

6TH BATTALION, 11TH ARTILLERY

Hawaii



Viet Nam

On Time, Sir!

From Georgia to Viet Nam

Section 17

"Last Man Out"

by Clenton Thomas, B Btry, '68-'69

Pride will separate, whether it be friends or family. In this story you will see what pride in both myself and Ramsey did to our relationship with one another. It is not my intent to cast Ramsey in a bad light, but we were - what we were. Each person on the LZ had their own way of dealing with the effects of being in a war. Alcohol or Drugs, sometimes even both, or some other form of relief. Alcohol was my vice, and I can with a clear conscience lay claim that, I have never in my lifetime done drugs with the desire to get high off them. And when I did use drugs, it was for painful injuries or the such, and I would use it sparingly.

It was one of those party nights in our hooch, I was well on into my alcohol intake and Ramsey was high on something. He probably smoked weed, but he never did it in our hooch. He started this conversation with me: *Doc, you drink that beer or whiskey and it impairs your ability to function. When you wake up the next day you will have a hangover, headache, and even throwing up. Whereas if you had smoked pot or popped pills, you would not have all those ill effects. When I smoke my pot or pop my pills, I can get up the next morning without a headache, or any other side effects. I'm good to go from the start, not hung over for half the morning like you are. You should do drugs, like I do.* Well, I came back at him with what his dope was doing to him, and it had a similar effect on him as far as it would impair his ability to function also. And we argued back and forth for several minutes. I finally told him we will see.

I knew he had guard duty later that night, he was to replace Lance, somewhere around midnight. Lance was already on guard duty. Soon afterward we both went to bed. I lay in my bunk just above him, half awake waiting for Lance to call Ramsey for his shift. I was determined to see if his claim of no ill effect was true or not. Finally, Lance called Ramsey to wake him for his shift. I let the phone ring a dozen times or more before I finally called out to Ramsey. He grunted and half asleep mumbled "What". By now the phone had quit ringing. And I told Ramsey that Lance had called, that it was his turn at guard duty. He mumbled something and turned over. So I waited some ten minutes and he still had not gotten up. So I called him again, and in another ten minutes I called him again, I still could not get

him to get up. Lance called once more and I let it ring several times, before I called out to Ramsey. Still I got no response from Ramsey, so I got up and answered the phone. Lance thought it was Ramsey answering the phone, but I told him that I had tried to wake him, but couldn't get him to wake up. By now it was around one o'clock and Lance was tired and sleepy. I told him, I would try and see if I could get him awake.

This time I didn't just call Ramsey, I also shook his shoulder. He didn't care too much for that, and told me to leave him alone, that he was sleepy. Well I didn't, I shook his shoulder several times after that but with still no response. The next time, I not only shook his shoulder, but reminded him that he had bragged about the ill effects that my drinking would cause me, but that his drugs would not affect him, that when he woke up he would be ready to go. He had done his drugs and I had done my drinking, but who was wide awake and functioning. This finally got a reaction out of him, he got up dressed and headed out to relieve Lance. I had returned back to my bunk by then and was going to go to sleep. Some ten minutes later, Lance came in and asked if I was awake? I told him that I was, and he asked what I done to Ramsey, he was mad as hell when he reached the guard bunker. I just told Lance, I had gotten him up, to pull his time at guard duty, it wasn't right that you pull two shifts of guard duty.

From that day forward, there was a riff in our friendship. We did not go around arguing or fussing with one another. You might say we tolerated one another, pride would not let either one of us take the first step toward healing our friendship. We avoided personal contact with one another. It came all most time for Ramsey to return home. Ramsey and Orton would be leaving the hill together. Lance came up with an idea of giving Ramsey a gift to remember our service together. His plan was that he would steal one of the dip-stick out of one of the generators that Ramsey looked after. He knew of a place, back in the world that would chrome it. He was going to send it back and have it chromed and one of his family members would pick it up and put it on cloth covered display pad that we could present to him. Lance had already talked to several other people about pitching in on the cost of doing this. When he approached me and asked if I would also like to help with the cost, I readily said I would. Lance stole the dip-stick and sent it off, so that it would be back in time before Ramsey left. It came in some five days, before he was to leave.

