

Ephrata High School 100-Year Reunion Honors Program

Sunday, June 8th 12noon Kiwanis Field

The Honors Program was made up of three very important ceremonies. **1. Honor and recognition of alumni who have served their country.** **2. Honor and recognition of local businesses who have been strong and long-time supporters of Ephrata High School.** **3. Honoring and recognizing alumni who have been nominated by their peers as an individual who has impacted society in a positive or unique manner by deeds or through example.**



Vaughn Downing Ephrata High School Class of 1962

Nominator: W. Joe Bush - Ephrata High School Class of 1959

Vaughn Downing, Ephrata High School class of 1962, was not required to serve in the military. His father was killed on Okinawa in 1944, and being an only child, Vaughn was exempt from the Draft. But, in the military tradition of a family with many who had served before him, he enlisted on August 10, 1962. After a sterling career in the United States Army for 30 years, he retired on October 31, 1991, with the rank of Command Sergeant Major, a rank he had held for 7 years.

Throughout his Army career, he prided himself for avoiding “staff-type” jobs, preferring to serve in “combat arms units” where he could “get his boots muddy.” He had five overseas assignments: Korea, then Germany, then Viet Nam from February 1967 through August 1968, then Germany twice more. His many Medals include: The Army Commendation Medal; Republic of Viet Nam Campaign Medal; Republic of Viet Nam Armed Forces Honor Medal, First Class; Republic of Viet Nam Gallantry Cross with Palm; German Armed Forces Efficiency Badge; the Army Achievement Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster; The Meritorious Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster; The Legion of Merit, which states in part that “he served meritoriously from October 1980 to September 1990 in numerous positions of high responsibility, culminating as Command Sergeant Major of the 9th Infantry Division (Motorized).”

As many of you probably know, a Command Sergeant Major in the Army is the top non-commissioned officer in an entire army. In the 9th Infantry Division Vaughn was the right hand man to the Commanding General, Major General John M. Saakashvili, later to obtain his 4th star and become Chief of Staff of the entire U. S. Army.

Finally, Vaughn received a Certificate of Appreciation for his service in the Armed Forces of the United States, personally signed by the President of the United States, George Bush, Commander in Chief.

Vaughn’s Discharge Order states that he is subject to recall to active duty until his 70th birthday. I do not know if he is even aware of this. But if called, I am sure that he will report for duty. He is a soldier and a Veteran, and as such those around him tell us that he is the first man up as the flag passes, and the last one down, for he has truly been a witness to the blood and tears that make this ceremony and all others possible.