

Bravo Regulars



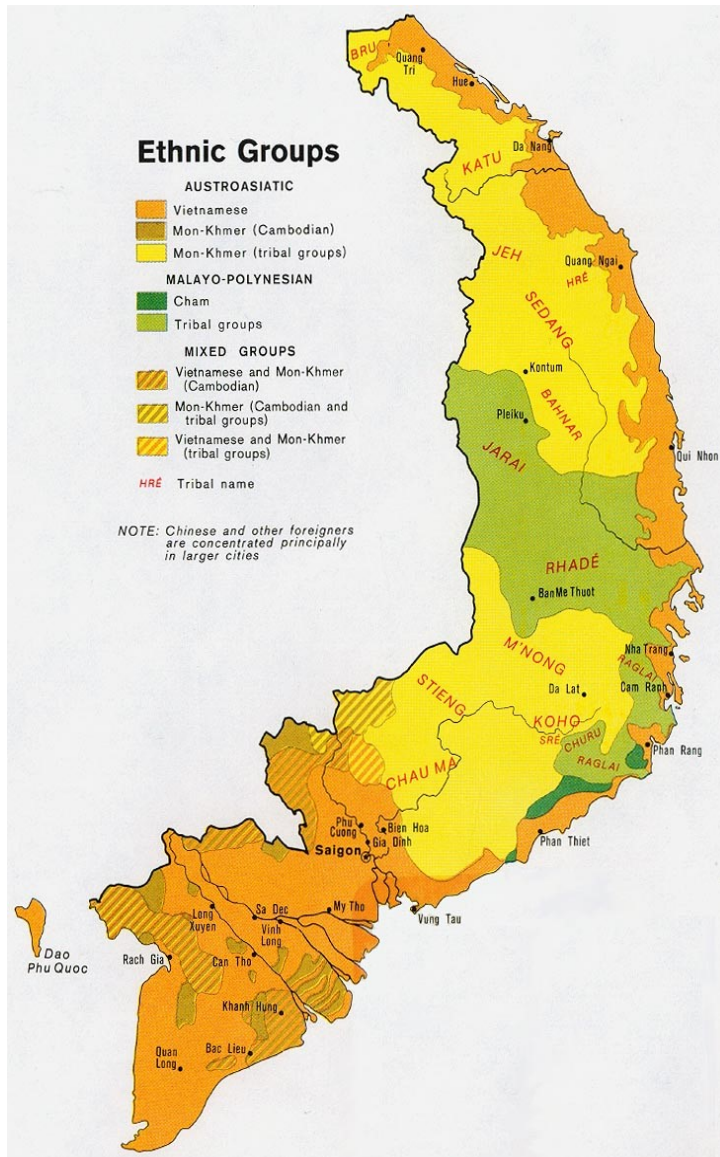
B Company 3/22



Vietnam Service

www.bravoregulars.com

March, 2021



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President's Message

Art Gormley
President
(718) 317-9881
ag31782@aol.com

Greeting Bravo Brothers,

I hope you were able to enjoy the Holidays, as best you could. They were like no other Holiday season in my memory. Still, I remain optimistic that later this year or early next year our lives will return to normal.

Unfortunately, for now the COVID-19 uncertainty persists. I have had numerous conversations with our June 2021 reunion host, Bob Best. He has been persistent and diligent in trying to move forward with our June 2021 reunion in Goldsboro, NC. He deserves our sincere thanks and appreciation for all his efforts. But, regrettably and reluctantly, the Board has voted unanimously to cancel the 2021 reunion.

Facing facility closures central to some of the planned activities, along with limits on large gatherings, possible travel and other restrictions all factored into the Board's decision. But it was our deep concern for the health and wellbeing of our Bravo Brothers and their families that prompted the cancellation. There was no other choice. By virtue of our age and ailments, we are in the crosshairs of this pandemic. More than 80% of our COVID-related deaths in the U.S. are people age 65 and over.

