

ALL GAVE SOME; SOME GAVE ALL

This week's veteran is Joe Mink.

Samuel Joseph "Joe" Mink was born and raised in Assumption, Illinois, and attended Assumption schools until the summer before his senior year in high school, when his family moved to Flora, IL. Joe graduated from Flora High School and was drafted into the US Army in 1969. Joe did his basic training at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri, and his AIT in Fort Ord, California, and shipped out to Vietnam in Nov. 1969. Private First Class Mink was with Company C, 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, Americal Division. While in Vietnam, Joe was an infantry soldier and carried an M-60 machine gun, an M-79 grenade Launcher, and also served as a tunnel rat - the latter not being his favorite. During the time that Joe was a tunnel rat, he recovered many enemy weapons and NVA flags.

In June of 1970, while serving as a machine gunner with Company C, Joe's unit came under a combined mortar and ground attack by an unknown size North Vietnamese Army force in Hiep Duc Valley. Joe maneuvered through the concentrations of enemy fire to a strategic fighting position in order to engage the enemy. Because of his actions during that skirmish, Joe was awarded the Army Commendation Medal with V Device and two Oak Leaf Clusters for his personal heroism and devotion to duty while in Vietnam. In addition to the Army Commendation Medal, Joe was awarded the Expert Rifleman's Badge, the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal w/60 Device, Combat Infantryman's Badge and the Vietnam Service Medal with 2 Bronze Service Stars.

Joe was Honorable Discharged with the rank of E-4 on June 18, 1971, and returned to his home in Flora, Illinois. Joe owned his own construction business for many years and is the father of two sons, Jason and Tyler. In 2002, Joe was reunited with his 5th grade girlfriend at a High School Class reunion in Assumption. Joe and the former Jody Anderson renewed their courtship, got married, and live in Assumption where Joe is a member of the American Legion. Joe and Jody enjoy spending time traveling in their motor home and look forward to retiring so they can hit the road more often

Joe's story was written by his proud "5th grade girlfriend".

Thank you, E-4 Samuel Joseph Mink, for what you gave for us.