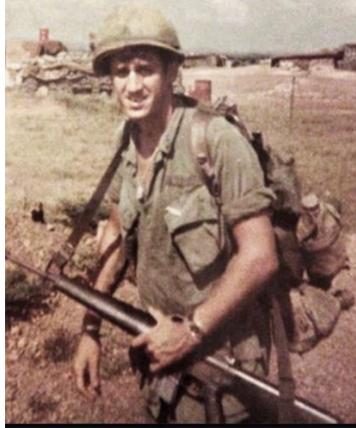


Joseph Howard Pierce Jr



## Neptune Beach's Fallen Wartime Military Veterans



### Vietnam War

CDR. Thomas Earl Dunlop  
(Bottom Left)

SGT. Joseph Howard Pierce Jr.  
(Top Left)

CPL. Dennis Lamar Bunting  
(Bottom Right)



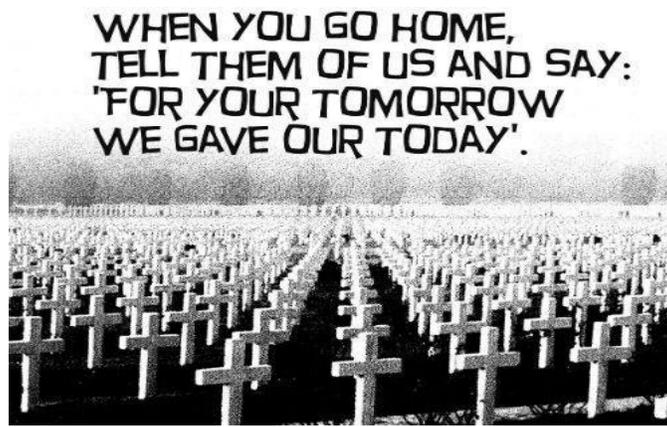
### Cold War

Capt. John Frederick Lorraine Jr.  
(Top Right)



We ask you to remember each of them because they all called Neptune Beach their home. They too, worked and played on the streets of Neptune Beach, they walked to school with their best friends and shared dreams of what they wanted to do for the summer and in life. Their dreams were endless but none of those dreams were ever fulfilled..... because the course of history altered them.

So on this Memorial Day, as we raise our Flags then lower them to half-staff, we are truly honoring and remembering our Neptune Beach Heroes; Thomas E. Dunlop, Joseph H. Pierce Jr., Dennis L. Bunting, John Frederick Lorraine Jr. and all those American Soldiers who died defending our country's freedom!



This information package is for Neptune Beach's four Fallen Wartime Veterans/Heroes. This information packet includes a short summary of who they were and the sacrifices they made for our community and country. ~*Lenny Jevic, BVMP Historian*

## Vietnam War

### **CDR. Thomas Earl Dunlop**

Thomas Earl Dunlop enlisted in the U.S. Naval Reserves in 1951 and received his commission as an Ensign in the United States Navy on July 2, 1953. He went to flight school and became a Navy Pilot. He was in his 21<sup>st</sup> year of a successful naval career and had attained the rank of Commander when he flew his last mission on April 6, 1972.

The Air Wing commander of Attack Squadron 22 embarked on the Coral Sea when it departed on its 1972 cruise was CDR Thomas E. Dunlop, an A7 pilot from Neptune Beach, FL.

In the early weeks of the CORAL SEA's 1972 tour, its attack squadrons started going after targets in North Vietnam in April. The action was faster and hotter than it had been in previous tours.

On April 6, 1972, Dunlop took off in his A-7E Corsair II from the USS Coral Sea on a bombing mission of enemy targets in Quang Binh Province, North Vietnam. While over the target area, his aircraft was struck by an enemy surface-to-air missile and as his wingman watched, Dunlop's aircraft exploded in a fireball and crashed. No emergency beeper signals were received from the area of his crash. He was classified Missing in Action.

In 2003, a joint team recovered remains from the A-7E's crash site, and on May 24, 2004, the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC, now DPAA) identified the remains of Commander Thomas Earl Dunlop, missing from the Vietnam War.

CDR Dunlop's grave can be found in Section 66, Site 2811, Arlington National Cemetery and his name can be found on the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Wall on Panel 02W, Line 131.

CDR Dunlop was a highly decorated aviator, his awards included 3 Distinguished Flying Cross Medals with Combat "V" for Valor in Combat, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V", Combat Action Ribbon and numerous other commendations and citations.



