

DONN LAFAYETTE SWEET**Class 24-66**

is honored on Panel 50W, Row 10 of
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Full Name: DONN LAFAYETTE SWEET
Wall Name: DONN L SWEET
Date of Birth: 7/14/1942
Date of Casualty: 7/25/1968
Home of Record: ROANOKE
County of Record: CITY OF ROANOKE
State: VA
Branch of Service: ARMY
Rank: 1LT
Casualty Country: SOUTH VIETNAM
Casualty Province: QUANG TRI



1LT Sweet was a Forward Observer with Battery B, 1st Battalion, 40th Artillery, I Field Force. LT Sweet was posthumously awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action which resulted in his death. He fought his way to an observation post while under heavy enemy fire. Despite the position's lack of cover and concealment, he remained there to attempt to eliminate the enemy resistance with artillery fire. As he began to adjust the supporting fire, his position was hit by an enemy mortar shell, mortally wounding him.

Donn is buried at Vale Cemetery in Schenectady, NY.

Gone but not forgotten

Donn and I were classmates in OCS, class 24-66. Because of our size we were usually together, side by side in formation. I was grieved when I heard that he lost his life in the service of our country. I remember him as one of the good guys and a man to stand with in tough times. He is a real loss to our nation.

Posted by: Sam (Short Round) Dauer, MAJ, AUS, Ret.
Relationship: OCS classmate
March 17, 2006

From thewall-usa.com

Well, LT, it's been about forty years since we stuck that quarter ton in the entrance to Gio Linh at the end of QL1. Remember you said "Go ahead, we have 4-wheel drive"? Next thing we know, we're sitting there up to our armpits in that soupy red mud. That story still gets a few laughs from the VFW crowd. I spoke to your mother and sisters some years ago and we set up a little memorial to you at the 1/40 webpage. God bless you, Donn, you were a good man. Sometimes I wonder about that Porsche of yours, the "egg". How many times did you tell me about that car, a hundred?

Don Delano
Same FO team on DMZ
Oct 2, 2007

You pushed us hard. Thanks!

I just came across your name on The Wall. You were my platoon lieutenant at the Infantry School at Fort Benning - at the good old Harmony Church Training Center. It's hard to believe that an area so close to Florida could be so cold. You froze like we all did but you never let it show. Rest in Peace.

John Howard
He was my platoon lieutenant at Ft Benning
Nov 1, 2010



A toast to Donn Sweet

By Jeff Wilkin

May 26, 2008

If people read today's history page, they'll learn all about Vietnam War veteran Donn Lafayette Sweet.

Sweet, whose family lived in Schenectady until 1956, died of injuries sustained in a mortar attack on July 25, 1968. He was 26.

I could have written much more about Donn, and the book his sister, Evelyn Sweet-Hurd, has written about him. But there are space limitations on the printed page - not so on the Internet.

The book is "His Name Was Donn," and is filled with letters Donn sent to his family from Vietnam in 1967 and 1968. Most of the mail was addressed to Donn's mother, Scotia native Marion Berning Sweet, who Donn nicknamed "Toombie." The reason for the nickname was Donn's concern over his mother's weight during the late 1960s; he was worried the extra pounds would put her into an early grave.

That never happened. Mrs. Sweet is 96, and spends her winters with daughter Evelyn in Conyers, Ga., and with daughter Joan Sweet Brault in Avon, Conn., during the summer. "She was 14 when she was supposed to go to the opening of the Van Curler Hotel with her father on May 7, 1925," Joan told me in an e-mail note. "Instead, her father died that day - it was her mother's birthday."

In Donn's letters home, he frequently inquires about the condition of a 1962 356 Super 90 Porsche automobile he had purchased for \$2,200 shortly before he left for Army duty. Donn called the sports car "Patti Porsche" and "The Marshmallow."

The car stayed with Evelyn after Donn's death in Vietnam.

"Patti Porsche and I spent many years together, but we ... separated in Waco, Texas," Evelyn writes in the book. "I could not afford to keep in her in "primo shape" as Donn might say, and I could not afford to buy insurance for her in the event that she might be stolen.

"My husband and I, both in graduate school and living on rice and beans most of the time, struggled over the decision to sell the Porsche. We sold her to a doctor who was getting her all fixed up to give to his son upon his graduation from Texas A&M. Donn would have loved the fact that the doctor was willing to spend a lot of money to get Patti in beautiful shape again."

I exchanged several notes with Evelyn and Joan about Donn. They said as a kid, Donn played army with his friends when the family lived at the corner of Union Street and University Place. He dug a fox hole in the back yard. He also developed a crush on his fourth grade teacher at Elmer Avenue elementary school, and made her a birthday cake all by himself. "My father had a friend in Wisconsin who was an Indian chief," Joan wrote. "He sent Donn a tomahawk, which was one of his treasures."

The sisters suggested I toast Donn this Memorial Day weekend. And I did, last night.

Because Donn occasionally inquired about his Playboy magazines in his letters, I pulled the January 1968 issue out of storage (I was given a couple hundred old Playboys during the mid-1970s, when a neighbor decided to throw out his collection. I used the magazines for an article content comparison that became my journalism thesis in college).

At about 9 p.m., I put the magazine on my back yard patio table, opened a beer for Donn and lit a candle. All three stayed out overnight.

It was a small way, maybe kind of a corny way, to remember a soldier and his sacrifice. But Evelyn and Joan say Donn had a great sense of humor ... I think he might liked the idea of Playboy and a bottle of beer waiting for him in Albany, 40 years after Vietnam.

