



John Owen Sommercamp, Sr. Co K-2

When this Californian joined Kappa Dos, he bought with him a trumpet and a tremendous knack for making friends. As a Plebe he didn't take long to discover all the food was in the corps squad area which is where he spent two seasons out of every year. John's natural ability, personality, and sincerity destine him for success.

Born – 4 Feb 1939, Redlands, CA.

To USMA – Came from Beaumont, CA. Appointed by California 29th. Nickname – “Johnnie”.

Died – 18 June 2003 (age 64) at Folsom, CA. Buried at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery Point Loma, San Diego County, CA.

Military Awards – Navigator Wings, 2 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 8 Air Medals, 2 Air Force Commendation Medals.

Schooling – Degree in Meteorology, New York University, MBA Degree, San Diego State University.

Family - Wife – Marty Cleveland Sommercamp (40 years) – 2 sons (John and James) – 4 grandchildren.

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John served on active duty in the Air Force for 20 years, retiring in 1981, with the rank of Major. His first assignment was at New York University studying Meteorology. He then served at John Connolly Air Force Base (AFB), Waco, TX (Navigator Wings and 501st Air Training Wing), Travis AFB, CA (86th Air Transportation Squadron, MAC), Danang, Vietnam (37th Air Rescue Squadron), Scott AFB, IL (Headquarters, Military Airlift Command), San Diego, CA (San Diego State University), Andrews Air Force Base, MD (HQ, Air Force Systems Command, (AFSC)), Wright-Patterson AFB, OH (B-1 Systems Project Director, HQ), Norfolk, VA (Armed Forces Staff College), and Los Angeles AFB, CA (Antisatellite Project Manager, AFSC Space Division).

After receiving his Navigator Wings, John flew continual C-130 supply missions between the U.S. and Viet Nam. He disliked the return flights when his plane transported the remains of fallen comrades. Beginning in May 1966, John's flight missions became more challenging and much more dangerous. Flying out of Da Nang with the crew of an HU-16 Albatross, John's assignment was Yankee Station off the coast of North Viet Nam. The mission was to rescue downed airmen. One day, his crew made a water landing in Haiphong harbor and picked up a downed Air Force pilot. Under fire from shore batteries, they then taxied for a mile across the harbor to pick up a downed Navy pilot.

After retiring from the Air Force, John devoted his time to family, coaching his sons, and investing in the stock market. John passed away on 18 June 2003, from a heart attack. John was always kind and considerate to all. He personified the code of Air Rescue – “That Others May Live.”

Footnote - John loved football and was 1st team All-Southern California football. At West Point, he was a promising running back until hurting his knee plebe year. He never fully recovered but continued to go to practices, and assist the coaches throughout his time as a cadet. John also participated in chapel choir and glee club. He loved to sit on the steps of the Cadet Chapel after services in the autumn admiring the scenery and the colorful foliage on the hills around West Point.