On the day they were to leave, we gathered at the chopper pad to see them off. I had my camera to take some pictures and was standing off to the side to take these pictures. And also because of the rift between us, I didn't want to spoil his memory of his departure from the hill. Of course everyone was happy for Orton and Ramsey that they were going home. In the course of the conversion, Lance came up with another idea. And he asked Orton and Ramsey what plane carrier would they be taking when they left the base to go home. He explained that he would be

taking (don't remember what carrier it was) this carrier to fly home. And he knew that Ramsey would also be taking it, but wasn't sure if Orton would. When Orton confirmed that it would be the same for him. He told them that he knew the ticket desk quite well and told them that just to the left of the desk was some restrooms.

What he suggested was that when they had purchased their ticket, they would go into the restroom and in the last stalls, write their name on it with the date and the next person would know that they had made it out alive. Although Orton and Ramsey were leaving the hill at the same time, they would not leave the country at the same time. He told them that he was next in line, for in two weeks away he was leaving also. Then he thought of me and asked me if I was leaving before him or after him.

I told them that after he left, I would be following him in a week or so. He then told me I would be flying home on the same carrier as the others. They all agreed that they would leave their name on the restroom wall. Then Lance turned to me and said: *Doc, it's ironic that you will be the last one out. Here you have looked out for us all these months, and you will be the only one to know if we all made it out alive.* In another section I have wrote about the most dangerous time for us was when we were leaving country, and although we left the hill in good shape it didn't mean that the danger was over, it would only be over when, we each stood in front of that restroom door.

As the others went back to joking and talking with one another, Ramsey detached himself from the group and came over to me. Looking me dead in the eyes, he said: *Doc, I know that we have had our difference, but one thing I have always known, that if I was wounded and laying out in the open. No matter what danger it would have meant for you. You would have been there for me.* And with that said he offered me his hand in friendship, I hesitated for a brief second then took his hand into mine, and the rift was healed, we parted as friends.

Two weeks later, I was once more at the chopper pad seeing Lance off. Although he left two weeks ahead of me, in talking with him recently, I found out that on the same day that I was processing out, and at the same place, he was also there. I didn't see him and wasn't really expecting to see him there. We could have at some point have even been exiting and entering the same building. After he left, it was only Sparkie (Glen Evans) and myself left in our hooch. That was a lonely week for me, and I felt the effect of not having them around. A week later I was on the chopper pad waiting for the resupply chopper to come in, I had said my goodbye to Bravo and to Sparkie, Big John and Jack the Crack. When I got on the chopper I asked one of the gunners to ask the pilot if he would circle the hill before we headed for Duc Pho. As we circled the hill, I looked down on what had been my home for the past seven months. I would not be coming back, I was going home.

As I've mentioned before, back in Duc Pho, I turned in my M-16 and aid bag, informed the two medics at the aid station that the hill needed a medic. Said my goodbye to Lien High. Went down to the air strip and caught a transport plane up to Chu Lia, did my paper work there and boarded another plane headed to Saigon. When I arrived in Saigon, there was more paper work to be done and they gave me my papers that would allow me to enter into the real world once more. At last I found myself some thirteen months later at the same place, I had departed from a Boeing 747 to start my tour of duty. When that Boeing 747 sat down, I saw my Freedom Bird waiting for me to board and I would be leaving Viet Nam alive and well.

I don't know about the rest of the guy's, waiting to board that plane. But I was praying, don't let Charlie drop any rockets or mortars on us. If they did, and I was not on that bird the doors would be slammed shut and it would leave me stranded in Viet Nam. One of the guys I had served with, had contacted me a few months ago and told me that he had seen me there, and spoke to me but I don't remember it. You might say I had a one tract mind that only included me and that plane. When I boarded the plane on the left side of the isle each row had two seats, but on the other side each row had three seats. It worked out that about mid way up the isle I was seated in the middle seat on the right side. It wasn't until the release seatbelts light came on that I could breath.

The Stewardess told us that, our route home would be to Japan, where we would refuel the plane and then on to the States. Our flight would be delayed for about one hour in Japan. Then we would head for Fort Lewis in Seattle, Washington. We had been in the air for a few hours when the Stewardess came around asking if we would like a sandwich and a drink. The two guys on each side of me ordered a sandwich and a drink, I wasn't hungry, nor thirsty so I declined her offer. What I was, I was sleepy. So while she took the other orders and went to fetch those orders, I went into a light sleep. When she returned to my row she served the guy to my left and it didn't bother me, and her giving the one on my right his drink that didn't disturb me. But when she leaned over to hand him his cellophane wrapped sandwich it passed in front of my face and the cellophane crinkled and I went into survival mode.

