



Tilford Cameron Creel

January 30, 1930 - December 26, 2020

Tilford Cameron Creel, Colonel U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (retired) died peacefully on December 26, 2020. Col. Creel was born in Des Moines, IA on January 30, 1930 and was the seventh generation of his family to serve in the military. He first enlisted in the army in 1948 and served in the Philippines on a surveying team. Upon exiting the military, he attended Johns Hopkins University, where he received a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering and was commissioned as an officer in 1954. He held a Master of Arts in Education from Northeastern University and was a graduate of the Army Command and General Staff College and U.S. Naval War College. His military decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, two Bronze Stars, two Meritorious Service Medals, one Air Medal, and an Army Commendation Medal.

Til served on active duty for over 32 years including command assignments as Commander and Director, Waterways Experiment Station, Vicksburg, Mississippi; District Engineer, Savannah District; Commander, 18th Engineer Battalion (Combat), Fort Devens; and Company Commander, 13th Engineer Battalion, 7th Infantry Division, Korea. His major staff assignments included Assistant Director of Civil Works, Upper Mississippi Basin, Washington, D.C.; Branch Chief, Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison, Department of the Army; Deputy Operations Officer, 25th Infantry Division, Vietnam; Chief of the Command and Staff Division, Aberdeen Proving Ground; Project Officer, 3rd

Logistic Command, France; Assistant Professor of Military Science, Northeastern University; and 7th Infantry Division, Korea.

After retiring from the military in 1984, Til served first as the deputy executive director and then as the executive director of the South Florida Water Management District from 1991 to 1994. Col. Creel is survived by his sister, Margaret, his brother, George; four children, Nancy (husband Alan), Martha (husband Walt), Tilford (wife Ellisa), and Alexandra (husband Kazuya); and five grandchildren, William, Nina, Elizabeth, Kaito, and Takuya. His brother, Buckner and his sister, Cornelia predeceased him. His wife of 37 years, Janet Grace Jones, died in 1996. He will be buried with her in Arlington National Cemetery at a later date.

At age 90, he was giving history lectures using PowerPoint, texting funny comments from his hospital bed and participating in Sunday night Zoom cocktail hours with his kids and grandkids. He was so good natured and fun loving that when asked to dress up as a biker for Halloween at his assisted living facility, he did, walker and all.

While an engineer by training, he had a great eye for art and architecture. He moved every few years and he and his wife made each home distinct and elegant, even raggedy army housing. His art collection was unique and diverse and a reflection of his interests. He was also a talented gardener and his children have fond memories of him moving rose bushes from army post to army post. For every new place his family moved to or visited, he made sure that his children were taken to historical sights. His children have an exhaustive knowledge of presidential homes and libraries, as well as military battlefields. They were fortunate to live near the many museums in Washington D.C. and had the rare honor of having the portraits of their ancestors placed on exhibit in the Corcoran Gallery. Til loved to collect beautiful and interesting things, including Boehm plates, silver Christmas ornaments, and commemorative presidential medals from the U.S. Mint. He

refused to buy one for the 45th president on principle.

He really was the King of Christmas. From choosing great gifts (and sometimes spectacularly crazy pink poodle presents) to creating a special Christmas theme each year, he celebrated the season. Last year, he hosted a holiday party for his friends and neighbors.

He cared so deeply about his country and served his country proudly and with honor. To that end, he was awarded the highest peacetime award given in the military. This year's election win by Biden made him extraordinarily happy as he believed the country would be headed back in the right direction.

He touched us all with his spirit, love of life and interest in all we did. His death has left a big hole in our lives.

Cemetery Details

Arlington National Cemetery

Arlington, VA

Tribute Wall



“ *Tilford Cameron Creel*

October 22, 2023 at 10:17 AM



“ *My name is Sue Rigler but when I worked with your dad and grandfather back in 1966 to approximately 1968, my maiden name was Petrosino. I was the secretary for the Command and Staff Division, OCS Brigade, US Army Ordnance Center and School. It was an honor and privilege to work then with MAJ Creel. It was of course the Vietnam era and troops were being trained and sent to Vietnam. Our Division was responsible for the construction of the Vietnamese Village built at Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD where Soldiers learned the tactics of the Vietnamese. Your dad/grandfather was an excellent officer as well as an officer with a sense of humor. I was just 20 years old then but had the utmost respect for the military and their bravery during the war.*

For some reason, I had been thinking about years past and decided to see if I could find any information on the our division personnel. Was so sorry to hear of the passing of your dad/grandfather but it sounds as though he lived a full and happy life.

