

# The Viet Nam Triple Deuce, Inc.

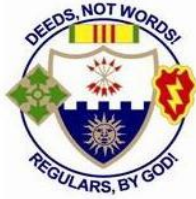
An Association of 2 Bn. (Mech)

22nd Infantry Regiment

Viet Nam Veterans

Together Then.....Together Again!.....

Thanks for Being There...&...Welcome Home



Vol. 30, No. 1

March 2024

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Steve Irvine B/68-69

Harold Metcalf

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Hello again from the sunny Midwest. It's really nice to cope with growing grass again rather than snow. I hope this finds you all well and good and looking forward to the next greatest reunion ever in Nashville in August. We are hearing some comments about the cost of staying in downtown Nashville compared to past reunions, but if you think about the experiences you have had at reunions in the past it becomes a smaller problem and a wise investment, especially at our ages. Comfort and relaxation are much more important to we old goats than it used to be...

This will be my first reunion since Dallas thanks to some ticker trouble popping up at the wrong times and I'm anxious to get back in the swing of things with you guys and gals. I'll apologize now for talking your ears off ahead of time, because those face-to-face conversations are so rewarding compared to this writing stuff.

The Board has several important things to present to you at our business meeting, so please make time to attend it. This is your organization, and you need to help guide it as we approach the end stage of it. See you soon...

**Dick Nash, A Co. & HHC, 69**

## **EDITOR'S COMMENTS**

There is a lot of news in this newsletter, so be sure to read all of it. Most importantly, the next Reunion is coming in August, so it is time to start planning your trip. The information about the reunion is listed below, and attached to the newsletter is the registration form you will need to fill in and send off with an appropriate payment.

Also attached is the latest, updated catalog of Triple Deuce Vietnam merchandise available from Jim May. You will notice that some of the prices have gone up. No, Jim isn't trying to rip you off. Inflation and higher shipping costs are responsible. Buy stuff now, before the price goes up again, or Jim runs out. Use the attached order form. Wear your Triple Deuce paraphernalia proudly, especially at the Reunion.

Thank you to all you guys who keep sending me articles to put in the newsletter. The more content the better.

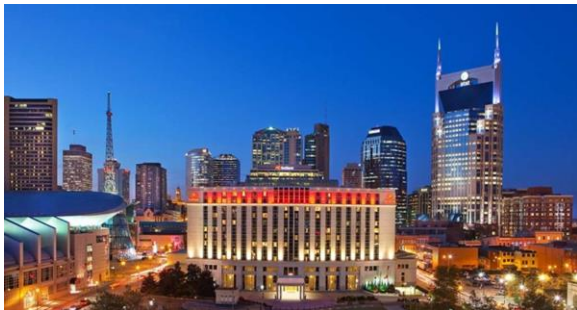
Brothers, it is an unfortunate but inescapable fact that our numbers are dwindling. Take heart in the knowledge that we are finally being recognized for our service, unlike things were in the Seventies. We can now hold our heads high.

Deeds, Not Words

**David Allin, DMOR  
A Co. & HHC, 69-70**

## REUNION AUGUST 21-25, 2024

If you didn't see the latest newsletter from the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment Society, here is the information for the reunion. The registration form is attached to this newsletter. The reunion will be at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Nashville Downtown, 315 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37219-1693. To make reservations, call 1-800-222-8733. Our Group Name is *22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment Society 2024 Reunion*, and our Group code is **92R**. Be sure to give them the code when you make the reservation, to ensure you get the group rate. The room rate for our group, with tax and fees, is \$246.63. Hotel reservations at our group rate must be made prior to July 23, 2024. The registration form has the information and prices for the dinners and other events.



## ALL ABOUT JIM MAY

*Editor's Note: In an email exchange about my latest book, Jim and I were discussing good and bad officers we had known. This is his comment.*



My experience with senior officers was mixed. My enlisted MOS was 11D, Cav Scout. I finished at the top of my training class partly because I'm an Eagle Scout, maps and compass reading and all things in the woods were not new to me, and partly because I could shoot. Expert with the Rifle, Machine Gun and Pistol. One would think that I would have gone to OCS at Ft Knox where I did Reconnaissance training, but no, the Army sent me to Ft Eustis, Transportation OCS. I was 20 years old and knew only that Army Branches did different missions. After OCS I went to the 197<sup>th</sup> Inf Bde at Ft Benning. I served as Bn Motor