Yes, the vaccines are here. The early rollout has been rocky, and there is still an estimated 30-50% of the population refusing to be vaccinated. New virus strains crop up weekly. Last but not least, no one yet knows how long the vaccine's immunity will last. The vaccination program is just barely 3 months old. We all surely hope vaccine immunity lasts a lifetime. But it could be just a matter of months or even weeks. Right now, no one knows.

Thanks to our dedicated reunion host. The cancellation of the June 2021 reunion, however necessary, has been a disappointment for all of us, but particularly for our reunion host, Brother Bob Best. He felt the impact of COVID-19 quite personally, having contracted the virus in late January. He continued to struggle with it in February but finally beat it. Just recently, he was hospitalized briefly with a severe respiratory infection. I'm pleased to say he is now on the road to full recovery. I spoke with Bob Best many times during this difficult period, and despite his illness he never lost sight of his responsibilities as a reunion host. In fact, it was Bob who alerted us to the difficulties and restrictions the virus would pose for our June 2021 reunion. We all owe Bob a vote of thanks for his hard work and his deep concern for the health and welfare of our members and their families who had planned to attend the Goldsboro reunion. I would also like to thank Pam Adams for working closely with Bob Best to provide counsel, support and her deft organizational skills in tracking and recording member registrations, merchandise orders, negotiating with vendors and more. Pam and husband Bravo Brother Jim Adams hosted our memorable 2018 reunion in Branson, MO. They know firsthand how demanding and rewarding the role of reunion host can be. Thanks so much for pitching in.

President's Message– Continued

I know all of us have been looking forward to seeing one another. It would have been great to travel freely once again and just get back to the normal lives we once took for granted. Know that the Board is committed to setting a new reunion date for 2022 later this year. Please see Dave Lowell's column for more on the reunion cancellation.

Speaking for myself, I began badgering my VA primary care doc about the vaccine in November. It worked. They called me in early January to set appointments for first and second shots. Compared with civilian authorities here in New York, the VA is doing a great job. I've had both shots and can report no ill effect beyond a sore upper arm that lasted less than 24 hours.

Make getting yourself and your loved ones vaccinated Job #1. The sooner America reaches broad immunity from COVID-19, the sooner all of us, our families, our friends and our neighbors can get back to living and enjoying our lives again. Please stay well!




Association Business

John Otte
Treasurer/Locater
(310) 539-0886
bravo6xray@aol.com

John

Financial Report Income and Expense		
Dec. 1, 2020 Balance		\$12,082.28
<u>Income</u>		
Dues	\$ 340.00	
Total Income	\$ 340.00	
<u>Expenses</u>		
Bank Service Charge	\$ 15.00	
Newsletter	437.71	
Website Update	35.00	
Hosting Service	63.21	
Total Expenses	\$550.92	
Feb. 28, 2021 Balance		\$11,871.36



Editor's Notes

David W. Lowell
Editor
(520) 762-8609
davidwlowell@aol.com

Welcome back Bravo Brothers! I hope this finds all of you well. I have received my first COVID shot from the VA, giving me 70% immunity, and am on the schedule for a second shot to take me to 90%. Dee is on schedule to get hers. Mine caused a mildly sore arm for a few days but no other problems. I strongly suggest everyone get vaccinated.

The Board of Directors has been discussing the reunion situation and has agreed on a plan of action going forward. First up, we have cancelled the plans for the 2020/2021 reunion in Goldsboro. All monies being held for that reunion will be returned to the contributor.

As has been our every-other-year tradition, we are opening up the bidding to all potential hosts for Reunion 2022. Bob Best has been invited to resubmit his 2020 proposal for the 2022 Reunion, should he care to do so. If anyone would like to host, please contact Art or myself. The Board is also considering other alternatives should no bidders emerge. Be assured that we will have a great reunion.

The Board plans to conference again in November, and we'll have a full report in our December issue. The timeframe of Summer 2022 covers Spring through Fall. If any of you would like to comment on the plan, please contact Art or myself. I will also be commenting on our progress as we go forward.

