



William "Bill" Fredrick Diehl Jr.

December 25, 2023

William "Bill" Fredrick Diehl Jr.

Lieutenant Colonel (LTC), United States Army (Retired)

Bill Diehl passed away peacefully at home, in the quiet early hours, on Christmas morning, 2023, in Woodbridge, Virginia with his loving wife, Barbara Diehl, by his side and after meaningful visits from all of his children, grandchildren & many of his friends.

As a well-respected figure, colleague and larger than life friend, it's impossible to understand his legacy without starting at the beginning. Bill was born to parents William Fredrick Diehl Sr and Mary Louise Viola Diehl on August 12, 1949 in West St. Paul, MN where he grew up with his younger sister Gloria and graduated from Sibley High School in 1967.

During his high school years, Bill seemed to excel at everything whether it was football, basketball, track and field, male acapella choir or the National Honor Society. He was selected by Congressional appointment to attend the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point. As a cadet, he was bright and active, playing football , participating in indoor/outdoor track and singing in the Catholic Chapel choir and Glee Club, which performed on both local and National television (The Ed Sullivan show in'68 as an example). He

graduated West Point in 1971.

Where Bill unquestionably excelled, particularly at West Point, was in track and field as both an exceptional athlete and Team Captain. After graduation from West Point in 1971, he continued to train and excel earning a spot on the All Army Track & Field team, in which he participated in the Hammer Throw event. He spent spring and summer seasons between 1972 – 1976 on temporary duty assignment to Eugene, Oregon training and competing. This training lead to America's track and field Olympic trials in June 1976. Bill cherished his experiences with his all- Army teammates, proudly reminiscing about his Olympic training in hammer throwing-- with records that still rank him nationally to this day. During this same time he earned membership in the elite Special Forces/Green Beret, earning Special Forces Underwater and Master parachute and scuba diver badges and Ranger Tab. Thereafter, he continued to compete at his duty stations when Army training and work allowed, up until the late 1980's at the Master's level.

His education would continue to postgrad earning an MS at both University of Southern California and Stanford University. In 1983 he would again return to West Point. This time, as an Assistant Professor with the Dept of Mathematics ('83-'86). where he would author "Ethics and Leadership: The Pursuit Continues"(1985) in which he advocated fiercely for a Military Code of Ethics to guide its members.

After his teaching tenure at West Point, Bill returned to Germany and then ultimately his last duty station was the Pentagon where he supported the Gulf War efforts. In 1993 after serving his country honorably for over 20 years, retiring as a LTC from the Army. Bill continued to support numerous areas of the Department of Defense as a contractor in various positions and as a government civilian.

He enjoyed volunteering in his community--singing in his church and community choirs and with the Washington DC regional West Point Glee Club, participating in the first ever West Point Glee Club reunion in 2007.

As a “civilian” living in the Woodbridge, VA area for over 30 years, Bill and his wife Barbara enjoyed traveling, mostly by Cruise ship, as Bill would say, “you only pack once!”. Their most recent trip was celebrating Bill’s 50th USMA reunion (Nov 2022) in Dallas/Ft. Worth, Texas celebrating the defeat of Air Force in a nail-biting USMA football match-up and trying to leave Covid in the rearview mirror! Over the years, they took trips to Germany to visit his German cousins, and visited the countryside to include seeing the “Passion Play” in Oberammergau, Germany. In 2006 they traveled to Rome, Italy and the Tuscany region to participate in the International Choral Festival. But, one of their greatest pleasures was always spending time in their mountain cabin, “The Great Escape”, in north Georgia, hosting family and friends on many occasions. They often escaped Northern Virginia for some peace & quiet and to celebrate their Valentines Day Wedding Anniversary (1997), fondly remembering when they were married at our Nation’s Capitol, Washington, DC by the US House of Representative Chaplain Ford, who coincidentally had been a Chaplain at West Point when Bill was a cadet! Since his wife is from Kentucky, they also enjoyed hosting what would become, for many years, their annual Kentucky Derby Party with family/friends at the Diehl Paddock in Virginia.

Bill’s greatest joy was his family and his longstanding relationships with friends and mentees. He will be remembered for his commitment to his friends and colleagues as well as his love for his family.