Officer, 2<sup>nd</sup> BN, 10<sup>th</sup> Arty, HQ Btry CO, 2<sup>nd</sup> BN, 10<sup>th</sup> Arty and then Bde Asst S-4. All the time I was with the 197<sup>th</sup> I kept being told by the Field Grade Officers I worked for that I wasn't like the people in my Branch and that I should transfer, first to Artillery when I was with 2<sup>nd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> Arty and then Infantry when I was with Bde HQ. I really didn't know why I kept being told I wasn't like the others in my Branch, I was a lieutenant and assumed that all Lt's did what they were told to do.

Well, when I found myself in the 25<sup>th</sup> S&T Bn (another Army screw-up) I quickly understood why I was told that I wasn't like the others in my Branch. Like your experience, I found myself with people who didn't know how to complete a mission but were all about how things looked. Appearance was everything. I was in the land of Quartermasters. I was also excess. Another Lt asked if I'd like to join him on a small convoy the next day; I was delighted to say yes. In the morning I found myself sitting in the passenger seat of a Jeep with an M-60 mounted on a pedestal. There was an EM manning the M-60. The other Lt was driving. We stopped at the Co HQ for an unknown reason. While the other Lt was in the building, I asked the EM how competent he was with the M-60. The EM told me he was a truck driver and had never seen an M-60 until now. When the other Lt got back in the Jeep, I told him that the EM had never seen an M-60 until just a few minutes ago. The other Lt's reply was, "Well, that's who they gave me." This ROTC Lt was a nice guy but didn't have the sense of an 11B who just finished AIT. My response was to switch places with the EM.

I knew then that I had to get away from these QM types. A day or so later I learned that a lieutenant was needed in the

Provisional Company in Dau Tieng and I volunteered for the job. The BN XO and CO were surprised that I wanted to go forward, but they granted my wish. This was the beginning of how I got involved with Triple Deuce.

**Jim May**  
**HHC, Prov. Co. 1968**

## **Harold Metcalf**

*In the last newsletter, we showed the certificate presented to Harold as a Distinguished Member of the Vietnam Triple Deuce. Here is the basis for that presentation.*

The Kool aid Kid crawled out of his luxury foxhole to make a presentation of the Honorary Member of the Battalion award to his close friend of many years, **Harold Metcalf**.

You have seen his name listed along with our webmaster, Steve **Irvine**, in our newsletter. The reason for the award follows:

Quartermaster **Jim May** contacted me on behalf of the Board of Directors and officers to make the presentation to Harold of a nicely framed letter announcing the award.

Years ago, while I was serving as your President, it was brought to my attention by the Board that we were receiving many complaints, wishes, and questions about our website. The board then charged me with getting the ball rolling on making a site that does us all justice.

Yikes! I know nothing about making and monitoring a website. Gee thanks guys. Hahaha!

So, I cried for help and **Steve Irvine** stepped up to the plate to save my skinny little behind. We started off with some upgrades to the main page but soon ran into issues that Steve said we will need a Programmer Analyst to rewrite some code if we were going to get what we want.

That's when I thought of Harold, who is a retired Programmer from the City of Portland, OR, Traffic management Dept. Harold wrote programs for Traffic signals maintenance, etc. He said he would take a look at the code. Harold loves programming challenges so he jumped right in the site to see what he could do. He got together with Steve, and they got to work. Harold only has one rule if one wants his services: "You must tell me what you want." So, that is what Steve did, and is doing for us today.

Harold was surprised and honored to become an Honorary Vietnam Triple Deucer. He is very aware of the power our site has in helping us attain our goals of finding our brothers and documenting our successful military history, which is second to none.

Harold has always lived by our motto, "Deeds, not words."

**Lynn Dalpez, DMOB, DMOR**  
**The Kool Aid Kid**

## **UNDERSTANDING A MILITARY VETERAN**

To understand a Military Veteran, you must know: \* We left home as teenagers or in our early twenties for an unknown adventure, away from family and

everything we knew. \* We learned the basics, then scattered in the wind to the far corners of the Earth. \* We found new friends and new family. \* We became brothers and sisters regardless of color, race, or creed. \* We had plenty of good times and plenty of bad times. \* We didn't get enough sleep. \* We smoked and drank too much. \* We picked up both good and bad habits. \* We worked hard and played harder. \* We didn't earn a great wage. \* We experienced the happiness of mail call and the sadness of missing important events. \* We didn't know when, or even if, we were ever going to see home again. \* We grew up fast, and yet somehow, we never grew up at all.

