

ALL GAVE SOME; SOME GAVE ALL

This week's veteran is John Mathias, Jr.

Junior graduated from Assumption High School in 1952. He worked for Allis Chalmers in Springfield until July of 1956, when he was inducted into the Army. After receiving basic training at Ft. Leonard Wood, Junior was sent to Fort Gordon, GA, to Signal School where he became a Radio Messenger Router. Later, he also received Military Police Training.

After his training at Fort Gordon, Junior was attached to the 69th Signal Battalion at Fort Meade, Maryland. The 69th has a storied past. The unit was organized in 1942. On July 19, 1944, the 69th landed on Utah Beach and joined the **XX Corps** of General George S. Patton's Third US Army as the Corps Signal Battalion. In Vietnam, the 69th operated all local communications in the Saigon Long Binh area, including support for the HQ, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam and the HQ, U.S. Army Vietnam.

Upon being discharged from the Army at Fort Meade on July 1, 1958, Junior returned to Assumption to work with his dad on the farm and drive a school bus for the Assumption School District. For a period of time, he was also the janitor at Bond Elementary. Because of his Military Police training, he did some part-time police work for the City of Assumption. From Assumption, he went to the Moweaqua School District as the bus maintenance person. He drove the vocational bus to Decatur for years. Many athletes will remember his driving them to their games. After consolidation, he continued in the same job for Central A & M until his retirement. He retired as bus mechanic in 1996 but continued to drive the vocational bus until 2000.

Junior married Phyllis Moss Mathias on November 4, 1967. They have one son, Kevin, and two grandchildren, Shawn and Rebecca. Junior died July 21, 2003.

Thank you, Technical Specialist 3rd Class John Mathias, Jr., for what you did for us.