### MIA Vietnam Veteran Buried At Arlington

ARLINGTON, VA - MARCH 21: A military honor guard carries the casket of CDR. Thomas Earl Dunlop during a full honors funeral at Arlington National Cemetery March 21, 2005 in Arlington, Virginia. Dunlop, of Neptune Beach, Florida, was shot down in 1972 while on a bombing mission over North Vietnam. (Photo by Mark Wilson/Getty Images)

Refs: <https://www.pownetwork.org/bios/d/d128.htm>,  
<https://www.vvmf.org/Wall-of-Faces/14235/THOMAS-E-DUNLOP/> ,  
<https://navy.togetherweserved.com/usn/servlet/tws.webapp.WebApp?cmd=ShadowBoxProfile&type=Person&ID=372443>

**Sign Sponsor:** Dunlop Photography with the Dunlop Family

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## **SGT. Joseph Howard Pierce Jr.**

SGT. Joseph H. "Jody" Pierce Jr. enlisted in the US Army in June 1968, and served with the 173rd Airborne Brigade, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry, D Company.

On Feb 22, 1969, Pierce was only 20 years old and was serving as squad leader during combat operations in the Republic of Vietnam. Pierce's platoon came under attack and started receiving a heavy volume of enemy fire. During the initial attack one of Pierce's men was shot and bleeding profusely. With total disregard for his own safety, Pierce raced through heavy fire to provide first aid to his fallen comrade. While administering first aid to the wounded man, Pierce was totally exposed to the intense hostile grazing fire. After treating the man, Pierce prepared him for evacuation, however, due to the seriousness of the wound he was unable to be moved. As their position was totally exposed, Pierce used himself to shield the man from the next burst of hostile fire. Pierce was fatally wounded while saving the life of his wounded comrade. Pierce's extraordinary heroism was documented in the Silver Star Citation he was awarded posthumously for his actions on this day.

Sgt. Pierce was a highly decorated soldier, some of his awards included:

- ★ Silver Star
- ★ Bronze Star
- ★ Purple Heart
- ★ Combat Infantry Badge
- ★ Marksmanship Badge
- ★ Vietnam Campaign Medal
- ★ Vietnam Service Medal

Sgt. Joseph H. Pierce Jr. (Jody) is buried at H. Warren Smith Cemetery, Jacksonville Beach, FL. His headstone epitaph reads; "To the world he was just one, To me he was the whole world." This headstone was designed by his loving wife, Janet (Foster) Pierce, a 1965 graduate of Fletcher High School. Together they lived on Hopkins Street in Neptune Beach and to them a young son, Joseph Todd Pierce was born in November 1967. His son was only 13 months old when his father died.

Joseph is honored on the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Washington DC. On Panel 32w, Line 82.



A memorial posted on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Wall of Faces for Sgt. Joseph h. Pierce Jr. left by his sister-in-law, Merle:

## **MY BEST FRIEND SUBMITTED BY MERLE FOSTER**

I met Jody when I was 13 yrs old in Jacksonville, Fl. Janet and I would go to Pizza Joe's Restaurant where we met Jody and Alfred Fichera, his friend. Jody was so handsome, friendly and always smiling. That beautiful pearly white smile. Jody loved people and they loved him. Speaking of love, little did we know that it was love at first sight between Jody and Janet! Years later in 1965 Jody appeared at our house at the beach, still smiling and much more handsome. Janet was delighted to see him again and they renewed their friendship. Eventually they MARRIED! In November, 1967, their son was born, Joseph Todd Pierce. Jody was over the moon excited about his son and the beautiful life that they would have as a family. To Jody his friends were like family and everyone enjoyed spending time with him. He was a true blue friend, brother, son, husband and father. He had strong family values and was devoted to his large family. Jody was so much fun to be around, he spread joy, laughter and sincerity everywhere he went.

In February, 1969, our world was turned upside down. Jody was Killed in Action while rescuing 4 of his team in Vietnam!! This action symbolized Jody's character although it caused him his life. He was awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star and 3 Purple Hearts. A

real HERO...to the world and especially to his family. He will NEVER be forgotten and always loved. I miss him so much. The image of his beautiful headstone is attached. It was designed by his wife as a tribute to him with the quote: "To the world he was just one. To me he was the whole world."

Refs: <https://www.vvmf.org/Wall-of-Faces/40793/JOSEPH-H-PIERCE-JR/>,  
<https://www.honorstates.org/index.php?id=292623>,  
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/130329946/joseph-howard-pierce>,  
<http://www.coffeltdatabase.org/detreq2.php>

**Sign Sponsor: Janet Foster Pierce Latimer & Joseph Todd Pierce  
(Gold Star Wife & Son of Sgt. Joseph H. Pierce Jr.) along with Pete's Bar**

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## **CPL. Dennis Lamar Bunting**

Dennis Lamar Bunting was born on September 27, 1946, and a 1965 graduate of Fletcher High School. Dennis was one of fourteen children, his oldest brother, Bob served in the Army and was a member of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division. Dennis said he was going Airborne too but said he was joining the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division. He enlisted in the Army in October 1965 and began his Vietnam tour on April 30, 1966. He had the rank of Corporal. His specialty was Infantry Indirect Fire Crewman. He served with elite 101st Airborne Division, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry, B Company. Dennis lived at 233 Margaret St.

