

Tuesday, July 16, 2019

My name is Kathy (O'Brien) Dennis. I was 19 years old when my 22 years old brother Jack was killed in Vietnam in April, 1968. So very long ago....but it seems like yesterday. I heard about your inquiry through a friend who, as an alum, receives the KUAY.

Our family was heartbroken. Jack was a very special young man, who touched so many lives with his zest for life and sense of adventure. He was too impatient to follow a serious academic path, but boy he accomplished a lot in his short time on earth. He became an Eagle Scout, and excelled in track at Queen Anne High. He also was a ham radio operator, remodeled a boat for water skiing and got a pilot's license. I remember his maiden flight over our home on Queen Anne.

When he was drafted I'm sure he was quickly observed for his ability to handle a gun. We spent summers up at a Lake Cavanaugh where we all roamed freely in the cascade foothills and learned to waterski. Jack roamed the most. With his BeBe gun and eventually a 22. He was also a natural leader with his pack of friends. It's not surprising that he was picked out for Officer Candidate School. After basic training at a Fort Lewis he graduated from Fort Benning OCS.

Jack drove from Ft Benning, Georgia back home to Washington in a "new" blue 1965 corvette convertible. His last big fling in 1967...before serving at Ft. Lewis. It was nice to have him close to home those last few months before Vietnam.

Everyone in my family....except me....has died. Our parents managed to see the Vietnam Wall in D.C. as did my oldest brother Frank and myself. A very moving experience. The Angel Fire Memorial in New Mexico sounds very special....and I hope I can visit there sometime. Here are a few photos of Jack. Maybe they could be used for his memory. We got one letter from Jack from Nam....he remarked how special it was to not have to pay postage. 😞

Jack earned the Silver Star posthumously. It is noted on his gravestone. He never married.

I still miss him.

Kathy Dennis