The 22nd Infantry Regiment Society's Executive Committee has decided to postpone their reunion from May 2021 to 30 September– 3 October, 2021. Anyone planning to attend, please note new date.

We received an email from Sandy Campbell seeking information about Soui Tre and Burt. She is a serious, amateur historian from Australia who researches famous battles. On our Bulletin Board you will find excerpts from the exchange. Please note that she is still seeking more information. If you're willing to get involved, please contact her. She can be reached at sandy_jeffrey@msn.com.

Editor's Notes (Continued)

Chet Johnson (Co. XO-1/66-5/67) has shared with us some very helpful information about dealing with the VA over disability claims and compensation. This information is on the Bulletin Board. Unfortunately, Chet has passed away recently and his information is in the obituary section at the bottom of the Bulletin Board. He was an occasional contributor and we often exchanged emails. He was what I call a 'stand up guy' and will be missed.

Cliff Weese (3rd Platoon—3-67/68) wanted to share with us an internet video about 3-1/2 minutes long. It depicts what I perceive to be an aging disabled war veteran struggling to deliver packages, when he encounters our nation's flag laying on the ground. His response will warm your soul. Be sure to watch through to the end. It can be found at getfvid_136139723_419601515951858_1545362181564842898_n.mp4.

Cliff also submitted another video of interest. His cover email explained it better than I can. This is 12 minutes long; so watch it when you have the time. I have never heard of this...it's in Colorado Springs, CO. The guy must be independently wealthy to afford all of this. This museum has everything from every war, Iran, Iraq, Nazi Germany, and the list goes on. He has thousands of mannequins with every uniform from every war, +. He has all of the military vehicles; he even drives some of them on occasion. Everything in there is completely functional. Pretty crazy! It would take days to do this place justice. He actually runs tours in October and November. <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=9hU15Fzlj0g—dragonman>.

We received a response from Andy Schultz (Squad Leader— 70/71) to M.C. Toyer's eulogy previously published in the December newsletter. It is on the Bulletin Board.

With great sadness I must report the passing of three of our Bravo Brothers: Ronny Garfield Dyer (3rd Platoon—9-67/68), Gordon 'Chet' Johnson (Co. XO—1-66-5/67), and Charles William Archer (3rd Platoon—8/67-1/68). Available information is on the Bulletin Board.

We have two roster changes. Terry Cabey (4th Platoon—7-67/68) has been moved from Active to Inactive, due to his contact information no longer being valid. Douwe P. Drayer (2nd Platoon— 7-68/69) has been moved from Inactive to Active. He is a Buell survivor. His contact information is 29 Audrey Avenue, Apt. B, Oyster Bay, NY 11771-1529. Phone number is 631-991-5956. Email address is dpjdrayer@gmail.com.

Thanks to all who contributed to this issue. Our next issue will be out in June and we will be accepting submissions through the end of May. Until then, may peace be with you.

Dave out

BULLETIN BOARD

Submitted by Sandy Campbell—sandy_jeffery@msn.com

Sandy ... I am just wondering if you can advise me where I could find some books regarding the battle of Soui Tre and Soui Cut as I cannot find any. I have been an avid amateur Vietnam War history buff for a very long time and have been fascinated by these two battles along with many other battles. I am also looking for any battlefield relics from these battles to add to my small but proud display cabinet. I just want to preserve and remember this part of history and pass it down to my kids so it won't be forgotten. Any help with my endeavor would be greatly appreciated.