I was half way up out of my seat, with my right hand cocked ready to defend myself when my eyes took in what was happening. I saw the sandwich in front of me and her arm stretched over to give him his sandwich. I looked over at her and both of her eyes were wide as saucers and by the look on her face, she figured she was going to be in a world of hurt. Dropping my arm, I apologized to her and sat back down. The guy on my right looked at me like I was crazy. I'll bet you that Stewardess made sure that everybody was awake the next time she served a soldier returning from Viet Nam.

We arrived at the Seattle airport around 1:00 AM. It took 2 hours to go through customs, then we were loaded onto a bus and went to the base. We stopped at a warehouse soon after entering the base. There we were issued our dress uniforms, awards and ribbons. Back on the bus, we were taken to the returnee's processing center. We were fed breakfast and directed to barracks to take a shower and sleep until the next morning to begin processing. Or we could dress and a Sgt. told us what building was the starting point for our processing. We could wait there for the Sgt. to come into his office around 7:30. At this time it was in-between 5:30 and 6: AM. I choose to go and wait to begin processing, I wasn't the only one there. I checked out alright except with my hearing. I took the test three times and each time they told me, I had a hearing loss.

I knew when it happened, I was returning from the mess hall with my plate of food, when not knowing that Gun One was doing a fire mission. I was right under the gun when it fired. They were busy doing the mission, no one noticed me walking up on them. Soon after that when I could hear again, I began hearing crickets, now we have crickets in south Georgia. And knew what they were and the sound they made. When I would hear them at night, I reasoned as long as they were chirping I was alright. But if they quit chirping it would mean that someone was close, and it might be the VC. It wasn't until I got home from Viet Nam and would hear them inside the house or car, but could not find any inside, that I realized it was my ears.

When we finished procession, we were told to go to a certain mess hall to receive our steak dinner cooked any way we wanted it. We were told that a bus stop was just outside the mess hall and it would take us to the airport, where we could catch a flight to our home state. A couple of us were standing there waiting on the bus, which would be there in about an hour, when this guy walks up and asked if we were headed to the airport. He said that we could call a taxi and split the cost between us and it would be there in five minutes and we could be on our way to the airport. We all agreed and he called the cab. And we rode to the airport at less cost than one could have hired it.

When I went into the airport terminal, the first desk I saw was the one Lance had told us about. And there off to the left was the restrooms he had said would be there. I went up to the desk and purchased my ticket and asked when the next plane to Georgia was leaving. I was informed that the last plane had just left and it would be 1 AM when the next one left. The boarding gate was on the other side of the terminal "Just my luck". I went over to the front of those restroom doors, set my bag on the floor some ten feet from them. If anyone was watching they would have thought I must have been off my rocker. This is what passed through my mind: ***I am the last man out, I will be the only one who knows if the others made it out alive from Viet Nam. What if none of them had made it out, what would that knowledge do unto my mind? What if they all had made it out, but had forgotten***

to leave their name on the wall of the restroom. Or they all had written their name on the wall, but housekeeping had washed them off or painted over them. These are the possibilities that I faced, as I stood there in front of that restroom.

Reaching down I picked up my bag, did a left turn and headed toward my boarding gate to wait for my plane. For six months I had served as a medic in Duc Pho and then for seven months as medic to "B" Battery, with the lives of seventy two men on my shoulders. I was not going to pursue the medical field, I was not a medic any more. Didn't mean I wouldn't help someone if the occasion presented itself, just meant I would not go looking for it.

Boarded my plane, and was told that it would fly into Dallas airport in Texas and I would have to swap planes to go to Atlanta, Georgia. When we arrived at the Atlanta airport I came off the plane as fast as I could, *I was almost home*. I went to the baggage ramp and found my bag. I looked to the left and I could see daylight coming in the doors there and there were taxi's outside. I headed straight toward those doors and noticed that there was no one, but me headed out of them. There was a lot of people coming in them. but I figured that I had retrieved my bag first and there would be others coming along behind me. When I exited the building I saw a Buffalo cab driver unloading a passenger from it and I walked to him and told him I wanted to go to 2310 Amber Way, in Decatur and fast.

