

ALL GAVE SOME; SOME GAVE ALL

This week's veteran is Kenny Sloan.

Kenny graduated from Findlay High School in 1967. He was drafted into the Army in April of 1968. After receiving his basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, he was sent to Fort Lewis, Washington, for AIT training and then on to Fort Benning, Georgia, for training to become a dog handler.

Upon arriving in Vietnam, Kenny was assigned to the 37th IPSD (Infantry Platoon Scout Dog) which was attached to the 1st Cav Division located in the Phouc Vinh and Bien Hoa area. When a 1st Cav unit made contact with the enemy, they would call in Kenny and his dog, a German Shepherd named Brandy, to walk point with a team of 3-5 soldiers. The dogs were trained to find enemy soldiers, and weapons and food caches. Once Kenny and Brandy found a large amount of enemy arms and rice. The rice was used as a bartering tool for information from the locals. The Army didn't get much useful information, but they gave them the rice. The natives hauled the rice away with elephants. It took the Army three days using Ch-54A (Sky Crane) helicopters to haul the arms away. Because the dogs were so effective at what they did, Kenny was told that the North Vietnamese had a bounty on them.

One day, Kenny and Brandy were walking point when he saw an enemy patrol on the trail ahead. Since it was a direct confrontation situation, Kenny had to fire which resulted in the death of one of the enemy soldiers. Although, he had no recourse because it was a "shoot or be killed situation", the image of that soldier still haunts him. One time on their return to base camp via helicopter, they had to ride with four body bags carrying American soldiers. It was a very solemn occasion for Kenny.

His unit went into Cambodia looking for the enemy. It was after that mission that Kenny received his Bronze Star. He was in Vietnam for ten months, most of which was spent in the field. It rained often in Vietnam. The soldiers uniforms were made to dry with body heat if the soldiers could get out of the rain. When they were able to sleep under their tent at night, the uniforms would dry, however, when they would awake in the morning, scorpions would be sleeping with them. When going through water, giant leaches would attach themselves to the soldiers.

Walking through the airport to board his plane for home after being discharged, he was spat upon and called a "baby killer". It was hard to understand that kind of treatment when he had done what his country had asked him to do. He says, "I don't regret my time in Vietnam. It made me appreciate life more".

After returning home, he worked for Caterpillar for thirty years before retiring. He helped his dad, Frank, and brother, Ronnie, with farm-work, and Stringers Fertilizer all while working at Caterpillar. He is married to Sally Wilson Sloan and they have three boys: Mike, Chuck, and Joe, and five grandchildren.

Thank you, SP4 Kenneth M. Sloan, for what you gave for us.