\* We fought for our freedom, as well as the freedom of others. \* Some of us saw actual combat, and some of us didn't. \* Some of us saw the world, and some of us didn't. \* Some of us dealt with physical warfare, and most of us dealt with psychological warfare. \* We have seen, experienced and dealt with things that we can't fully describe or explain, as not all of our sacrifices were physical. \* We participated in time-honored ceremonies and rituals with each other, strengthening our bonds and camaraderie. \* We counted on each other to get our job done and sometimes to survive it at all. \* We have dealt with victory and tragedy. \* We have celebrated and mourned. \* We lost a few along the way.

\* When our adventure was over, some of us went back home, some of us started somewhere new, and some of us never came home at all. \* We have told amazing and hilarious stories of our exploits and adventures. \* We share an unspoken bond with each other that most people don't experience, and few will understand. \* We

speaking highly of our own branch of service and poke fun at the other branches. \* We know, however, that, if needed, we will be there for our brothers and sisters and stand together as one in a heartbeat. \* ***Being a Veteran is something that had to be earned, and it can never be taken away.*** \* It has no monetary value, but at the same time, it is a priceless gift.

“How many times we must have thought.....dying was the easy part, it’s living.....that hurts so much! But live we must, for without us keeping them in our hearts and prayers, they would exist no more!”

“Sometimes, in my very, very rare, but very deep and troublesome periods, I wonder, if it isn’t those who have made the supreme sacrifice, who will sleep soundly and peacefully, for eternity, while the rest of us will always feel the tearing at the heart and hear the whispering in the mind.”  
– John Eberwine 1996

Each step the living Veteran takes honors the dead who have gone before.  
I stand for the Flag & National Anthem and kneel in prayer for the dead.



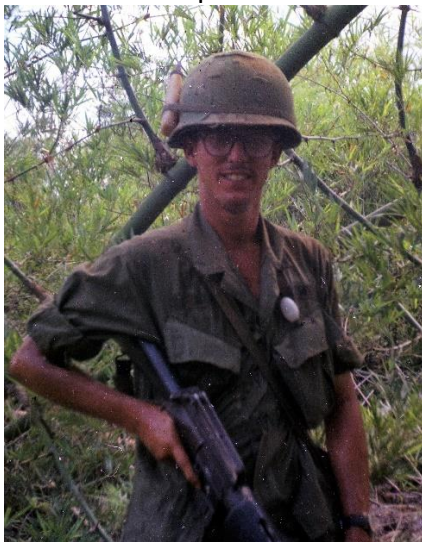
**John Eberwine, DMOR**  
**Charlie Co. Sept '67 to Sept '68**

## I, Too, Was a Replacement

Steve Irvine’s piece in the last newsletter has inspired me to describe my own introduction to Triple Deuce. It was early April 1969, when I arrived in Viet Nam. After AIT at Ft. Polk, I spent nearly six months at Ft. Campbell, KY, in a holding company while Personnel got my orders corrected, and finally I had been sent to Oakland Army Terminal (on my birthday) for shipment to Viet Nam. I was bussed to Travis AFB, and then flown to Anchorage, Okinawa, and finally Bien Hoa. I distinctly remember that when I stepped off the plane, my first impression of Viet Nam was two-fold: it was hot, and it stank. From Bien Hoa I went to Long Binh for processing, and then I was flown to Cu Chi for more processing. When they posted the unit assignments, I was extremely happy to see the (M) after 2/22 Inf next to my name. I had really wanted to be in a mech unit, and I had lucked out. While I waited for my in-country training to begin, I was put on detail—the prototypical Army detail of painting rocks. Another guy who was assigned to A Company, Triple Deuce, and I were told to paint the rocks lining the sidewalk to Division headquarters. This guy, who I will call Fred, and I shared a similar background, and quickly became friends. That night we went into a bunker to watch a movie projected onto a bedsheet. The movie starred Sammy Davis Jr. and Peter Lawford, as “Salt & Pepper”, and is rightfully forgotten now. I paid close attention during the in-country training, hoping it would help me survive. It was during that training that I became scared for the first—and only—time in Viet Nam. We were practicing a night ambush, and the idea of lying there in the dark

waiting for the enemy to come along, for some reason filled me with terror. Oddly, when I later did it for real, it was just boring and uncomfortable.