He informs me that he's not supposed to pick up fares here, it was the incoming passengers gate. The departure gate was down stairs. And he could only pick up fare's there. I could get into a lot of trouble, if I picked you up from this gate. I told him not to worry about it, nobody was going to say a thing to him. And if anyone did, **I'd handle it**. I had spent 13 months in Viet Nam and I was not about to let anyone hinder me from getting to my Sister's house. This solider was almost home. He briefly looked at me and said I'm going to do it, get in. When we arrived, I paid him and went to the side door that led into the kitchen and knocked. As I stood there waiting, it crossed my mind that it was Thanksgiving and they may have went off for the holidays. Didn't matter to me I had slept out in the open before and I'd do it until they came home. Wasn't necessary though, Janice opens the door, and she's got this shocked look on her face. She knew I'd be home, but didn't know when. It gets real mushy at this point, then my niece nine year old Tricia comes running in and it gets more mushy. Tricia's real name is Patricia, but I've always called her Tricia. My brother in law Hershel, was a driver for Allied Van Lines and he was out on a run when I got home.

Janice's house, was as I stated had a door at the side of the house that led into the kitchen. Once inside the kitchen it had two doors leading into two other rooms. There was a door to the right, that led into a dining room, and it had a double door that led into the living room. On the far side of the kitchen across from the side door, was a door that led into a den. Across from that door, there was a hall, on the

left about mid way was a bathroom door, and on the other side of the hall was a door that led into the living room. As you went to the end of the hall, it led into the master bedroom. When standing at its door, to the right was Tricia's bedroom. Bear with me, I'm going somewhere with this. Inside Tricia's room, she had a bed and there was also a bunk bed off to the side by the door. This was the bed I would be sleeping in.

We had supper, and spent a lot of hours catching up on everything. Around eleven we all headed to bed. At two or three in the morning, I was in what I thought was a dream, but was really happening. I heard someone choking, and I was up and out of the bed to see after this person. It was Tricia, that was choking, and I knew that I had to clear her air way. I stuck my finger in her mouth and located a piece of chewing gum. I extracted it out and laid it on her night stand. Watching her for a couple of minutes to ensure she was all right. When I turned back to return to bed, knowing that I was just dreaming all this, things did not look right. I was thinking that I was still in Viet Nam, it didn't look like our hooch on the hill. So I thought, I'm back in Duc Pho at the aid station, but it still didn't look right.

It came to me that if I went outside, then I could get my bearings and I'd know where I was. So I went out the door into the hall, looking to my left down the hall. It was in semi darkness and I thought, that way just led deeper into the aid station. I decided to go out the door to my right, it would probably open to the outside. Opening the door, I stepped into another room not outside. There was a bed to my left and there was someone laying in it. I could tell that it was a woman, but what puzzled me was what was a woman doing in the aid station.

As I stood there looking down at her, it hit me like a ton of bricks. ***I made it out of Viet Nam, I'm alive, I'm not hurt. I'm really home, I made it out alive.*** I had went into Viet Nam not expecting to live threw it. And yet here I was alive and well at my sister's home. I don't know if Janice was aware of me being there in her bedroom at that time of night. If she was she was probably petrified with fear of what I might do to her. She has never mentioned it and I didn't either.

While in Viet Nam, often various men would talk about going home and would often describe their homes and families. Yea, homesickness hit us all at one time or another. Remember we didn't really want to be in Viet Nam. Our homes was our center, and it often kept us from going crazy over there. It was a place that was orderly and peaceful, one we were comfortable in. Although in the above, I called my sister's place home, it was not the home place that I thought about when I got homesick in Viet Nam. It was not my father's home in Jacksonville, Florida. Rather it was a 200 acre farm that my Grandfather owned, in Alamo Georgia. It was a place that I had spent most of my summers at, while growing up. Two weeks after I had returned, I needed to go there.

My desire was to visit with my Grandfather, and his dog Brown. Also to visit the gravesite of my Grandmother. Then spend some time just wondering around the farm, remembering the times I had spent there. One of my Uncles, had a son Joey, he was around ten years old and I was sort of his hero, don't know where that came from. But he wanted to go trout-line fishing with me the first night. I didn't really want to, but he kept on and on. Finally I told him, if Uncle Jack and Aunt Nettie would let him, then we would go. I honestly thought that they would not let him do it, guess what? They agreed for him to go.

