26905

Died in Kauai, Hawaii, 15 December 2005

Interment: Cremated

*To date no Assembly/Taps memorial article  
has been published for Mike.*



**Henry Mathias Uberecken**

No. 26945

Died in Texas, 3 October 2006

Interment: Cremated, Ashes Scattered

*To date no Assembly/Taps memorial article has  
been published for Hank.*



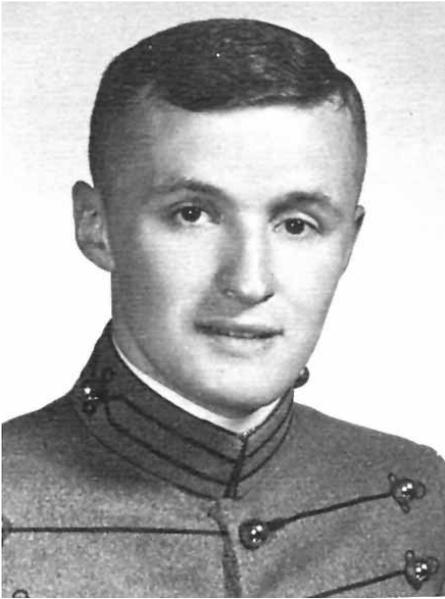
**Steven Gregory Honzo**

No. 27092

Died in Marengo, Ohio, 26 September 2007

Interment: Palmerton, PA

*To date no Assembly/Taps memorial article has  
been published for Greg.*



## Robert Adam Wysocki

No. 26948

Died in Bridgewater, CT, 23 January 2008

Cremated, Private Inurnment

*To date no Assembly/Taps memorial article has been published for Bob.*

*The following biography was provided by his widow Mary and Greg Rice.*

Bob was the President and Managing Partner of the Cornell Group-Connecticut, Inc, an executive search consulting firm he founded in 1996, after completing a career at NYNEX Corporation and Bell Systems. Bob brought to the Cornell Group over 25 years of experience in the Investor Relations, Investment and Telecommunications professions and industry. During his last eight years at NYNEX, Bob was Executive Director of Investor Relations, assisting the Chairman and CFO of NYNEX with all aspects of communications with the global investor community. From 1982-1987 he headed the NYNEX Investment Management Staff responsible for investment policy, asset diversification, investment manager selection and

surveillance, in-house management and trust administration. The NYNEX Master Pension Trust was one of the top 25 private pension funds in the U.S. Prior to his executive staff responsibilities, Bob served in various corporate treasury positions with financial management responsibilities.

Bob graduated with honors from the Executive MBA program at Pace University in 1984.

He has served as the President of the National Investor Relations Institute.

He was the President of the West Point Society of New York from 1995-1997, where he raised over \$100,000 for various projects.

He was a member of the Connecticut Congressional Committee for nominees to West Point.

He was appointed the Civilian Aide for the Secretary of the Army in 2002 for Connecticut.

He was a Dana Farber Jimmy Fund supporter for cancer research and among the leading fund raisers for the 2006 walk-a-thon.

He was a member of the Board of Trustees of the town of Bridgewater, Connecticut, where he was cited for his integrity, common sense, and professional judgment.

He loved West Point and the bonds he made with his brothers in the class.

Throughout his life, in whatever endeavor he chose to pursue, Bob revealed his core identity: high moral character and a sincere and caring interest in his fellow man.

Above all Bob treasured his family: Bob is survived by a loving family, his wife Mary, son Chris and wife Mitzi, daughter Lauren and husband Mike and his grandson AJ.

### *Not Dead*

*Walking through the trees to cool my heat and pain,  
I know that David's with me here again.  
All that is simple, happy, strong, he is.  
Caressingly I stroke  
Rough bark of a friendly oak.  
A brook goes bubbling by: the voice is his.  
Turf burns with pleasant smoke:  
I laugh at chaffinch and at primroses.  
All that is simple, happy, strong, he is.  
Over the whole wood in a little while  
Breaks his slow smile.*

*Robert Graves (1895-1985)*



## Robert Howard Miller, Jr.

No. 26690

Died in Katy, TX, 11 June 2008

Cremated, Inurned in Florida

*To date no Assembly/Taps memorial article has been published for Bob. The following tribute appeared in the August 2008 issue of Pooper Scooper.*

Robert Howard Miller, Jr., passed away in the early morning hours of 11 June 2008, with his wife Lila at his side. Tom Parr was with them only a couple of hours earlier, when Bob called her name. That was his last conscious moment, and the best tribute to the woman who has loved him and cared for him so well. As many of you know, this was Bob's third battle with cancer over the past ten years, all of it caused by exposure to agent orange in Vietnam. Bob put up a terrific fight, and never, ever lost his sense of humor or his clear focus on life. He will be sorely missed. He and Lila were married just prior to our 40<sup>th</sup> reunion; the reunion was their honeymoon.

A memorial service for Bob was held in Katy, TX on the afternoon of June 23. Here's a report from Tom Parr: "Bob Frank '70 helped tremendously, both before and after Bob's death. He coordinated a chorale group from the West Point Society of Greater Houston to sing the Alma Mater and Mansions of the Lord. A lot of Grads from the Class of '58 forward were in attendance. Steve Sears, Bob's and Tom

Parr's "Other Roommate" Cow year and the last week of Firstie year (long story about Operations Crossroad, a mountain in Africa, a fall off of a cliff that would have killed a human, and 9 months in bed, in traction, in the hospital...) from Spokane, WA. Rich Adams, who also roomed with Bob, came in from Colorado, and Rob & Judy Herb were able to postpone their trip back to Cheyenne, WY, to join us. David Ellis, ex-'67, and an alum of the CIA (as was Bob), was present, as well as Randy Pais, Bob LaRaia, Al Nahas, and Jerry Walker. Bob's daughters and mother came in from Florida, where Bob's ashes will be interred next to his grandparents and father. His brother was able to be with Bob before his death, but he could not make it from New York to attend the services.

