



Donald A. Couvillion Co E-1

The Couver came to West Point from none other than sunny California. When good times were to be had, whether at West Point or away in the city, you could always count on Couv to contribute his welcomed share. Many a fond girl will cherish the memories she shares with Don.

Born – 8 Dec 1939, Baton Rouge, LA.

To USMA – Came from Burbank, CA. Appointed by California 20th. Nickname – “The Couvers”, “Couv”.

Died – 8 Dec 1995 (age 56) on his birthday at Mount Holly, NJ. Buried at West Point.

Military Awards – Distinguished Flying Cross, 2 Bronze Star Medals, 15 Air Medals, Army Commendation Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Combat Infantryman’s Badge.

Schooling – Pilot Training Schools (Fixed Wing, Caribou, Mohawk), Master’s Degree in Engineering, University of California, Berkeley, Command and General Staff College.

Family - Wife – Janet Warner Couvillion (33 years) – 2 children (Caprice and Collin) – 3 plus grandchildren

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Don served on active duty in the Army (Infantry and then Transportation Corps) for 20 years, retiring in 1981, with the rank of Lt. Colonel. His first assignment was in Panama. After 4 years in the Infantry jumping out of airplanes, Don had a better idea — flying. He volunteered for flight training and qualified in fixed wing at Ft. Rucker, AL and the Caribou at Ft. Eustis, VA. In 1967, he went to Vietnam (first tour - 13th Aviation Battalion), where he flew Caribous and Beavers in and out of remote locations. In 1969, he returned to Ft. Eustis and qualified in the OV-1 (Mohawk). He then attended the Command and General Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth, KS before returning to Vietnam (second tour - 13th Aviation Battalion). Never outgrowing his love for flying, he was one of the original Army pilots selected for the U.S. Astronaut program in the early 1970s, continuing on to become rotary-winged qualified and serving as a test pilot at Ft. Eustis. His final assignment before retirement from the Army was at Ft. Monmouth.

After retiring from active duty in the Army, Don worked in the aeronautical industry. He joined Transcoil, Inc. as the Chief Engineer and was soon recruited into the management team of Magnavox Corporation. These two positions helped advance his career further as the Regional Manager of AIL Systems, Inc., remaining there until retiring again in 1994. Don passed away on 8 December 1995, from cancer.

Footnote from LIFE magazine – A feature article on the Plebe Class of 1961 displayed a photograph of Don and fellow E-1 classmate, Jim Schall, ball-room dancing together in Cullum Hall during lessons provided by the Arthur Murray Dance School.