So I went to the local hardware store and bought the supplies I would need. Uncle Jack had a 10 foot alum boat and said he would put it in the tooting pound. That afternoon I went to the pound and took a roll of twine and ever ten foot put a loop in it. Then tied it to one side of the pond, and stretched it out to the other side and tied it off. It was about ten foot from the shore most of the way. I then, in the boat went alone to every loop I had made. With a four and half foot piece of fishing line tied it to the loop and put a hook and a sinker on the other end of the line.

That night around ten, Joey and I went down to the pond. We had just gotten the lantern lit and gotten into the boat, when a set of headlights came to the pond. Uncle Jack and Aunt Nettie got out and came up to where we were. I put Joey in the front of the boat and I got in the back. He was to help me pull the boat along using the line. At each loop we would stop and I would put a worm on the hook. Then go on to the next loop. Had done about five loops when we felt a tug on the line. Uncle Jack and Aunt Nettie was keeping pace with us on the edge of the shore keeping an eye on Joey. We pulled the boat back to where we had a bite. Catfish have three sharp pin like fin's, one on its back and one on each side behind the head. To hold the fish safely, you had to take your thumb and pointing finger. Slide the line in between them and bring the two together making a hole that you would lift the head of the fish into. This would depress the fins against the fish and you could hold it while you took the hook out.

Joey was beside himself, he wanted to be the one to take the fish off. So I looked over at Uncle Jack and he gave me an OK nod. So we changed places, he went to the back and I got up front. I still was the one baiting the hooks as we pulled the boat alone. Wasn't long before we felt a tug on the line, and we backed the boat to where it was. I was instructing Joey how to do it, and he was doing great. He had his hand close to the water so as not cause the catfish to start flopping. Excitedly he told me that he could see its head and of course Uncle Jack and Aunt Nettie was right there on shore some ten feet from him. They were telling him to be careful and hold the fish tightly so that it didn't fin him. Well Joey didn't have a catfish on the line, he had an eel and it wrapped its self around his wrist and arm. Joey let out a scream, standing up, he slung that eel as far away from him as he could.

Both Uncle Jack and Aunt Nettie was standing in the water, with both arms stretched to Joey. And he had one foot on the rim of the boat and was lifting the other foot to step out of the boat, he was going to walk on water to get to his parents. I reached out and caught the back of his shirt and pulled him back into the boat before he went overboard. Uncle Jack told us that he thought that was enough fishing for the night. Joey didn't argue with him he was ready to go home. I told them to go ahead, that I would take care of the trout line. I disassembled it and dumped the fish and worms into the water.

Joey must have spent all night thinking about what we could do the next day. Because the next morning, he hit me with us going bird hunting. They had a bird dog and quail hunting was in season. Again it wasn't my desire to go hunting, and I told him that I didn't have a shotgun. And he came back with, his dad did, and I could borrow it. Well, I figure after last night's ordeal, Uncle Jack and Aunt Nettie surely would say no. Wrong! So off hunting we go, we had flushed a couple of covey's of birds. We hadn't hit a single bird either time, and it was working on my nerves, when they would take flight. We came across a fence that was leaning over with the top edge a couple of feet off the ground. We followed safety procedure as I gave my shot gun to Joey as I climbed over. Then he passed them to me, and he climbed over. I had told Joey at the start of the hunt that he was to stay on my right, and a little behind me, just enough that I could keep him in the corner of my eye. But as I left the fence Joey for some reason hung back, expecting him to take his place I began searching out in front of us for the dog. I could not locate any movement from him and thought he might be pointing at some birds.

What I didn't realize was that while we were crossing the fence he had cast about in front of us and had not located any birds, then had circled around behind us. And was coming up fast to the same spot we had crossed at. When he went to jump the fence row he didn't quite clear it and his rear foot got caught in the fence. This created some noise behind me, I had my shotgun at port arms, as I swung around to my left, I released the safety. Moved my trigger finger to the trigger, and raised it to my shoulder. When I had finished the 180 degree turn, I was ready to fire and it was pointed at Joey's head. I took note of the dog at the fence and swung my shotgun up to the sky while return it to safety. ***"Oh Shit, I had almost shot Joey in the head."*** We resumed hunting and we hadn't gone fifty feet when I told Joey that this ain't going to work. We need to head on back to the house. With that said, I emptied my shotgun. Joey didn't argue with me, but also emptied his shotgun.

