
Joseph Bingham Mack Jr.

NO. 21338 CLASS OF 1957

Died 25 January 1966 in an aircraft accident off Key West, Florida, aged 33 years.

Interment: Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia

THE FACETS OF THE PRISM that is the man—the love and faithfulness seen by his wife, the love and tenderness given to his children, the love and respect evidenced to his parents, the affection and consideration shown to his sisters, the loyalty given to God and country, his devotion to duty and honor as a man and as an officer, his interest in people and his acceptance of the good and the not-so-good in them, the sense of humor which kept him on an even keel and made it possible for him to enjoy many things with many people, his integrity to self and to others—these and other aspects reflect the character and personality of the one we knew and loved as Joe Mack.

The only son among the five children of



JOSEPH BINGHAM MACK JR.

Reverend and Mrs. Joseph Mack, Joe grew up in a home of Christian love and affection. To the whole town he was "the little boy with the big grin." As he grew, he kept the grin and acquired a sense of humor and a fighting spirit.

With a minister father, Joe moved about. After graduating from high school in Knoxville, Tennessee, he enlisted in the Air Force and completed several assignments as an enlisted man. A congressional appointment to the United States Military Academy directed him toward a military career, and upon graduation in 1957, Joe was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Air Force. During his stay at the Point, Joe's fighting spirit came to the fore as he won the brigade boxing championship in his weight class; he also enjoyed the challenges of chess, skeet, and the Russian language.

During flight training in Texas, Joe met and later married Gail Keppler. Their three daughters are a continuing memorial.

Joe wore his silver pilot's wings proudly and felt that serving with the 11th Fighter Interceptor Squadron in Duluth, Minnesota, was his "first real Air Force assignment." Though his tour there lasted only one short year, Joe took so much pleasure in being a fighter pilot that he said of that duty, "It's better than working for a living!"

WINTER 1967

Upon his return to the States from a remote assignment in the Pacific, Joe earned a master's degree in aeronautical engineering at the Air Force Institute of Technology at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. He put his knowledge to use and his inquisitive mind to work at Edwards AFB, California, where he was involved in many test programs and served as project engineer on the B-26K test program.

Joe volunteered to return to the cockpit and welcomed his assignment to a fighter squadron at Richards-Gebaur AFB, Missouri, again flying the F-102. While on a Tdy alert in Key West, Florida, Joe made his last flight, crashing offshore shortly after take-off during a pre-dawn scramble.

His life will be remembered by many as one lived in fullness. Had he lived longer, Joe could not have won for himself greater respect and affection than he attained in his 33 years.

He leaves behind his wife Gail; three daughters, Patty, Kathy, and Melissa; both parents; four sisters; and many relatives and friends—all of whom will miss the many facets of the one we knew and loved as Joe Mack.

*This is the death of Death, to breathe
away a breath
And know the end of strife, and taste
the deathless life,
And joy without fear, and smile without
a tear,
And work, nor care to rest, and find the
last the best.*

from *Emancipation*

by MALTBY D. BABCOCK

—Ashley Mack
Sister

Lyell Francis King

NO. 23093 CLASS OF 1960

Hostile death, Vietnam, 18 February 1966.

Aged 27 years.

Interment: Greenfield Cemetery,
Hempstead, Long Island, New York

The thoughts of others

Were light and fleeting,

Of lovers' meeting

Or luck or fame;

Mine were of trouble

And mine were steady,

So I was ready

When trouble came.

LYELL KING, TRUE to his favorite lines from A.E. Housman, was ready "when trouble came." He had already proven himself a skillful and courageous advisor to the Vietnamese 22d Ranger Battalion when he was killed in action near Ban Me Thout on the 18th of February, 1966. His conduct on the day of his death and during five major battles in the preceding months earned for him the undying admiration of his comrades in arms and the gratitude and commendation of his country, which awarded him the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, and the Purple Heart. A grateful Vietnamese government also awarded him, posthumously, that country's National Order, Fifth Class, and the Gallantry Cross with Palm.

Lyell was born on 12 May 1938 in Coquille, Oregon. The eldest son of a career officer, he spent his boyhood in many states and several countries, as the family followed the elder King from station to station. Early in life Lyell acquired a fascination with all things military, and long before he graduated

from high school he was full of martial lore, sharing, for example, his father's great interest in and broad knowledge of weapons.

