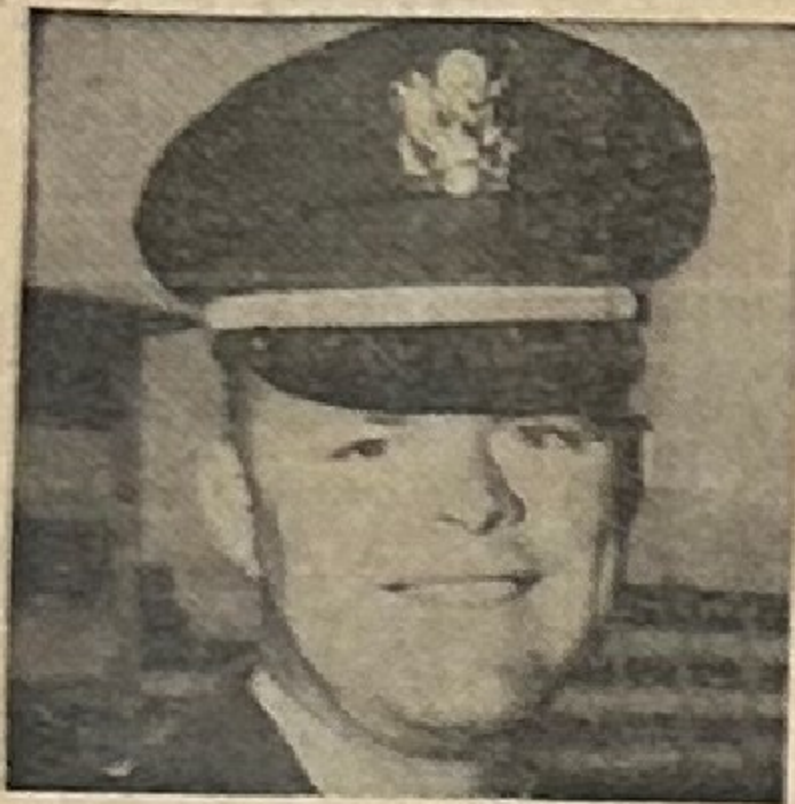


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The Vietnamese War Comes to Brewster



SKIP DALEY

Everybody in town knew Skip Daley, high school sports hero and one of 11 local boys in Vietnam. They read his letters from the front, sent him mail and gifts -- and watched for him in the newsreels. Then, suddenly, he was dead -- killed by the Vietcong. Now the war no longer is a battle fought 9,000 miles away. It's as close as the nearest mailbox, as terrible as a mine disaster.

By JAMES SOUTHWOOD

The flag in front of the Brewster School moved slowly in the wind, almost touching the deep snow, and the red of the stripes seemed to drip down the draped flag onto the white ground.

Remembering now, remembering her son Skip giving the flag salute for the graduating high school class, Mrs. Dorothy Daley walked through the snow swept in piles around the shingled elementary school where she is a teacher and where Skip Daley went to school. She could hear the tearing sound of the wind in the flag at half-staff.

Skip Daley. The flag was down for Skip Daley, 1st Lt. Walter Ralph Daley, 1st Cavalry Division Airborne U. S. Army, killed in action in Vietnam, eight months after his 24th birthday.

SKIP DALEY GREW UP in Brewster on Cape Cod, a town of 1,533 residents. And tomorrow Skip Daley will be buried in the Brewster cemetery where now the snow is drilled against the gravestones of Brewster men who served in other wars.

Brewster is a small town stretching along the north side of Cape Cod, 27 miles southeast of Boston. The town's link with a country 9,000 miles away is strong. It was strong before Skip Daley was killed in Vietnam and now there is an unbreakable link between Brewster and Vietnam.

Until the grenade exploded 12 days ago, 11 young men and boys from Brewster were in Vietnam. And on the day Skip Daley's body was brought back to Dover, Del., en route to Brewster, on that same day, 18-year-old Malcolm Lettis, whose family lives on Crosby Lane, East Brewster, near the Daley house, left California with a group of U. S. Marines for Vietnam. The eleven remains undiminished.

For awhile the townsfolk thought Skip Daley's funeral would be held Saturday, but they waited. They waited for 24-year-old Gilbert Ellis Jr., Skip's boyhood friend, 1st Lt. Gilbert Ellis Jr., a medic with the 5th Cavalry Division, came home from Vietnam to be Skip's official escort from Dover, to Brewster. Gil Ellis lived across the street from Skip Daley's house on Main Street, East Brewster.

