

In Loving Memory



Colonel Tom L. Stewart
March 5, 1935 - June 9, 2020



AirCav Hooah!

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He was happiest with his family gathered around him – preferably next to a Myrtle Beach campfire but a fireplace in a Tyrolean ski lodge did nicely, as well – listening to his tall tales late into the night. A warrior and a scholar, he loved Shakespeare and often quoted extended passages from the bard’s greatest AirCav Hooah!

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Colonel Tom was born in Old Boggy Depot, Oklahoma on March 5, 1935 and grew up near the Oklahoma panhandle in Enid. The son of Basil O. Stewart – one of the last great itinerant farmers roaming the vast midwestern plain – and the iconic Juanita Wike – she’d swat a fly dead, right on the plate of scrambled eggs that she just cooked you – he was fond of reminding you, with that mischievous grin of his,

“everyone in town knew me as ‘that Stewart Boy.’” He was a bruiser and in 1953 he went to Oklahoma A&M College on a football scholarship. But Life intervened, he didn’t quite finish, and soon after he enlisted in the U.S. Army.

A clever young man, after a time he got himself into the Army’s Officer Candidate School in Ft. Benning, Georgia. It was there, while finishing at the top of his class, that Colonel Tom met the southern belle who would become his wife: Elizabeth Dawson – forever to be known by him as “Miss Elizabeth.” Army Aviation School followed and he excelled. Turns out that brash young Oklahoma kid knew his way around a helicopter stick and the Army selected him to serve as one of its test pilots on the early prototype to the Cobra attack helicopter.

Colonel Tom spent two combat tours in Vietnam and, as any real combat veteran would tell you in their understated way: “acquitted himself well on the field of battle.” In 1968 he led (from the front) the 1st Armored Cavalry (Air Mobile) Division’s close air support of the marines and soldiers pinned down in the Citadel during the Battle of Hue’, part of the Tet Offensive and one of the longest, bloodiest battles in the entire Conflict. His exploits earned him the Bronze Star for combat gallantry - very rare under normal circumstances and even more so for a helicopter pilot. He dove into a river to save the crew of a downed helicopter while under heavy enemy fire. Later in his career, at the height of the Cold War, he commanded the “Ironhorse” Squadron of the legendary 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment in Fulda, Germany – his proudest professional moment.

In 1988, Colonel Tom retired from the Army to St. Louis, Missouri, which served as his home base for a quarter century and from which he and Miss Elizabeth continually launched epic road trips to the Gulf Coast, Las Vegas and back to Oklahoma – where he periodically returned as the triumphant son to regale his sisters and extended family with tales of misadventure from the wide world across which he’d cut such a mighty swath. Eventually, he and Miss Elizabeth made their way for good to Las Vegas, where he enjoyed his final years in the company of his two children and their families and friends.

In light of the continuing pandemic, the family will be hosting a Virtual Memorial Service on June 20, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. (Pacific).

The family requests that flowers and cards be sent to Colonel Tom’s wife, Elizabeth, at 4661 Riva de Romanza St., Las Vegas NV 89135.