With this background, reinforced by the reputation of a great-grandfather who won the Congressional Medal of Honor in the Civil War, it was natural and fitting that Lyell should also choose to pursue a military career. He had wanted to be a soldier for "as long as he could remember." While he was still a senior at Kirkwood High School in Kirkwood, Missouri, Lyell applied for admission to West Point—and it was his only application—and received a presidential appointment to the Class of 1960.

Lyell obviously enjoyed his four years at the Academy; his boyish grin and warm sense of humor never failed to lighten the hearts of his classmates when the going got rough. Notwithstanding his quiet and personable manner, however, those who were close to Lyell knew him for a man of uncommon dedication and strength of character. He came to West Point with a strong sense of purpose, and while there he applied himself diligently to the dual tasks of acquiring knowledge and learning how to lead men.



LYELL FRANCIS KING

With a commission in the Infantry and newly married to the lovely Judith Anne Van Rees, Lyell paused at Fort Benning only long enough to attend the basic course and win his "jump wings" and Ranger "tab" before reporting to his first duty station, Fort Davis, in the Panama Canal Zone. At Fort Davis, and later at Fort Sherman and Gulick, he excelled in the role of a small unit commander and won several accolades for his work as an instructor at the Jungle Warfare Training Center. While in Panama, Judi presented him with a daughter, Jennifer Stilson, who was to share with her mother Lyell's unqualified and unconcealed devotion.

Departing Panama in early 1964, Lyell reported to Fort Lewis, Washington, where a brief but distinguished period of duty on the staff of the 4th Division's 1st Brigade earned him his first command: Company A, 2d Battalion, 8th Infantry. As the commander of the neighboring unit, I had ample opportunity for admiring Lyell's expertise. His was a first-class unit—polished and precise in garrison, aggressive and efficient in the field, and at all times loyal and devoted to its commander. There was no doubt in the minds of those who saw him operate at Fort Lewis that they were witnessing a real professional with a tremendous future—a man destined to wear stars.

113

When orders came for Vietnam, Lyell was ready. He took Judi and Jenny to Monterey with him while he attended the 12-week course in Vietnamese, graduated first in his class, and then flew westward "toward the sound of the guns." The assignment with the 22d Ranger Battalion was one of the most dangerous in Vietnam, but it virtually guaranteed plenty of action with some of the Republic's best troops, so Lyell considered it a prize to be sought. He got the job at his own request. Once in the field with the battalion, he was in his element, for he knew he was learning those lessons one doesn't find in books. Moreover, he was facing daily those challenges and responsibilities toward which his years of preparation and training had been directed. It was the ultimate test of the professional soldier; Lyell knew he would not be found wanting.

Lyell King was a warm and lovable person, but he was also a man with a goal, one whose course in life had been as unerring as a taut bowstring. He was one of those rare individuals who combine a true nobility of character with, in the words of Douglas MacArthur, "a temperamental predominance of courage over timidity, of an appetite for adventure over love of ease." He leaves behind, in the hearts of his family and friends, a love and respect which words can scarcely convey.

—Robert E. Montgomery Jr.
Captain

Lawrence Alan Britten

NO. 24543 CLASS OF 1963

Hostile death, Vietnam, 30 March 1966.

Aged 25 years.

Interment: West Point Cemetery, West Point, New York

THE FOLLOWING EXTRACT from a letter written by Brigadier General John R. Deane to Larry's widow describes the action leading up to Larry Britten's death: "On 30 March, about mid-afternoon, Larry's company, Company A, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 12th Cavalry Regiment, conducted a helicopter assault into an area about 50 miles southwest of the town of Pleiku, just a few thousand meters south of the Chu Pong Mountain and a few kilometers from the Cambodian border. A platoon from an air cavalry reconnaissance unit had entered the area earlier and had established light contact with an enemy unit. Firing was sporadic but not heavy.

"When Company A, of which Larry was the executive officer, landed in the area, the enemy fire began to increase in tempo, and by late afternoon an intense fire fight was in progress. Several helicopters were shot down, and a number of men in Larry's company were killed or wounded. Among the seriously wounded was Larry's company commander who lay in an exposed, forward position with his soldiers. With great personal courage and showing complete disregard for his own safety, Larry went to his company commander to carry him to a place of safety. In the performance of this heroic act, Larry gave his life."

Born in South Dakota and raised in California, Lawrence Alan Britten entered West Point in July 1959 as a member of the Class of 1963. Larry approached his four years at West Point and the prospect of a career as an officer in the Regular Army with an enthusiasm and dedication that was rare among his contemporaries. He did extremely well as a student, his greatest interest being the study of Military Art, and, as an athlete,

he led many L-1 intramural teams to victory. But more than anything, the one trait which most distinguished Larry as a cadet was his latent ability to lead.