He is survived by his wife, Barbara and their blended family: Children-Kristin (Diehl) Dias, Mario Dias & grandchildren Joshua, Patrick (pre-deceased),

Daniel, Natalia and Gabriel Dias of Woodbridge, (VA); Kathryn Diehl of Los Angeles, California; Karen Diehl of Woodbridge, VA; Chris Peters, Sharon (Johnson) Peters and grandchildren, David Ronin Peters of Fairfax, Dylan Johnson, Lucy and Dexter Peters of Mineral, VA; D. Neil Peters (LTC-Army, Retired), Julia (Lambino) Peters and grandchildren Victoria (Peters) Gack, Reiner Gack and great-granddaughter, Emma Gack of Bavaria, Germany and Loreen Anito, Derek , Zoey and Bryan Peters of Bonner Springs, Kansas; Greg Peters and grandson, Greysen Peters of Woodbridge, VA and Bill's sister Gloria Diehl and Jim Gilhooley of Vermont and many brothers/sisters in-law, nieces, nephews, cousins and longtime friends. Bill also maintained a strong, close relationship w/ his beloved Diehl family in Nuremberg, Germany area.

Bill will be buried with Full Military Honors at West Point, NY on Tuesday, Feb 13, 2024 w/ a memorial mass at the West Point, Most Holy Trinity Catholic Chapel at 1:30pm, followed w/ burial in the West Point Cemetery. After the burial family and friends are invited to a reception at The Thayer Hotel, West Point, NY

The family will also hold a Celebration of Life on Sunday, March 3, 2024 from 1-4 PM at Old Hickory Golf and Events Center, 11921 Chanceford Drive, Woodbridge, VA 22192

In lieu of flowers, and honoring Bill's memory & love for veterans and dogs--- please consider making a donation to Semper K9 Assistance Dogs serving the Prince William VA and surrounding communities.

Website/link to make a donation in memory of : William F "Bill" Diehl <https://donate.semperk9.org/fundraiser/5176887>

To Mail-in a donation: Semper K9 Assistance dogs, PO box 451; Quantico, VA

22134

Previous Events

Memorial Mass

FEB 13. 1:30 PM (ET)

Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church
699 Washington Road
West Point, NY 10996

Burial

FEB 13 (ET)

West Point Cemetery
329 Washington Road
West Point, NY 10996

Celebration of Life

MAR 3. 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

Old Hickory Golf Club LLC
11921 Chanceford Drive
Woodbridge, VA 22192

Tribute Wall

KD

“ From Eric Sundin, USMA classmate of Bill’s and a member of the “Stew”—

Bill Diehl was perhaps one of the best combat arms leaders that I ever saw in the Army. I observed him in units at Ft Bragg with the 5th Special Forces Group and in Germany with the First Infantry Division. His Technical Competence or “Knowing Your Stuff” was outstanding. Bill’s many talents as an Airborne, Ranger, Infantry and Special Forces officer continuously set the example for all his soldiers and officers to follow in each unit he commanded.

As an example, Bill was selected to be the premium leader of the famous “Green Beret Gabriel Demonstration Special Forces A-Team” at Ft Bragg in 1977. This demonstration team was featured in the famous movie “The Green Berets” starring John Wayne in the mid-1960s. The team was used to brief VIP’s on each man’s many talents and capabilities to conduct counterinsurgency operations. Bill looked the part as the tall athletic soldier who spoke fluent German and convincingly portrayed the sterling first class professional soldier that he was.

He always took care of his soldiers without coddling them and always lead by example whether it was qualifying in tank gunnery at Grafenwöhr Germany or setting the example during strenuous field training exercises during harsh weather conditions.

As an example of his compassion and mentoring talent he volunteered to teach the lower math academic sections at West Point. The cadets always academically blossomed in his class while learning the difficult subject with passing grades.

Lastly, the expression "Adversity does not Build Character, it just reveals it" applies to Bill as he battled his health challenges yet he always had an upbeat and positive attitude.

Kristin (Diehl) Dias - January 30, 2024 at 05:01 PM

JB

i will miss my friend. Bill, i wish you fair seas and following winds.

Jim Buck - August 19, 2024 at 10:20 PM

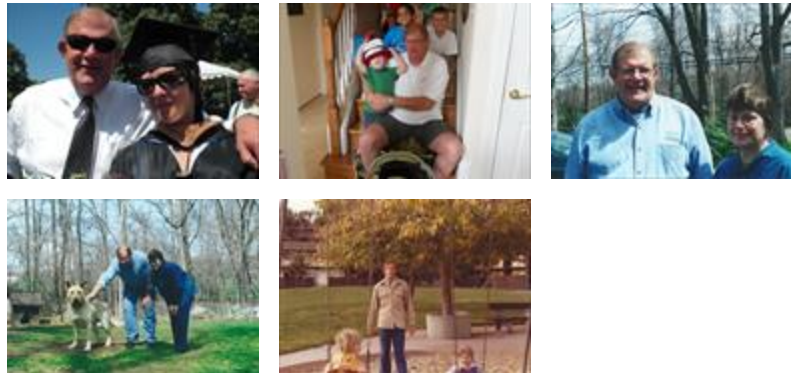
SL

Rest in peace Bill. I will always remember you and I at Grafenwöhr with 3rd Arm during our cow year.

