

# NEW MEXICO MILITARY INSTITUTE

## HALL OF FAME

### **CPT John S. Wilson, NMARNG 1960 HS**

John S. Wilson attended high school at New Mexico Military Institute and returned for his freshman year of junior college in 1960. He continued his education at New Mexico State University. In 1961, John was drafted into the Army, completed basic infantry training at Fort Carson, Colorado; and attended Advanced Individual Training in military policing at Fort Gordon, Georgia, and was further stationed at Fort Bliss (Texas) as a Military Policeman. In 1962, his father sustained serious burns over much of his body in an accident and John requested and received a hardship discharge to return home to Belen New Mexico.

He then joined the New Mexico National Guard and married his wife Dorothy Ann. He was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the New Mexico National Guard through the Officer Candidate School program in 1965.

In the fall of 1965, John was sent to Vietnam with a New Mexico National Guard unit. They were stationed at Dong Ha near the DMZ; supporting a Marine company. Serving as a Platoon Leader, John was moving to contact when the Duster weapon system he was in hit a landmine and was destroyed. John was blown out of the tracked vehicle and received shrapnel wounds to the backs of his legs, gas burns, and a concussion.

John realized that his driver was still trapped in the vehicle and despite his wounds, he was able to get him extracted. They made their way back to the Marine Base Camp and were airlifted to a hospital ship and then to Japan for treatment. John was awarded the Purple Heart and a Bronze Star for Valor in 1967 after lengthy hospitalization and was further assigned to the Forward Area Weapons Division of the Low Altitude Air Defense School at Fort Bliss (Texas). During this time John was highly respected as an extremely versatile instructor in all facets of Forward Area Weapons including the Chaparral Missile System and Vulcan Air Defense System.

John realized the vital need for an extensive evaluation of these weapons under actual combat conditions so he volunteered to return to Vietnam for this purpose and was granted a medical waiver by the Surgeon General of the Army to be able to return to Vietnam to provide data on the use and employment of the Vulcan Weapon System in combat conditions.

Captain John S. Wilson was killed in action at Long Binh Post on the 23rd of February, 1969. The base had come under heavy attack and John was outfitted with a flack vest and in a relatively safe location within the bunker, he was sheltering in for the attack.

Several civilian contractors from General Electric, who were not equipped with a flack vest were located near the entrance to the bunker. John and a Lieutenant Martinez surrendered their safer locations and flack vests to the General Electric technicians. John and Lieutenant Martinez then stationed themselves outside the bunker armed with only their service weapons. John was struck by a rocket with a direct hit, killing him instantly. Lieutenant Martinez, who had been standing behind John, survived but lost both of his legs. John was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star, and the Silver Star for Valor.

John S. Wilson lived and served as an example to each of us. Service above self, reflecting great credit upon his family, his country, the New Mexico National Guard, and particularly to New Mexico Military Institute.

**Inducted for Valor this 22nd day of October in the year 2021**

---

**LTC Danny L. Armijo, NMMI 1972 JC**  
**NMMI Alumni Relations Director**

---

**Jerry W. Grizzle, Ph.D.**  
**Major General, USA (Ret)**  
**NMMI Superintendent/President**