



Major Russell C. Wagnon (Ret)

July 15, 1950 - April 24, 2017

Russell Clyde Wagnon, 66 years of age, passed on Monday, April 24, 2017 in the company of family and friends after an extensive battle with a malignant brain tumor.

Russ was born July 15, 1950 in Ashland, Oregon to the late Clyde and Mary Alice Wagnon. He was the oldest of three children, survived by Delores and preceded by James Stanley. His youth was spent in Hawaii, California, and Oregon where he developed a lifelong passion for the outdoors. Russ attended the United States Military Academy at West Point, NY graduating in 1972 with a BS in Applied Science and Engineering. In 1979, he received his MSEE in Electrical Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology. Russ spent 20 years in the US Army before retiring from active duty as a Major, with time spent at diverse locations including West Point, Fort Bragg, Fort Gordon, Fort Leavenworth, Germany, and Korea. After his active duty service, he spent another 20 years as a civilian contractor in support of programs based in Fort Monmouth and the Aberdeen Proving Grounds.

While attending West Point, Russ met his wife, Gweneth, and they were married in June of 1973. Together, Russ and Gwen raised three sons, Brian, Kevin, and Scott in Tinton Falls since 1987. His voice became synonymous with Pop Warner football for many years in the '90s as he announced the games for the local teams while his sons played. Russ passed on his passion for the outdoors to his sons, and the community, by taking on various adult leadership roles in the local Boy Scouts of America troop. Later in life, he

pursued his interest in sailing, where he could often be seen around the docks of the Monmouth Sailing Center or on his boat, the Sea Owl, in the local waters.

Russ was a loving son, brother, husband, father, and to many, a friend. He leaves behind his wife Gwen, and their sons, Brian, Kevin, and Scott; his sister, Delores, and her husband, David; his siblings-in-law, Adele and Gregory; his close and devoted family friend, Kelly; two cats, Raven and Zeus; and many nieces, nephews, and numerous friends.

Visitations will be from 2:00 to 4:00 pm and 7:00 to 9:00 pm on Friday April 28th at Bongarzone Funeral Home, 2400 Shafto Road, Tinton Falls. A Funeral Mass will be offered at 10:00 am on Saturday April 29th at the Church of Saint Dorothea, 240 Broad Street, Eatontown. Burial of cremated remains in West Point Cemetery will be held on Friday, June 2nd at 1:30 pm. In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made locally to the David S. Zocchi Brain Tumor Center at Monmouth Medical Center, or to the National Brain Tumor Society at braintumor.org. For online condolences, please visit his memorial website at www.bongarzonefuneralhome.com

Cemetery Details

West Point Cemetery

West Point, NY

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 28. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

Bongarzone Funeral Home
2400 Shafto Road
Tinton Falls, NJ 07712
(732) 918-6200

Visitation

APR 28. 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM (ET)

Bongarzone Funeral Home
2400 Shafto Road
Tinton Falls, NJ 07712
(732) 918-6200

Funeral Mass

APR 29. 10:00 AM (ET)

Saint Dorothea's Church
240 Broad Street
Eatontown, NJ 07724

Tribute Wall

AB

“ *Al Barthelmess lit a candle in memory of Major Russell C. Wagnon (Ret)*



Al Barthelmess - December 10, 2020 at 05:42 PM

LJ

“ *Love, Audrey and Jerry purchased the Fruit Abounds for the family of Major Russell C. Wagnon (Ret).*



Love, Audrey and Jerry - June 05, 2017 at 10:18 AM

JM

“ *Jerry And Audrey Moran lit a candle in memory of Major Russell C. Wagnon (Ret)*



Jerry and Audrey Moran - May 31, 2017 at 09:18 AM

MB

“ Russ and I were classmates in the great class of 1972 “Proud and True”, company mates in Company G-1 “Gophers”, and often roommates through our four years at West Point. I guess it was only natural that a tall guy from the West Coast and state of Oregon and a short guy from Southern New Jersey would just naturally become good friends. We graduated in June of 1972 and the friendships and memories that we made back in those dark ages long ago remain strong to this day.

