

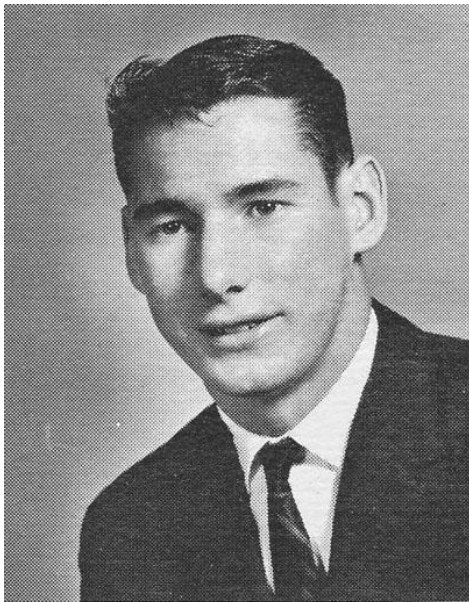
# GARY LEE HAUSMAN

Loveland HS Class of 1965

## US ARMY

April 3, 1967 – November 28, 1968

101<sup>st</sup> Air Cavalry Division, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion,  
502<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division.



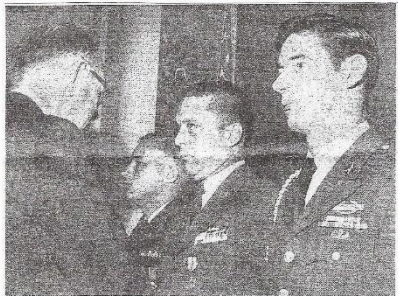
Gary Hausman



**Hausman, Gary Lee**

"A high man, with a great thing to pursue." Browning  
Football 1, 2, 3, 4; Basketball 1, 3, 4; Track 1, 2, 3, 4; L Club  
1, 2, 3, 4; FFA 1, 2; Ski Club 1, 2, 3, 4; Art Club 3; Powderpuff  
Letterbearer 3





**COLORADANS AMONG MEDAL WINNERS IN FITZSIMONS HOSPITAL CEREMONIES**  
 Walter Koch of Denver, a civilian assistant to the secretary of the Army, awards medals to Vietnam veterans at Fitzsimons General Hospital in ceremony Wednesday. From left are 1st Lt. Jon P. Mery, Hirs...

## Loveland Soldier Gets Medal for Viet Valor

A soldier from Loveland, Colo., received the Army Commendation Medal with the "V" for valor device Wednesday at Fitzsimons General Hospital during ceremonies which also honored 23 other Vietnam veterans.

The awards were presented by Maj. Gen. Byron L. Steger, hospital commander, who was assisted by Walter Koch, Denver, a civilian assistant to the secretary of the Army.

Spec. 4 Gary L. Hausman, who served with the 11th Airborne Division's 52nd Infantry, received the commendation medal for his actions near Phu Bai, Vietnam.

Hausman, while leading his team in an enemy assault, came under fire and was wounded. Disregarding his own safety, he covered the retreat of his men with heavy fire and then led them back to the com-

bat casualty.

Receiving the Air Force Commendation Medal for meritorious service in Vietnam was Sgt. Jerry J. Newman, formerly of Loyal, Wis., now of 800 Moline St., Aurora. Newman served with the 12th Reconnaissance Intelligence Technical Squadron and retired in April. He isn't a combat casualty.

Three Colorado youths were among 18 men who received the Purple Heart for wounds received in action.

They are: Spec. 4 Leslie D. Shehorn, Model, with the 25th Infantry Division; Pfc. Mark L. Christenson, Fort Morgan, and Pfc. William D. Thompson, Denver, both with the 4th Infantry Division.

Also receiving the Purple Heart was Spec. 4 Robert J. Trautle, Worland, Wyo.

*PHOTO BY JON RAYNE*  
 PHOTOS BY JON RAYNE  
 PHOTOS BY JON RAYNE





### A Recondo Commando's Memories of Viet Nam

A Viet Nam war experience of Gary L Hausman, a Purple Heart and Army Commendation Medal with Valor Device recipient and a dogged combatant and leader. I'm proud to have been a part of our military by serving as a soldier and a grateful American for so many reasons. My daughters asked me "What did you do in the Viet Nam war Dad"? That question prompted me to begin recalling some of those experiences, from being drafted, through training, deployment, engagements and finally a return to a divided nation.