IT'S LIKE THAT in Brewster; boyhood friends, schoolmates, relatives, are in Vietnam. Everywhere you go in Brewster, you can find a connection with the war in Vietnam. And always, in

a house just down the road, you can find a family with a son there.

Brewster has a quiet beauty about it. Wooden rail fences, red walls in the summer when the roses cover them, are now covered with snow. Wood for fireplaces is stacked against the shingled Cape Cod homes and the names on the mailboxes are of old Cape Cod families, some of whom have lived in the same house for two centuries. Allen, Bassett, Chase, Clark, Crocker, Crowell, Ellis, Latham, Nickerson, Sears.

And the same names which are on the mail boxes are embossed in brass on the stone monuments listing the men from Brewster who served in World War I and in World War II. There were five Ellises from this small town who served in World War I; eight from the same family who went off to World War II.

And yesterday, an Ellis who was in Vietnam, came back to Brewster with the body of his friend who died in Vietnam.

The impact of the war in Vietnam on the town of Brewster cannot be told in statistics. The news of Skip Daley's death hit this town harder than the blizzard which came six days later wheeling out of the northeast and pounding the Brewster shoreline.

But there are statistics. One Brewster man lost his life in World War I. One Brewster man lost his life in World War II. There were no casualties in the Korean conflict. And now one Brewster man has died in Vietnam. The war in Vietnam is not a small war for this small Cape Cod town . . .

ARMY MAJOR A. E. VAN STEENBERGEN, commanding officer of Camp Edwards on Cape Cod -- a major installation during World War II but now reduced to a four-man-garrison -- was thinking about the war in Vietnam and the small town on Cape Cod. He was on an official mission -- to inform Mr. and Mrs. Henry F. Daley, Main St., East Brewster, of their son's death.

Men from Brewster had fought in the Revolutionary War, resisted the British when they threatened to sack and burn the town in the War of 1812, died in the Civil War and died in the two World Wars.

But before Skip Daley died in Vietnam and was brought back to Brewster only one other Brewster man killed in a foreign war had been given a military funeral in Brewster.

It was early Thursday morning, Jan. 27, when the olive drab Army sedan came into Brewster. The night before,

Major Van Steenbergen had received word from the Casualty Section at Fort Devens that a lieutenant whose family lived within his area had been killed in Vietnam. There is an Army regulation against notification of next of kin between ten o'clock at night and six in the morning.

THE MAJOR DID NOT NOTICE the small green off Main Street, named for H. Allston Caboon, who died in World War I and was given a military funeral in Brewster. The major was thinking about what he had to do and wishing that he was not driving a sedan with U. S. Army written on the license plates.

A chaplain was with Major Van Steenbergen. It was just after eight in the morning when the Army sedan entered Brewster.

Past the gray, wooden town hall past the police and fire station, past the old Deane's general store, the Baptist Church, and past the school, the uniformed officers rode in the olive drab sedan.

As the Army sedan drove down Main Street, the Cranberry Highway, no one was on the street. But the people in the houses saw the olive drab car and the two officers in it. They thought about their boys in Vietnam and they knew something had happened.

MAJOR VAN STEENBERGEN saw the blue lettering on a low white building 50 yards long: East Brewster Post Office. He pulled the car into the parking place and got out. The post office was closed, but Postmaster Arthur Coakley was inside sorting the mail.

Coakley, a member of the Brewster V.F.W. Post, saw six-foot-six Major Van Steenbergen outside the post office. "The Daley family. Could you please tell me where to find the Daley home?" the major asked. Postmaster Coakley lives two houses away from the Daley home on Main Street. He had watched Skip Daley and Gil Ellis grow up.

The major and the chaplain went to the wrong house. The neighbor told Major Van Steenbergen that Henry Daley, who everyone calls Jim, was working at the Roland C. Nickerson State Park in East Brewster and that Mrs. Daley was teaching the fifth grade at the Brewster elementary school.

The Army sedan went by the empty Daley house to the state forest, named for a Brewster man who served in World War I.

Tall, slender Jim Daley, dressed in a khaki-colored uniform, was near the headquarters building. As soon as he saw the Army sedan and the major, Skip Daley's father knew. He knew before the first word was spoken. And then the three men--Jim Daley, the major and the chaplain--went to the elementary school and Mrs. Daley was called from the classroom. It was 8:45 a.m.

