

Sandberg, Michael Bruce (Mike), 5th Platoon

5 August 1945 - 3 November 1973

Mt. Hope Cemetery, St James MN – alongside wife Patricia



Photographs:

Mike Sandberg circa 1972 serving with the Lancers of VMFA-212 at Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii;
Captain and Mrs. Mike Sandberg (Patricia Mays) 5 June 1971.

Captain Michael Bruce Sandberg was born on 5 August 1945 in St. James, Watonwan County, Minnesota, the son of William Arthur Sandberg and Madeleine Elsie Wahl. Michael was the second of four boys: William Allen -1939, Steven Bradley -1949, and Irving Lee -1951.

Mike attended St. James High School. He was the senior class vice president and a member of the National Honor Society. He attended the University of Utah at Salt Lake City on a NROTC scholarship from 1963 to 1967 earning a BS in Physics. While at the U of UT, Mike was in the NROTC with a Marine Corps option and attended the 6-week Bulldog Program, between his Junior and Senior years, at MCB Quantico, VA.

Mike accepted a regular commission in the USMC upon graduation from the University of Utah and reported to Officers Basic School Class 1-68 Alpha Company 5th Platoon, in June 1967. Upon graduation in November 1967 he reported to NAS Pensacola for the Naval Flight Officer (NFO) pipeline training, where he took Basic and Intermediate flight school. At the culmination of NFO training, Mike received his wings as an F-4 Phantom Radar Intercept Officer (RIO) flying with the VMFA F-4 Phantom II squadrons. He was assigned to an F-4 squadron.

Mike deployed to Vietnam flying with VFMA-115. It is said that he may have had a three month tour as a Forward Air Controller with a Marine ground unit. At the conclusion of his Vietnam tours, Mike was stationed with the Lancers, VMFA-212 MCAS Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii.

While stationed in Hawaii, Mike met Patricia Mays. Patricia was employed in Hawaii and both were enrolled in post graduate work at the University of Hawaii.

Captain Sandberg and Patricia Mays were married on 5 June 1971 in a military ceremony at the Kaneohe, MCAS base chapel with a reception at the officers club. Both the Sandberg and Mays families were in attendance. Michael was released from active duty on 31 July 1973 and he and Patricia moved to Tucson, AZ where both were enrolled at the University of Arizona as graduate students. Mike was studying for a master's degree in Physics and Patricia was also working toward a master's degree.

In a tragic twist of fate, Mike and his wife, Patricia, were brutally shot and killed on 3 November 1973 in their Tucson condominium during a home invasion. Both killers were apprehended and convicted. One of the killers died of liver disease in 1987 while awaiting execution on Arizona's death row. The other was executed on 3 June 1998.

USMC Resume:

- TBS Class 1-68 Alpha Company, 5th Platoon June-Nov 1967
- Aviation Preflight Indoctrination (API), NAS Pensacola FL.
- Basic and intermediate flight school for Naval Flight Officers (NFO), VT-10, NAS Pensacola FL. and Corpus Christi, TX.
- F-4 Phantom II RIO (Radar Intercept Officer) School, VT-86, NAS Glynco, NFO wings upon graduation.
- Assigned to an F-4 training / operational squadron.
- Assigned to an operational squadron: VMFA-115, VFMA-212, possible others.
- Forward Air Controller (FAC) Spent 3 months as a FAC with Marine ground forces.
- Release from active duty: 31 July 1973

Personal Reflections about Michael Sandberg:

From Stephen Silver (TBS 6-67) 2 Apr 2015: Mike and I were friends in VMFA-115 in Vietnam, where our tours overlapped. He had a great sense of humor. We had a deal – whichever one of us got to Japan on R&R first would buy the other guy's stereo gear and ship it home for him. Somehow I got there first – I think he might have been detached for a FAC [Forward Air Control] tour?? – and spent the day in the base stereo store. I remember him being delighted and I never told him that I had slept on my wallet that had both of our money in it and then walked out of my cubicle and left my wallet under my pillow. When I suddenly realized what I'd done more than an hour later, I sprinted back. The wallet was still there and his stereo gear made it home.

Editor's Note: Patricia Mays was born 15 May 1941 in Los Angeles, CA to Roderick Ainsworth Mays and Dorothy Ellen Perkins. Roderick and Dorothy were both graduates of UC-Berkeley. Patricia had one older brother, Peter born 2 May 1939 also in Los Angeles. Both Peter and Patricia attended the University of California – Los Angeles (UCLA). Patricia graduated with a BA

in Psychology. She was a member of the Delta Delta Delta sorority just as her mother was at UC-Berkeley.

From Irving Sandberg 11 Apr 2015: Brother. Have a great reunion! And if anyone who knew Mike during those years would like to contact me, I would be happy to talk to them. Irving Sandberg, Waverly, Iowa, irving@mchsi.com