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Born in Loveland, Colorado in 1946, grew up in Loveland and attended high school at Bill Reed (the person who sent me my draft notice) and then (at that time) the new Loveland High School. I was influenced and encouraged by a teacher, friend and coach Walt Clark. Coach Clark and my Dad, Taylor Hausman sparked my interest in the outdoors, and hunting in particular. I think this helped prepare me to be a good infantry soldier in combat. Hunting sharpened my skills of close contact of the fight and the need to make the first shot count. I pursued a career in Industrial Arts and athletic achievement. After lettering all four years in football and track at Loveland High and graduating in 1965 attended Mesa College on a competitive scholarship in Varsity Track and Football.

I lettered the first year in football and track, but the next summer broke an ankle and was unable to compete that fall. In 1966 not being able to secure a waiver of tuition, I dropped out of college and a month later received a draft notice stating "You are hereby notified of your induction into military service". My choice was to serve rather than dodge the draft like many of my schoolmates did. I was taught to love someone or something you give your heart and soul. I felt love for my country and was willing to sacrifice my life to protect our liberty. I perceive myself as a patriot who believes in God, Honor and Country and when called to serve did so.

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There were 34 Loveland High School graduates who gave their lives in wars starting with World War 2 and including Korea and Viet Nam. There were 7 Loveland High School Veterans who gave their lives on the battlefield in Viet Nam. Two of the 7 casualties were close friends, Jerry Roberts and Arlan Schaeffer. Jerry's Dad owned a high mountain ranch above Drake, Colorado where summers and weekends were spent hunting, fishing, camping and riding motorcycles. Arlan and myself were football and track athletes and competed for school records. Only a fraction of the casualties during the wars actually died on the battlefields, many more carried their wounds back and suffered long after the actual fighting ended.

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After a physical, swearing in ceremony and oath of allegiance to the USA at the induction center in Denver, I was put in charge of taking the files and paperwork for all that were flying to Ft. Bliss Texas that day. Everyone had been bussed to Stapleton Airport but me. The paperwork was delayed and the plane was waiting on the tarmac. I was taxied to the airport with a briefcase full of orders. I arrived with my name being broadcast by PA throughout the terminal. I was finally aboard and ready to take my first commercial flight. When we arrived at Ft. Bliss the harassment began immediately. We were greeted by a drill instructor yelling "Get off the bus you maggots - fall out and line up". Our long hair was removed with electric clippers in to a short buzz cut hairstyle. Civilian clothes were exchanged for olive drab combat fatigues, we all looked very similar. After three months of physical, combat skills and discipline training I received merits in the disciplines of weapons and also received the outstanding athlete award



in the battalion. After four weeks of basic training, we were issued our first weekend pass. Luke Lapointe (one of my buddies) asked me to spend the weekend at his parents' home in the desert of El Paso. We swam in their pool and rode dirt bikes in the sand dunes. I heard later that Luke had lost part of his leg in a dirt bike accident and was discharged.

After Ft Bliss, I packed my duffle bag for Advanced Infantry Training at Ft Gordon, Georgia. At this base, we trained for combat and tactical insights such as calling in coordinates for air strikes and mortar placement. We trained on how to survive and treat wounds in the field and use and maintain all types of weapons.

After 4 months at Ft Gordon I packed up my fatigues and jump boots and headed for Ft Benning, Georgia and paratroopers jump school. After jumping numerous times out of C130, troop and cargo transport aircraft I received the Paratrooper's Badge. While in training, our platoon was asked if we would like to be extras in the movie "The Green Berets" starring John Wayne. We were filmed hooking up our static lines and shuffling to the door before we jumped out of the paratrooper cargo plane. Duke (as friends called him) asked us to share a coffee with all of us who were in the jump scene. The conversation centered on the Army, Green Berets and our assignment in VietNam. His charisma inspired us and his sincerity gave him an air of being in command. He was what every young boy wants to be like and every old man wishes he had been. The Duke was one of America's favorite movie stars and reflected the best of the United States of America. He is missed.

