

WILLIAM CLIFFORD STENSLAND

Major William C. Stensland, USMC (Ret.), died on 10 August 2005. He was born on 6 August 1938, in Sioux Falls, SD, to Roy E. and Irene Mundy Stensland. A 1956 graduate of Thomas Jefferson High School, he then accepted an appointment to the Naval Academy. While at the Academy, he was a Four Striper in the first trimester, a star academic student, an avid bridge player and a very well liked individual. Bill had an adventurous spirit while at the Academy, and was often seen coming and going by his Fifth Company Classmates thru his Zero Deck window during the wee morning hours.

Upon graduation in 1960 and having always wanted to be a Marine, he was commissioned in the U.S. Marine Corps and was a member of The Basic School 4-60 class. During his active duty status, he served two tours of duty in Vietnam, receiving many honors, medals and citations. His personal decorations include the Silver Star, Bronze Star with Valor, Navy Commendation with Valor, two Purple Hearts, Vietnamese Staff Honor Medal and Vietnamese Crosses of Gallantry. In 1975, he was given a 100% disability honorable discharge for wounds received in Vietnam.

Bill affected and was respected by many Marines, and it has been said that he is one of the true heroes of the Vietnam War. He was the inspiration for the fictional characters, Lenahan in *A Sense of Hono.* and Major Otto in *Fields of Fire*, novels written by James Webb '68. Bill was a studied historian and political scientist. He was soulmate of his wife, Isabel. Bill lived by the creed, "Duty, Honor, Country." Bill loved books, travel and physical fitness. In 1993, Bill and his son, Roy, rode bicycles 1,600 miles from Ohio to Texas, and in 1997, he rode 2,750 miles from Seattle to Austin in 25 days, carrying 70 pounds of equipment. He sculled from Austin Rowing Dock approximately 2 million meters in the past year.

Bill enjoyed framing his wife's art and traveling with her on many occasions to Italy. He maintained many lifetime friendships that have endured to this day. Bill once said, when asked what the meaning of Love was to him, "Love is watching Isabel cry every time she walks into the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi." Burial was held at Arlington National Cemetery, with full military honors.

Isabel Stensland & Warren Hahn '60
Shipmate May 2006