

William E. Murphy III '57

No. 21577 ■ 8 Jan 1935 – 21 Feb 1986 ■ Died in Bryn Maw, PA
Interred in Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, VA



William Edward Murphy III was born on 8 Jan 1935 in Philadelphia, PA. As the son of William E. Murphy, Jr., Class of '29 and Elizabeth Winterer Murphy, Bill was destined to be a soldier and to follow his father's path to West Point and an Army career. Bill grew up and experienced early schooling in Philadelphia, but consistent with the life of an "Army brat," he found himself in Hawaii following World War II, along with his parents and three siblings, Tony, Kathy and Betsy. They fondly recall Bill's liking for Hawaiian "snacks," which caused him to gain weight and earn the moniker "Triple-Belly Bill." Bill's earnest quest for a West Point appointment began while at the American High School in Germany. Bill then enlisted in the Army and qualified for the U.S. Military Academy Prep School at Stewart Field near West Point. Bill studied very hard and succeeded in his quest, earning his appointment from Congressman Green. He entered with the Class of 1957 on 7 Jul 1953.

"Murph" was the congenial classmate and company mate whom we all recall with fondness and affection. In the days when classmates selected their own roommates, Bill was sought after by his L-1 classmates because, as stated in the '57 *Howitzer* entry, he had "perseverance and pleasant congeniality." We remember his kindness and his great, big Irish smile. Bill loved to laugh and never had a bad word for anyone. The academic departments haunted him a bit, but he always managed to stay a few tenths ahead of them at decisive moments. It was a proud and happy day for Bill when he graduated with the Class of 1957 on 4 June and was commissioned in the Infantry, the branch he loved and in which he wanted to serve his Army career.

Bill had a great career pattern for an Infantry officer. All his assignments were solid Infantry as he pursued his combat arms career. After completing basic Infantry, Airborne and Ranger schooling at Ft. Benning, Bill reported for his first duty tour with the 505th Airborne Infantry Regiment. Then, in 1961, Bill was given command of the 1st Ranger Company. Following this assignment, he completed the Infantry Officer Career Course at Ft. Benning in 1964. While there, he was able to pursue his love of golf and even succeeded in winning a tournament over the commanding general, which may not have been his best career move! More importantly, there he met his future bride, Marilyn Rankin (a speech Clinician and "Army brat").

His next assignment was a tour of duty in Korea where, again, Bill commanded a company in the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry. After Korea, Bill returned to the Prep School, relocated to Ft. Belvoir, as a member of the staff and faculty, 1965–67. During this tour, Bill and Marilyn married at St. Rita's Church in Alexandria, VA, on 10 Jul 1965, and later their daughter Bridget was born. In addition to his duties at the Prep School and duties as a new parent, Bill found time to begin work on a master's degree at George Washington University.

Bill's path and destiny as an Infantry combat arms officer continued during his tour of duty in Vietnam, beginning in 1967, with assignments as executive officer at the battalion and brigade levels, and as S-3, 5th Cavalry, 1st Air Cavalry Division. Bill returned home to complete his master's of science degree at George Washington University in 1968. This was followed in 1970 by assignments to Ft. Leavenworth and the Army Combat Development Command and, subsequently, as a student at the Command & General Staff College. While there, a son, Brian, was born.

Bill next prepared for his assignment with Joint Military Assistance Group, Thailand during 1972–74 by attending the Defense Language Institute. During his Thailand tour, a second son, Kevin, arrived. In 1975, Bill's accomplishments as an Infantry officer were recognized when he was selected to

command the 2nd Battalion, 41st Infantry, at Ft. Hood, TX. Bill culminated his proud 20-year Army career in 1976, when he was assigned to the Military District of Washington as a member of the President Jimmy Carter Inauguration Committee.

After retirement in 1977, Bill returned to his Philadelphia roots and settled his family into a beautiful colonial home in New Town Square. Bill went to work for AM MAK in their Philadelphia contracts office. He devoted the remainder of his life to Marilyn and raising their children in this pleasant suburban Philadelphia environment. He was an accomplished handyman and did home repairs and remodeling himself. He was active in his church of St. John Neumann and coached Little League baseball. Bill maintained contact with his beloved alma mater by becoming a member, and later President, 1984–86, of the West Point Society of Philadelphia, one of the oldest and most prestigious of the alumni organizations.

Bill's illness came on as a result of a melanoma caused by long exposure to the hostile sun in fields and under conditions only a true soldier would know. His faith in God sustained him, Marilyn, and his family as he fought his illness, but he finally succumbed to it on 21 Feb 1986. "Murph" was buried in Arlington Cemetery, a most appropriate place for this distinguished soldier.

Bill Murphy was a highly moral and principled individual in every way. He was true to his destiny to become a soldier, an Infantry soldier, and very proud of it. He was a loving husband to Marilyn and a great father to his three children. He was truly a good friend, company mate and classmate, whom we lost much too soon. Bill earned his place with honor in the Long Gray Line. Well done, Bill! Be thou at peace.

—Marilyn Murphy & L-1 classmates
Bill Burke, Joe Tedeschi & Nick Monaco