While waiting for assignment, I volunteered for every school available: Leadership, Pathfinder and Reconnaissance Schools. After I finished this training, I was given a 2-week leave. I said my goodbyes to Mom and Dad and left Colorado to serve the Red, White and Blue. I was 19 and green and felt I was at the top of my game and motivated - soon to travel halfway around the world. After leave I was sent to Ft Lewis, Washington. My recollection of Fort Lewis was a rainy base with a picturesque view of Mount Ranier. There was some confusion when we as replacement soldiers were given winter fatigues, were we bound Korea's colder climate? We were awakened at 1 am to exchange the cold weather clothing for tropical fatigues, then boarded a bus to a tarmac to be loaded onto a jet.

My passage aboard a crowded Pan American jet ended at Cameron Bay on October 31, 1967. The South China Sea was a deep blue with waves breaking on the white sand beach. It was a spot of great beauty. A feeling of apprehension from lack of sleep combined with restlessness we arrived in Southeast Asia. When the Pan Am jet cabin door opened a blast of heavy heat was nearly overwhelming. The first hour in Vietnam we were off the plane and marching to the barracks and a gun shot rang out. A soldier was cleaning his .45 pistol and accidentally shot himself. It was a traumatic experience of how easy it is for a person to lose their life.

After orientation at Cameron Bay I was assigned to a reconnaissance platoon with: Headquarters Company, 101<sup>st</sup> Air Cavalry Division, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, and 502<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division at Phan Rang Base Camp. From there we were airlifted by 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Huey helicopters to locations all over South Viet Nam and even Cambodia. We moved from basecamp to field assignments by climbing into a chopper and skimming over rice paddies then pop up above the trees at break-neck speeds. When flying into a hot landing zone the door gunners would be shooting the tree line with M60 machine gun fire. We would sit in the door opening, feet on the skids preparing to disembark while small arm gun rounds would ping the sheet metal of the chopper. Along the Ho Chi Mihn trails we performed reconnaissance missions in small fire teams as well as search and destroy in larger platoons in the mountainous jungles with thick canopies to delta plains with rice paddies. The weather was usually hot, humid and during the monsoon

season very wet. The monsoon rains would last for hours each day. Insects were always a problem – mosquitoes, ants as well as leaches, snakes and spiders and disease. Everywhere you would go there was water and the earth turned to a red sticky mud which made it impossible to move quickly and hard to keep your rifle clean. The only good thing about the rainy season was that the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and VietCong (VC) didn't like to engage in bad weather. The stress of war was ever present. Viet Nam was a place of unusual customs, people, ideas, language and religions for American soldiers, danger was everywhere. A soldier's life was camps, foxholes, sandbag bunkers, hoochs, tents, bivouac and humping the hills with a heavy rucksack. Sleep was intermittent and usually not more than a couple of hours at a stretch for long periods of time, as we mixed daytime reconnaissance patrolling with night time ambushes.

There were many memories of comradery and amazing sights, like walking down an ancient trail alongside a crystal clean river covered by a layer of jungle canopy. There were amazing Buddhist temples, teak trees 150 feet tall, black panthers, monkeys, bamboo forest, and tropical vegetation. A high light moment while walking point on a reconnaissance mission in the central highland on an ancient trail I topped a hilly incline and observed a gorilla standing in a stream getting a drink (hand to mouth). We looked at each other and he walked back in to the thick jungle. There were times we would have a few days off for a stand down, taken out of the boonies for rest, relaxation, a hot meal and a shower. While sharing a foxhole with friends there were melancholy moments to reflect on the setting sun. Twilight time was inspirational especially on Christmas day while eating dinner on a hilltop observation point overlooking a valley. We listened to music on cassettes or radio as this euphoria passed staring into the mountainous jungle in front of us. We saw a firefight break out across the valley. It was getting dark and the skirmish was far away. During the exchange of small arms fire we saw red (American) and green (NVA) tracer rounds being volleyed back and forth. The music played on enhancing the melancholy mood. Songs by Ray Charles, The Stones, Jimi Hendrix, CCR, The Doors and Bob Dylan. Songs that were being heard back in the real world – surreal!

