

NEWSLETTER

Jim Swett Recalls Nam in Poem

A VIETNAM SOLDIER

By James Swett

There once was a boy not far
from his toys,
that lived life and took all that he
could.

Then one day the call, to serve
for his country,
brought an end to that
unburdened life.

He'd heard of the "The Nam"
and knew it was far.

He'd heard of the people in fear,
he knew that the time to answer
the call was now and it needed
to be done.

He signed all those papers and
pledged his support
to his country and all of its
truths,

for people were dying for the
right to be free and
he knew where he needed to be.

So he went to the Post and was
issued his gear-
a helmet, some boots, and and
a gun.

He heard the Drill Sergeants
bark orders to march and he
went with the rest of the troop.

They drilled night and day and
ran everywhere,

His muscles and joints how they
ached.

But he kept to the pace and
finished the race and
knew that his training was done

He said goodbye to his family
and friends wondering if he'd
ever see them again.

Leaving the good life, and
heading for strife, was as
stressful as it could be.

He arrived in "The Nam" with
fear in his guts and saw all the
guys going home.

He wondered out loud and said
to a friend "in a year i should be
in that crowd"

Assigned to a unit he waited for
papers to officially mark his
debut.

a "bird" flew him high, out into
to sky, where it looked like a
beautiful place.

With mountains and gorges and
streams down below, no sign of
a struggle or war.

But pings on the "bird" skin
made him realize that war, was
only a moment below.....

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Lt Jim Swett

Jim Swett arrived in Vietnam during late October of 1969 and was assigned as 2nd Platoon Leader in Charlie Company. Malaria would later pull him to the rear for treatment, where he was then reassigned to a Bravo Company. He later served out his tour in HHC.



Jim now resides with his wife in Bartlett, Tennessee.

He has three children and is a proud grandfather as well.

In 2015 he put pen to paper and wrote this reflective poem of his time in Vietnam..



“to offer your life, for the service of all, is the greatest gift of them all”



LT Jim Swett 1969

The fear in his gut that the time had arrived, made him shiver with cold and dismay.

But he thought of his training and what he had learned, and swallowed the lump in his throat

His unit was camping on top of a hill, with guns bristling bright in the sun. the mortars all shiny and waiting for use should the call come to "fire away"

A unit was out there just sweeping a hill and calling in "fire away." the noise of the cannon and shake of the earth, brought hell on that fought after turf.

The smoke had arisen and the call came in, that the mortars had done their job well. the unit made contact, the VC had scrambled or left lying there in the dirt he faced another enemy out in the bush.



The weather played havoc with plans. if clothes weren't wet from the sweat on his back, they were drenched from the rains on the earth.

The water filled monsoons were endless it seems. they washed away plans for the day. he went day by day with rations of beans, for the "birds,"

They just could not fly. his clothes were all dirty and his beard was a mess for the water too precious for that.

But finally the day came and the glorious "birds" came bringing mail, more water, and "rats"

The months came and the months went with daily action reports.

The VC would gain ground and then they would lose ground and he wondered why politicians back home, wouldn't send guns or more troops, to get in to action to get this ugly war done.

When he went to a village of Montagnard natives and the little ones gathered around. asking for candy and gum, it was then that it hit him, he had done what was needed and he was proud what his country had done.

A slap on the back from a Montanguard chieftain and the taste of rice wine in a gourd, made him realize these people were friendly and kind.

They only wanted to live out their lives which was what they were being denied.

And then came the day, when his service was done, a year - 12 months and a day.

As he boarded his plane and looked back to see, all the "new guys" that formed in a line.

He knew that was him in the spring of last year and knew of their feelings and fear. he whispered a prayer for, and thoughts of good cheer, and hoped they'd be here in a year.

So the boy with his toys, had grown to be a man with his sights set high on high to offer your life, for the service of all, is the greatest gift of them all.