

AN EAGLE
HAS SOARED





DR. THOMAS M. HAMPTON

Dr. Hampton, 61, passed away on *Veteran's Day, November 11, 2004 at his home in Cornelius, NC*. He was born April 9, 1943 in Clarksville, TN, son of the late Thomas and Frances Sutton Hampton. Tom was a constant source of strength and humor and a blessing to all who were fortunate enough to meet him. He viewed his life through rose colored glasses and even in adversity, he ALWAYS put the needs of others before his own. Everyone who knew him loved him and he will be missed by family, a multitude of friends and

his many patients.

Dr. Hampton was a Captain, United States Army, Retired. He was an Airborne Ranger who served in Vietnam with Company C, 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry, 101st Airborne Division, and was awarded The Combat Infantry Badge, The Bronze Star, and The Purple Heart.

He graduated from Austin Peay State College with a BS degree in Industrial Engineering and Business, and from Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine. In 1978, Dr. Hampton opened his practice, Carolina Foot Associates, on Randolph Road.

Dr. Hampton was a member of the American Podiatric Medical Association and past President of both the NC Podiatric Medical Association and the NC Board of Podiatry Examiners. He was a member of The Jesters, The American Legion, The Elite Aviation Club, The Quiet Birdmen, and a former Shriner .Clown.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held at 2:00 p.m. Sunday, November 14, 2004 at Myers Park Methodist Church, 1501 Queens Road. Charlotte. Reverend Jerry Autry, Tom's chaplain in Vietnam, will be officiating. Interment with military honors will follow at Evergreen Cemetery, 4426 Central Avenue, Charlotte.

Visitation will be from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. Saturday, November 13, 2003, at McEwen Funeral Service, Charlotte Chapel, 727 East Morehead Street.

Dr. Hampton is survived by his wife, Toni LaFrance Hampton; a daughter, Susan Hampton and husband Will Nabach of Arlington, VA; two sons, Bryan Hampton, who attends The Citadel and Justin Hampton, who attends UNC Wilmington.

In addition to his parents, Dr. Hampton is preceded in death by a son, Thomas Marion Hampton, IV; two sisters, Willadine Hampton and Elizabeth Jarman, one brother, Clifford Hampton, and a beloved niece, Betsy Bryant.

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I WANT TO BE AN AIRBORNE RANGER



Airborne Ranger Tom Hampton passed from this life into the next on *Veterans day*. Very appropriate, to all of us who knew Tom. He loved the military. I will never forget the first time I met him. We were at Fire support base *Sandy Star*. In Vietnam, a fire support base was kind of a staging area where troops would leave from to fight the enemy. Not always, many units stayed out in the field for long periods. Anyway, here I am sitting in my tent and the S 3, operations sergeant, sticks his head in my tent and says, "Chaplain, come quickly, we have us a new Lieutenant and he sounds just like you. And, he did, Tom Hampton was one of those bear of a guys who kind of enveloped everything around him.

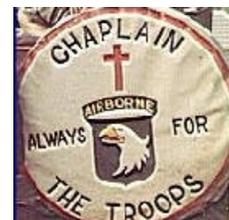
He was assigned as platoon Leader for Second Platoon, Charlie Company. At that time, Charlie Company had been in all kinds of action and platoon leaders were going fast. I will never forget what Tom said, "Preacher, I'm so glad to be here." What! Who is glad to be in Vietnam. But, in a sense, he was. it was what he had trained for; gone to OCS and then on to Ranger school. This was where the action was and he wanted to be a part of it. He once told me *that Vietnam was the pivotal point in history of his generation and no way was he going to miss it.*

From time to time, I would see Tom. He was always overjoyed to see me with a great big bear hug. *This is Christmas*, he would say. And, he always called me that good southern affectionate term, "preacher."

I was always amazed that when I would have service, almost all of his troops came. I thought it strange as his entire platoon would be Protestant. Later I discovered that he told most of them, *just do it. It ain't going to kill you.* My suspicion is that the troops showed up out of respect for Tom. **He's doing this**, why not?

When Tom was hit, I was at the fire support base and immediately went to see him at the field hospital, Phu Bai, I think He'd lost lots of blood and was white as a ghost but still managed to say, *what about my soldiers?* Tom always had the welfare of his troops in mind. It was the camaraderie of Vietnam and that which would stay with him and most of us the rest of our lives.

