

Roxana Class of 1966 Plans Memorial for Classmates Killed in Vietnam War

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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ROXANA - The Roxana High School Class of 1966 graduated with bated breath. It was difficult to celebrate with a war overseas.

When Patricia Weir thinks about this time, her mind goes to the four classmates she lost in that war not long after graduation. Nearly 60 years later, the Class of 1966 wants to memorialize them on the Roxana High School campus, where they knew those four men as boys.

“Many of our classmates were either conscripted or enlisted to fight the undeclared war in Vietnam,” Weir remembered. “Some came back to us wounded in body and spirit. Some did not come back to us at all.”

Over the years, Weir and a few other women have made a point to visit the graves of Wayne Carnell, Bill Peyton, Terry Dallape and Duke Mason, all of whom are buried

near their hometown. The women leave flowers at their headstones every few months, with special visits on Memorial Day and Christmas. But lately, Weir has noticed that they seem to be the men's only visitors.

"They were very young," she explained. "They were 19 and 20 years old when they were killed. They weren't married. They didn't have any children. And there's just no one...As we have gotten older, I'm concerned that once our little group from Roxana Class of 66 is gone, there will be nobody who's going to remember these guys and what they did for us."

Weir is determined not to let that happen. Working with her classmates, she has approached [Roxana Community Unit School District #1](#) with the idea to have "a dignified and appropriate memorial developed" at the high school. She spoke to Principal Jason Dandurand and Superintendent Debra Kreutztrager, who "welcomed with open arms."

Her classmates, too, were immediately supportive. Over the past few months, the class has donated most of the money needed to complete the memorial. They plan to wrap up the fundraiser by November and, hopefully, be ready to go by spring 2024.

Now, they want to get the story out. Not only do they want to thank the district and the classmates who have made the memorial possible, but they're also trying to reach any living relatives of Carnell, Peyton, Dallape and Mason. They want them to know the boys are remembered.

At every class reunion, Weir hangs four posters with yearbook photos and information about the four soldiers, including their rank and where their names are located on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. Classmates talk about Carnell's love for theater and football, Peyton's academic achievements, Mason's nicknames, Dallape's skill on the basketball court and how "he looked great in those little gym shorts and tank top."

"Our guys are still there with us and we remember them," Weir said. "Our class has stayed together sort of emotionally because of this dreadful lived experience that we had together."

While the class focuses on remembering the young men they knew, their deaths are always front of mind. They remember Carnell's choice to enlist in the Marine Corps, his death at age 19 in the Quang Tín Province in South Vietnam during Operation Swift. In the Army, Peyton worked in helicopter repair and died at age 23, a little less than nine months after he arrived in Vietnam. Dallape was a mechanic in the Army and killed by a grenade at age 21. Mason was nicknamed "Speed" in the Army, and he was posthumously promoted to sergeant after he died at age 21.

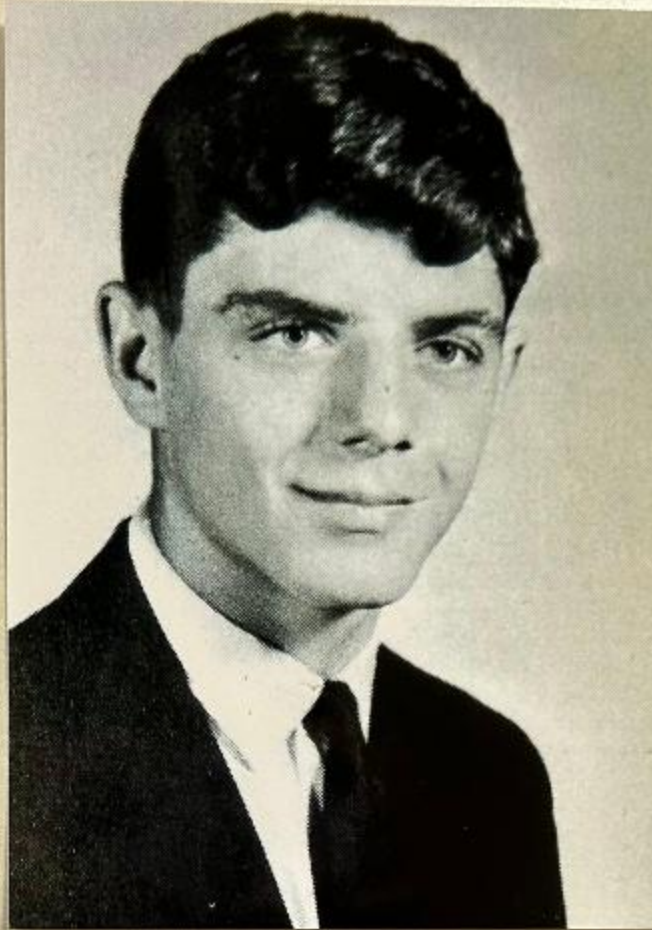
Weir is quick to point out that these four men were not the only casualties in her class. At the class's recent party to celebrate their 75th birthday, she asked all of the Vietnam veterans to stand. At least half the room did. The more she remembers, the more frustrated she becomes.