Art ... Thank you for your inquiry and your interest in these two battles. I'm not aware of any books devoted solely to either battle. I was not personally at Soui Tre. But I've copied David Lowell, Bravo's Newsletter Editor, who was at Soui Tre and would certainly know more than I do about the battle. What I can offer to do is have your inquiry posted to the next edition of our newsletter. From time-to-time, a Bravo brother will share their recollections of one battle or another. Those accounts, when they appear, are carried in our quarterly newsletter. Unfortunately, they are not indexed in any way, but they are available on the Bravo Regulars' website. As I said, I was not at Soui Tre, but I was at Soui Cut, which was the defense of fire support base (FSB) Burt. We just passed the 53rd anniversary on Jan. 1, 2021. There are two books I know of that mention the battle. The first, Platoon-Bravo Company was written by my CO, the late Bob Hemphill. I consider it to be the more factual. The second Book, Absolution, was written by Charlie Boyle who was a platoon leader with Alpha Co 3/22 and later CEO of Charlie Co. I knew many of the officers cited by name in the book. Boyle dramatized the book using himself as the principal character, Dennis Riley. Warning: His account of what he witnessed is brutally graphic. I hope this helps.

Sandy ... Thank you kindly for your reply. I am honored and I really feel it's a privilege conversing with you. I will definitely purchase the books you recommended. I still believe that there should be books solely devoted to these battles! I have started reading the newsletter already and will continue to do so with great interest. Thank you so much if you could get my inquiry posted on the next newsletter. It may seem a little bit weird that I like to collect Vietnam battlefield relics/militaria but I love preserving history. It has been a passion of mine since I was little. I feel these stories need to be told and never forgotten. Please do not hesitate passing on my email to any of your gallant brothers. I again thank you for your time.

Dave ... Thank you for your interest in our story. In addition to the articles published in the newsletter (index attached for your convenience), I have a number of articles that were not published in the newsletter. It would be difficult to send you all these pages by email. I would be happy to copy them and send them to your home if you desire. Please let me know. I am a veteran of that battle and will answer any questions you may have. My perspective was as a 'grunt' on the ground, rather than from command. I'll publish your inquiry and contact information in our next newsletter due out in March. For better results, please consider submitting a letter directly addressing vets of those battles and detailing what assistance you're requesting. We will be accepting input for our next newsletter through the end of February.

Sandy ... Thanks for taking the time to respond to my email. It's an honor and privilege conversing with a veteran. Yes, I would like you to send me the articles you mentioned. Thank you for accepting my inquiry for publication. I would love to hear your personal account of the battle, your view and your stories, anything you would be happy to share with me. I would like to sincerely thank you and Mr. Gormley again for giving me your time and help with my endeavors

Dave ... The information mentioned has been assembled and will be forwarded to you. You need only to send me your snail mail address. Content for our newsletter should be directed to me. Any photos or documents should be submitted in jpg format. Any research on this event should include 'LZ Gold'. Basically, on 19 March 1967 we made a helicopter assault into a clearing to seize it for a Fire Base where the Artillery would set up their cannons to support infantry operations in the area. The LZ 'went hot' and there were many casualties. Two days later we were surrounded by an estimated force of 2500 VC and placed under siege. At the same time, President Johnson was enroute to a peace conference and the VC wanted to annihilate an American unit to improve their bargaining position. Historically, the battle is the largest single day battle of the war in terms of body count and the second largest battle overall.

Sandy ... Thank you so much. I am looking forward to finding out more information and details. My address is 40 McSweeney Crescent, Gordonvale, Queensland 4865, Australia. Thanks again for all your help. I hope I haven't been too much of a pain!

Sandy ... I have received the documents. Thank you so much for taking the time to gather all the information. I really appreciate it. I hope it wasn't too annoying. If ever you come across any captured items, relics or any other militaria from these battle, please let me know. It has been an honor and a pleasure conversing with you.

Dave ... You're welcome and thank you for your interest in our history. I will mention our exchange in the newsletter and I will copy you when I do.

BULLETIN BOARD**Submitted by Chet Johnson (Co. XO—1/66-5/67)**

Dan Bresnahan (Lt. Dan) compiled the below to help Veterans with the VA on Nov. 16, 2020.
Subject: Submitting Disability Claims to the Veterans Administration for Compensation.