Our B-3 Tac, COL Bob Hull '56, was not able to attend, but sent a message that he remembered Bob as '...a highly intelligent and decent man who contributed to his world and society.'

Our class provided a nice arrangement of flowers, and we had the Corps flag present. His pastor resided over a

wonderful service, and Sears and I did our best to paint a picture of our buddy Bob during the eulogy for those who did not know him well in life. Rich Adams recited his poem, In Their Eyes. There were very few dry eyes in the church as he spoke the last lines.

Lila has asked me to please express hers and Bob's gratitude to all of those who sent letters, cards, and e-mails, and to the class prayer group. The support of the Unsurpassed Class meant a lot to them, and Lila will carry the warmth shared by our class in her heart forever. Being able to attend the reunion just after their wedding was the highlight of their short time together, and Lila knows she is now a member of a very special group of people."





Photo taken by Sylvia G raham

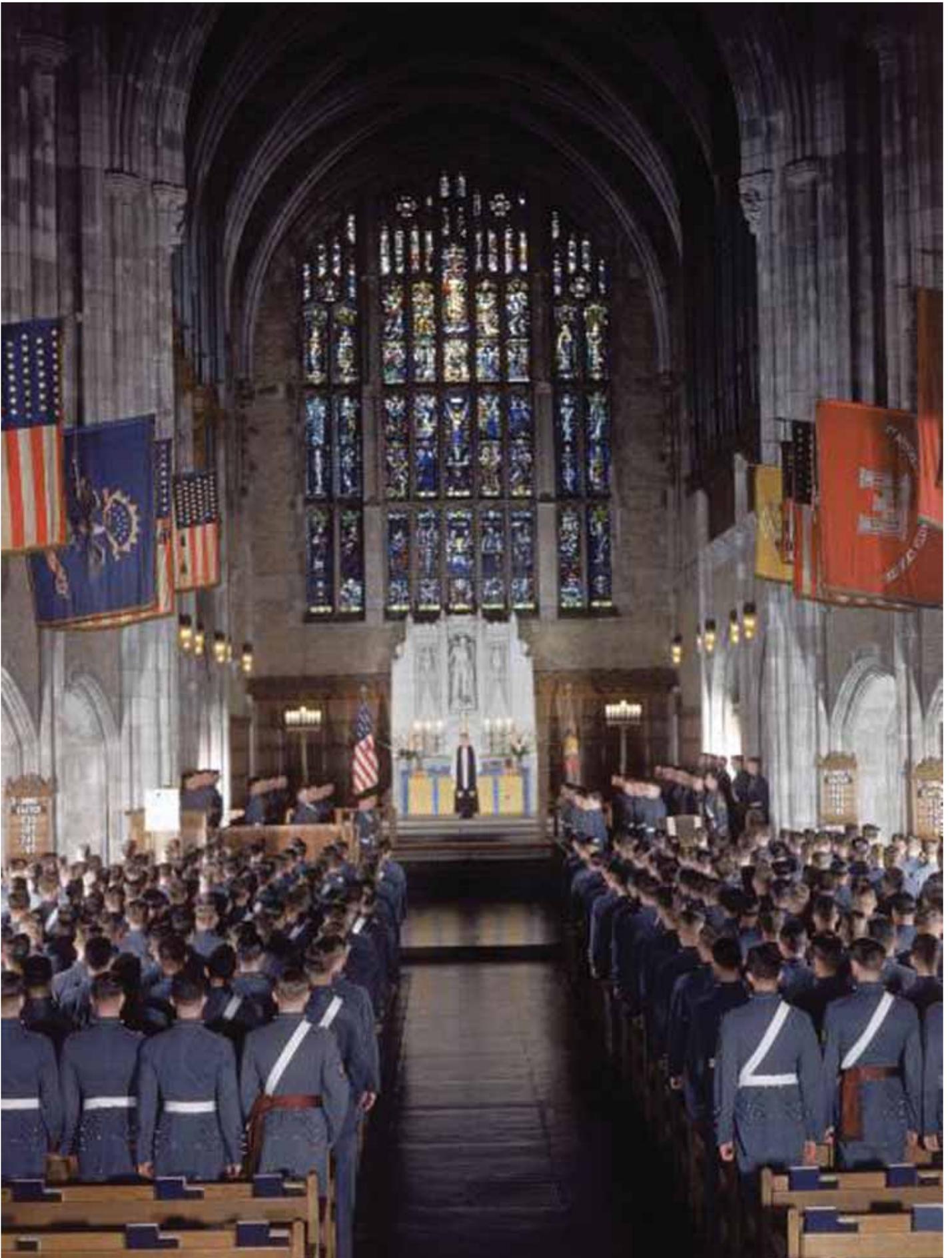
## Alma Mater

Hail, Alma Mater dear,  
To us be ever near  
Help us thy motto bear  
Through all the years.  
Let Duty be well performed,  
Honor be e'er untarned,  
Country be ever armed,  
West Point, by thee.

Guide us, thy sons, aright,  
Teach us by day, by night,  
To keep thine honor bright,  
For thee to fight.  
When we depart from thee,  
Serving on land or sea,  
May we still loyal be,  
West Point, to thee.

And when our work is done,  
Our course on earth is run,  
May it be said, "Well Done;  
Be thou at peace."  
E'er may that line of gray  
Increase from day to day,  
Live serve and die we pray,  
West Point, for thee.

P. S. Reinecke '11





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