When that training was done, we were flown to Dau Tieng, issued our weapons and TA-50, and put on a deuce-and-a-half to carry us out to the company patrol base. I kept eyeing the surrounding countryside suspiciously, being very aware that I had no ammo for my M-16. When we arrived and unloaded, I was standing there wondering what to do next, when I saw a man approaching. Keep in mind, up until then all my interactions with officers involved men in sharp pressed uniforms who were aloof and somewhat arrogant. The man coming up to me had a boonie hat, no shirt, and his pants cuffs were rolled up above his muddy boots. He put out his hand to me and said, "Hi, I'm Captain Crocker, how are you?" I immediately knew I had landed in the best infantry company in Viet Nam. Then I met my platoon leader, Dick Nash, and my squad leader, Lon Oakley, and my initial impression was confirmed. Welcome to the land of the Little People.



**David Allin, DMOR  
A Co./HHC, 1969-70**

## **Ambush Patrol at Fire Support Base Burt**

*Editor's Note: You may have seen this before, but I think it is worth reprinting.  
Thank you, John Eberwine*

**Time: Afternoon of 01-01-68.**

**Location: FSB Burt.**

We have just been briefed by the ambush patrol leader of our mission that night. I remember talking to him alone and recommending that we not go out on the patrol with standard armament. He asked why. I said think about what has been going on around here. I have a feeling we are going to get hit hard tonight. He thought about it then said what do you want taken tonight? I told him what I thought was needed. He then said, tell the others. I'll back what you say. I gathered the rest of the patrol and issued instructions that two 60s, a 90 recoilless, 6 frag grenades per man, 6 claymores and an M79 were to be carried that night. I also told them that a double compliment of ammo was to be taken. I was now receiving verbal abuse from one end to the other. Well, we came back with no claymores (we did not detonate them, artillery did with their fire) about 20 M60 rounds, no frag grenades, no M79 ammo, about 150 rounds of 16 ammo, and all of the 90 recoilless rounds. We also had a clip of 45 ammo. The 90 could not be fired because we were in a hole. The back blast would have injured one or more of us. Of course, if the 90 had been our last remaining resource we would have used it.

**Time: Night of 01-01-68 & 01-02-68.**

**Location: 800 meters south of FSB Burt.  
Ambush Patrol.**

After we had set up at our original position that night, at or around 10:30 P.M. an enormous amount of movement was taking place around our position. 'C' 6 was called and given our situation report. He instructed us to change our location and to take cover in one of the laterite pits which were nearby. We were also told that rescue was not possible at the time. It was out of the question. What was going to happen very shortly was obvious. I remember that on the way to the pit I got tangled in a claymore wire. The men in back of me, as well as I, felt it took a long time to get cleared.

Once we were situated in the pit I and one other patrol member saw about 20 to 25 enemy off to our right about 50 meters. I saw the other patrol member raise his 16 to fire. I whispered don't fire. Fortunately he did not. I told River to contact 'C' 6 and report the direction of movement for the group of enemy I had just seen. It was now about midnight. I went to the patrol leader and told him that we could not fire at every sound or shadow we thought we heard or saw because no re-supply of ammo would be coming and that our only chance of survival would be to kill every enemy that saw us until daylight. All hell was starting to break loose. Both of us then talked to each patrol member and said don't fire unless you are positive that you will hit them. We also said once you see one of us has taken enemy out, put grenades on them. I also told the patrol leader that I was going to be shoulder to shoulder with one of the 60 gunners to ensure proper timing of fire and that he better do the same with the other. Sam Favata was the first to engage and kill some of the advancing enemy on our position that night. I remember Sam saying, Norm they are coming. I said I see them.

