

## Clarence E. Wittman '57

No. 21457 ■ 18 Oct 1930 – 16 Mar 1992 ■ Died in Ft. Sill, OK  
Interred in Ft. Sill National Cemetery, Ft. Sill, OK



*Clarence Edward "Witt" Wittman* was born 18 Oct 1930, in Ellis, KS, a small town in mid-America. Growing up in a family of modest means, he demonstrated a drive and determination that would be evident throughout his life. Witt began working as a young boy. Graduating from St. Joseph's Military Academy in 1948, he entered St. Joseph's College and joined the Army National Guard of Kansas.

Called to active duty August 1950, he soon found himself a part of the Korean War, assigned to an engineer unit in Korea. Shortly thereafter, he was promoted to sergeant. During this period, he applied for an appointment to West Point, attended the USMA Preparatory School, and was admitted to the Academy as a member of the Class of 1957 on 7 Jul 1953, the recipient of a Congressional appointment.

Witt became a member of Company I-1, and it quickly became obvious to all of us that the "Sarge" was different. For one thing, he was more mature than the rest of us! Barely meeting the age limit for admission, he had been fighting in Korea while most of us were still in high school. And he proudly wore on his cadet uniform the Korean War Service medal with three battle stars. Nobody messed with the "Sarge." During his cadet days, Witt

was known for his love of the rifle and pistol ranges and his inability to spell. Somehow he made it through English. All other subjects were a breeze. He was always cool. Two weeks before graduation, something wonderful happened to Witt.

On a blind date in New York City he met the love of his life, Beverly Thomas. Assigned to Ft. Sill, OK, following graduation, Witt carried on a year-long courtship by correspondence with Beverly. Enroute to his next assignment in Vicenza, Italy, somehow he found time to stop in New York City! He asked Beverly to marry him, she accepted his proposal, and they were married three months later while Witt was on temporary duty to White Sands, NM. They married 29 Jul 1958, at the Immaculate Conception Church in New York City. So began a beautiful marriage resulting in four great sons.

Four wonderful years in Italy followed. During this period, Beverly and Witt had three of their four sons. They loved living on the economy and stayed there even after government quarters became available. They loved everything Italian—the culture, the architecture, the people, the food. Beverly even learned to speak passable Italian. They returned to Ft. Sill in 1962 and soon had their fourth son. Witt had the first of two Vietnam tours in 1964, the other being in 1969. He was awarded four Bronze Star Medals and two Air Medals. During the period 1973–75, Witt attended the Army Command & General Staff College and the University of Kansas, earning a master of business administration degree. After a stint as professor of military science at Texas A&I University, he was assigned for the last time to Ft. Sill. Witt retired in 30 Nov 1979.

Following retirement, Witt went into banking initially and then into the Civil Service at Ft. Sill, where he remained until his death on 16 Mar 1992. He is interred at the Ft. Sill National Cemetery.

Beverly and Witt enjoyed their retirement years. He loved playing duplicate bridge, the stock market, and the oil business. And Beverly says that he was good at all of them. He remained active in the Rotary Club. Most of all, he was proud of his sons.

There is an old saying that "the apple does not fall too far from the tree." Beverly and Witt had four apples. All four sons served in the military. The two oldest graduated from the Naval Academy, the third from the Air Force Academy, and the fourth served two years in the Army. A remarkable story! The oldest, Gary, flies for Delta Airlines. The second, Gregory, will retire 2012 as a captain after 30 years in the Navy. The third son, Clayton, retired as a colonel in the Air Force (and promptly entered law school). And the fourth, Bradley, is a regional manager for Trader Joe's. There are nine grandchildren. There are probably other families with similar records of service to our country, but I am unaware of them.

All of the I-1 classmates of "Sarge" are the better for having known him, and our country has been fortunate to have such a dedicated family. Witt was a true patriot, serving in two wars. He was a loving husband for Beverly, and, finally, a tremendous role model for his family.

—Jack Apperson '57, I-1 classmate  
with wonderful help from  
Beverly Thomas Wittman

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*When "Whit" came to Woo Poo the military was not new to him as he spent 23 months in the Army.  
He brought with him nine months of combat experience from the Korean conflict.  
His associates are sure that he will continue to serve his country  
by keeping honor and duty foremost in forming his daily decisions. —1957 Howitzer*