

# Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution

## Proudly Honors

### Patriot of the Month

July 2023



## Stanley J. Adams

### United States Army

Sponsored by:

Jane Randolph Jefferson Chapter, NSDAR

Stan was 19 years old when he was drafted by the Army in June 1968. He was sent to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri for eight weeks of basic training, then to Fort Ord, California for eight more weeks of AIT "Advanced Individual Training" (Combat), where he was assigned to the Infantry. Next he spent two weeks at Camp Roberts, California for advanced weapon training. He came home to Missouri briefly before reporting to Oakland Army Base in California, and in late November he flew out of Travis Air Force Base to Vietnam to join the War.



On his arrival in Vietnam, Stan was assigned to the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in Cu Chi and subsequently assigned to the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, Bravo Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, near Tay Ninh. Stan explained that the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment's nickname is "Manchu." A component of their crest emblem is a dragon, so the Vietnamese locals called them "Dragon Men." After a couple of processing days, Stan's unit was flown by Huey Helicopters to their assignment in the field. Stan remembers his Sergeant Leonard Simpson from California telling them, when they arrived in the field: *"You won't hear the round that gets you, so why worry about it?"* Every new soldier to the field was also told *"Don't salute an officer!"* as it makes them a target to be shot by the enemy, and *"Don't make anyone mad!"* because everyone has guns. The men quickly learned that the Manchus were always in the thick of the fight, and their chances of making it back home were slim. In fact, Stan and the other men in his unit were "replacements" for other soldiers who had been killed in the recent "Thanksgiving Day Battle." Three weeks after arriving in the field, Stan and his unit were caught in their own major battle - a nightmare experience that has haunted him throughout his life.

The Manchus were assigned to build a patrol base about 9.5 miles south of Tay Ninh City, west of the South Varn Co Dong River about half a klick away from the Cambodian border. The site was a flat, wide open area in the rice fields that became hard and dusty during the dry season. The camp was designated "Mole City" by the soldiers stationed there - because their bunkers were connected by a trench, someone commented *"We're living like a bunch of moles."* Mole City became "ground zero" for a bloody battle that unfolded on December 22, 1968. Portions of the base camp were

overrun by the North Vietnamese Army and one of the men he'd come to know, Gary Everette from Texas was killed in action during the battle. The soldiers knew they had to fight to the finish, no matter what the outcome. None of them knew how this would end, but they fought bravely through the night. At daybreak, gunships and helicopters arrived and continued to drive enemy forces back into Cambodia. This was Stan's first battle and the most horrifying during his tour of duty in Vietnam.

Most draftees were required to serve for a total of two years, including a full year in Vietnam. Stan was "in country" from November 23, 1968 to November 22, 1969. He spent most of his time in the jungles and rice fields, moving often between camps and base stations. He said it rained nearly every afternoon during the Monsoon season.

During his time "in country", Stan witnessed much death and devastation. He was especially affected by the deaths of two men in his platoon, Gilbert Bargmann from North Dakota and David Deitch from New York. These soldiers, who were positioned on his right and his left, were both shot during a battle on June 19, 1969. Gilbert was killed instantly in the field, but David was still alive. Stan and his fellow soldiers were able to get David onto a MedEvac helicopter, but he died from shock while en route to the hospital. Stan knows full well that it was only by luck and the grace of God that he survived his time in Vietnam.

Stan was touched about how kind and gentle the Vietnam people were, and also affected by how poor they were, as they had very little. The Vietnamese people were happy to just grow their rice and exist, though most appreciated the United States soldiers trying to help their villages.

During Stan's year of service in Vietnam, he was promoted to an E-6 Staff Sergeant. He received many medals, including: Vietnam Service Medal with 4 Bronze Service Stars, Bronze Star Medal with 1<sup>st</sup> Oak Leaf Cluster with "V" Device, Air Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross With Palm Unit Citation Badge, Republic of Vietnam Civil Actions Honor Medal First Class Unit Citation Badge, Expert Qualification Badge with Rifle Bar, and Marksman Qualification Badge with Automatic Rifle Bar.

Stan returned to the United States in late November, 1969 and finished out his remaining six months of service with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, 5<sup>th</sup> Army Infantry Division (mechanized/tanks - the "Red Diamond" or the "Red Devils" at Fort Carson, Colorado. On June 3, 1970 he was honorably separated from active duty after completing two years of active military service. After returning to Missouri, Stan met his future wife, Rita Russell, and they were married on November 28, 1974.

Stan began his employment career with G&S (Gamet & Sons) Construction, building overhead electrical power lines as a subcontractor for Boone Electric Cooperative. He received his "on-the-job training" for this high voltage work through the GI Training Bill. Due to this training and work experience, Stan was hired in 1975 by Daniels International as an Electrical Inspector in the Quality Control Department during the construction of the Callaway Nuclear Plant. In 1984, after the construction of the plant was complete, Stan was hired by Ameren UE as an Electrical Supervisor. He retired from Ameren in 2004.

Throughout much of their married life, Stan's wife Rita encouraged him contact some of the men he had served with, but it was too painful for him. For over 30 years, Stan kept most of the details of

his Vietnam service to himself. Rita began searching for and contacting the men of Stan's unit. She also learned that Stan's mentor and hero in Vietnam, SSgt. "Rock" Leonard Simpson had passed away years earlier on February 18, 1988 from his 2<sup>nd</sup> heart attack, but thankfully Rita located his widow Mary and their two daughters Tricia and Dede and their families attended their first "Manchu Reunion" in 2003. While there, some of the men talked about what they had experienced in Vietnam. Others just listened. They remembered the men they lost on the battlefield and shared stories about others who had been lost since returning. They discussed how they had coped - or tried to cope - over the many years that had passed since they had last seen each other. This reconnection was so good for Stan and the other men. Through this experience, Stan learned that several of the men were going to the VA for services, which is something he had never done. Not long after that first Manchu Reunion, Stan sought care with the VA and was officially diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. He began seeing a therapist to help him with the nightmares that had plagued him for over 30 years, and she asked him to write down the details of the battles and other bad memories. This would help her to gain a better understanding of what he was going through so that she could determine the best way to help him.

Stan & Rita continued to attend the annual Manchu Reunions and they connected with more men with whom Stan had served. Within five years of attending that first Reunion, two B Co. Manchus died suddenly of heart attacks, both near the anniversary of the Battle of Mole City. At the next Reunion, Stan's Capt. Ron Cabral said "*Look, we need to get this history down while we can.*" So what started out as Stan's therapy notes, turned into more of a term paper, and later, became the book, "*Mokane to Mole City.*" Over the course of a three-year journey Stan finally revealed to his family what he had experienced on the front lines of Vietnam. He and Rita, along with their two daughters, put their talents to work to turn his memories into a work of art that pays homage to the Manchu men of Bravo Co. and all Vietnam soldiers. "*Mokane to Mole City*" was published in January 2019, and is dedicated to Stan's loving family and his lifelong friend, Darrel Cavin, who helped him survive the aftermath of the Vietnam War. Stan encourages veterans, especially combat veterans to write your story and though hard, to reach out to the families whose loved ones paid the ultimate price.

Stan and his wife Rita have been married almost 50 years and have two daughters, Kim and Nichole, and two grandsons, Huston and Bowen. They are active members of the Millersburg Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the 4/9 Manchus, and the US Exercise Tiger Foundation (a military commemoration foundation located in Columbia, MO). Stan is a Life Member of the VFW Post 2657 (Fulton, MO), the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association, the Vietnam Veterans of America, the DAV, and a member of the Columbia Elks Lodge 594.