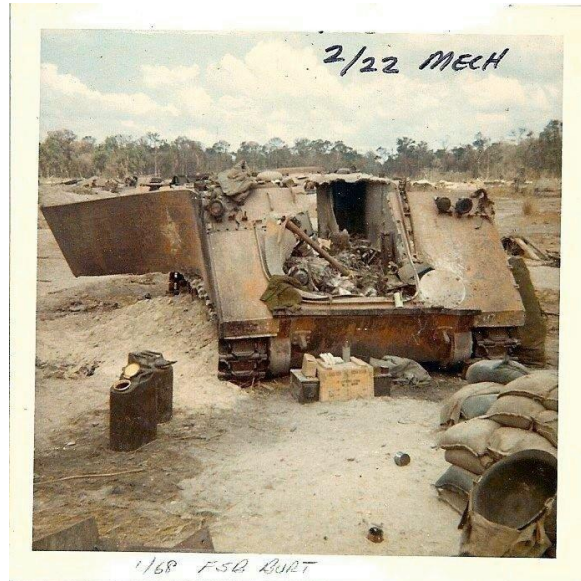
Don't shoot until I say to. Sam was getting anxious and so was I. The enemy group was about 20 to 25 feet from our position when I told Sam, now! The group of 4 NVA went down hard. Sam was told to keep the 60 pointing at the spot because I heard moaning. My 16 was also pointed at it. I told someone to put grenades on the location. None of us forgot to throw grenades the balance of the night. Incidents such as that just described took place all night. They were short, deadly encounters.

**Time: Approximately 02:30 to 03:00 A.M.  
01-02-68. Location FSB Burt Ambush  
Patrol.**

At this time approximately 100 to 150 NVA and Viet Cong are all around our position. The patrol has killed at least 12 of the enemy. 'C' 6 is told of our situation. The decision to bring an air strike directly on our position is made. All in the patrol are told to get down and take as much cover as possible. At this time we all wished we had the ability to claw to China. The air strike occurs. I don't know how many of the enemy were hit by the strike. I do remember that massive amounts of movement near our position ceased. Six of the patrol members were wounded by our bombs. I was not one of them. As I recall I was the only one on the patrol hit by the enemy that night. The air strike rendered my 16 a pull-bolt repeater. Once I had determined that my rifle's auto feed mechanism would not function, I gave the balance of my ammo to the rest of the patrol, except for two mags. I remained at Sam's side for about an hour and a half more. Then I told him that I felt our situation had calmed down quite a bit and was going over to Rivera so I could keep an eye on him. Sam said OK Norm, I know what to do. I said I know, you've done a good job.



I got to where Rivera was and asked him how he was doing. He replied OK but that his arm was starting to stiffen. River, as a result of the air strike, had received a bad wound to his left arm. He thanked me for putting a battle bandage on it earlier. I said OK and that we were going to sit back-to-back the rest of the night. If they were going to get us we were going to take as many of them out as we can. This seemed to ease his mind a little.



**Time: Approximately 04:00 A.M. until we were secured. Location: FSB Burt Ambush Patrol.**

The rate of contact with the enemy had been getting lower since the air strike. This trend continued until we were secured at daylight on 01-02-68. Around 04:30 A.M. I sensed a change around our position. Activity around us seemed to be almost nil. A feeling of relief came over me. I was now thinking we are going to get out of this situation alive. I told this to Rivera but it did not register. He was starting to go into shock. We had nothing with us to keep him warm so I kept talking to him. Just before the rescue team got to our location we could hear the tracks coming. So could an

unfortunate V.C. I am sure he was trying to get away from the tracks when he came upon our location. After seeing us he turned and started to run. I picked up Rivera's 16 and was going to shoot when Walters, 45 in hand, stood up and fired. The V.C. went down, shot in the head. Walters turned and asked me, "Norm did you see that"? I replied, "good shot cowboy"!

**Time: 06:30 A.M. Approximate. Location FSB Ambush Patrol.**

Walters had just killed the last enemy that made contact with our patrol. The rescue element was on the scene. 'C' 6 was elated that we had pulled through. His smile went from ear to ear. Words of exuberance were coming from the patrol members. I was exhausted. I got to my feet and saw the carnage around me. As others gathered enemy weapons I counted the enemy bodies. Eighteen enemy soldiers lay dead around our position. I know that we got at least twice that many. I said to myself what a terrible waste. However, I was glad to be alive.

