

Gerald T. Dwyer '57

No. 21273 ■ 7 Dec 1935 – 7 Jan 1995 ■ Died in Daytona Beach, FL
Cremated. Ashes scattered over Atlantic Ocean



Gerald Thomas Dwyer was the oldest of three sons of William and Kathleen Dwyer. After leaving the place of his birth, Kingston, PA, the Dwyer family settled in Elmira Heights, NY. Both of Jerry's parents were educators, so the natural love of learning flowed easily to Jerry. Service to community and to country also was imbued in all three brothers. From his youth, Jerry had a vision to attend West Point and serve his country. His nomination to West Point was the first of many successes in his life. His military service was beyond extraordinary, as he accomplished his duties, whether administrative, as an instructor, or in training. Jerry's actions in combat were simply beyond the call of duty as a Forward Air Controller (FAC) in the Vietnam conflict. Jerry was a rare individual who always gave 100 percent of himself, no matter the task. Once Jerry undertook a task, he gave totally to accomplish it, whether making arrangements for a social event or facing several enemy soldiers who outnumbered him. His accomplishments after retiring from the Air Force were, again, superb and focused on serving his country.

Jerry met his wife Pat when he went to visit his brother Bob at the Air Force Academy. It was love at first sight, and they were married on 27 Dec 1957. The couple had three children: Bob, Linda and Carol.

We first got to know Jerry as a plebe, when he excelled academically, militarily and athletically. Jerry was destined to go to West Point and his preparation and height vectored him to Company A-2. His roommates called him terrific, with a positive attitude, and believed that, despite an occasional setback, tomorrow would be a better day. Academics came easily to Jerry, and this allowed him to help others in more dire straits. Always willing to contribute his

time and talents benefitted everyone in A-2. The company had many successful picnics and parties due to Jerry's attention to every detail. As the ring committee representative for four years, Jerry's contributions gave us a most memorable symbol—our class ring. Jerry's interest and ability in the Pistol Club probably gave him a most valued attribute when he found himself face to face with the enemy on the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

During Cow summer, when he got his hands on a T-33, he was convinced that the Air Force would be his future. Jerry found himself as an instructor pilot soon after his initial training at Vance AFB, OK. He performed well, but his ambition was to be a fighter pilot. Jerry took a short detour when selected to be the aide to the commander of the Air Force Institute of Technology. This fit him and his ambition perfectly. He excelled in his duties as an aide, and this sharpened his view of his future, whether flying or attending to his intellectual pursuits. Finally, his assignment to fly fast movers came when he was assigned to fly with the 38th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron (TRS) in Ramstein, Germany. Two years later, Jerry found himself on the staff of Headquarters, USAF Europe.

Jerry was eager for an assignment to Southeast Asia and was assigned to Nakhon Phanom, Thailand, where he flew the O-2A, a push-pull Cessna as a Forward Air Controller (FAC) in 1967–68 with the 23rd Tactical Air Support Squadron. He flew and developed tactical procedures used against enemy forces traveling along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Jerry's innovative tactics caused great damage and casualties to North Vietnam forces heading south. Jerry believed in taking the fight to the enemy, and this caused Jerry's aircraft to be shot down twice in a few months in 1968. He was rescued on his first visit to the Ho Chi Minh Trail after spending one night escaping and evading. His next bailout put Jerry in a ravine from which there was no escape. A short while later, six of the enemy came after him, but he shot and killed three. Jerry's frontal assault terrified the other three, and they ran off. Jerry was subsequently rescued for the second time. He was awarded the second

Silver Star for his miraculous actions against overwhelming odds. Subsequently, Jerry co-authored a book with a colleague, Pat Sweeney, describing their initiatives while flying as FACs over some of the most highly defended areas in Southeast Asia.

Jerry's intellectual pursuits paralleled his military growth as he immersed himself in the new data processing techniques developing for computers. He was then sent to Harvard to pursue his MBA. Armed with his new degree and his ability to develop and apply data processing to complex military subjects, Jerry returned to Germany as a staff officer and project officer for the World Wide Military Command and Control System. In 1974, he was selected to attend the National War College and was designated a Distinguished Graduate.

Jerry's last active duty assignment was at Wright-Patterson AFB, where he played a fundamental role in the logistics distribution system of Logistics Command. He retired in April 1977.

The General Electric Company recognized Jerry's valuable background in management and data processing. He worked for GE for eight years and was responsible for building a major industrial site in Ireland and overseeing management responsibilities in Singapore and other international locations. Eager to head his own company, Jerry later was president of three emerging companies.

While taking an executive physical examination in late 1994, a tumor was discovered in his lungs. He died three months later at home on 7 Jan 1995. His ashes were scattered over the Atlantic Ocean off the Florida coast, as was his wish.

Jerry was preceded in death by his parents and a son, LT Robert J. Dwyer, USN, an F/A-18 pilot who did not return from a Desert Storm mission flown from the aircraft carrier *Roosevelt*.

Duty, Honor, Country—Jerry lived by them every day of his life. Be thou at peace.