Several years ago, we connected up again and then it was often phone calls and updating of our lives. Tom had what I call, "the keeping up" gene in him. He would keep up with people and it always amazed me that he was able to do this amidst such a busy schedule. I would not want to make Tom a saint, but then again, he was a man among men and a fellow warrior and he will be missed. My world will not quite be the same since he's gone. Up until the end, Tom was always who he had been and a few days before he died, he called me to make sure that I was still coming to do his Service. Of course. An honor! jda



A WORD FROM VIETVET BUDDIES



Thanks for the update. I got to Charlie Company just a few weeks after he was evacuated. He made the trip to the Wall a couple of months ago and seeing the guys did him well and proud. Dan O'Neill, my 3-6, said it well when he remarked that 35 years ago Tom Hampton was a part of his life for a very brief time. Dan put Tom on the medivac. Thirty-five years later Tom was once again a part of Dan's life for just a brief time (at the Wall) and Dan is also the better for it. NDrive On! Jim Sgroi C/1/501

Wow! Totally shocked me. This guy has been in my life and left---quickly---with a blown off foot. Never to be heard of again until last year...then into my life again at the reunion. And then, to leave so quickly, again. He surely seemed like a great guy. He will be missed by me. Thanks for the info, Don.

I just learned from Tex that Tom Hampton passed away in Charlotte on Veteran's Day, after a long battle with cancer. Tom was 2-6/C Co from Dec '68 til 8 Feb '69, when he nearly lost his foot to a booby trap. I never met him over there but from the way the men of 2d platoon spoke of him, I knew that "Old 2-6" was a good man. Many of you can confirm that from first hand knowledge of Tom. Tom came to the Wall Reunion this August and he was everything I thought; a good officer and a fine man. He was very happy to have re-connected with C Co and was looking forward to attending the 2005 reunion. We'll be thinking of him in Colorado and I will take pleasure then in buying a round in honor of "Old 2-6".

When I heard the news of the Lieutenant's death, I was blown away. We expected it as more and more of us are biting the dust. It is time. And, for most of us who should have died in Vietnam, every day is a gift. And, I don't have any doubt that Tom felt that way. I'm only sorry that my contact with him was limited. He was the best officer that I've ever known. He was a natural leader and time and time again, he saved us from some serious stuff. I always admired the way he stood up to the Colonels who would just come flying in. He was respectful but laid it on them often. What I hate now is that the Lieutenant didn't get to stay in the Army. He loved it and would have been a general. I'll be remembering him often. Red

REMARKS FROM THE CHAPLAIN

As for men and women, their days are like grass. Flourishing like a flower of the field, for the wind passes over it, and it is gone. and its place knows it no more but the steadfast love of God is from everlasting to everlasting. (Psalm 103:15-17) ♦ God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. So be not afraid, even if the earth is shaken and mountains fall into the ocean depths. The Lord Almighty is with us, He is our refuge. (Psalms 46) ♦ For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (11 Corinthians 5:1) ♦ Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting (1 Corinthians 15:55) ♦ Jesus said, *I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die.* (John 11:25-26)

For everything, there is a season, and time for every matter under heaven. The writer of Ecclesiastes describes well the human condition. Every time I hear the words of this passage, I am reminded of the amazing ambiguity of life. Life and death, war and peace, love and hate, gain and loss, joy and mourning, all occur side by side at all times and in every place. Even as we gather to mourn the loss of Tom Hampton, in another place another family gathers to celebrate the birth of a new son or daughter. We concern ourselves about how we will adjust to life without our love one. We do with our friend, Tom.

Life is seldom one-dimensional. Even at this moment, those of us here experience a complex range of emotions. We are sad, because we will miss the physical presence, the strength, the dedication, and the joy that Tom brought to our lives. We are relieved that now Tom has passed from this life into the next. It is a continuing process—life and death. The circle is unbroken, it is broken. It is the process. We are born, we live our lives the best we can and then we die. *It is the process.* And, for all of us, this is the way it is.

HOW SHALL WE DIE

William Cullen Bryan said this, “So live that when thy summons comes to join that innumerable caravan which moves to that mysterious realm where each shall take his chamber in the silent halls of death. Go not like the quarry slave at night, scourged to his dungeon, But sustained and soothed by an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave like one who wraps the drapery of his couch about him and lies down to pleasant dreams.

In some ways, it is like Tom decided it was time: for those of us who knew Tom Hampton well, he taught us lots about living but also talk us much about dying.

Every person has a story—a life story even as we mourn our friend, Tom, whose story ended in this life, we are in a sense jolted into a realization that we are part of his story. We hope we can all look at how our story weaves with his and dedicate ourselves anew to living out our lives the best we can. I think Angelo Patri had it about right, “In one sense, there is no death. The life of a soul on earth lasts beyond his departure. You will always feel Tom’s life touching yours, his voice speaking to you, that spirit looking out of other eyes, talking to you in the familiar things he touched, worked with, loved as familiar friends. He lives on in your life and in the lives of all who knew him. Amen.

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2003 101st Airborne Division Association Convention



Tom was sick but made a decision to come to the *Convention*--great fellowship. We told beaucoup war stories.

Photos courtesy of Jon Quick.

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