Those intangible qualities of leadership that beckon men of destiny to the forefront were already apparent when Larry came to West Point. Those who knew him as a cadet will always remember the confidence and trust he inspired while filling a wide variety of responsible positions in the Corps. His native talent, his drive, and his engaging personality all seemed to have predestined him for the highest positions of responsibility in the Service. It came as no surprise to Larry's friends then, when he became the ranking company commander during his first class year. At graduation he was named the outstanding company commander of the First Regiment.

Larry decided that the greatest opportunities for leadership and the most difficult challenge for the young leader was in the Infantry. Having chosen that branch he and his wife Beth moved to Fort Benning in the summer of 1963, and there Larry successfully



LAWRENCE ALAN BRITTEN

completed the Infantry Officers Basic course, and airborne and Ranger training. Larry's first duty assignment was Fort Bragg where, despite the long hours and the frequent absences from home, he enthusiastically embraced his new responsibilities. For him it was a challenging time of learning, and his success as a young lieutenant was noteworthy. Soon thereafter he was selected as aide de camp to the assistant division commander of the 82d Airborne Division, Brigadier General Edward P. Smith. Although it meant separation from troop duty, Larry welcomed this chance to broaden his experience. He would now be able to evaluate the Army he loved from an entirely new perspective.

At Fort Bragg, a daughter, Kimberly Guin, was born to Larry and Beth. Larry's loving devotion to his daughter resulted in a relationship seldom seen between a father and his young child. His family was extremely important to him, and he endowed mother and daughter with a deep and abiding love.

The unrest in the Dominican Republic and the subsequent movement of elements of the 82d Airborne Division to the Caribbean meant another dislocation from his family for Larry. But in his capacity as aide Larry was close to all facets of the operation. It was a rare opportunity for him, even though he sorely missed the exhilaration he always

experienced while commanding and serving with troops.

It had long been his intention to volunteer for duty in Vietnam, but the situation in the Caribbean and his loyalty and admiration for General Smith prevented his taking any action to transfer.

Finally, in January 1966, Larry did leave for Vietnam—as aide to General Deane. It was his fond hope at the time that he would be released soon after his arrival in the far East in order that he might join a troop unit. Seeing the war and its progress from division level had its advantages, but Larry wanted to be with the units involved in the fighting. He felt that all of his training had prepared him for a leadership role in combat, and he yearned for that responsibility.

Larry's request for release from duty as an aide was approved, and he elected to join the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment of the 1st Air Cavalry Division. Initially he was assigned as executive officer of the battalion's A Company, and very quickly became part of the small-unit war with an entirely new perspective from the level of the combat soldier.

Quite apart from the military side of the war, Larry also saw and was profoundly moved by all its attendant miseries. He wrote of his feeling of desperation at the sight of so many Vietnamese children orphaned by the ravages of war, and of his anguish over the suffering of his fellow soldiers. Still, his devotion to the United States' cause never wavered. Above all else Larry recognized that sacrifices had to be made in order to protect those principles which Americans hold dear. A close friend has said of him: "Larry was a most magnificent man and officer. There are so very few as special, as talented, as kind. And these few are the ones who are most willing to give of themselves in order to see that their dreams, their ideals, are held sacred."

On that March day, 1966, while in command of an infantry company in close combat with the enemy, Captain Lawrence Alan Britten made the ultimate sacrifice. He left a legacy that will be shared by all who knew him or served with him, a legacy of courage and dedication.

Larry Britten was many things to many people—adored husband, devoted father, loving son and brother, professional soldier, courageous leader, and dedicated American. To his many friends he was a man and an American of the first and finest order.

Michael Joseph Soth

NO. 24616 CLASS OF 1963

Hostile death, Vietnam, 21 June 1966.

Aged 24 years.

Interment: West Point Cemetery, West Point, New York

MICHAEL J. SOTH, a gallant young captain, was killed in action in Vietnam on 21 June 1966 while fighting for what he felt was a just and noble cause. Words that could eulogize fully this deeply religious man just do not exist. Mike's love for his God and his country gave him the strength and courage to dedicate his life to the defense of freedom. No greater love has a man for freedom than that he give his life in defense of another man's freedom.

Mike was born on 27 January 1942 in East Orange, New Jersey. He grew to maturity in Ontario, California, graduating from Pomona Catholic High School in 1959. He