



Bradley E. Pelham

With his family at his side, Brad Pelham passed away peacefully on May 23, 2021, at the age of 67. He was a leader, a man of faith and compassion, and a true friend to anyone he knew. He will be forever remembered by his family and friends.

Brad dedicated his life to the Marine Corps. As an Air Crew Chief, he played a vital role in the evacuation of Saigon, a significant event during the Vietnam War in April 1975. He flew onto the rooftop of the American Embassy and loaded Americans and at-risk Vietnamese civilians onto helicopters. He was among the last Americans to leave Saigon before it was overrun. Nine-hundred and twenty Americans and eleven hundred and twenty Vietnamese were saved through the work of the Marines at the Embassy. Brad's role in this event earned him the Humanitarian Services Award.

After the war, he served on the drill field as a Senior Drill Instructor responsible for the training of a battalion of new Marines. Master Gunnery Sergeant Pelham was the consummate professional, leader, and had tremendous influence on innumerable Marines. Throughout his military career, Brad was fueled by a desire to ensure peace through strength and force readiness. Leadership from the front, and by example, were the hallmarks of his storied career.

Other accommodations earned include Navy Commendation Medal, Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal, Joint Meritorious Unit Commendation (with device), Air Crew Wings, Sea Service Deployment ribbon with 11 stars, Combat Action ribbon, and Expert Rifle & Pistol Shooter.

Brad served as Chapter Commander of the Bellevue D.A.V. for two years and a Veterans Service Officer for five years. He impacted the lives of hundreds of Veterans in helping them receive disability benefits.

Though he seems to have a tough exterior, Brad had a huge heart and showed love to his family daily as he guided each member to live up to their full potential. He was the foundation of his family and cared for each individual with love and patience.

He is survived by his wife, Lily, Papillion; children Melody Thweatt (Aaron), Jennifer Tomb (Derek Thompson), Melanie Leszczynski (Jakub), Jennalyn Crothers (Albert) and Bradley Pelham (Taylor); his mother Mary Greene; his uncle John Johnson (Caryl); his siblings Patty Maller (Tom), Marlin Pelham (Nadine), Charlie Pelham, Kevin Pelham (Dorothy), Chris Pelham; cousins Cathy MacAloney, and Cindy Sendor (husband Walter); and numerous grandchildren, nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his father, John Pelham; his father-in-law, Simeon Pascual; and his brothers, Verlin Walters and Jimmy Pelham.

