

Megan O'Dell
Period 1

Ronnie Guyer
Army
1964-1966
2018

Ronnie Guyer

“Freedom must be protected at all costs,” exclaimed Ronnie Guyer. Born 1942 in Oakland, California, a young boy who originally wanted to become an attorney, never knew what life would have in store for him. At age 22, Guyer was open to serve in Vietnam, ready to sacrifice. The Vietnam war was described as a blessing that impacted his life in a way that nothing else could. From that point on Guyer’s life would be changed for the better.

“In life things are always bound to improve” exclaimed Guyer. From someone who lost their mother at a young age and experienced the hardships of war, he still cheers and dances like nobody's watching. Guyer’s mom, Evelyn was the sole reason why he remained so strong during such a unpredictable time in his life. At times, Guyer would feel as if he was not making the right decision because of how dangerous and risky war was. After her passing, he visited her grave and she assured him from above, “Have no fear, you will survive this war without shooting a shot.” The loving words from his mother in spirit guided and protected him while fighting for our country. His mother assured him that he was making the right choice. At the time, Guyer was unsure about his destiny while serving, now he knows the Vietnam war was “God’s plan for his life”.

During the war, Guyer was a radio man and driver for the United States Army Lieutenant General, Hal Moore. One hot day in Vietnam, Guyer, along with 114 other soldiers were stepping out of a helicopter onto what they thought was just tall grass. To his surprise, he had

just stepped on a Punji stick, directly after a man in front of him had made the same mistake. Thankfully, God was on his side, raining the night before to wash the poison off the bamboo stick. At first, the injury wasn't so painful, but in time it started to sting. Only 5 days after the injury, he was sent back out to fight. Guyer was awarded a Purple Heart medal for his wound in the war, sharing his heart with others is a gift. Hal Moore was a very serious man, but Guyer stepping on the Punji stick right after the man in front of him had Moore laughing so hard, he could've been rolling on the floor. For Guyer's injury to give such a solemn man some comic relief, was absolutely "worth it". Hal Moore, Guyer's respected leader in the war told him "Carry on Guyer, you're doing a good job".

"True happiness in life comes from sacrificing on behalf of others, the greater the sacrifice the greater the happiness." In 110 degree weather, Guyer would carry the wounded and decaying bodies of his brothers in combat from helicopter to helicopter. The stench and odor from the dead bodies left everyone barely breathing. Along with carrying the bodies, he would also identify them, some of these would be his own friends. There were about 500 death and wounded letters that Guyer hand typed and sent to the dead soldier's families. This lasted for three weeks after the battle. The process was so mentally draining that he couldn't even write a letter home during this time. Despite the fact that this process was hard, Ronnie was making a sacrifice.

"Do you have any regrets when it comes to serving in the U.S. Army" Guyer was asked. He replied "Absolutely not, the U.S. Army gave me a better handle on what was real and what was not in this world." Guyer wishes everyone would serve for their country, it was the singlehanded most impactful thing in his life. In 2005, Guyer attended the 40th Anniversary of the Battle of IA-DRANG at the Vietnam Wall Memorial where he was highly honored for his

service. At the Memorial, the 16th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Peter Pace, said to Guyer “Thank you for leading the way”. Thank you for your service Ronnie Guyer!