

ALL GAVE SOME; SOME GAVE ALL

This week's veteran is Larry Howse.

Larry graduated from Assumption High School in 1966. After a brief employment with Caterpillar in Decatur, he was drafted in 1967. Larry was sent to Fort Leonard Wood for basic and then on to Fort Benning for Advanced Infantry Training and demolition training. His next stop was Vietnam.

Larry got a rude welcome to Vietnam. The airport was under mortar fire. Their cargo plane flew slowly but never landed. They had about a five foot jump from the plane to the ground. One of the planes escorting them crashed and burned at the end of the runway.

He was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 47th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division. On their second day, they were taken on patrol to accustom them to what they would be doing. There were not supposed to be any Cong in the area, but one jumped out of the bushes and shot the 2nd Lieutenant in their group. It was the first time Larry had ever seen a dead person.

He and a Vietnamese, who had defected from the North Vietnamese Army because they had killed some of his family members, made up a demolition team whose job it was to go out after American bombing runs to find bombs that had not exploded and demolish them, so the enemy could not use them. They also blew up enemy arm caches when they were found and destroyed enemy hideouts. He was sent on these demolition forays about twice a month. He also installed a mine field around their compound.

Larry spent time in regular combat as attested to by the awarding of a Bronze Star with a "V" Device: *For heroism in connection with military actions involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam: Sergeant Howse distinguished himself by valorous actions on 30 December 1968 while serving as a Squad Leader with Company B, 3rd Battalion, 47th Infantry, on a reconnaissance in force mission in Kien Hoa province. During fierce fighting, Sergeant Howse, disregarding his own safety, mortally wounded several Viet Cong and was responsible for the destruction of two enemy bunker emplacements, as he repeatedly exposed himself to the intense enemy fire. Sergeant Howse's personal bravery and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the Military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the 9th Infantry Division and the United States Army.*

Other awards that Larry received were: the Air Medal, Good Conduct, Army Commendation with "V" Device, Vietnam Campaign, Vietnam Service, and four Purple Hearts: piece of shrapnel going through his arm, shrapnel in his shoulder, a carbine bullet penetrating his rucksack and going about one-fourth of an inch into his back, and a knifing.

After his discharge, Larry reenlisted and was sent to Germany. He had trouble with how he and fellow Vietnam veterans were treated when they came home. He suffered from the lack of respect and hurtful things that were said to him. For years, he told people that he had served in Germany, but did not mention Vietnam.

Thank you, Sergeant Larry D. Howse, for what you gave for us. Larry's father, Paul, and brother, Glenn, were also in the Armed Forces.