



Donald T Walton

November 15, 2022

A Man with Two Birthdays

Date of birth, date of death. These are the standard openers in most obituaries. While these dates are important, the dash that connects them is the most important and often most overlooked. Within that dash is a lifetime of loving, a lifetime of dreams, hopes, adventure, sorrows, losses, and a lifetime of memories. So for a moment, please take some time and come along as the story of Donald Walton becomes more than a dash between two dates.

On December 27, 1939, Donald Thomas Walton was born in Loeb, Texas, to Sadie Ruth and Lester Thomas Walton. Donald, or Don as he was known to most, was born at home in the middle of a snowstorm. A fitting entrance for a man who lived his life as a force of nature. It was due to this snowstorm that Don had not one but two birthdays, a fact that he rarely let anyone forget. Because of the snowstorm, Lester Thomas had to wait three days to visit the courthouse to register Don's birth. Instead of putting the actual day Don was born, Lester Thomas recorded the day he was at the courthouse, which made Don's official birthday on record the 29th of December rather than the 27th. Growing up in Texas, Don spent most of his time in Beaumont and Jasper. He was the oldest of four; he had two brothers, Charles and Lloyd, or "Pete" as he was called, and one sister, Barbara. As a child, he liked to go on adventures around his grandfather's farm. A natural-born storyteller, Don would often recount some of these adventures, in great detail, to anyone who would listen. Stories were never in short supply when Don was around. He'd

tell stories about working in the garden with his grandmother, working on projects with his father and grandfather, and even a story that involved kittens on the roof of their home!

Over the years, Don held lots of odd jobs, from construction to the local handyman. But the one that defined him and was the lens through which the narrative of his life was written was his time in the Army. Serving more than 21 years, Don loved his country. In his illustrious career, he was awarded several medals, including the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, an Army Commendation Medal, and a Bronze Star. Even after his time in active service, Don spent a great deal of time pouring into the future generations of servicemen and women through programs such as the Sea Cadets and JROTC and by working with organizations such as The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA), The American Legion, and the VFW. During his tenure in the service, he served three tours in the Vietnam War. His time in the military took him and his family around the world. Alaska, Germany, and Texas were just some of the duty stations Don held. It was at one of these stations in Arizona that he met his wife, Alice Ann Lyons.

Alice Ann Lyons and Donald Thomas Walton were married on May 7, 1965. Soon after they were married, they had a son Carl Edward. Soon after, a daughter Karen Ann and another son, Richard Edwin, would join the family. Throughout their marriage, Don and Alice embarked on some big adventures. From traveling to various duty stations to over-the-road trucking in their later years. Both loved to travel and see new places. Don and Alice were married for forty years until Alice's death in 2005.

A man who never liked to sit still, Don had many hobbies. Woodworking and painting were some of his favorite activities. From a doll bed and shelf made for his granddaughter to giant wooden yard decorations, Don's creations were legendary and always held his signature touch. Mentoring was another large part of his life. Don loved to teach younger generations about different skills. Whether it was woodworking, Boy Scouts, art, mechanics, or military service, he loved to teach. When he wasn't out working with youth in his community,

planning Veteran's Day parades, or crafting the next big yard display, Don loved to listen to bluegrass music, read books, watch westerns, and the television shows *M*A*S*H* and Heartland. War movies were another favorite of his; Dunkirk and Pearl Harbor were two of his particular favorites.

Of all the roles Don held in life, his favorite was being a grandfather. Don was extremely proud of his grandchildren. When having a conversation with him, it was almost a guarantee that one of his grandchildren would come up. Don loved to watch his grandchildren play and would, more often than not, look on with a huge grin on his face. When they would visit him in Hope Mills, NC, it wasn't uncommon for Don to bring back a waffle from Waffle House or chicken fingers from Beef O'Brady's as a surprise. Whether it was playing with trucks, playing a round of cards, putting together a puzzle, or sharing a bowl of Neapolitan ice cream, Don loved to spend time with his grandchildren.

November 15, 2022, was Don's last day on Earth. However, it is not the end of his story. Don's life is so much more than a dash between two dates. His memory will live on in the lives of the people who knew him. Whether he was a mentor, father, grandfather, uncle, cousin, or friend, Don will live on through their memories.

Donald Thomas Walton was born December 27, 1939, in Loeb, Texas. He died November 15, 2022, in Bay Minette, Alabama. He is preceded in death by his wife Alice, mother Sadie Ruth, father Lester Thomas, brothers Charles and Lloyd, and sister Barbara. He is survived by his son Carl (Darlene), daughter Karen (Henry), and son Richard. Grandchildren Brandi, Jay, Amanda (Carl), Andrea, Christopher, Katelyn, Daniel (Karen), Elizabeth, and Kevin (Richard). Many nieces and nephews and five great-grandchildren.

Previous Events

Military Graveside Service

NOV **23**. 12:30 PM (CT)

Alabama State Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Spanish Fort

34904 AL-225

Spanish Fort, AL 36577

(251) 625-1338

Tribute Wall



“ *Andrea Parker lit a candle in memory of Donald Walton* ”



Andrea Parker - November 22, 2022 at 10:53 PM



“ *2 files added to the album Donald Walton* ”



Andrea Parker - November 22, 2022 at 10:53 PM

SR

Don was a Dear friend of mine! I hate I didn't hear of his passing till now! We were stationed at Fort Bragg together! We were in the same company, which was the 72nd Aviation Company. We worked together and had a lot of laugh together as well. Don and I were always picking and joking with each other during this time! We were there from 1976 to 1979 when I came down on orders to Germany! Don was assigned there from Alaska.

Upon my retirement from the military in 1991 from Fort Lewis. I returned to North Carolina where I grew up not but a few miles from Fort Bragg! I went to Ft. Bragg for Retirees Appreciation Day, and there I was reacquainted with my dear friend Don. He had a table set up for the Retired Enlisted Association. That's how we got reacquainted. He also encouraged me to become a life member of the association which I did. I attended one or two meetings with him. I lived about 40 miles from Fort Bragg. Was not able to get to Fort Bragg as often as I'd like and visited with Don. I had taking on a second job working with the state of North Carolina upon my retirement from the military.

Don and I kept in contact over the phone. We called each other quite often. He and I did a presentation at East Montgomery High School in Montgomery County for the ROTC program at that school one year. I did a presentation one year for Don because he was not able to make the trip. Because of other obligations that he had on the calendar.

He is a dear friend, and he will be greatly missed! I thought the world of him and I had great respect for him. He made it back from Vietnam three different times I honor him for that. And all the Vietnam veterans who returned home and those that didn't! God bless you my friend, I'll see you on the other side!

SSG. Joseph Ingram US ARMY Retired - May 16, 2025 at 09:37 AM