Russ was smart, gifted, and a born leader and he fit into West Point like a hand fits in a glove. Russ and the class of 1972 entered West Point in 1968 which, for those of you old enough to remember, was the pinnacle of the Vietnam War. We entered the academy during a tumultuous time in US history marked by internal strife, riots and the Vietnam War that we thought we would become involved in after graduation. Russ knew what he was getting into and he put his effort into, and focused on becoming the best that he could be and this young man from Oregon succeeded as both a cadet and an officer.

Russ was the type of friend that you needed to survive the stress at West Point. Nothing ever seemed to faze him. He was always cheerful – I can’t remember ever seeing him down and he had a laugh that you could hear throughout the barracks. He was always there to cheer you up when you were down or frustrated trying to survive the best years of your life at Hudson High. He was always willing to help others whether it be helping them learn the finer points of Physics or Mechanical Engineering or just being someone who would listen and provide sage advice when the going got tough.

I always had trouble at West Point running the mile in less than 7 minutes. That is 430 seconds and I needed every one of them to pass the finish line – usually in a state of utter physical exhaustion. Russ was one of the reasons why I was always able to make it. He would finish his mile, usually in less than five minutes, and then pick me up on the last lap and kick my butt across the line with maybe two or three seconds to spare.

Russ’s ties to West Point were strong. He loved the academy

atmosphere. He lived the West Point motto of duty honor country to the fullest. He had an assignment at West Point instructing cadets in electrical engineering, and one of his sons was born at the academy during that tour. He met his lovely wife, Gwen, at West Point. My wife, Pat, and I were lucky to share numerous weekends together with them while we were dating and at multiple reunions over the last 45 years.

One of the last parts of the West Point Alma Mater goes:

*"And when our work is done,
Our course on Earth is run,
May it be said, "Well done:
Be thou at peace."*

Russ, well done as a member of the class of 1972, and as a dedicated officer in the United States Army. Also, well done as a loving husband for nearly 44 years to your lovely bride, Gwen; well done as a father to your three sons, Brian, Kevin, and Scott who you raised to be the exceptional young men that they are today; well done as a good friend to so very many people that you encountered during your life; and well done as an exceptional, caring human being. God bless you roomie. "Be thou at peace."

Mike Balderman USMA Class of '72, "Proud and True"

Michael Balderman - May 04, 2017 at 08:32 PM

TM

“ *I am so sorry to hear this. I worked with Russ at Fort Monmouth right out of college when he was still active duty, and later when he was my supervisor at CSC. He was a mentor and friend, always joking and smiling. I last saw him a few years ago down in Aberdeen, MD when I ran into him by chance. I am so sad to hear of his passing - my thoughts and prayers are with his family.*

Tina Miller - May 01, 2017 at 09:11 AM

TG

“ Although we never met but just knowing your son Kevin and what great values he has I know in my heart what a great man you were we love Kevin and I know you will watch over him and the rest of the family from heaven resr in peace Katie's Aunt Terry

Terry Guildener - April 29, 2017 at 09:03 AM

WB

“ *Gwen and Family*

I am still trying to comprehend that Russ is no longer with us. He was my classmate and friend for whom all I had was respect. Please accept my condolences.



In the small world we live in, it turns out that Russ occasionally worked with my younger brother, Jim, who is a retired Navy Senior Chief and now contractor to the military. They last saw one another in Hawaii in 2010.

May God grant you much grace to grieve Russ well.

Proud and True.

*Ward Bursley
Simpsonville, SC*

Ward Bursley - April 28, 2017 at 05:56 PM

DR

“ Gwen & Sons,

My deepest sympathies for your loss. Russ and I worked together at FT Monmouth wherein I was the Product Manager for Western Hemisphere Transmission Systems and Russ was my Deputy and lead engineer on multiple projects. He was the heart of the team bringing comradery and a sense of "doing good" for the Army. I often kidded him about being a West Point Grad and not getting a real education. Russ was extremely proud of his West Point heritage and serve his country. I greatly admired Russ and he will be a loss to the world.

