

MISSOURI STATE SOCIETY DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Proudly Honors



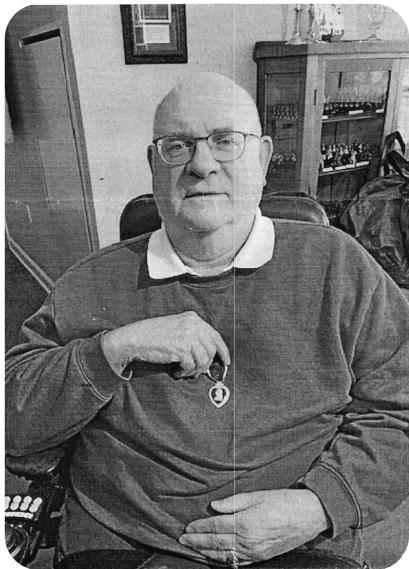
TERRY VAN METER
UNITED STATES ARMY
CAPTAIN (O-3)

as

PURPLE HEART PATRIOT
MARCH 2025

Honoring His Service and Sacrifice

Sponsored by: Sarah Lewis Boone Chapter, NSDAR



Wanting to be a soldier since I was eight years; I attended Norwich University in Vermont and graduated in 1966. I spent 17 months at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, in B Company, 2nd Battalion (ABN) 506 Infantry, 1st Airborne Division, Screaming Eagles, as platoon leader. Thanksgiving Day 1967 I was deployed to Vietnam. My position was as Battalion Staff Officer, Executive Officer of C Company, Headquarters Commander. The last post in which I served was a Company Commander of B Company.

I served during the 1968 Tet Offensive. The awards I received were an Air Medal with a V for valor device that is attached to a ribbon. July 22, 1968, I received a Bronze Star with the V device for action.

On August 28, 1968, I was wounded during a three-day operation. The second day I was shot three times and my body received parts of a grenade. The second bullet did the damage. I was shot in the front of my neck as I was in a crouch. That shot spun me around. It next entered my right lung, crossed my spine, entered my spleen and kidney. The third shot passed through the front of my shoulder. I could feel the numbness pass through my body. As I tried to turn over, I prayed, "Father, please help me get out of here." I passed out several times and the Battalion Commander was told that I was dead. A medic pulled me out by my feet and placed me on a helicopter.

I was first sent to Cu Chi. As it did not have a neurologist, I was moved to Long Bien where I was stabilized. There, three doctors worked on me: a general surgeon, a throat specialist, and a neurosurgeon, who operated on my back. I was admitted as a seriously ill patient.

On September 14, I left for Japan and was back in the states by the end of that month. I was admitted to Valley Forge Hospital in September, 1969. Telegrams were sent to my parents every day. I had one operation there. I met with Dr. Goodman who told me that not much was known about spinal cord injuries. He let me know that I was unable to walk but should not compare my condition with others who had experienced the same injuries. Different outcomes might occur for reasons that were not known by medical science.

After that meeting, I cried for 45 minutes. I knew that the dreams I had as a boy were over. I had the choice of what my attitude would be. I could feel sorry for myself or control those things I could. I decided to try my best each day.

At a Veterans Administration (VA) hospital, a Navy veteran told me, "Don't limit your life to others in, chairs. " I view my situation as a nuisance, not as a person who is handicapped.

I spoke to a former professor at Norwich University, Retired Colonel Sargent. When he asked, "What will you do?" I replied that I would return to school to earn an MBA and work in industry. He prompted me to consider working instead as a military historian. That is what I did and entered that field a year later. My career now was to preserve, not make history.

Beginning in 1976, I was a museum specialist at the U.S. Cavalry Museum at Fort Riley, Kansas. I became its director in 1979 and stayed at Fort Riley until 2002. I then went to The Center of Military History, Washington, D.C., and retired from Civil Service in 2006 as the director of the US Army Museum System.