Stan Leja - August 21, 2024 at 01:43 AM

KB

“ 19 files added to the album Family



Ken Breaker - January 29, 2024 at 05:47 PM

JM

“ Dearest Barbara and family, Betty and I are saddened and so very sorry for the loss of Bill. He was a very special person. I have so many wonderful memories of parties, one on one visits, poker nights and singing! He was so very kind and helpful to me, when I was in the choir. We definitely had a mutual admiration society, that's for sure. He will always hold a special place in my heart as a great friend, a great bass, and all around great guy! So glad that we had that brief chat with you both, last February at the restaurant. God bless you all. You have been and will remain in my prayers.

John Maher - January 29, 2024 at 04:46 PM

KB

“ Occasionally all went down to Atlanta for a night on the town. I we visited Pittypat's Porch for their famous Mint Juleps, the Atlanta Underground, and Victoria Station for their delicious prime ribs. After a night on the town, we would end up at iHop for an early morning snack. (Ken Hartlein)

Ken Breaker - January 29, 2024 at 01:43 PM

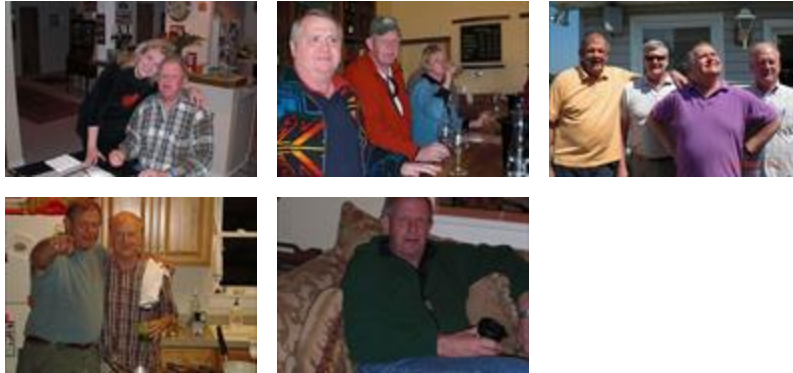
KB

“ During Airborne School in August of 1971, Bill and I liked to toy with the drill sergeants. There was an exercise where one student would give the command to another student to "Take up the slack Rope-man." Bill and I twisted this around. So when our turn came, it was " Take up the rope, Slack-man." We repeated this whenever we had the chance knowing that we would earn 50 pushups (which we could do) as punishment. Sometimes the drill sergeants would make us run circles around our jogging formation as punishment. We loved it, and I think the drill sergeants enjoyed it too. (Ken Hartlein)

Ken Breaker - January 29, 2024 at 01:39 PM

KB

“ 23 files added to the album *Stew Reunion Memories*



Ken Breaker - January 29, 2024 at 01:07 PM

KN

“ Kip Nelson lit a candle in memory of William "Bill" Fredrick Diehl Jr.



Kip Nelson - January 27, 2024 at 05:42 PM

KN

Barbara, I'm very sorry for your loss. You have had so many kind and supportive words for me over the past couple years. Please know that Josie and I have you and your family in our thoughts and prayers. ❤️ 🙏🙏🙏

Kip Nelson - January 27, 2024 at 05:47 PM

BD

Thank you Kip for your very special words of condolences. It means so much to me & my family.

Barbara Diehl - January 29, 2024 at 01:27 PM

KD

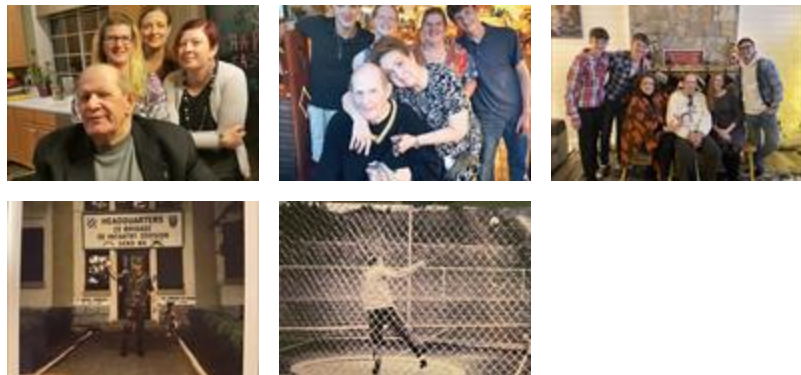
“ 6 files added to the tribute wall



Kristin (Diehl) Dias - January 27, 2024 at 03:09 PM

KD

“ 6 files added to the tribute wall



Kristin (Diehl) Dias - January 26, 2024 at 08:33 PM