

MISSOURI STATE SOCIETY DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Proudly Honors



HARRY EUGENE BOWERS
UNITED STATES ARMY
SERGEANT (E-5)
1967 – 1969



WOUNDED IN ACTION MAY 27, 1968
as

PURPLE HEART PATRIOT
JULY 2025

Honoring His Service and Sacrifice
Sponsored by: Missouri's Shoal Chapter, NSDAR



Harry Eugene Bowers, a Purple Heart Veteran, was interviewed at his home in Lathrop, Missouri, where he grew up and returned to in his retirement. His wife was present and participated in the conversation as they were married before he was drafted into the army, and she had stories to tell from a wife's perspective. Harry is a Vietnam Army Veteran and was discharged as a Sergeant (E5) with dates of service 1967-69. He received the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with two Bronze Stars, Vietnam Campaign Medal with a 1960 device, Combat Infantryman Badge (1st Award), Purple Heart Medal, Army Commendation Medal, First Class Gunner (M-60), Sharpshooter (M-14) 20/S Bar.

Harry began his story by saying he was drafted into the Army in 1967. He was picked up in Plattsburg, Missouri, and taken to Fort Leonard Wood for three months of basic training. There, he learned how to be an Infantry soldier. He was then sent to Fort Polk, Louisiana, for three months for advanced Infantry training. After a 30-day leave, he was

shipped out to Vietnam in February 1968. On arrival, he was put on patrol duty at Cam Ranh Bay. His group was divided up, and he was sent to Pleiku, Vietnam, at a base camp where there was heavy fighting, casualties, and many replacements were needed.

Upon leaving the base camp, he was sent to the jungle to replace the wounded and those killed in action. In the jungle, there were groups of 30-35 four-man patrols. They set up perimeters, booby traps, flares and cleared the area. They continued moving, setting up new sites and then tearing down the sites when they needed to move on. One person in the group always carried a hatchet, ax, shovel, and pick. Each soldier had empty bags to fill with sand to which they made bunkers out of to hide for protection. They all dug out under the bunker.

On May 27, 1968, Harry was shot in the right shoulder and hit by shrapnel. He was not evacuated for his injury, but treated in the field by a medic. At this time, their bunkers were run

over by the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). There was heavy fire, and several were killed in the group. Harry recovered bodies, and after the NVA's were killed and buried by their own, our soldiers had to dig them up for the body count. Harry became a squad leader and helped other squads as they lost half of their people. After this battle, the platoon moved south with the same mission. He was in Company C. They carried 70 pounds on their back, such as one week of food, four quarts of water, and 400 to 500 pounds of ammo. At one time, they had the same clothes on for four months at a time, but usually they got a change of clothes every three to four weeks. The weather was humid with monsoons, and several times they found themselves sleeping in six to eight inches of water. Although the jungle boots were vented, soldiers received jungle rot and leeches.

In November, after nine months in the jungle, they had a seven-day rest and relaxation (R&R) pass in Hawaii, where Harry's wife met him. After the R&R, he returned to Vietnam performing the same jobs until February of 1969, when he returned to the States. In Seattle, Washington, they all got dressed up in clean clothes, and that is when he received the Purple Heart Medal. Harry received a 30-day leave before going to his next duty stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia. But while on leave, he became very ill with Malaria, and upon arrival at Fort Benning, he was hospitalized for one month, having recurrences until 1971. He served for six months and was then discharged from the military.

Before Harry went into the military, he worked as a welder. After the war, he worked at Sheffield Steel, KW Dart Chemagro (Bayer) for 33 years. He worked in refrigeration, pipe fitting, and machinery repair. He retired at 55 and moved to the Lake of the Ozarks since they had retirement plans and real estate investments. In adjusting to civilian life, he became a workaholic and kept himself occupied. He went to the Veterans Administration (VA) at age 62 to address Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), hearing and malaria issues, and was given 60% disability. He has kept in contact with buddies from his platoon, attended reunions, and joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW).

The life lesson he learned was
"SURVIVAL".