Veterans, there are many medical conditions resulting from your military service, for which you are entitled to various forms of compensation, including medical care, and monetary compensation. But, many veterans are dismayed when their claims are denied, after following what appears to be a simple application process. However, by being aware of the most common actions which could cause your claim to be denied, you can greatly enhance your ability to obtain those benefits, keeping in mind that the following guidance is not all inclusive.

Irrespective of whether or not you pursue obtaining these benefits, the first step is to register with the Veterans Administration (VA). This can be done at many locations which have either a federal VA facility, or a State/County facility with a Veterans Representative. No matter which you select, the most important document to bring with you is your official record of military service commonly known as a DD-214. Possession of a DD-214 greatly expedites the process of registering with the VA. This document is also important because it instantly resolves several issues.

First, it establishes when you were in the service and in what war you participated. Second, it establishes what awards you received, and third, whether you were a POW. Which war(s) you participated in is important because each war has certain presumptive medical conditions for which you are entitled to specific lifetime medical coverage, and financial compensation, ie: all Vietnam veterans are automatically covered for all medical conditions established by Agent Orange exposure. When you register with the VA you will automatically be entered in the registry for any war in which you participated. The registry for that war has specific medical conditions which are presumptive for that war. That means that if you have any of the medical conditions listed for that registry, the only thing that needs to be established is that you have that medical condition. Your exposure to that condition, your lifestyle, or your family history, are all irrelevant.

The proof of having received a Purple Heart, or being a POW, is important because the VA is dealing with a large number of veterans, and your Purple Heart, or POW status, moves you up the priority list for treatment, ahead of non-wounded, or non POW veterans.

Now, on to the process for obtaining your benefits. You can do this either by submitting a claim through a VA representative, or you can file a claim yourself. This seemingly simple process is in reality a process where many veterans hurt their chances of obtaining the very benefits to which they are entitled.

Once you obtain the blank claim form, review it carefully. The first question asked on the form is to state the nature of your claim. The important thing for you to understand is that the VA Claims Personnel who review this document usually have hundreds of cases for which they are responsible. Due to this overwhelming number of cases, they don't have time to waste trying to decide exactly what your claim is trying to establish. They rigidly follow a checklist, which expedites the processing of your claim, but doesn't ensure that your claim is being processed by the correct medical personnel. Accurately wording your claim, with terms that cannot be misconstrued, will not only expedite the processing of your claim, but will ensure it is going to the correct personnel.

BULLETIN BOARD

Continuation of VA Assistance

You should utilize the same database that the VA claims representative uses. This is commonly referred to as "The VA Disability Schedule", but is formally known as "The Schedule for Rating Disabilities" (see: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/warms/bookc.asp#f>), and is codified in Part 38 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). This is a comprehensive breakdown of every part of the body, and assigns a numerical code to each body part. It is so detailed that, as an example, the first digit of the little finger of the left hand, has a different code number than the same digit of the same finger of the right hand. And, for each body part, there is a paragraph describing each different medical problem that exists for that part, ie: 1) loss of sensation: tingling, numbness, pain, etc., 2) loss of use, 3) loss of that part: amputation, etc., 4) cosmetic: discoloration, scarring, swelling, etc. or disease. It is extremely important to only use the terminology in the Disability Schedule (not your own words), and enter their description into the appropriate block on the claim form, including the specific numerical code number assigned to that disability. This prohibits the VA Claims Personnel from making their own interpretation of your claim, and mistakenly entering your claim into the database, in error. This alone may cause your claim to be disapproved. You can't claim "A", and obtain compensation for "B".

After the VA Claims personnel enter your claim into the system, they forward it to a civilian contract medical person who will examine you to substantiate your claim. Either the VA Claims Person, or the examining physician, will schedule you for an appointment, without consulting with you as to the locations/date/time, and then will provide written notification to you to be turned in to him/her ahead of your examination.