The NVA (North Viet Nam Regular Army) would create opportunities to ambush or attack and then disappear into their jungle terrain or the many obscure tunnels “ghostlike”. They were well trained soldiers with many years of experience and resolve. There was a constant threat from snipers, booby traps, mines, mortars and at times all out frontal assaults, nowhere was safe. All of Viet Nam was a battle zone. We fought against a well-trained North Viet Nam Regular Army and Viet Cong soldiers who were farmers during the day and VC at night. It was difficult to distinguish between the friendlies and the foe.

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Villages were built with trenches and “spider” holes and tunnels that crisscrossed their hoochs which sometimes had bunkers inside. The old and very young villagers who did not support the communists had either been killed or forced to live in government-controlled enclaves. Local Viet Cong units and snipers harassed Americans and laced ridgelines, trails and paddy dikes with sophisticated booby traps of every size.

My fire team would usually go in to the jungle and set up an observation point and watch for enemy movement, sometimes staying in the field for a month at a time. We would be resupplied weekly or after a firefight that depleted our ammunition. Our food was C-Rations and Lerps (dehydrated meals), or whatever we could find to eat. Occasionally we would find mango and banana trees and eat fish from the river. We depended on our rucksacks to carry all survival equipment for extended deployment in the battlefield. It held food, water, medical supplies, extra magazines, ammo, fragmentation and smoke grenades, claymores (antipersonnel mines) M72 law rocket launcher, poncho and poncho liner plus

personal items. Luxuries were limited to what would fit inside one's pack, letter writing materials, towel, soap, toothbrush & camera. Rucksacks sometimes weighed over 40 pounds. We also carried our weapons: M16 rifle with bayonet, 45 caliber hand gun. Or, if you were unlucky you would carry a M60 machine gun weighing approximately 25 pounds plus 300 rounds of ammunition, but it was one of the most effective weapons in a firefight. I think the M60 7.62mm round was more effective than the M 16's standard 5.56mm ammunition since it was larger and heavier the M 60's ammunition could cut through branches, thick grass and brush and still reach out and punish the enemy. The M60 faithfully fulfilled its role for Huey helicopter door gunners, infantrymen humping the hills "brush time" and the brown water swift boats in the Mekong Delta.

We saw many US Soldiers while on reconnaissance and search and destroy missions get wounded and lose their lives by NVA and VC but also by accidental deaths occurring because of being young and inexperienced with pressure situations surrounding them. Accidents can and do happen, like a soldier walking downhill into a helicopter blade or while moving through thick vegetation and a pin being pulled off a hand grenade that was attached to a rucksack. My first search and destroy mission was into a mountainous area above a river bed. A lost detachment, a 101<sup>st</sup> Platoon, in a terrain so unfamiliar and blinded by the thick jungle vegetation fired on us and we returned fire before someone shouted out "Master Blaster" (a code word for friendlies). One soldier was killed in the short skirmish and chaos. Fire fights seemed to occur every few weeks. One afternoon the platoon was moving through the bush single file in a tough climb and as we neared the top of a steep hill an NVA unit laid in wait around the summit. They poured a brutal voracious fire down on us ripping and gouging the earth and vegetation around us. We watched brave soldiers lay down their lives for a friend. The fire fight was short lived and the NVA disappeared back into the jungle. We fought in some of the toughest areas in VietNam with America's toughest division the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne. There has been little recognition of how brutal the war was for those who fought it on the ground, dropped into the enemy's terrain half way around the world, 12,000 miles from home. The 502<sup>nd</sup> of the 101<sup>st</sup> were an elite fighting force that carried on the tradition of obedience to duty and obligations to country like the heroes and role models who fought in World War II and Korea.

