

Classmates

Who



Served

In the Military



U.S. AIR FORCE

Bruce Boyne



I was drafted into the Army and I had to report on May 28, 1968. I took my basic training and advanced infantry training at Fort Lewis, Washington. After a 10-day leave to Minnesota I was on my way to the once beautiful country of Vietnam.

I arrived in Vietnam on October 23, 1968, I wasn't having any luck so far in the military having been drafted and then being trained as an infantryman, and things did not improve any once I was in Vietnam. I was assigned to Charlie Company, 4th/9th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division. Charlie Company had the nickname "Suicide Charlie" and had sustained casualties and wounded soldiers at a very high rate.

True to form, on November 23, 1968 our company ended up getting caught in an open area, ambushed by a much larger enemy force in bunkers, with underground tunnels. They pretty much had us surrounded and anyone who was not hit when they first opened fire, was fired upon as soon as they tried to move. I was walking point and since I was closest to their bunkers I was the first one hit by machine gun fire, probably no more than 40 feet from their bunkers.

To make a very long day short, I ended up staying in that spot for 4 to 5 hours while we were striking the enemy positions with artillery, mortars, cobra helicopters, and some air strikes. I had resigned to myself, to the fact that I was going to die. I was only hoping it would be quick and painless. Somehow all the bullets and most all of the shrapnel missed me.

Following is a list of the soldiers who died that day. Several of them died within a short distance of me. Some of them died trying to help me.

NAME:	Rank:	AGE:	DOB:	From:	Married/ Single:	Tour Began:
DAVID IVAN BRIGGS	SP4	21	3/7/1947	North Collins, NY	Single	5/20/1968
JAMES CLARK CARLSON	PFC	21	9/14/1947	Salinas, CA	Single	9/7/1968
JOHN WAYNE COLBERT	PFC	21	12/7/1946	Kinder, MO	Married	8/20/1968
ARNOLD RAYMOND DIEKEMA	SP4	21	4/27/1947	Grand Rapids, MI	Single	2/20/1968
MICHAEL NELSON LOITZ	1LT	21	9/16/1947	Rootstown, OH	Single	10/23/1968
RICHARD ALLEN MILKS	SGT	22	9/18/1946	Fenton, MI	Single	4/16/1968
ROBERT JOHN NIXON	PFC	21	2/26/1947	Paoli, PA	Married	9/18/1968
FRANK SANFILIPPO	PFC	20	5/7/1948	New York, NY	Single	7/11/1968
RICHARD CRAIG STEVENS	SP4	20	6/24/1948	Lebanon, IN	Single	4/26/1968
JOSEPH DANIEL SZIDOR	PFC	21	5/14/1947	Miami, FL	Single	8/9/1968
MITCHEL RAY TYLER	PFC	21	3/25/1947	Silsbee, TX	Single	9/6/1968
TERREL JAMES VIDRINE	PFC	20	2/13/1948	Ville Platte, LA	Single	10/24/1968
CARL J WINTER	CAPT	25	12/3/1942	Hemlock, MI	Married	7/13/1968



Some of the men of Charlie Company – 1968

Another 20 of us were wounded that day leaving very few soldiers left in the field. I was medivacked to a field hospital where I underwent surgery. When I woke up from surgery I was told that since the bullet had broken my left arm I would be going back to the World.

I spent some time recuperating in Saigon, followed by surgery in Japan, and then I went to Fort Riley, Kansas. I evidently was indispensable to the war

effort, so they decided to send me to Fort Hood, Texas for the rest of my active

service. There I was I assigned to the Chemical, Biological and Radiological Unit of the 1st Armored Division.

I attained the rank of Sargent E-5 while I was in the Army. I was awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart along with the other medals you receive for just being in the Army.

Each year our Battalion has a reunion which I found out about 10 years ago. Joyce and I have attended each year since except one year when I had surgery about the same time as the reunion. Through the Battalion's website I also learned of the town where one of the men who died trying to help me had lived. I have since been in contact with several members of his family and have also met with several of them throughout the past six years. They were so appreciative to have someone tell them how their brother died.