There are two things wrong with this notification process. The first is that the scheduled examination date/time may not be compatible with your availability. The second is that the location may require you to travel a great distance when there were other contract examination facilities much closer. The VA Claims Personnel who are processing your claim, intentionally don't provide you with their contact information, so attempting to change the appointment is almost impossible. And, if you fail to attend the scheduled evaluation, the VA will cancel your claim, even if their scheduled appointment was impossible for you to attend! In this case, your only recourse is to immediately contact the contract physician, when you are first provided with the appointment date/time, and attempt to reschedule your appointment. This may be difficult, because the contract physicians commonly handle contract VA examinations on a specific day and may not be able to reschedule you.

Often, the contract physician will mail you a questionnaire asking you for further details about your condition, and may question you in detail, during the examination. It is important for you to remember that he/she is not your personal physician. They are not bound by the privacy laws protecting your medical information (HIPPA, et al), and are not providing medical care, medicine, or advice. They are only there to evaluate your medical claim, and to determine if you have the condition you are claiming, and whether it was caused by your military service. In other words, their role is to determine if your claim can be denied. Do not provide them with any information which could cause your claim to be denied. As a hypothetical example, if you are claiming a significant hearing loss, don't admit that, in civilian life, you spent years working in a rock band, without any hearing protection. When asked any questions, only answer in a manner which exemplified that "this disability was caused by my military service". Don't discuss any circumstances outside of your military service.

If you have more than one medical condition for which you are seeking medical care and compensation, submit a separate claim for each condition, but, if you think one is connected to another, you can refer to a second claim, in the first. There are some conditions which are worsened by the presence of another condition. That is known as "synergism", and is an excepted medical reality. An example of synergism in a current civilian medical situation, is the lethality of the COVID-19 virus being enhanced by other medical conditions, as we get older.

BULLETIN BOARD

Continuation of VA Assistance

If you have more than one medical claim approved, it is important to understand how the total compensation is calculated. Medical claims are calculated based on a percentage of the entire body, usually in 10% increments. However, for purposes of our example, let's assume that all disabilities are worth 10%. So the first approved claim is 10% out of the entire body (100%). However, the second approved claim is only 10% of the remaining 90% of the body (or 9%). The third approved claim is only 10% of the remaining 81% of the body (or 8%), etc. So, in the example given here, those three claims (each of which are rated at 10%), only total up to 27% ($10+9+8=27$) for compensation. It should be obvious that it is very difficult to ever reach 100%.

Hopefully, this information provides some guidance which will help you in obtaining the disability compensation to which you are entitled. But, there are several other issues which may be of assistance to you.

Disability compensation is provided from the date of your claim. So, it behooves you to submit your claim as soon as you can, so that, even if the claim is disputed for a long time, once it is approved, your compensation is backdated to the date of filing the original claim.

Not only are the physical exam evaluations provided at no charge to you, but you can also submit a claim to the VA for all mileage expenses incurred by you in traveling to those evaluations. When you submit the expense claim, ensure that you know the exact mileage between your home and the location of the physical exam evaluation, and that the check you receive from the VA is for the round trip, not the one-way distance.

If you are a retired military veteran, any VA Disability Compensation you receive will be subtracted from your military retired pay. However, you can correct for that by submitting paperwork for "Combat Related Special Compensation (CRSC)", or Combat Related Disability Pay (CRDP). When either of these is approved, then you will receive the one you select, in addition to your military retired pay. Even though this is a benefit that is guaranteed, you will never receive it if you don't apply for it.

Sometimes having a disability approved can cause an unexpected problem, outside of the VA system. A good example of this is establishing that you have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Even though this is a totally credible, and accepted, medical determination, and any dissemination of this information is protected by the medical privacy laws (HIPAA et al, again), the realities of having this disability documented, can be very harmful to you. One example is if you are still in any position (civilian or military) which required a security clearance. There have been many cases of veterans losing their security clearance (and therefore their job), because of it becoming known that they have PTSD.

Another example is if you have a valid concealed weapon carry permit (CCW). In many jurisdictions, having PTSD is grounds for having your CCW revoked. In both of the above situations, it is clear that, because of the totally incorrect public perception that PTSD is a form of mental illness, not a medical problem, your rights may be denied. Having to fight these decisions legally, at great expense, and time, are issues that anyone thinking of submitting a PTSD claim needs to be aware of, before they submit their claim.