WITHOUT CEREMONY, without an official proclamation, the flags in Brewster were lowered. At the school, at the East Brewster Post Office, at the Brewster Post Office, the town hall and in the yards in Brewster.

And in the fifth grade class at the Brewster elementary school, in Mrs. Daley's class, ten-year-old Jimmy Richardson and Jimmy Eldridge sat quietly, trying to remember what it was Skip Daley wrote in his letter from Vietnam.

The letters from Vietnam. Two days after the news of his death there was a letter from Skip Daley dated January 23: "Well, we are still in the same status as my last letter stated. The company moved out of the village and moved to secure our brigade headquarters and my platoon remained to protect the village . . ."

THE PEOPLE OF BREWSTER came to the old mailbox house on Main Street where the Daleys live. Most of them knew of Skip Daley's death before they read about it in the local paper. And

some of them in Brewster, when they heard on the radio that 1st Lt. Walter R. Daley of East Brewster had been killed in Vietnam, asked, "Is that Skip? Is that Skip Daley?"

Everyone in Brewster knew Skip Daley--but only a few knew his first name was Walter.

The people came to the Daley house to pay their respects and the neighbors came to help with the cooking and the household chores.

Dr. F. Rene Murad, Brewster's only physician, came to the house. It was the day after the news of the death and Mrs. Daley, still stunned, could only say, "I still can't believe it. I just don't believe it." She said that to Dr. Murad, who understood.

Dr. Murad and his wife recently received a letter from Vietnam. "The days go on and no one knows or really cares what day it is. I'm counting the days until I'll be home again." The Daleys had received letters just like it and Dr. Murad understood. His son, F. Christopher Murad, enlisted in the Marines when he was 17. He is 20 now and a lance corporal with the 3rd Marine Division. A dog handler, Opl. Murad serves on the point during search and destroy missions. He has been in Vietnam since February 1966 and is scheduled to come home next month.

AND THERE WERE OTHERS who talked with the Daleys, others with special bonds because they have sons in Vietnam from this small town where there are few secrets and where everybody knows everybody.

The Straughts on Main Street in West Brewster. They would have to write their son Norman, a Specialist 5th Class with the 4th Cavalry Division and tell him about Skip Daley. In the war in Vietnam, Norman might not have heard of Skip's death. Norman Straught was in Skip's class at Dennis-Yarmouth Regional. They played on the same teams.

This was the month that Norman Straught was due to come home. He extended his tour in Vietnam. On September 2, 1966 the tank that Norm Straught was in, had been ambushed and he was wounded. When he volunteered to extend his tour in Vietnam, Norm's younger brother Jo, 20, was angered.

"All he wanted was for me to get home and then he extended," Jo said. Jo Straught is home from Vietnam now--with 73 scars from the three times he was wounded in action in Vietnam.



BREWSTER TOWN HALL--A TOWN IN MOURNING

Like his brother, Jo was a tank driver. And his tank was ambushed by Vietcong and shelled. Jo was the first Brewster boy to return from Vietnam, getting home to his wife and family just a few weeks ago. "I don't want to see anybody protesting this war at home," Jo Straught says.

No one in Brewster is protesting the war in Vietnam. Norm and Jo Straught's mother, Mrs. Norman H. Straught, Jr., says, "The question about whether we should be there should have been answered before we went there. That isn't the question. We are there."

"THE WAR IN VIETNAM is affecting this town, make no mistake about it," says Town Clerk Donald P. Consoidine. "Skip Daley's letters tell you why we are there."

Skip Daley wrote to the seventh grade girls at the Brewster school to thank them for the cookies they had mailed to him in Vietnam. He shared them with 38 men in his company. On the second page of that letter, Skip Daley wrote:

"I hope you all understand and realize the importance of our mission here in Vietnam. You have probably been told or read in the newspaper the

reason for our presence here, that of making sure these people have the opportunity to be free and have a chance to select their own government and form of life. In essence, it boils down to stopping Communism here in Asia so your boy friends and husbands-to-be will not have to fight this evil force in your back yard."

The week before he was killed, The Oracle, the weekly newspaper printed in Orleans, next to Brewster, carried a story about 1st Lt. Walter Daley. "He has now returned from his R&R and is currently operating right on the coast in Bong Son in a pacifying phase of the war."