On September 17, 1966, 10 days shy of his 20 birthday, CPL. Dennis L. Bunting died during hostile combat action against enemy forces on Hill 86, Tuy An, South Vietnam, Phu Yen province.

*Excerpts from a letter sent to his sister, Charlene, from one of his fellow soldiers who was with Dennis the night he was killed in action:*

*Dear Ms. Ganzer;*

*I served with your brother, Dennis, in B Company, 2nd 327th Infantry and was with him the night he was killed on September 17, 1966. We were on a hill (Hill 86) north of Tuy Hoa and were overrun by a large enemy force, which outnumbered us 10 to 1. The attack, which occurred in the middle of the night in a driving rainstorm, was a complete surprise and resulted in numerous casualties to our unit. Dennis and I were two of only nine men that attempted to defend the perimeter against a force well over 100 enemy soldiers. Prior to the soldiers attacking the hill, the VC had bombarded our position with numerous mortar rounds and other explosive devices, killing and wounding many of our men.*

*Our company commander, Captain Joseph Mack, had used the hill as his command post during our operations in the area. Captain Mack and his command group were all killed in the attack. A total of 10 men, including Dennis, were killed and one man died 12 days later. The rest of us were all wounded. It is a miracle that any of us survived that terrible night.*

*I will tell you he died a hero fighting for his country, and most importantly for his fellow 101st Airborne troopers. The night he was killed was the worst experience I had during 19 months in Vietnam. As I indicated earlier, it was by the grace of God that everyone on that hill was not killed.*

*I hope this information is helpful to you. I know the loss of your brother at age 19 must have been devastating to you and your parents. I hope that your memory of him was of a patriotic young American, who believed in Honor and Country, which was and still is the motto of our unit, the 327th Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division. Dennis and I had the privilege of serving in the finest unit in the United States armed forces.*

*Dennis gave all on Hill 86.*

*Best personal regards,  
Doug Field*

Dennis was awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart posthumously. He is forever honored on the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Washington DC. His name can be found on Panel 10e, Line 104.



1968. Bob Bunting, left, his mother, Elizabeth, Dennis Bunting and Charles Bunting in Los Angeles a few days before Dennis left for Vietnam in late April.

Refs: Beaches Leader Article, dated Nov. 9, 2007 by Johnny Woodhouse, <https://www.vvmf.org/Wall-of-Faces/6718/DENNIS-L-BUNTING/>, <https://www.327infantry.org/homescreamingeagles/2nd-battalion/2nd-battalion-companies/b-2327-infantry-no-slack-vietnam/dennis-lamar-bunting/>

**Sign Sponsor: American Legion Auxiliary Unit 316**

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**Cold War**

**Capt. John Frederick Lorraine Jr.**

On 28 January 1964, an unarmed USAF T-39A twin engine jet trainer (#62-4448) piloted by Captain John F. Lorraine departed Wiesbaden, West Germany, at 14:10 on a routine three-hour familiarization and training flight. Aboard was the pilot instructor, Captain John Lorraine, and two student pilots for this particular aircraft, Lt. Col. Gerald K. Hannaford and Captain Donald G. Millard.

All aboard were killed when the aircraft was attacked and shot down by two MiG-19 aircraft of the Soviet Union.

According to records, the aircraft had flown approximately 90 kilometers into East Germany at the time the MiGs were scrambled and shot down the American aircraft. The aircraft came down near Vogelsberg village, Thüringen (then in East Germany), crashing into Bonifacius Hill.

A memorial was placed in their honor at Bonifacius Hill near Vogelsberg. Initial efforts by the citizens of the local community to place memorials on the site were torn down by Soviet authorities each time.

Lorraine was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart, Air Force Achievement Medal and various additional awards and citations.

Due to Fred's personal friendship with many Atlantic Beach residents, The City of Atlantic Beach honored Captain Fred Lorraine's legacy by establishing "The Captain Fred Lorraine Memorial Honor Roll." Resolution 67-12 was passed on Oct 23, 1967. Fred Lorraine lived at 301 Myrtle St.

Captain John Frederick Lorraine Jr. is buried at Oaklawn Cemetery - Jacksonville, Florida.



**Sign Sponsor: Proctor Ace Hardware**

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**Special Thanks**

~Many thanks to Johnny Woodhouse for his sharing his amazing stories he wrote for us all in the Beaches Leader and for keeping the memories of our local veterans who paid the ultimate sacrifice alive and never to be forgotten. Johnny's stories helped inspire me to undertake this project!

~Thanks for the strong support from the Beaches Veterans Memorial Park committee, American Legion Posts 316 & 129, American Legion Auxiliary Units 316 & 129, VFW 3270 & Vetcare.

~Thanks to Operations Manager, John Graham, and his creative team of professionals at Florida TransCor for partnering with me to develop these beautiful honor street signs.