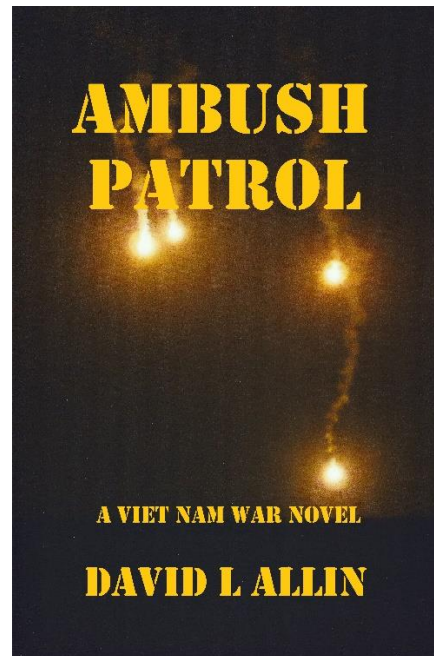


**Time: 07:00 A.M. Approximate. Location: Our return to the laager.**

As our patrol crossed the battalion laager line everyone was looking at us wondering how we survived. I saw the wreckage of several tracks and the duster. The perimeter line was littered with spent small arms cases. The ground was brass plated. I went to my track and said to the members of my squad who were present, "you guys had a pretty bad night". They looked at me and shook their heads yes. I seized the moment, returned the look, smiled, and said, "it wasn't too bad out there". I went inside the track, got some 16 ammo and mags, sat down at the side of the track and started filling the mags. Sometime during the filling process I went to sleep. I remember someone saying we need to get him up. He needs some chow. Sutherland had fixed me a C ration pizza. Also, next to me, leaning against the track, was my new M16.

**Norman T. Nishikubo**  
**C Co. Sep 67 to Aug. 68**

## NEW BOOK



In my latest novel, 1LT Carr and SFC Samples have to deal with a new company commander, one whose disastrous decisions put the platoon in extreme danger. As always, the book is available from Amazon.com.

**David L Allin, DMOR**  
**A Co./HHC, 1969-70**

## TAPS

**Ben Cook**, B Co., 1<sup>st</sup> Plt. September 1967 to September 1968, died February 13, 2024. Dean Springer had this to say about Ben: "Ben was with the 1st Platoon, B Co. 2/22 Inf. while I was the Platoon Leader. Ben would work on and drive our Armored Personnel Carriers, fire the 50 Cal. MG or

carry the M60 MG's, Use the Recoilless Rifle, or walk point. Heck, Ben even trimmed my hair when we were on extended jungle patrols. He always thought first of others...We were all Brothers-in-Arms.

Ben, Thanks for Walking Point on this Mission. Jesus has just said, "Welcome Home, Ben. Welcome Home!"

**Bruce E. "Doc" Smith**, C Co. September 1968-September 1969, died on December 4, 2023.



Harless Belcher writes: Bruce was a great Medic and a great Friend to all he touched. Three of his Charlie Brothers attended his Funeral as served as Pallbearers: Charlie Patee, Jim Lally, and Harless Belcher. Bruce's Widow asked me if we could add Bruce's love for his Honor Guard Duty's to his post.

**Karl T. Bergeron**, B&HQ Co., 4th ID & 25th ID, Sept. 66 to Jun 67, passed in October 2023. He is survived by his partner, Garner Duff.

**Bill Deckard**, B Co., 1968-1969, died on July 4, 2023, due to Alzheimer's. He is survived by his wife, Billie Sue, who says he always enjoyed getting his Triple Deuce newsletter and almost wore it out by the time he got the next one.

**Mike Groves**, A Co. March 1968 – March 1969, died December 24, 2023. He is survived by wife of 54 years, Cathra (Cathy) and daughter Valkyrie (Val), son-in-law (Tom) and two granddaughters (Ava & Stella). Mike served one tour in Vietnam, from March 1968 to March 1969. Mike was past President of Triple Deuce and past locator for Alpha Company. Mike & Cathy co-chaired the 2002 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment Society's reunion in St. Louis. He enjoyed traveling to Ft. Drum & Ft. Hood, and many reunions. He also enjoyed traveling, especially to Alaska on his motorcycle and fishing vacations to the Canadian wilderness & Venezuela.

Mike will be remembered in the community for his volunteer work as Past President of the Citizen Police Academy Alumni Association (CPAAA) for St. Louis County. Family and friends will miss his BBQ pork steaks, quick wit, and hearing him whistling happy songs. Mike had a 6-month illness, but through it all he retained his sense of humor, charm, and kept everyone's spirits high with his smile and a chocolate kiss. Mike is interred at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in St. Louis, Missouri. Deeds Not Words.