

VERNON BASIL SONES
Colonel, USA, (Ret.)



Vernon Sones passed away peacefully on March 20, 2018. Born in Butler, Pennsylvania he earned Eagle Scout before attending the Pennsylvania State University where he was President of Acacia Fraternity, and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Forest Engineering and his commission as a Second Lieutenant as a Distinguished Graduate of the Pennsylvania State University's Army ROTC program. He began his career as a combat engineer officer, transferring to combat infantry when he was a Captain, for the remainder of his twenty-eight-year Army career. He served as an Infantry Company Commander in the 101st Airborne Division and as an Infantry Battalion Commander in the 23rd Infantry Division in Vietnam.

Additionally, he served in numerous staff positions, at all levels of command, during his Army career, to include as an Instructor in the Leadership Department at The United State Military Academy, and as a member of the Army Staff and the Joint Staff. On the Army Staff, he served in the Secretary of the Army's Office of Legislative Affairs, responsible for the Army's legislative liaison with the United States Congress as well as state and local governments. While assigned to the Joint Staff he worked in the Studies, Analysis and Gaming Agency. He was also on the faculty at the National Defense University for six years, culminating his Army career as a Department Chairman, responsible for the educational curriculum of more than 4,000 senior federal executives on Department of Defense manpower and resources mobilization.

He graduated from the Army Command and General Staff College, the National War College as a Distinguished Graduate, and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. Additionally, he earned a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Pittsburgh. His military decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, and the Meritorious Service Medal. Decorations earned during two tours in Vietnam include the Dis-

tinguished Flying Cross, four Bronze Stars, nine Air Medals and the Vietnamese Cross' of Gallantry with three Bronze Stars. His special qualifications include the Combat Infantryman's Badge, Ranger Tab, Senior Parachutist Badge and the Army General Staff and Joint Chiefs of Staff Badges.

Following his military career, he served in numerous contracting capacities as a Systems Engineer and Task Manager for telecommunications management, emergency management plans and programs, resources management and manpower, and industrial mobilization aspects of national security programs.

Throughout his life, Vernon was passionate about giving back to his community, his church and his family. He was active in numerous civic organizations to include as an eleven-time President of the Chapel Square West Community Association. His extensive participation and efforts in local civic organizations earned him recognition in 2004 as the Citizen of the Year for the Braddock District, Fairfax County, Virginia. As a fifteen-year College and Career Sunday School teacher at Immanuel Bible Church he taught, led, mentored and positively impacted the lives of hundreds of college and career age young adults. His greatest passion was spending quality time with his family traveling and enjoying the outdoors. He especially loved hunting, fishing and attending sporting events with his sons and his eight grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Basil Sones, and his sister Mrs Phyllis Potter of Butler, Pennsylvania.

Vernon's greatest enjoyment was his family, which he always placed first in his life. He never missed an opportunity to encourage and express how proud he was of each family member. He is survived by his loving wife of fifty-six years, Helga, and their three devoted sons Bruce, Dwight and Eric who all served in the military, as well. He deeply loved his three daughter in-laws Laurie, Dana and Jen and adored and cherished his eight incredible grandchildren, Abigail, Braydin, Karina, Torin, Christian, Hannah, Gabriel and Jacob.

A memorial service will be held on April 7 at Immanuel Bible Church, 6911 Braddock Road, Springfield, VA at 11 a.m. A burial service will be held at a later date at Arlington National Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, a tax-deductible charitable donation may be made to Advocates International, 501 (c)(3), www.advocatesinternational.org/content/donation.