Dennis Raymond, COL US Army Retired

Dennis Raymond - April 28, 2017 at 03:14 PM

PG

“ *Pediatric Medical Group purchased the Beautiful i n Blue for the family of Major Russell C. Wagnon (Ret).*



Pediatric Medical Group - April 27, 2017 at 06:42 PM

BH

“ *Bongarzone Funeral Home lit a candle in memory of Major Russell C. Wagnon (Ret)*



Bongarzone Funeral Home - April 27, 2017 at 03:42 PM



“ *Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Major Russell C. Wagnon (Ret).*



April 27, 2017 at 02:46 PM



“ *The Woodson family purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Major Russell C. Wagnon (Ret).*



The Woodson family - April 27, 2017 at 01:37 PM



“ *Courtney, Nathan, Tyler and Savannah Eaton purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Major Russell C. Wagnon (Ret).*



Courtney, Nathan, Tyler and Savannah Eaton - April 27, 2017 at 11:42 AM

“ Russ and I are West Point Classmates. In 1973 Russ and I were assigned to the same Artillery Battalion in the 82d Airborne Division. He was the hot shot Signal Officer, and I was on the guns. One day the Battalion Commander called me in and reassigned me to the Headquarters Battery with the job to help clean up a bad situation. This unit was as bad and evil a unit as I saw in my entire career. Rampant drugs, discipline, accountability. The worst of the post-Vietnam soldiers. By example, my driver, a former, no kidding, face on the poster for recruiting, had gone bad, and was arrested for B&E into a Veterinary Hospital where he was caught stealing animal sedatives.

As I am unpacking my stuff, Russ came in and said, “Glad you’re here. I asked the old man for you. You should know it’s just you and me, and the Survey Chief. The rest cannot be trusted and most are dirty.”

So, at 1800 that night, the Russ and I held an all hands. We informed them that we were going to be there in the barracks days, night, weekends, holidays, until the end of time. We used that line before Schwarzenegger did. Russ and I were together all the time. For six months. Often we carried baseball bats. If there was going to be trouble, they’d have to deal with two of us. Drug busts, arrests, and lots and lots of after-hours counseling and training. One of the two of us would type up the disciplinary charges, drag the dirtbag in to their hearing, and show the company commander where to sign, and put the bad guy in jail. Pretty soon the population of good guys in the battery began to become the majority and Russ and I got back to our wives.

Fast forward. The U.S is about to take down Noriega in Panama. I’m an aide to the general who said he needed a top-notch signal officer to help upgrade the comms capability. The General said to get him the best signal officer I could to get the mess fixed down here. I called the pentagon and asked for Russ. He was immediately reassigned and worked miracles and earned a commendation. He and his jewel-of-a-wife Gwen are precious to Mary and me. RIP Classmate

John Northrop

John Northrop - April 27, 2017 at 09:34 AM

BC

I remember those days in the early 70s when we were spending more time as cops than we were as officers doing our job. God Bless Russ. I will have a mass said in his memory at Most Holy Trinity church at West Point in the next 2 weeks. Bob Curran '72

bob curran - April 28, 2017 at 07:24 AM

MD

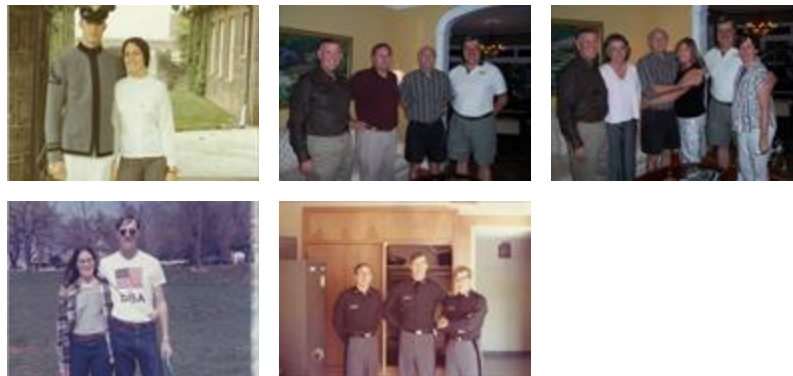
“ *Kevin, My condolences to you and your family for your loss. My thoughts are with you all during this time and will be looking to link up when you return back to Maryland for a drink and some memories. Take care. - Downs*



