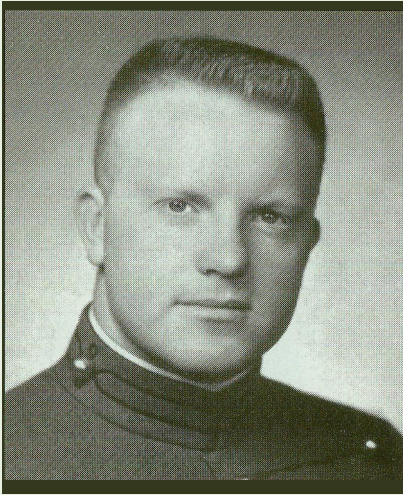


ELIOT V. PARKER, JR. • '60

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FROM THE DAY he was born, on 8 Jun 1937, Eliot Vail Parker, Jr., expressed a determination to graduate from USMA. And 23 years later to the day—he earned his commission from West Point as an Armored Cavalry officer. That ability to focus his many talents on meaningful, long-term goals allowed him to make lasting contributions to those he served and those he loved.

Eliot married the love of his life, Adelheid "Addi"—soon after graduation. He then attended the Armored Basic

Course, Ranger School, and Airborne School. His first assignment was on the East German border in an armored cavalry squadron. There, the Parker's started their family. The first two of four children Dawn and Helene—were born in Frankfurt, where Addi grew up after WWII.

After three years in Germany, the Parker's returned to the States, and Eliot served in the 82d Airborne Division as a troop commander during 1964-65. During this time, he saw his first combat action as a paratrooper in the Dominican Republic, and his first son, Eliot V. III, was born. Soon after, Eliot was sent to Viet Nam as a Special Forces Green Beret and was wounded in action twice. After Viet Nam, he attended the Armored Advanced Course and graduate school at the University of Wisconsin, where he earned a master's degree. Eliot returned to West Point during 1968-71 as a member of the Department of Physical Education. As a coach, trainer, instructor, and mentor, he made a lasting contribution to the skills and values of three West Point year groups and the faculty. It was at West Point that the last of the Parker children, Charles, was born.

In 1971, Eliot again returned to Viet Nam, serving as a battalion executive officer with the 196th Infantry Brigade. At the end of that tour, he was assigned to the Army Command and Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth, KS, as a student and stayed until 1976 to teach military tactics.

After a tour in Naples, Italy, as the exercise director of Allied Forces Southern Europe, Eliot commanded the 4-40th Armor at Ft. Carson, CO, during 1977-79. After a successful command, he and his family became part of the Army War College Class of 1980 at Carlisle,

PA. After graduation, he again served on the staff and faculty at CGSC at Ft. Leavenworth, KS. He departed in 1982 to become XVIIIth Airborne Corps Civil/Military Affairs Officer at Ft. Bragg, NC, and served in that position during the military operations in Grenada.

Eliot Parker was the epitome of the Cold War warrior, serving his nation in peace and war—in uniform and out—for all of his adult life. Among his many awards are the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, five Bronze Stars (one with V) and two Purple Hearts.

After retirement as a colonel in 1985 and a successful foray into the private sector, Eliot returned to his passion, teaching young people. He spent the next 10 years teaching junior ROTC at Davie High School near his home in Mocksville, NC. Upon his second retirement in 1999, he became the Davie County Veterans Affairs Officer and State Vice Commander of the Purple Heart Association. Sadly, for his family and those he worked so hard to continue to serve, Eliot unexpectedly passed away in April 2000.

As a companymate and close friend, I have had the opportunity to share in the joys and sorrows of the Parker family, as they have in my family. This event, and its immediate aftermath, has been for me the most difficult part of our mutual journey. In the blackness, though, a light appeared. The outpouring of support for the grieving family by friends, neighbors, community leaders, and people Eliot (or "E.V." as his close friends called him) had touched along the way, reaffirmed that while we all wished for more time together, the time that he had was well spent.

E.V. was many things to many people. To some, he was a soldier, a leader, and a combat hero. To others, he was an extraordinarily gifted person who shared his many talents with others by coaching, teaching, and leading by example. And to still others, he was a selfless citizen who accepted the responsibilities that go along with the privileges of being an American. The common denominator is that E.V. always put service to others ahead of himself. He is, and will be, remembered as a man who helped make it a better world as a soldier; a better nation as a teacher of our youth—even a school bus driver when the need came; a better community as a volunteer; and a better life for one family as a father. As a result, among his "other" awards, are a grateful nation, thousands of thankful students, an appreciative community, a devoted wife, four loving children, eleven adoring grandchildren, and many friends who miss his presence. Well done, E.V. Be thou at peace.

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