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**Madison Tennessee**

**1955 TO 1986**



*Madison Alumni lost but **NOT** forgotten!*



## **Class of 67**



**Virgil Thomas Deal Jr**

**Died: Dec 16, 12**

**Obit:** NA decorated Army doctor who served in some of the military's most elite commands was identified as the pilot killed in Sunday's plane crash in Robeson County.

Retired Col. Virgil Thomas "Tom" Deal Jr. was acting chief of surgery at the Fayetteville VA Medical Center when he died, but he was well known throughout the military, especially within the special operations and medical communities. He had served as command surgeon of Special Operations Command at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., and was commander of Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

"He was a beloved colleague and advocate for the veteran. Our hearts are heavy with his loss," Elizabeth Goolsby, director of the Fayetteville VA Medical Center, said Monday.

Deal Died: when his small plane, a Piper PA-28 Cherokee, crashed in a wooded area off Parkton Tobermory Road on Sunday afternoon. He was alone in the aircraft, which departed from a Summerville, S.C., airport and was on final approach to Fayetteville Regional Airport.

Officials with the National Transportation Safety Board arrived at the crash site Monday to try to determine what caused the accident.

The plane crashed about 5 miles southwest of the airport and was destroyed by fire.

Deal was appointed at the Fayetteville VA in October. He had served in a variety of positions at Fort Bragg with the 7th Special Forces Group, Army Special Operations Command and Joint Special Operations Command.

According to an official biography, Deal has commanded hospitals in the field and in garrison, including Madigan Army Medical Center at Fort Lewis, Wash., and Walter Reed in Washington. At one point, he served on a classified special operations medical contingency force conducting worldwide missions in support of U.S. counterterrorism operations.

Those who knew Deal described him as a humble man who had found repeated success in life.

He was an Eagle Scout and graduated near the top of his class at Madison High School in Madison, Tenn., they said. In medical school, Deal was elected to Alpha Omega Alpha, a medical honor society.

In 1983, following the death of his mother, Deal left the Army and founded what would become the largest surgical practice in Clarksville, Tenn.

For the next seven years, Deal would serve in the Tennessee National Guard but volunteered to return to active duty at the start of the first Gulf War, during which he earned a Bronze Star.

Deal again volunteered on Sept. 11, 2001, according to someone close to him. While in New York City for a medical seminar, Deal performed triage on a Chelsea pier.

Deal graduated from Austin Peay State University in Tennessee in 1971 with a degree in chemistry and biology. He received his medical degree from the University of Tennessee College of Medicine in 1974 and completed his residency at Brooke Army Medical Center in 1981.

Deal's military education includes participation in Special Forces Officers Course, Military Free Fall School, AMEDD Officer Advances Course, Command and General Staff College, Army War College and Flight Surgeon's Course.

His awards and decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, the U.S. Surgeon General's Medal for Exemplary Service and the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.

He was a member of the Special Operations Medical Association, American College of Surgeons, Association of Military Surgeons United States and Association of the United States Army.



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