I was surprised when just a couple weeks ago I received an invitation to attend the Class of 66 Reunion in Lebanon, IN as a "someone with special ties" to their class. Regretfully, this is the same weekend our Battalion Reunion is being held and I have made a commitment to some people to be there.



Me at Ft. Hood, TX -- 1970

Greg Erickson

Greg joined the US Army in 1968.



Henry Imsande

In 1970 I enlisted in the Army and went to Fort Lewis, Washington for basic training. I went to Fort Bliss, TX for A.I.T. and on to Fort Richardson, Alaska to finish my tour of duty. I was one of four to be on the traveling simulator test trailer. My job was to simulate the Russian air invasions and the Hercules missile sites where to track and destroy such invasions.

Anthony Isola

I received my Draft Notice in March of 1968. I joined the Army in June 1968, went to Vietnam in 1968 to 1969... returned to States, Ft. Hood, Texas...and re-enlisted June 1970...got married in July, 1970, and back to Vietnam in September 1970 to September 1971. Upon return to the states, I was stationed at Ft. Carson, Colorado for 2 years, and in January 1974, we left for Germany and was stationed there for 3 years. We returned to the States in January 1977 and decided to hang it up.



David Matson

I entered the U.S. Army in December of 1969 and went to Fort Lewis, Washington for B. C. T. After basic training, I traveled to Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland for A.I.T in aircraft armament training. I graduated first in my class and I was promoted to SP/4. I then received an all-expense paid trip to South Vietnam in June of 1970 where I was assigned to the 118th Assault Helicopter Company in Bien Hoa as an armor and door gunner. I also took a side trip into Cambodia with the 118th.

Later I served with the 187th Assault Helicopter Company located in Tay Ninh, Vietnam and from there I rotated back to the United States in June of 1971. I finished my regular army career with the 1st Cavalry Division in Fort Hood, Texas.

Once back in Minnesota, I joined the Minnesota National Guard, where I was assigned to the Detroit Lakes Unit (2/136 (M) Infantry, M-2 Bradley Unit). I retired from the National Guard as a Platoon Sargent (E-7) in February of 1992 with 21 years of service.



Howard “Danny” Maunumaki

Dan served in the United States Army from April 29, 1968 to April 20, 1970.



Kenneth Ryckman

Ken proudly served our country in the US Navy for 4 years active duty, and 22 years reserve duty, retiring July 1, 1998.

Ron Virnala

I served from 1967 to 1971 in the United States Air Force. Basic training was in San Antonio, Texas. Technical training was in Wichita Falls, Texas. I was first stationed in Oscoda, Michigan from 1967 to 1969. My second training base was in Denver, Colorado for munitions. Final base was Phanum, Thailand from 1970 to 1971.

My basic training was in San Antonio, Texas. I was trained in pavement and road maintenance in Wichita Falls, TX before being sent to an air base in Oscoda, MI. When the winter came I volunteered for the night shift. We would plow snow off the one mile long runway and the streets of the air base. One night I remember very well. I helped someone during the day so I did not get much sleep that day. That night I was assigned to operate a very large snow blower, six feet tall - eight feet across, to blow the snow off the edge of the runway. I ran the truck mounted with the snow blower to the runway and began to blow the snow off the runway. I was about half way down the runway watching the snow being thrown off to the right. The snow banks were very high this time. So the progress was very slow, about two miles per hour. As one knows when one is tired, the mind can play tricks on one's self. All of a sudden I thought I saw a human hand come up over the top of the front of the snow blower. Needless to say, I stopped the unit and the truck and got out to see exactly what I saw. There was no human hand or anything else resembling anything human; it was my imagination.

I was there for about two years when I asked the question, "How long does one stay on this base before being sent overseas." I was told I was there until my tour was over. I said, "Not this guy. I joined the service to see the world." So I set out for the administration building asking to be sent overseas to Asia. I was then sent to Denver, CO to be trained in munitions, bombs, and such. I stayed there for about 1 & 1/2 years. A mix-up in security clearance.

