ALL GAVE SOME; SOME GAVE ALL

This week's veteran is Rod Pinkston.

Rod was born and raised in Assumption, Illinois, and graduated from Pana in 1984. He is the oldest son of Bill and Sue Pinkston. He enlisted in the U. S. Army in August 1984 and retired in October 2008 as a Master Sergeant after a 24-year career.

Upon completing technical training as a Power Generation Equipment Engineer at Fort Belvoir, Virginia in 1985, he was assigned to the 1st Forward Support Battalion, 2nd Armored Division at Fort Hood, Texas. He quickly worked his way through the enlisted ranks to become the Engineer Section Chief and was awarded a U. S. Patent for inventing an Auxiliary Power Unit Portable Test Kit.

In July 1988, Rod was reassigned to the 1/68 Armored Battalion, 8th Infantry Division in Wildflecken, Germany, as a Platoon Sergeant. This battalion was one of the first units in Bavaria to field the new M1 Abrams Tank. He deployed to Southwest Asia in December 1990 for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm and was attached to 3rd Armored Division. The "Spearhead" Division's mission was to enter Iraq from Saudi Arabia and engage the Republican Guard from behind.

Rod completed his combat tour in Iraq on 18 May 1991 and returned to the United States to be an Advanced Individual Training instructor at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. In August 1993, he moved the Engineer School to Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Maryland, and became the battalion Master Fitness Trainer.

In May 1996, Rod was reassigned to the 601st Aviation Support Battalion, 1st Infantry Division in Katterbach, Germany, as the Special Purpose Equipment Section Chief. He deployed to the Balkans in March 1997 for a seven-month combat tour in Bosnia and then returned to Germany. In 1998, he graduated from the US Forces European Hunting Program in Ansbach, Germany, and became one of only eighteen Americans qualified to receive the coveted "Deutsch Jagdschein" or German hunting license. He finally found time to hunt European boars in Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic.

In February 1999, Rod was promoted to the rank of Master Sergeant and selected to be the Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC) of the Olympic Shotgun Team at the U. S. Army Marksmanship Unit, Fort Benning, Georgia. He remained in this position for the last nine years of his career as he prepared Army shooters for the 2000, 2004 and 2008 Olympics. His Soldiers won two gold medals and set four Olympic records at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, China. It was the first time in history the United States earned four Olympic medals in one shooting sport, two Golds by Rod's soldiers and a Silver and Bronze by shooters trained at the Olympic Training Center.

Rod married his high school sweetheart, the former Jo Ann Campbell of Pana, IL, on 02 November 1985. They recently celebrated their 28th wedding anniversary and live in Columbus, Georgia. Rod is the Founder and CEO of JAGER PRO, LLC. Employing retired Soldiers, JAGER PRO™ is the first private company to adapt and develop military-grade technology and methods to harvest 3,000 wild pigs annually. Research learned from his seven years living in Germany helped him develop more efficient wild pig control systems for the United States. Rod is the inventor of the M.I.N.E.™ (Manually Initiated Nuisance Elimination) Trapping System and an expert on the latest wild pig control methods and technology in the industry.

His military awards and decorations include: Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (2 oak leaf clusters), Army Commendation Medal (5 oak leaf clusters), Army Achievement Medal (8 oak leaf clusters), Army Superior Unit Award, Army Good Conduct Medal (8), National Defense Service Medal (2), Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Southwest Asia Service with Bronze Service Star, Armed Forces Service Medal, Overseas Service Ribbon (2), NATO Medal, Kuwait Liberation Medal (Saudi Arabia), Kuwait Liberation Medal (Kuwait) and Air Assault Badge.

Thank you, Master Sergeant Rodney G. Pinkston, for what you gave for us and sharing your story with us.