



CLASS OF JANUARY 1943
UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY
• MEMORIAL ARTICLES •



John Leroy Weber, Jr.

No. 13128 • 28 May 1918 – 9 May 1996

Died in Seattle, Washington, aged 78 years

Cremated and ashes scattered in the waters of the San Juan Islands, Washington

JOHN LEROY WEBER, JR., was born the first of six children to John and Evelyn in Sandusky, Ohio. In 1937, he served as a private first class with the 1st Engineers in the Army and attended the Second Corps Area West Point Preparatory School at Ft. Dix until 1939, when he received his appointment to USMA.



At West Point, he rose to cadet corporal as a second classman and was among the 176 members of his class to graduate with pilots wings after training in Santa Maria, California, while on detached service during his First Class year.

After graduation in January 1943, “Jake” attended B-26 training at Laughlin Air Base in Del Rio, Texas, and B-24 transition training in Ft. Worth, and became an instructor pilot (not his favorite assignment).

In December 1943, he entered combat out of Royal Air Force Station, Horsham St. Faith, in England. He flew B-24 Liberators as aircraft commander and operations officer in the 458th Bomb Group of the Eighth Air Force. Jake and several other West Point graduates, including his friend and classmate Bob Whitlow, having combat experience in heavy bombers, formed the 2d Air Division Scout Force at Steple Morden. Flying P-51 Mustangs ahead of the bombers, they served as scouts for weather, target identification, flak, and enemy fighters. Jake flew one bomber tour and three fighter tours. During 1944–45, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross three times and the Air Medal seven times.



After the war, Jake served briefly in the Current Operations Division, Headquarters USAF. In February 1946, he became an instructor at the Air Tactical School at Tyndall Field, Panama City, Florida. There he met and married June Elizabeth Dillon of Asheville, North Carolina.

Jake was interested in aeronautical engineering and had a good head for science, but after the world-wrenching decade just past, he felt that he could be of greater service to the country pursuing political science. He entered Georgetown University in 1947 and received a master's degree in international relations in 1949. By then he and June had adopted Susan. He spent the next four years at Air Force Headquarters in Washington, first in the Directorate of Plans and then in the Air Base Division, Directorate of Operations. During that assignment they adopted

John III.

Assigned in 1953 to Headquarters, FEAF in Tokyo, Jake served in the Office of the Assistant for programming until reassigned as assistant director of operations. He became a student at the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1955 and then commanded the 3560th Pilot Training Group at Webb AFB. He served as director of plans and programs in Headquarters, Air Training Command, and then headed the Europe, Africa, Middle East Branch, International Division, Directorate of Plans at Air Force Headquarters in Washington until he was transferred as the assistant for National Security Council Affairs, DCS/P&O.

Upon retiring as a colonel in August 1961, Jake moved his family one last time to Seattle, where he became a partner in a construction company with Dick Nyman, a flying buddy from WWII. In 1965, Jake joined the University of Washington and served as the assistant director of facilities planning and construction until 1972, when he became the assistant vice president for health affairs. While at the university, he enjoyed the occasional opportunity to dust off his West Point Latin for a quote or wry comment in conversations with faculty members. He always appreciated the excellent education the country provided him.

Jake finally retired in 1978. Boating, gardening, golfing, and traveling — mostly to the East Coast plus San Diego for a month or two every winter — made up a large part of the 18 years dad had left. He and mom spent their last years in a very open one-story house on a creek with Japanese maple trees, dahlias, an occasional salmon or enormous gray crane. And every year, fuzzy little ducklings were shepherded through the yard.

Dad attended the 50th anniversary of the 355th Fighter Group in Steeple Morden; he was pleased to see many old friends and impressed with the warm and enthusiastic reception from the local population, anxious to extend their appreciation for deeds performed so long ago. Dad also attended his 50th Reunion at West Point, on his way home from England, where he reconnected with his roommate Buck Stahle and many other old friends. Though he didn't often indulge in lengthy reminiscences, he valued those two affairs. Only a few big trips were to be taken after that, with the help of a wonderful doctor at the University of Washington Hospital and the support of the chemotherapy crew, almost three weeks in New Zealand were realized. Many amazing sights, fabulous seafood dinners, a little golf, boat rides, and an occasional beer were enjoyed and referred to long after.

Dad's final excursion was to Tubac, Arizona. There, in November 1995, he joined Bob Whitlow and Val Woodward for a few days in the sun. They managed 19 holes every day and shared tales dating from just before and after the war: tales of buzzing friends' houses; riding a motorcycle through a bar; flying cumulus clouds like a winding highway; and flying into such a nice sunset that they jumped up 5,000 or 10,000 feet to watch it again. These three, one on chemo, one with a new pacemaker soon to be installed, were all happy to be there; happy to play "best ball" on the back nine, had been warriors, had helped to make the world a better, safer place, and felt fortunate to have enjoyed such long lives after losing many young friends fifty years before. These men cast long shadows in their setting sun.

Jake lost his loving wife June in 1992. He is survived by Susan and John and his five sisters and brothers. His ashes, with June's, were cast into the waters of the San Juan Islands in Washington State.

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• WELL DONE, BE THOU AT PEACE •

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