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#### Viet Nam War Facts

- 2,709,918 Americans served in Viet Nam representing 9.7% of their generation
- 58,148 Soldiers lost their lives in Viet Nam
- 75,000 Soldiers were severely disabled
- 5,283 Soldiers lost limbs
- Of the Soldiers that were killed, 61% were younger than 21 years old
- 250,000 South Viet Nam soldiers killed
- Over 1,000,000 NVA and Viet Cong wasted
- Over 2,000,000 civilians from Viet Nam, Laos & Cambodia killed

We were sent to the central highlands to help the mountain tribes fight the Viet Cong and take covert missions to sabotage their supply bases in Laos and Cambodia along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. One February afternoon on a search and destroy assignment it was hot as usual and there was an eerie feeling walking down an ancient foot path covered by thick canopy. We made our way along the trail and much to our surprise found an abandoned bunker complex. There were campsites with hammocks and clotheslines strung with fatigues hanging to dry. There was a cache of bike parts, mortar tubes and mortar rounds.



We secured the complex being careful not to miss or trip any booby traps and called in coordinates on this location. The central highlands consist of mountains that have double and triple canopied jungle with heights of 3,000 to 5,000 feet elevation. When temperatures fall below 60 degrees near the A Shau Valley and the Laos border it was a foggy and foreboding place with little light in the jungle and plenty of fauna hostile to soldiers. The valley floors were covered with elephant grass sometimes 8-foot-tall and so thick that you would have to use a machete to cut a trail through it. There were many firefights and a few battles that I took part in at places like Chu Lai, Hue, a Goodyear Tire rubber plantation in Cambodia, the A Shau Valley, along the Ho Chi Minh trails and my last battle at Phu Bai. War is hell but there is intrigue, suspense and exhilaration. You're scared, terrified and miserable but then the fighting starts and suddenly everything is at a heightened state. Your life and your friends' lives are at stake – you are moved to a savage instinct to overcome the enemy. It may be hard to comprehend, but soldiers that have experienced combat have an affinity towards one another because they have seen things most have not. It is a rite of passage in one's life and leaves a lingering feeling of selflessness.

The Tet Offensive started early in 1968 and was a New Year Holiday celebration. The Tet holiday cease fire turned into a political firestorm that resulted in hundreds of surprise battles and skirmishes. The Tet offensive cost 2,500 US Soldiers their lives and US public opinion would sway against the war as a result. Eight thousand US men injured, I was one among the many. Most of us who fought in Tet were young men and we are now poised as old men or possibly ancient. The 1968 Tet Offensive was an American victory turned into a disastrous retreat. It was a psychological turning point for Americans back home, President Johnson announced that he would not seek reelection and we started participating in the Paris Peace Accords.

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While on an outpost in the central highlands in Late February our platoon rendezvoused with a convoy of armed amphibious personnel carriers (APC's) and M48 Patton tanks. We rode on top of the tanks holding on for dear life. The tanks were noisy and the smell of diesel exhaust and dust was so thick we covered our faces with cravats. The tank crew of four were a rowdy bunch with a dark humor. We moved quickly down dirt roads through primitive villages and old cemeteries with graves indentified with large tombstones. As we moved closer to Saigon living conditions improved and the general appearance of native citizens seemed more refined. We passed south of Saigon to a port on the South China Sea. The battalion boarded Land Sea Transports (LTS) which included troops, supporting vehicles, tanks, APC's, artillery, rations and other cargo. We left the dock, and moved out in the harbor to head up the coast about 600 miles to DaNang. We moved out to sea and the worst thing that one could imagine happened. A typhoon hit the coast and we spent three days out in open water to ride out the storm. I was sea sick all three days unable to eat or drink anything. The waves were so large they broke over the deck making it impossible to go up topside. As we docked and disembarked at DaNang the sun appeared and the sea flattened and a tranquil sensation for a short time was felt.

