



William Townsley Deuel Co G-1

Many people are amazed to find that Bill doesn't spell his name with three o's. Half way through plebe year, Bill found a home in the fourth floor gym. His most prized possessions are "Navy stars" won in gymnastics. He may be remembered as claiming to be the only normal-sized man of '61 in G company.

Born – 24 Oct 1938, Memphis, TN. Army Brat. His father was a West Pointer class of 1912.

To USMA – Came from Springfield, IL. Appointed by Illinois Senator Douglas. Nickname – “Charlie Brown”.

Died – 30 Sep 1966 (age 27) Killed-in-Action (KIA), Vietnam. Buried at West Point.

Military Awards – Bronze Star Medal (with V), 2 Army Commendation Medals, Purple Heart, Combat Infantryman's Badge.

Schooling – Armor Career Course (as an Infantryman), Military Advisor's Course.

Family - Wife – Jeannie Deuel (2 1/2 years) – one son (Matthew) – grandchildren.

Contact – Jeannie Deuel (wife), Matthew Deuel (son).

Bill served on active duty in the Army (Infantry) for 5 plus years until his untimely death in Vietnam in 1966, with the rank of Captain. His first assignment was with Company B, 2nd Battle Group, 3rd Infantry (Platoon Leader) in Korea. He then served at Ft. Benning, GA (Infantry Advanced Course), Ft. Campbell, KY (Assistant Operations Officer), Vietnam (Battalion Advisor, RVN 2nd Airborne Battalion).

On 21 September 1966, just nine days before he died, Bill shared the thoughts that guided his actions in life in a letter to his wife, Jeannie - “I believe that we were all put on this earth for a purpose, and our lives will not end until that purpose is achieved. I believe that each one of us has been delegated certain responsibilities. I believe that the important thing is not how soon we can be relieved of them, but how well we manage them until God sees fit to relieve us of them. In your prayers I hope you pray not for our safety, but that we have the wisdom and courage to shoulder our responsibilities.”

On 30 September, while returning from a successful mission, the helicopter in which Bill was riding received heavy automatic weapons fire from the ground. In that one unlucky instant Bill was killed. He was the only man on the aircraft who was hit. Among the hundreds of letters received by his wife and family came one from then Lieutenant Barry McCaffery – “I must tell you of the affection and respect that Sergeant Ortiz and I felt for our captain. He was a very kind man and a brave and competent officer....The captain's loss stunned the battalion completely....(His) sacrifice, I assure you, will not be forgotten by the officers and men of the 2nd Airborne Battalion.”

Footnote - He learned the routine of company-level operations so well during Bill's assignment in Korea at a Lieutenant that his commanding officer said to Bill – “I may be a Captain before you, but you will be a General before I am.”