*God Bless All,
Sue Rigler*

Sue Katherine Rigler - March 23, 2021 at 12:42 PM

CV

“ Good morning,
I had the honor and pleasure of working with your dad and grandfather at the South Florida Water Management District from 1985-96. I served as a professional in the public affairs office and later as the director of the office of government and public affairs while Mr. Creel was the Deputy Executive Director and Executive Director of the agency.

He was a joy to have as the "commander." He was a fair and straight forward boss who treated us all with great respect and the care that a military officer demonstrates for those in his charge. I am thrilled to know that he will be laid to rest with your mother in Arlington National Cemetery. She was surely a compass in his life.

I know that Colonel Creel loved his country, his duty - but most of all, he loved his family, and that extended to his military and water management "families." I will always remember him with great respect and endearing fondness.

*My most sincere condolences,
Cathy Vogel*

Cathy Vogel - February 04, 2021 at 10:14 AM

MY

“ *I had the pleasure of working with Til at the SFWMD. He was very knowledgeable about so many things. Loved his dry wit and Christmas parties. I know he was very proud of his family. He will be missed by many. My deepest condolences to his entire family.*

Margie Yansura - January 14, 2021 at 12:41 AM

KK

“ *Til, You were most generous, kind, thoughtful person. You will be greatly missed!! I will miss all of your stories and all of our conversations. You forever made a great impact on my life. I will never forget my friend most all.*

*Love Always
Kat*

Kat Kelsh - January 11, 2021 at 06:39 PM

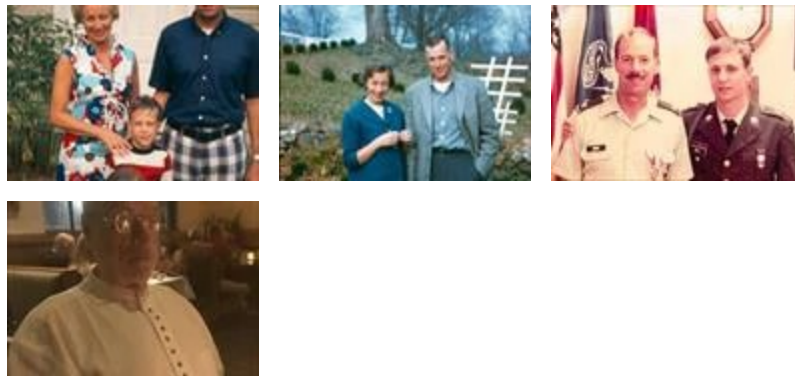
RO

“ *From your former neighbor on Dunbar Road, my heartfelt sympathies. I liked and admired your parents very much. They were very sweet to me and my family. I remember your Christmas trees and table settings were so elegant. My family, including my parents, were invited to dinner one year, just before Xmas, where my parents, Holocaust survivors, met an officer who had liberated the camps. Very memorable! My best wishes to all. A great loss. R. Kanter*

Rosemarie - January 11, 2021 at 04:16 PM

NC

“ *Dad. Love him and miss him. He was one of a kind and a loving, supportive force.*



Nancy Creel - January 11, 2021 at 08:34 AM

PB

“ I am so sorry for the loss of my Uncle Tilford, my cousins. I will miss his great laugh and his fabulous wit. He played such a loving part of my childhood. As my godfather, I had a special connection to him. I will miss him. Xox

Patricia Creel Baltzley - January 09, 2021 at 10:43 PM

PB

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Patricia Creel Baltzley - January 09, 2021 at 10:33 PM

MN

“ 3 files added to the tribute wall



Martha Niehoff - January 08, 2021 at 11:25 PM

MN

“ 5 files added to the tribute wall



Martha Niehoff - January 08, 2021 at 12:53 PM