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After spending an evening on DaNang's South China Sea beach and finding great satisfaction of a hot meal and a warm shower we were dismissed to spend time watching the sunset over the surf. The Navy had built a beach house and saloon – it was an oasis in the middle of a combat zone. The beer was plentiful and honky-tonk music was broadcast across the beach. After indulging in several PBR's an Army/Navy disagreement broke out, a brawl ensued with MP's (Military Police) escorting the most intoxicated off the beach and closed the beach house for the night. The consequence of this soiree resulted in our superiors sending us back in to the boonies the next morning. We were loaded in the back of a deuce and a half trucks and moved north up the coast on Highway 1. The highway in spots was

high above the coast and there was a view of a battleship far out in the open sea. We moved up in the mountainous jungle near Hue. With full rucksacks we moved from trucks in to a hostile mountainous jungle and back in to the bush in search of insurgents from North Viet Nam. These days were hot and the humidity high, and moving through the thick vegetation was difficult. We walked single file over hill and down in to a valley streambed with the sides of this creek thick with ferns and other vegetation. The water so clear we filled our canteens and drank from the swift running water. The canopy was thick and the shade was a relief from the hot sun. That evening we secured a hilltop, set out trip flares and claymores and bedded down for the night. The next several days we pressed on in to the rugged and rough terrain anticipating contact and anxious for a fray of some type. We spent the week in the field scouting and observing any activity during the day or night. In early March we cleared a landing zone of trees for choppers to resupply and bring mail from home. We then had a lift off to an outpost that had been attacked the previous night. As we flew in to the land zone (LZ) and disembarked the choppers we observed blood on the sandbags around the foxholes or fighting positions. This attack on the outpost of Chu Lai was the reason for the repulse stimulating our emotion to seek vengeance.

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On March 10, 1968, the 101<sup>st</sup> Air Cavalry Division, 2<sup>nd</sup> 502 on a search and destroy mission were ambushed by a company of North Vietnamese Army regulars, dug in and concealed in the vicinity of Phu Bai along the Perfume River. I was one of the severely wounded, but spared, unlike many Recondo's who gave their lives that day. Caught in the action of kill or be killed, we fought a battle that day. There is no greater love for our country than to risk one's own life when asked to protect our way of life.

Early that spring day the reconnaissance team left a base camp at Chu Lai in central Viet Nam. We were choppered into the jungle to pursue NVA & Vietcong who attacked the outpost the previous night during the Tet Offensive. We traveled a trail along the river that flowed south and west of Hue (the ancient imperial capitol). We stopped at noon to eat at a Buddhist temple rising up from the water's edge. The tomb of an ancient ruler of old rose high above long rows of stone steps which ascended to stone structures, religious sculptures and idols. Then down into the valley floor we followed a trail that was so old and well-traveled no jungle vegetation would grow. The point man made contact, he was fired on, incoming rounds from automatic weapons and snipers perched in the trees. We were outnumbered by well-equipped North Vietnamese soldiers. We were a couple squads of about 20, their guerilla force were many platoons and were well-camouflaged, concealed in foxholes along a dry river bed waiting to catch us in a crossfire. I felt a biting sting of a minor leg wound from sniper fire. We all got low to the ground and got ready to defend ourselves. We returned fire and tried to retrieve our dead and wounded. After hours of trying to hold our position artillery rounds were softening their assault. The gunfire became intense and we pulled back to make a stand and try again to retrieve the casualties, thus the mantra "No one will be left behind". We fired our rifles until the barrels glowed hot and were running low on ammunition. The line was manned as "Charlie" (another name for Viet Cong) crawled up through trees and bamboo thickets. The enemy was coming out of the dry riverbed to flank us from the rear. Attempts were made in the next 2 hours to retrieve Steve Worley, Robert Rera and Doc Scavella who were desperately asking for help. Scared and with adrenaline pumping my fireteam low crawled to get our wounded and break an entrenched enemy line. We were showered with grenades as we crawled back to a depression in the ground. Severely wounded by hand grenades and small weapon fire I lay almost helpless with nerve ends all screaming from wounds. My skull was broken and searing hot shrapnel burned my flesh. I laid in a deep depression in the earth with only a .45 caliber pistol to defend myself. A medic tried to stop the bleeding and ease the pain with morphine. Ammunition was getting low and so was the sun. When the gunships came, they pounded the ground with rockets and strafed with mini-guns. They put their deadly load one hundred feet from our position. We all lay prone as