But the "pacifying phase of the war" suddenly shifted and Skip Daley's platoon was airlifted into a battle. Two days before the news of his death, Gilbert Ellis' mother was watching television and saw films of an operation in the Bong Son section. She wondered if Skip or her son were involved.

WHEN HE WAS IN HONG KONG for five days for what the Army still calls Rest and Recuperation, for a fever he contracted in the Vietnam jungles, Skip telephoned his family on Jan. 2 to wish them a happy new year. It was the last time they heard his voice.

And now Mr. and Mrs. Daley read and hear of the lunar new year truce in Vietnam and they find it hard to believe. They remember one of Skip's letters, dated last Christmas Day. It was written after Skip had led a search patrol against the Vietcong.

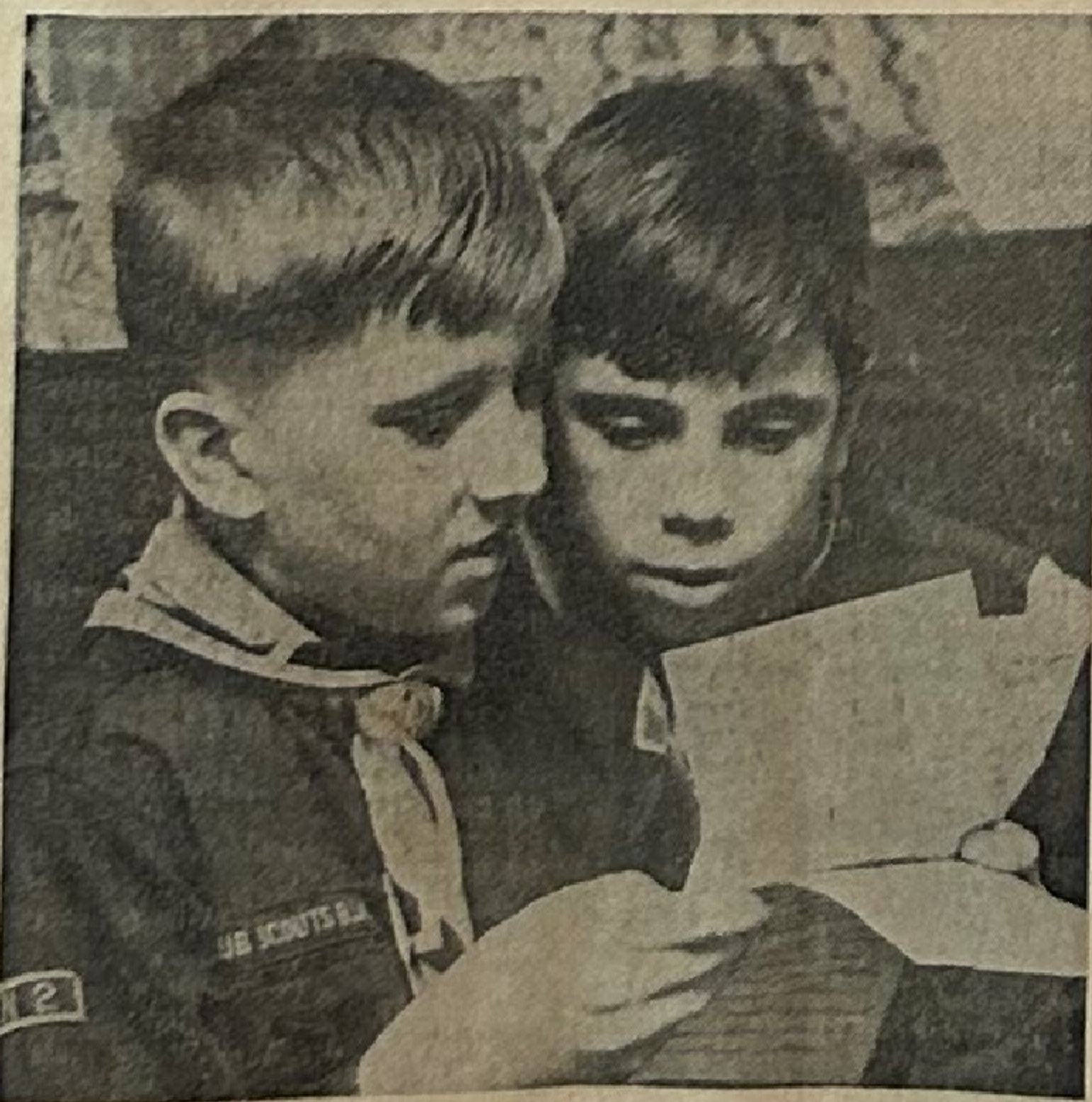
"There was no truce in Vietnam at Christmas," Mrs. Daley said in a gentle, quietly modulated and controlled voice. "There was no peace at Christmas. He kept telling us in his letter about the poor equipment and lack of supplies--tents with holes in them. When I wrote him and told Skipper that our taxes were going up his reply was, 'Good, now maybe we'll get what we need over here.'"