Mike Downs - April 27, 2017 at 07:34 AM

MB

“ *6 files added to the album New Album Name*



Mike Balderman - April 26, 2017 at 08:24 PM



*Mike, I have not met you yet but I look forward to doing so...thank you for sharing, these are amazing photos, my heart goes out to you and the rest of G-1/class of 72...dad would recommend that we all get together..tell stories and drink scotch...lots of scotch... *salute* kw (son #2)*

Kevin Wagnon - April 27, 2017 at 01:20 AM



“ *Team TACCOM and Gov purchased the Sacred Duty Spray for the family of Major Russell C. Wagnon (Ret).*



Team TACCOM and Gov - April 26, 2017 at 02:47 PM



“ *From Kevin's Saturday morning golf buddies purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Major Russell C. Wagnon (Ret).*



From Kevin's Saturday morning golf buddies - April 26, 2017 at 10:31 AM

AP

“ 6 files added to the album *New Album Name*



Adele Hedley Page - April 25, 2017 at 10:25 PM

FF

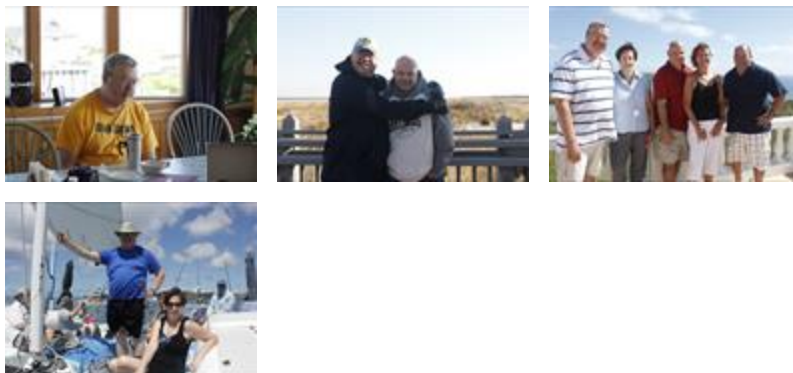
“ From the Czarnik Family purchased the *Lavender Reflections Spray* for the family of Major Russell C. Wagnon (Ret).



From the Czarnik Family - April 25, 2017 at 05:40 PM

AH

“ 4 files added to the album *New Album Name*



Adele Hedley - April 25, 2017 at 05:23 PM

CG

“ *Brother Russ...you have been a great mentor/friend for the last 20 years or so. THANK YOU for that mentorship. My deepest sympathy to your wife, son (Kevin) and family. I will deeply miss you! RIP Brother...Goose Gossage*

Charles Gossage - April 25, 2017 at 03:59 PM

Kevin Wagnon

Thank you Goose...at some point in time, we shall have a scotch and tell stories of dad, I think he would have liked that...

Kevin Wagnon - April 27, 2017 at 01:25 AM

BA

“ *BC Team APG purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Major Russell C. Wagnon (Ret).*



BC Team APG - April 25, 2017 at 03:27 PM



“ *Beautiful Whisper was purchased for the family of Major Russell C. Wagnon (Ret).*



April 25, 2017 at 03:05 PM



“ *Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Major Russell C. Wagnon (Ret).*



April 25, 2017 at 02:54 PM



“ *Russ, you were a great colleague to work with. You always brought a fresh perspective to any situation. Thank you for your mentorship during the short time we worked together. My deepest sympathy to your wife and family. - Greg Bockelmann*



Greg Bockelmann - April 25, 2017 at 02:04 PM