bullets ripped the evening sky and rockets threw masses of dirt in the air. "So close to death" as each of us said a prayer. The sun was setting, now low in the west. We heard a noise at our left rear – it was reinforcements from C Company. Now there is enough to break their line. Two C Company soldiers helped me to a medivac helicopter. The dead were prone on the deck and we the wounded were placed on top of them. As the chopper lifted off, we received fire and the copter had to pitch to a steep bank. As we pitched we all nearly slipped out of the open door and had to secure a foothold to keep us from sliding out over the open water of the river. We were taken to a field hospital for triage where I was operated on. I was conscious and was able to communicate to the surgeon and answer his questions about our political leaders as well as who was the president of the Confederacy. Fortunately, I happened to remember it was Jefferson Davis. I passed the quiz so he told the nurse to prepare me for surgery. The operation saved my life but left me crippled.

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My parents were notified that I was missing in action and would not know of my welfare for quite a while. A Red Cross girl assisted in writing a letter to Mom and Dad by dictation, they were relieved to know I was not MIA. I was in the field hospital for a week until I was stable enough to be flown to a hospital in Japan where I spent a month before well enough to be transported to Fitzsimons Army Hospital in Denver. When we landed at Buckley AFB we were greeted by war protestors carrying signs. Mostly college students protesting the war would spit at us and heckle us by saying we deserved to be wounded and crippled for participating in an unjust war. They blamed us for the war. The castigation we received upon returning home was not from former generations but from our peers, college professors and the media. Academic institutions became focal points for protests against the war. For students the war was an intellectual exercise in draft avoidance, protest marches and springtime parties. The reward for going through the trauma of combat was to be greeted with hostility. This counter culture generation of the 60's chastised their parents and trusted no one over 30. They felt those who fought in WW II and Korea were materialistic and out of touch. Many of us who served in Viet Nam never complained of a generation gap but rather honored and emulated our fathers service and agreed with the concept of attempting to stop communism. To disagree with your country's policy is one thing, but to work for its defeat by the enemy is quite another and that is what Jane Fonda did. She and other Hollywood entertainers committed treason by supporting the North Viet Nam communist party. The nation failed to welcome us home. Such were the divisions of Viet Nam. No parades, no flags and so little thanks. Such was the lack of support for the US soldiers of Viet Nam. I tried to blend in and keep hidden the fact that I had served.

I was shot and fragged at dusk on March 10, 1968 and never have been whole since. I was wounded severely all over my body and head with a traumatic brain injury that crippled me forever. I thought the best part of my life had been stolen from me. Losing my physical ability took me from being a young warrior to feeling broken, useless and defeated. Each year on March 10<sup>th</sup> I celebrate being alive. I reflect on how lucky I am, and remember those noble warriors and friends lost in Viet Nam. The VA doctors told me I would not walk or function as I did prior to being shot. Being persistent and determined I moved from being bedfast, to a wheelchair, to crutches, to walking cane and finally to walking. I never regained my prior balance and equilibrium or strength but obtained somewhat normal function. Being crippled and being blamed for the Viet Nam War by peers I felt lost and things were not as clear as they once were. It was hard to adjust from the physical and mental pain. To be wounded and survive and observe others being killed and crippled is to suffer and I'm still searching for the meaning of that suffering. The battles still rumble in my head. Those exposed to combat and who have watched the suffering and pain of battle have a deep invisible pain called "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder". PTSD symptoms sometimes

catch up with me, especially on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebrations with fireworks or a restless night when Rera or Worley visit me in a nightmare.

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The experience of Viet Nam echoes in memories of my youth. I sometimes recollect the sounds of combat – like the repetition of the chuff, chuff, chuff of an approaching Huey helicopter, volleys of gunfire, incoming mortar rounds and the chaos of a skirmish. I still remember the smell of a firefight as a mixture of hot and humid jungle vegetation with the smoke of gunfire, grenades and the scent of wounded soldiers.

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My rehabilitation and convalescence lasted a year at Fitzsimons before I was medically retired from the Army. I became a student at CU Boulder but due to the ongoing war protests on campus and on the advice of students I didn't let it be known that I was a Viet Nam veteran. I tried to blend in and keep hidden the fact that I had served my country in Viet Nam. Viet Nam seemed to call everything in to question. The candor of our government and what it meant to be a patriot.

