

DONALD (DON) NOWLIN

Don Nowlin was born on May 14, 1946 in Berlin, New Hampshire. He lived in the former Jonathon Abbott house, the big yellow house on the hill by Chadbourne's Lumber Mill in Walker's Mills area, where his Dad worked. He attended primary school in the little red school house nearby; all classes were taught by one teacher - Mrs. Ward. Middle school (grades 4 -8) was at Crescent Park School before moving on to Gould Academy, class of 1964. While at Gould, Don excelled on the baseball team, and in 2022 was selected for inclusion in the Gould Academy Athletic Hall of Fame.

After graduation from Gould, Don enlisted in the Marine Corps on August 12, 1964 and, along with 11 other enlistees, was taken to Boston, MA, where they took the Oath of Service, spent the night in a hotel, and the next day flew to Charleston, South Carolina. From there, a Greyhound bus delivered the new Marines to Parris Island, arriving around 2400 hours on August 14, 1964. Don finished Basic Marine training in October, 1964 and was then sent to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina (CLNC) with a Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) of 0331-M-60, Machine Gunner.

Don's first duty station was with Foxtrot Company, 2nd. Battalion, 6th. Marines at Camp Lejeune, where he attended school for the M-60 machine gun, including disassembly, assembly and numerous field operations with instruction on gun deployment, Field of Fire, and troubleshooting. He also participated in several live fire exercises, was deployed on a 3 month Caribbean cruise, and made several amphibious landings. He was assigned to CLNC from December 10, 1964 to February 14, 1966.

His next duty station was Marine Barracks, Clarksville Base, Tennessee, in charge of base patrol and security. A final top secret clearance was required; Don received his clearance on May 24, 1966. After about a year, he volunteered for Vietnam and received orders to Camp Pendleton, California, for 30 days "Pre-War" training. He left Camp Pendleton on November 10, 1966, aboard the USNS W. H. Gordon, enroute to Danang, Republic of Vietnam, arriving on November 30, 1966.

During his time in Vietnam, Don was assigned to Company F, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines. He participated in eight operations against the Viet Cong and more than a dozen fire fights. He carried the M-60 for 7 months, then "handed it off" when he became Weapons Platoon Squad Leader. He left Vietnam on November 27, 1967, relatively unscathed, as a Corporal. As a result of his Vietnam service, in 2014 he was diagnosed with leukemia, presumably from Agent Orange exposure, and received a disability rating of 100% from the Veterans Administration.

After a much needed 30 day leave, in January 1968 Don went back to Camp Lejeune for a short tour and then was reassigned to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Shortly after arriving, a notice was posted about try-outs for the Fleet Marine Force Baseball Team. Don made the team and happily played baseball (his first love) for the remainder of his tour. The team won the Guantanamo Base league championship, with Don batting an average of

.408 - 3rd in the League! After making SGT in June, he was reassigned back to Camp Lejeune, one month before the end of his enlistment. He received his release from active duty in August, 1968, and after 2 years of Inactive Reserve Time, received his first Honorable Discharge on August 12, 1970.

In 1976 he went into the Active Reserve and went to the Naval Air Station in Jacksonville, FL, from his home in Ocala, FL, for one weekend a month. He remained in the Active Reserve for 4 years, making S/SGT and receiving his second Honorable Discharge on February 11, 1980.

During his military service, Don received the following awards:

- Combat Action Ribbon (Vietnam)
- Presidential Unit Citation w/2 Bronze Stars, Meritorious Unit Commendation
- Marine Good Conduct Medal
- National Defense Service Medal
- Vietnam Service Medal w/2 Bronze Campaign Stars
- Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation (Gallantry Cross Color w/Palm and Frame)
- Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation (Civil Actions Color w/Palm and Frame)
- Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal
- Marine Reserve Medal
- Rifle Sharpshooter Badge
- Pistol Sharpshooter Badge

After leaving the Marine Corps in 1968, Don played baseball in the minor leagues for the Boston Red Sox until injuries terminated his career in 1970. After that, he had a number of jobs: beer delivery for 12 years, delivering snacks for 2 years, coffee for a year, and managing a gas station. In 1989 he started a career as a contractor delivering the US Mail to outlying post offices from the main hub in Gainesville, FL, retiring in 2019 after 30 years at the age of 73.

Don has been married three times. He was married to his first wife, Margaret, from 1970 to 1978 and they had two sons, Michael and Daniel. Sadly Daniel died from a drug overdose in 2016. He married his second wife, Tina, in March of 1980 and they had three sons, Jeffrey, Matthew and Patrick. They divorced after 39 years. He has been married to his current wife, Gwenn, for almost three years; they enjoy home projects and also have a camper and love taking it out for days at a time. Gwenn has a horse named Tara and she rides Dressage as well as Western with her. Don has taken up golf, thinks he is improving his game, and hopes to shoot his age someday, even if he needs to live to be 100 years old.





Gould Academy
ATHLETIC
HALL OF FAME

DON NOWLIN
Class of 1964

In the early stages of Don's baseball career, he was on both the JV and Varsity Baseball Teams. As a sophomore, he started at shortstop and had a .375 batting average. The athleticism that he showed on his American Legion team after graduation garnered interest from a Red Sox scout. Don was offered a contract and a bonus, but he was already committed to the US Marine Corp. After basic training and time in Vietnam, Don was posted in Guantanamo Bay, where he played for the Marine Force Squad and had a batting average of .408. After being honorably discharged, Don played "A" Ball with the New York Penn League. He later played in the Florida State League with the Winter Haven Red Sox. After that, Don played two years of semi-pro ball before going on to "Umpire School" before becoming the beloved coach for his sons' baseball teams.

Inducted 2022