When we got back to the house, Uncle Jack and Aunt Nettie had already eaten, and we fixed us a plate. I wasn't very hungry and finished up before Joey did. I don't know if I've mentioned this before, but when I came out of Viet Nam I was smoking two and a half packs of cigarettes a day. I needed a cigarette, so I went outside to smoke one. When I got outside, I noticed Uncle Jack under one of the pecan trees looking as if he was in deep thought. I was going to head in the

opposite direction, but he noticed me and called out to me. Clenton come over here I want to ask you a question. *"Now I'm thinking. Oh Lord! Joey's told him about what happened on our hunting trip this morning. And I'm in for it. I knew that I had to face up to it.* What he asked me, was totally unexpected! **Clenton while you were over there, did you ever kill anyone?** PapaThomas (my Grandfather) had eight son's. Uncle Jack was the only one that served. He was a WWII Veteran.

Let me explain something to you, first of all. In the total time (409 days) I spent in Viet Nam, I did not fire my M-16 even one time, not even in target practice. I did fire a pistol in target practice (and I've told you that story). But, I did throw one hand grenade that night on guard duty, don't know if it took some one out or not. So when I answered Uncle Jack, no I don't think so, I was telling him the truth. I told him about throwing the hand grenade and said that if I had fired my weapon at them, I would have done it from over a wall with my head down.

He said that they would do the same when fighting with the Germans. If they were behind a wall they would lay their rifle on the wall and bang away. If there was any enemy killed nobody would know who had killed them. And also if they were in a city, at the corner of a building. They would stick there weapon around the corner and bang away. And no one would know who shot who. He said, I had one confirmed kill. I was clearing a boomed building one day going from room to room. As I stepped into this one room, across from me a German was entering into it through a window. We both noticed each other at the same time, looking at him face to face, I shot first. I've lived with that scene every day since then.

If you had known him as long as I have, you would never know that he carried this burden of taking another man's life. He was the most cheerful, fun loving, always had a smile and loved people, no matter who they were. Maybe in telling me about it, someone that could understand, helped ease his burden somewhat.

There is another first cousin, that also viewed me as (in his own word) someone who could walk on water. Don't you dare believe it. What I would like to do is share with you a portion of a letter he sent me recently, about his own father.

By Thomas Nygarrd:

I remember my Dad, on the other hand was worried about you the whole time you were over there. He was drafted and served in the Norwegian Army in about 1928. He was in Germany going to School when Hitler came to power. All his friends were getting drafted into the German Army (even the Norwegians like my dad) so he figured he better get out and did so in 1939. He went to New York and was working in a bakery when he was drafted in late 1940 and reported in March of 1941. He was 32 years old and wasn't a citizen but he had a green card so in he went. He was at Ft Benning just like you as well as Louisiana, Texas and other places in between. He spoke German so he was an interpreter and also a tank sergeant in a tank destroyer battalion; 774th.

He landed on the beaches in France in 1944 after all those years of training. He was attached to Patton's 3d army and was on the front lines until the war was over. He saw a lot of bad things that made him worry about you in Vietnam. They were packing his battalion up to invade Japan when they dropped the atom bomb and then the war was over. He went back to Norway as the German's had occupied the family bakery over there during the war.

He came back to the US in 47 I believe to visit a friend by the name of Bill Bailey of Columbus Georgia and to keep his US citizenship that they had so kindly given him before sending him on the beaches. He met Bernice and took her back to Norway a few weeks after they met. Mama and Papa Thomas were so mad they would not even go to the wedding. Loisa and I were born in Norway. My Mom came back in 1952, ostensibly for a short visit to introduce us to our grandparents. I was named after Papa Thomas (Thomas William Nygaard). However, after Mom got to Georgia she decided she was not going back to Norway. It was too cold and rough over there. So she told Isak to come to the US or it was over. So over he came although that was a problem. He had been out of the country too long so his citizenship had been revoked. So it took a year or two to get him in the country he had fought for. In the mean time we lived at the farm with Mama and Papa Thomas.

Any way Isak was all smiles when you were back in one piece from Vietnam. He was a tough old guy but he hated war. He said wars were just a way for old men to get young men killed; usually for no good reason. I think he was right.

To some of you, you may have to think on what I'm saying:

For those of us that served in Viet Nam

We crawled into Viet Nam.

For those of us, that survived Viet Nam.

We walked out.

As I close out these stories, I would like to say to all branches of the Armed Services that served in Viet Nam, to the Donut Dollies that visited our troops and to the Nurse's that tended our wounded in various Countries.

"THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE"

I'M SO GLAD THAT YOU MADE IT BACK HOME.

THE END