I hope that the preceding information assists anyone wishing to submit a disability claim with the VA, expedites the processing of their claim, and increases their chances of having their claim approved.

BULLETIN BOARD

Submitted by Andrew Schultz (Squad Leader—70/71)

I was in Vietnam 1970-71 and was very moved by M.C. Toyer's story on SSG Steve Orders. I remembered that same area and jungle between Xuan Loc and Saigon near the fire base close to Xuan Loc. If my memory holds true, I believe we called that jungle, the Checker Board Jungle, which was also close to the Michelin Rubber Plantation. My brothers, who were also my troops (I was a Squad Sgt) saw a lot of action in that area. As with my fellow brothers in arms, I tried to forget the trauma from those encounters and time, but it keeps coming back. We continue to go on!

Submitted by Editor—Obituaries**Ronny Garfield Dyer (3rd Platoon—9-67/68)**

Ronnie Garfield Dyer, 74, passed away on Saturday, December 21, 2019 at Atrium Health in Concord. Born June 14, 1945 in Montgomery County, he was the son of the late Brantley Vanhoy and Mary Belle Dyer Davis. He was a Sgt. In the U.S. Army and served one tour during the Vietnam conflict. He retired from the U.S. Forest Service with 37 years of service. The last 22 of those years, he served as law enforcement for the U.S. Forest Service. He was a courier for First Bank for 7 years and spent 12 years working security in the courtroom for the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office. He was a member of West Montgomery Lions Club for 15 years and also served 25 years as a volunteer for the Uwharrie Volunteer Fire Department.

Gordon 'Chet' Johnson (Co. XO—1/66-5/67)

Gordon Chester 'Chet' Johnson, age 81, of Carriere, MS, formerly of Slidell, LA, passed away on Wednesday, December 9, 2020. A native of Gray, KY, he was an Army Major (Ret). In his early life, 'Chet' was a member of the Kentucky National guard in the 1950's, joining the Navy in 1956 serving as a shipfitter aboard two destroyers. Upon receiving an honorable discharge from the Navy in 1960, Chet joined the U.S Army, attending Airborne School at Ft. Campbell, KY, and earning his silver blood wings. He was assigned to 506th Parachute Infantry, 101st Airborne Division. Chet attended Officer Candidate School in 1964 at Ft. Benning, GA. In August 1966 he was ordered to lead an advance party to Ben Hoa, Vietnam, training Infantry combat soldiers. He experienced combat while in Vietnam earning the esteemed Combat Infantry Badge. After one year at Ft. Carson, he was assigned back to Vietnam with the 101st Airborne division. He was awarded a Bronze Star with V device and Purple Heart after the battle of Ashua Valley. He was also involved directly with the Battle of Dong-Ap-Bia, otherwise known as Hamburger Hill, receiving his second Bronze Star, as well as his third Bronze Star. Chet retired with 22 years of active duty. Upon retirement, Chet joined the staff of Louisiana State University as an Associate County agent and worked faithfully for another 22 years.

Charles William Archer (3rd Platoon— 8/67-1/68)

Charles William Archer, 74, passed away March 3, 2021 in Tyler, TX. He was born October 25, 1946 in Dallas, TX to Iris Corley and Eugene Archer. He graduated from South Oak Cliff High School in Dallas and attended Dallas Baptist College. Chuck served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War and received numerous awards including a Purple Heart. He retired as a Sergeant after 33 years of service at the Dallas County Sheriff's Department and continued to work on a part-time basis for an additional two years. Chuck's hobby was traveling and he took many road trips to his favorite places. Through the years he visited 49 states. He especially loved the times he was able to visit his Vietnam 'Foxhole Buddy' Brownie and wife, Joy, in Arizona. These travels gave him wild stories, which he loved sharing with anyone who would listen.