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# Ernest Edward Lane, Jr

Lieutenant Colonel  
HHC, 39TH ENG BN, 35TH ENG GRP, 18TH ENG BDE  
Army of the United States  
11 July 1924 - 18 May 1966  
Kyrock, Kentucky  
Panel 07E Line 082



[The database page for Ernest Edward Lane, Jr](#)

29 May 2006

LTC Lane, the commander of the 39th Engr Bn (Cbt), was on a helicopter recon of the harbor at Vung Ro (which later became Port Lane). The helicopter he was in took one round, which hit

**him in the liver. He took more than a dozen pints of blood and didn't make it.**

**From his son,  
Ernest Lane**

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**25 Jun 2006**

**Text of West Point Association of Graduates obituary, from 1992:**

**ERNEST EDWARD LANE, JR., known to his E-1 Company classmates as "Shady" but to most as "Ed," was born on a farm in Kyrock, Kentucky on 11 July 1924. In second grade, Ed took notice of a young lady, Eloise Basham, who was destined to become his wife. During high school, Ed and Eloise both achieved grade averages that have yet to be equaled. While Ed became known as a teller of tall tales from the hills of Kentucky, he couldn't come close to his father's skill in this endeavor. From his father he also inherited a strong love of country and the military, which led to his entering West Point after one year at the University of Kentucky.**

**At the Academy, Ed was remembered as fun-loving - a guy with a happy glint in his eye who liked to play pranks on his friends. From home, he brought his interests in fishing and skiing. He also became a camera buff, seen more often than not with a camera slung about his neck. Eloise reports that Ed carried on an ever-faithful correspondence with her during his cadet years, which led naturally to their engagement. The day 5 June 1945 saw Ed's graduation from USMA, his commissioning in the Army Corps of Engineers and his marriage to Eloise in Highland Falls.**

**Ed received his first taste of troop duty with the 6th Engineers in Korea, commanding first a platoon and then a company. Eloise joined him in Pusan when their first child Theodora was old enough to travel.**

**Returning to the USA, Ed was one of the few selected to join the Special Weapons Project at Sandia Base, Albuquerque, New Mexico. From there, it was two years at the Engineer Center, Fort Belvoir, where Ed served on the staff and faculty as well as attending the Officers Advanced Course. To complete his education, Ed was sent to Harvard to earn a master of science degree in civil engineering. Then, from 1954-55, it was back to Korea for more troop duty, while Eloise, Theodora, Ernest and Timothy returned to Kentucky.**

**The family was reunited at Fort Leavenworth, and Ed graduated from the Command and General Staff College. While there, Ed acquired a parakeet who would land on his shoulder as soon as Ed sat down in the evening and spend hours walking around and around his neck. Tweedle, the parakeet, was rough on his shirts, however, since she was always taking a little nip to hold on. Then the family moved south to Galveston, where Ed spent two years as the executive officer for the Engineer District, largely involved in civil works. In 1960 they began one of the highlights of their active duty career. Both went to the language school in Monterey to study Greek before moving to Athens, where Ed served as Assistant Military Attache. They often traveled about the country together and grew to love the people and the history of the region. Even the children were immersed in the language, since Ed insisted that, while they were in Greece, they speak Greek at home.**

**In late 1964, Ed started a fateful assignment: he took command of the 39th Engineer Combat Battalion at Fort Campbell. After vigorous training in the US, Ed took the battalion to Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam. On 18 May 1966, at the age of 41 and in the prime of life, Ed boarded a helicopter to make a low level reconnaissance for a new port. Although the reconnaissance was successful, Ed was killed by sniper fire. One week later, he was buried in the family plot in Sweeden, Kentucky - back in the hills he loved so much. The new port was developed and**

**named Port Lane. When the 39th Engineers moved back to Fort Devens, they named their museum Lane Hall. Obviously, Ed had earned the love and respect of the officers and men of the 39th Engineer Combat Battalion.**

**Eloise remembers Ed as good looking, fun loving, ambitious and loyal. The children remember that happy glint in his eye. They easily could tell if he were serious about the impending discipline he was about to impose on them because only in those rare instances did the glint disappear. Above all, however, Ed loved his country and the opportunity to serve. He lived for "DUTY, HONOR, COUNTRY" - the words inscribed on his tombstone. And he was proud to be an Army Engineer - Eloise insured that Engineer buttons were sewn on his final uniform in the casket. Eloise now lives with her daughter Theodora and her husband in Atlanta. Ernest, who followed his Dad into the Army through the ROTC route, retired after 21 years. Timothy is a computer programmer in Louisville.**

**In Ed's words, "We all thoroughly enjoyed every second of our time there; it (the assignment) was a pleasure all the way. We can only wish for many more years of the same. . . "**

**The Army lost a loyal son when Ernest Edward Lane, Jr. was killed in action in Vietnam.**

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**From his son,  
Ernest Lane III  
[ernielane@verizon.net](mailto:ernielane@verizon.net)**

**A Note from The Virtual Wall**

**Lieutenant Colonel Lane's casualty records indicate that he died of injuries received in a helicopter-related incident but include neither the date nor location of the incident. However, the 1966 History for the 129th Assault Helicopter Company, which flew Hueys out of Tuy Hoa Air Base and Nha Trang, contains the following text:**

**"One of the Nha Trang slicks was hit by a sniper on the 15th during a road recon through Vung Ro Bay and a passenger, L/Col Ernest Lane, 39th Engineer Battalion was fatally wounded in the stomach. The Post- [sic] at Vung Ro subsequently was named in his honor."**

**Vung Ro Bay is immediately south of Cam Ranh Bay. The 39th Engineers built a small ammunition facility there to ease munitions resupply to Tuy Hoa AB. The port (not "Post") facility was named Port Lane in remembrance of LTC Lane.**

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**With all respect**  
**Jim Schueckler, former CW2, US Army**  
**Ken Davis, Commander, United States Navy (Ret)**  
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