When one is in the service one does not get their first request. I wanted to go to Vietnam. I had heard different stories, that it was good duty or it was bad duty. I wanted to find out for myself. The Air Force gave me three choices: Vietnam, Thailand, or Germany. I choose Thailand thinking that I would be sent to Vietnam. As things came around I was sent to Thailand. The people were very nice. It was my first encounter with people of a different country and culture. When we

arrived at the base we were told to remember one thing, "We are guests in this country, so behave as guests." As in Michigan, I choose nights to works in Thailand . There are fewer Chiefs around at night.

Early one morning the dispatch got a call that the bomb load that was delivered was short one clutter bomb unit. That is clutter of six - twenty pound fragmentation, anti-material, bombs. I drove to go the ammunition dump to get one clutter bomb and bring to the flight line. (Flight line is where the aircraft were parked awaiting a full bomb load.) I found the location and I walked to the back of the weapons carrier pickup and garbed the clutter and brought it to the trailer. I brought it within three inches of the deck, top of the trailer, and dropped the clutter. The Master Sargent was not too happy with me doing that. It had no fuses in it so it was safe.

My tour of duty was up and I was shipped home. When we got into San Francisco, CA air base we were told

"When we travel home, please wear civilian clothes." That way we would be safe from the protesters of the Vietnam War. [Now those same people are now in charge on our government. Is it any wonder why this country is in the mess it is?]

Roland Wapola

Here is a summary of my military service:

Basic training at Fort Bragg.

Served in the Army 1969 to 1972.

Overseas duty – 18 months on Okinawa as an engineer inspector.

Completed my service in Fort Hood.

Medals: National Defense, Army Commendation, Good Conduct (hard to believe I know).

Rank at discharge – SP/5.

Ron Windels

I received my draft notice on Feb. 21, 1968, was married on March 4, 1968, and entered into the U.S. Army on March 19, 1968.

My basic training was in Fort Lewis, Washington and my AIT (Advanced Infantry Training) followed immediately at the same post 11B10; I completed this about the end of July of 1968. I flew home for a couple of weeks' leave, then off to Vietnam by air arriving about August 20th, 1968.

I was assigned to Co A, 3rd of the 47th Infantry, 9th Division, in the Mekong Delta of South Vietnam. I became a "Rice Paddy Daddy." My oldest daughter was born a few weeks after my arrival, but the Red Cross notification did not catch up with me until about 2 weeks later.

Infantry in a hostile area is not necessarily where a 20 year old wants to be. I do feel lucky and thankful to be here today. I could have just as easily died those almost 50 years ago like several others from my outfit who are forever young in my memory.

On January 4, 1969 I was wounded in a fire fight after a day long engagement with a Viet Cong force. I received a gunshot wound to my right upper arm, shattering the bone and sustaining nerve damage.

Once I realized I was going to live, I knew my war days were over.

Once the dust off helicopter got me and other wounded out of the fighting zone, I knew I was going to go back to the "World."

I was sent to Fitzsimmons Army Hospital in Denver, Colorado for healing and therapy for 8 months. I thought I might get a medical discharge from the army, but no, back to duty in October at Fort Carson, Colorado.

Because of my injuries my duties were limited, but I completed my 2 years of military service on March 18, 1970 and have lived around the New York Mills and Sebeka area ever since.

I received the Purple Heart, Bronze Star, and Army Commendation Medal for Heroism in Action. I also receive a partial disability compensation for my injuries.

P.S. One good memory I have is on December 27, 1968 several of us "ground pounders" were "choppered" in to 9th Division base camp to see the Bob Hope Show. They let us infantry boys sit right up front. The bad part was we went back out in the bush on ambush that night, wondering if we had really ever been there.

Ron Windels Sebeka Class of 1966
 New York Mills 1st-9th grade

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*The Class of 1966 thanks you for  
your service and sacrifices.  
We are proud of  
you.*