"The war was undeclared. We had no idea what we were fighting for," she said. "We didn't win it, obviously. And we lost 57,000 young men and women...And we're not even talking about the guys that were wounded. We had one guy that was very severely wounded. He came home and killed himself...Post-traumatic stress disorder, Agent Orange, all of that happened. For what? For what? What a waste."

While they lost their classmates, the Class of 1966 will not let their memories be lost, too. The Roxana High School memorial will serve as a reminder to students and community members of the Vietnam War. And to the Class of 1966, it's a reminder of their friends.

"These young men never had a chance to have a family and a rich, fulfilling life as most of us have enjoyed over these many decades. We're now 75 and won't be around much longer to ensure that their sacrifice and their memories are not lost to eternity," Weir said. "They were our friends, our teammates and our classmates... their memories will be enshrined where we all knew them, at our high school."

If you are related to Talmadge Wayne Carnell, William "Bill" Allen Peyton, Terry Lee Dallape or Roman "Duke" Gale Mason, Weir asks you to email her at michaleen@charter.net.



WAYNE CARNELL

Talmadge Wayne Carnell was born on 2/11/48. His family called him Tommy. We all called him Wayne. He graduated with us in 1966 and shortly thereafter volunteered for the US Marine Corps.

Wayne was an infantryman in M Company, Third Battalion, 5th Marines. We lost our friend in Quang Tin Province South Vietnam on September 12, 1967 when he was killed in action by enemy small arms fire during Operation Swift.

Wayne was very active in both sports and the arts in High School. He played football as a Sophomore, Junior, and Senior and lettered as a Senior. He also played baseball. His artistic side manifested itself in his acting, singing, and other musical talents.

We remember him. We miss him. He will never grow old for us. He will always be young and fresh in our memories. We thank him and honor him for HIS service to OUR country.

On the Wall: Panel 26E Line 57





TERRY DALLAPE

Terry Lee Dallape was born on May 1, 1948 and graduated with us in 1966. We all recall, I'm sure, Terry on the basketball court every season. A tough competitor, he lettered as both a Junior and a Senior. (He looked great in those little gym shorts and tank top, by the way. Ask any girl.)

Terry was in the U.S. Army, a Spec 4 infantryman. He was a mechanic in the 5th infantry division. We lost our classmate on 7/30/69 to the enemy in Quang Tri Province Republic of Vietnam. He was killed in action by a grenade.

We remember him. We miss him. We thank him and honor him for HIS service to OUR country. Terry will never grow old for us. He will always be young and fresh in our memories.

On the Wall: Panel 20W Line 075





BILL PEYTON

We, his classmates, all called him Bill. He was born William Allen Peyton on 12/14/47 and he graduated with us. Throughout High School Bill was active in Junior Achievement as a sophomore, Junior, and Senior.

A member of the United States Army, Bill was a Spec 5 and his unit was 61ST AHC, 268TH AVN BN, 17TH AVN GROUP, 1ST AVIATION BDE, USARV. Bill's job was helicopter repair. He started his tour of duty in country on August 22, 1969.

We lost Bill on 5/7/70 in Pleiku Province South Vietnam. A helicopter in which he was traveling came under enemy fire. It crashed over land and the entire crew perished. Bill was only 23 years old

Today, we remember Bill. We miss him. He will never grow old for us. We thank him and honor him for HIS service to OUR country.

On the Wall: Panel W11, Line 127





"DUKE" MASON

We all called him Duke. His fellow Long Ranger Patrollers called him "Speed". His actual name was Roman Gale Mason and he was born on September 25, 1947. He graduated with us.

Duke was in the United States Army in "E" Company, 50th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division Specialist 4th Class, E4. He was posthumously promoted to SGT.

We lost Duke on January 27, 1969 in Kien Hoa Province, Republic of Vietnam. He had been in country 260 days. He was killed in action by small arms fire while on a combat mission.

Today, we think of Duke. We remember him. He will never grow old for us. We thank him and honor him for HIS service to OUR country.

On the Wall: Panel W33, Line 3

