

Respect for Vietnam Veterans

By

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Two and a half million Americans served in Vietnam. My grandfather, Pete Barnosky, was one of them. The Vietnam War was a long costly war that cost many American Soldiers their lives. Contact between family members and trust between the Vietnamese people and the Soldiers was non-existent. The respect for the Soldiers was little to none, but we can show our respect now in more ways than one.



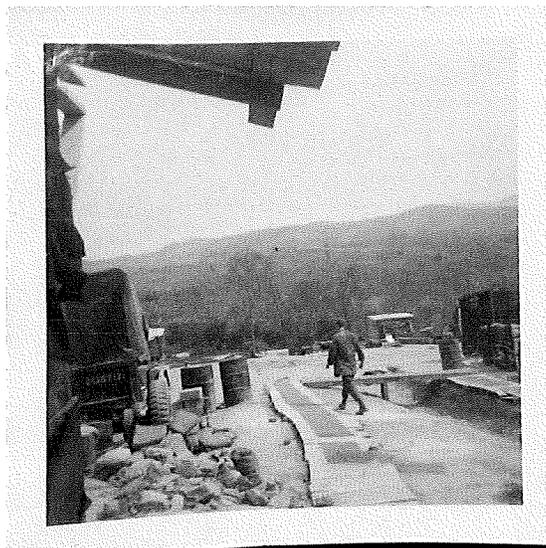
(On the right) PVT
Pete Barnosky and an
unnamed friend,
Pleiku, Vietnam, 1968

The Vietnam War occurred in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos from 1955 to 1975 between North Vietnam and allies of South Vietnam the United States. My grandfather enlisted in the Army in 1967 at the age of eighteen. In 1968 he was sent to Pleiku in the central highlands of Vietnam with B Battery 1/92nd Field Artillery as an ammunition truck driver. This job was a very dangerous one because if there had been missteps in loading, accident, or incoming enemy fire, he and any other American Soldiers on the truck could have been killed. Considering this, my grandfather was lucky to have survived, unlike the 58,214 Soldiers killed during the War.



PVT Pete Barnosky with his truck, Vietnam, 1969.

The dangerous conditions were not only difficult for the Soldiers, but so was communication between them and their families. The only way for families to stay connected was through letters or radiophone. Trust between the native people and the Americans were explicitly unheard of at the time. This made soldiers feel as if anyone they had spoken to would sabotage the camp or is one of the enemy. Soldiers had also been mistreated and disrespected by their superiors.



Camp conditions, Pleiku, Vietnam, 1968

Respect is something we are taught from a young age to use when addressing someone of higher status, our parents, and those who have served. When my grandfather had been in the War people had looked down on him. They thought that since the United States had no direct reason to involve itself in the War, that the Soldiers' actions were unnecessary. However, they persevered in doing what they believed was right and what was necessary to protect their country. The Veterans of the Vietnam era should be treated with immense respect for not only what they endured, but for their selfless service. My Grandfather and many men and women like him would like to receive something as simple as a thank you.

My grandfather fought in Vietnam along with two and a half million other Americans; they deserve respect and admiration and they should not have to demand it.



Members of B Battery, 1/92nd Field Artillery, Pleiku, Vietnam, 1968