There were other things that Skip Daley and the young men from Brewster needed in Vietnam. And they got it--packages and mail from home.

AS THE UNITED STATES military strength in Vietnam built up and the impact of that build-up reached Brewster, the people in the Cape Cod town did something about it.

The Vietnam Committee of the Ladies Auxiliary, Brewster V.F.W. Post 9917, was formed last May. Headed by Postmaster Coakley's wife and Mrs. William Doyle of Stony Brook Rd., West Brewster, the committee wrote to the Brewster boys and sent them packages.

A pair of hand-knitted socks for each (Continued on Page 4, This Section)



A LETTER FROM SKIP: Jimmy Eldridge, 10, son of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Eldridge of Brewster, and Jimmy Richardson, 10, son of Mr. and Mrs. E. Richardson of East Brewster, read a letter from Lt. Daley.



VIETNAM BOUND: Mrs. Arthur Coakley of East Brewster (left) and Mrs. William Doyle of West Brewster, members of the Vietnam Committee of the Brewster V.F.W., prepare packages to send to Brewster boys in Vietnam.

THE SKIP DALEY STORY

(Continued from Page 1, This Section)

boy on his birthday, books and cookies, the little and important things were packed and mailed. Christmas packages. "Skip kept asking me to send him pens to write with. He wrote so much he kept running out of pens," Mrs. Coakley said.

Skip Daley wrote to his family, his mother and father and his 16-year-old brother, Paul, a sophomore at Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School. He wrote to his 21-year-old sister, Carol Kelley, and her husband, whom Skip never met. He wrote to the children in the Brewster school and to other boys from Brewster in Vietnam. And Skip Daley wrote to his girl friend.

And now it is those letters, some of them humorous and some serious, which are helping the people in Brewster sort out their grief.

MRS. DALEY, REMEMBERING NOW, her son's scrapbooks spread on the table in the room with the fireplace and the hand-braided rugs and the wide-board floors. "Remember, Jim, remember that Harwich game. Skip got 26 points, Oh, those were championship teams."

In the Nautilus, Skip's high school yearbook, there is a photograph of the Dennis-Yarmouth soccer team. It was undefeated and won the Cape Cod championship. Gil Ellis stands one boy away from Skip. The basketball team had a winning season. And the baseball team, with first baseman Skip Daley batting third, went to the state play-offs.

"He loved baseball. He said to me once that if he had a million dollars he'd buy a baseball team," said Mrs. Daley, remembering now.

Skip Daley went to Springfield College, where he was graduated in 1964. A leg injury prevented him from playing the sports he loved. He took up golf at Springfield and played in the Bing Crosby Golf Tournament when he was in the Army at Ft. Ord, California.

The man who runs the market three houses away from the Daley house, Manuel J. Packett, and Roland Gallant, who works at the state Youth Service Board forestry camp at Roland C. Nickerson State Park, have begun a memorial scholarship fund for Skip Daley.

THERE WILL BE another kind of

memorial for Skip Daley tomorrow afternoon at 2 p.m. in the white Baptist Church on Main Street when they hold church services for the first young man from Brewster to die in the war in Vietnam. But it will not be the last memorial for Skip Daley.

Danny Hart, 22, won't be there. Specialist 4th Class Hart, who lives near the Daley home, is in Vietnam. Francis Cash, 21, of West Brewster won't be there. He is in Vietnam. And Harold F. Clark, 22, is in Vietnam with Norm Strauhn and Capt. W. S. Tuckerman and Sgt. Raymond D. Hamil and Cpl. Murad and Pvt. Letts.

But Howard G. Beane is home and Jo Straughn is home. And Gil Ellis came home with Skip Daley.

And in that yearbook of his graduating class, next to Skip Daley's photograph, there are these words: "He leaves behind his collection of sports letters stretching from first base to third base." That was written almost seven years ago.

Now 1st Lt. Walter Ralph Daley leaves behind different letters. And he leaves behind much more than that.