



**John Arthur Eielson Co C-2**

*John entered West Point with some doubt as to what lay ahead. It soon became evident to all that his determination and sense of humor were adequate prerequisites to send him high in the class. Torn between his loves of football, skiing, and lacrosse, John spent most of his leisure hours as a cadet engaged in some form of athletics.*

**Born** – 19 June 1939, Orange, NJ.

**To USMA** – Came from Haverhill, MA. Appointed as Qualified Alternate.

**Died** – 7 Feb 1991 (age 51) at Fitchburg, MA. Ashes were spread in several places special to the Eielson family.

**Military Awards** – National Defense Service Medal.

**Schooling** – Medical Degree, University of Pennsylvania. Board Certified in both General and Thoracic Surgery. Alpha Omega Alpha, National Medical Honor Society.

**Family** - Wife – Sandy Nolet Eielson Quinlan (28 years) – 2 children (Kristopher and Kerry) – 6 grandchildren.

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John served on active duty in the Army (Corps of Engineers then Medical Corps), for 21 years, retiring in 1982, with the rank of Colonel. After his first assignment in the Engineer Battalion (Platoon Leader and Company Commander) at Ft. Lewis, WA, he then served in Philadelphia, PA as a Medical Student at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School (under an Army program for excess leave to study medicine). During those summers, he was stationed at Valley Forge, PA (Medical Student, Valley Forge Army Hospital). Upon graduation, he was sent to Honolulu, HI (Intern, Tripler Army Medical Center), then Washington, D.C. (Resident, General Surgery and Thoracic Surgery, Walter Reed Army Medical Center), Frankfurt, Germany (Chief of General Surgery, 97<sup>th</sup> General Hospital), Aurora, CO (Chief of General Surgery and the Surgical Training Program, Fitzsimons Army Medical Center).

After retiring from active duty in the Army, John joined another Army trained surgeon in a successful private practice in Fitchburg, MA. Eight years later in July 1990, he was diagnosed as having a malignant brain tumor (an astrocytoma). He passed away on 7 February 1991, six months after his diagnosis. What made this man special to so many? - Intellectually curious, he was also a gifted writer of prose and poetry, an accomplished artist, as well as a fine athlete. John was a master of satire, an inventor of outrageously construed exclamations that amused and sometimes shocked his listeners. One could easily say he was a Renaissance man. As a physician, he was both proficient and deeply caring, receiving countless letters of appreciation from his many patients. His evolving relationship with God deepened as he aged. At his death, he was a committed follower of Christ, a comforting reality to all who treasured him. He was a loving husband and father who provided adventure, rollicking fun, tender care and strong guidance.

Footnote – For many in the USMA Class of '61, every time they hear the 1961 song hit by Jimmy Dean - "Big John", they remember and think of their friend - Big John Eielson.