What I witnessed in Viet Nam were many brave soldiers who were patriotic and respected the culture and people of Viet Nam. My experiences with US Army Veterans who served in Viet Nam is a story of noble courageous soldiers. They went, served, sacrificed and fought like patriots. I never saw anyone killed by our guys in cold blood, and was distressed to hear of the My Lai massacre. My experience was we would go out of our way to make sure that innocent civilians weren't hurt. The US Army's motto is: "This We'll Defend, Duty, Honor and Country". The movie that best represents the dilemmas and challenges of this war is "Hamburger Hill", which was based on my company and battalion close to the time I was there.

After 5 presidential administrations and 30 years of secrecy we as patriots were misled so they could retain political power. We should not have been involved in Viet Nam's Civil War. The Vietnamese only wanted independence and rid itself of foreign invaders. They were fighting for the same ideals as our Revolutionary War. The Viet Nam war was poorly managed and ended ugly. The "Peace Movement" of the 60's came down hard on every soldier coming home.

Vietnam was a place of ancient history and a culture that was not to be changed by the US or French or any other occupying country. We failed to understand the North Vietnamese resolve and misread how the Vietnamese people felt about their government. To stop the growth of communism was a worthy cause but not winnable with a limited war. My only regret is that we were not able to do more for each other and for the people we came to help. The war to secure hilltop outposts, towns, roads and trails rings on but the places and names forgotten except by those who were there. For us who have felt the sting of battle save one backward glance when leaving and take one moment to embrace those moments left behind.

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#### Awards & Decorations Received

- Purple Heart
- Army Commendation Medal with Letter "V" Device for Valor on the Battlefield
- Viet Nam Service Medal & Bronze Star Attachment
- Republic of Viet Nam Campaign Ribbon
- Expert Badge: Machine Gun, Pistol, Rifle

- US Army Pathfinder Badge
- Parachutist Badge
- 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Badge
- Combat Rifleman's Badge

The Army gave me great satisfaction and I am honored and grateful to have served my country. I would liked to have had a military career if not forced to retire after receiving my injuries. For a short time in American history, I was privileged to fight alongside the proud men of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division occupying the battlefields in South Viet Nam. I pledge not to forget all the patriots that prepared to defend our country and especially my friends, Robert Rera, Steve Worley and Doc Scavella who were killed March 10, 1968. I'm proud to have served my country but lament that my buddies paid a price both with their lives or wounds that may never heal. I have remorse that I do not know who the dust-off pilots were the day I was evacuated to a field hospital or who the doctors and medics were that provided frontline trauma care to spare my life. I miss those close bonds between soldiers who watch out for one another. America is the greatest gift from God to this world. This nation is a beacon of freedom and liberty. I embrace, revere and love my country and I fought to protect our nation.

. . .

After retiring from the Army, I attended CU Boulder and graduated from CSU with a Bachelor of Science Degree. My major was Industrial Construction Management and continue to work in this field today. I married my friend and partner, Chris. She and I have 2 daughters, Erica and Kelly. I'm a small business owner in real estate and development. I believe in giving back to the community where you live and have contributed service on the Loveland City Council as Mayor Pro Tem in the 1990's and volunteer for the Loveland Utilities Commission. Over the years I have served on many other city and county boards and commissions.

Gary L. Hausman

Hooah!!!!

### **The American Creed**

I believe in the United States of America ... established upon those principles  
of equality, justice and humanity for which American patriots  
sacrificed their lives ... It is my duty to my country to love it,  
support its constitution, to obey its laws, to respect the flag,  
and to defend it against all enemies.

William Tyler Page

Adopted by the House of Representatives April 3, 1918



### **Airborne Creed**

I jump by parachute from any plane in flight. I volunteered to do it  
Knowing full well the hazards of my choice. I serve in a mighty  
Airborne Force - famed for deeds in war - renowned for  
Readiness in peace. It is my pledge to uphold its  
Honor and prestige in all that I am - in all I do.