

**FALLEN HEROES TRIP**  
***Final Service at West Point***  
***November 27, 2018***

**A Memorial Journey  
For USMA 1969 Classmates  
Who Made The  
Ultimate Sacrifice  
For Their Country  
During The Vietnam War**

***by***  
***RAY DUPERE***



**Joe Silva**



**Pickett King**



**John Woodrum**



**Chip Oliver**



**USMA Class of 1969  
Memorial Service  
for  
Our Fallen Classmates  
Interred at West Point**

**3:00pm, Tuesday  
November 27, 2018  
at  
West Point Cemetery  
U.S. Military Academy  
West Point, New York**



**Jon Shine**



**Paul Sawtelle**



**Harry Thain**



**Ken Yonan**

On numerous occasions during my travels around the country for the different memorial services the subject of a final resting place often came up as a part of normal conversation. Even though none of us were getting any younger, almost without exception most people I talked to had not made any final decisions. I mentioned this to

my wife when I returned home as we were no more prepared than anyone else. Even as I write this we still haven't absolutely decided, though I did mention that I think I would like to be buried at West Point if possible. I think this final service has convinced me of that even more than when we talked about it a few months ago. So much of who I am as a person can be traced to West Point; and so many of my most precious memories can be located there as well. Though I had dreamed of going to the Academy since I was about ten years old I had never actually been there before. The day I first set foot on West Point soil was the day I swore to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America. Like many others I'm sure, I did so with tears streaming down my cheeks. After the service at the cemetery we visited the Memorial Room at Cullum Hall to see the names of our fallen classmates inscribed there. Following that I went upstairs to the ballroom to re-visit the spot where I first met my wife on 15 February 1969 at a Valentines Mixer. This coming February will be the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the day we met. Though I didn't take the time for an extra visit, next door to Cullum Hall is what was once the West Point Officers' Mess where Avril and I had our wedding reception on 13 June 1970. I also have very fond memories of bringing my son up to West Point back in the summer of 1992 for a week of soccer camp. I was able to stay with the players in the old 4<sup>th</sup> Regiment barracks and watch Jeremy play on the same fields that I had played on as a plebe for the D3 intramural soccer team. During the service at the cemetery there were a couple of things which touched me that also pointed towards the idea of being buried there. One was the reminder that Joe Silva had been moved to West Point after having first been buried in his hometown of Rutland, VT. I had read Joe's memorial article several times before, but somehow the idea of his remains being moved sounded so fitting when read at his gravesite at West Point. The other thing was a very deep emotion that began to come over me as Ed Quinn read Ken Yonan's memorial. As he was nearing the end of the reading it began to dawn on me that my mission was almost complete. In a few short minutes I would share my devotional and then we would say the Lord's Prayer and finally the bugler would play taps. As the sun was starting to go down and the emotions started to take hold I thought to myself that what we were doing was just exactly as it should be. The memorial trip came to a fitting close at West Point where for each of us it had all started over fifty years ago. In closing I would like to thank everyone who took part in all of the twelve services around the country. The presence of every single person was an encouragement and a blessing. I would also like to thank God for giving me the idea and for enabling me to see it through to the end. If it were not for coming to faith in Jesus Christ 46+ years ago, it would not have been possible, but with God all things are possible.



**On a cold gray afternoon (27 Nov 2018) twenty members of the BOTL and one class widow (Lynn Brown) gathered at the West Point Cemetery to pay homage to the lives, sacrifice and dedicated service of our eight classmates resting there who fell in Vietnam.**





**Left to right, Bob Harper, Fred Mott, Phil Clark, Phil Smith, Ed Quinn, Bob Molter, Lynn Brown, Doug Williams, John Morris, Mike Colacicco, KC Brown, Ray Dupere, Cdt Joe Mannino, '19, Pete Heesch, Chuck Anstrom, Chuck Anderson, Tom Watson, Jim McDonough, Mike McGovern, Tom Hanna, and Jeff Peterson (Class of '69 Chairholder).**