

CPL James D. Davis Memorial April 1st 2017



From Left to Right

Bob von Almen IL, Glenn Green MO, Bob Lister OH, Frank Matsko IL, Dave Simonds CT, Ken Pitetti KS, Ron Middlebrook TN (standing in front of Ken), Jim Harris WY, Leigh Freeman NE, Tom Weides NE, Kneeling Left to Right Glenn Shuman OK, Gary Gilliam MO, Rolland Christiansen MO.

Charlie Company 2nd 506th Infantry 101st Airborne Div. 1970-71 memorial team provided another memorial for a fallen brother. The memorial teams have traveled over 8,000 miles and had honored 16 of their fallen brothers over the last year.

There were thirteen men from 9 states who made their way to Lexington NE on April 1st to hold a memorial for CPL James D. Davis 46 years from the date he was killed in action. The 8 vehicles of memorial team were escorted to the cemetery by the Lexington police and Nebraska State Patrol. When they got to the cemetery, cars were lining the highway and the lanes in cemetery. They were greeted by all the brothers and sisters of the Davis family who were anxiously waiting at St Ann's Cemetery, they were joined by family and friends to remember and honor their brother Jimmy. Over 120 people including the Charlie Company memorial team and VFW honor guard attended. All 13 men of the memorial team took part in a beautiful ceremony which was followed by an amazing lunch provided by the family. The forecast for the time of the memorial was cold and rainy but shortly before the memorial was to begin, the sun broke through the clouds and warmed the air and our spirits, as it shined throughout our ceremony.

Tom Weides, welcomed those who had come out to remember our brother, Ron Middlebrook created the battlefield display with the boots, weapon, dog tags and helmet.



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Gary Gilliam's task was to answer a question we heard in a past memorial "Why did it take 46 years to make this journey?" He told us as we left Vietnam we were given awards and medals for our honorable service, officers told us "we should be proud of our service to our country" and "your country is proud of your sacrifice." Then we returned home to find many in our beloved nation did not share the same sentiment. Many of those here were called vile names and spat on as we traveled through the airport. We found the pains of war had reached into even our smallest communities. We tried to put Vietnam as far in the past as possible, got jobs, raised our families but as years passed we found we could not out run the memories of war. Years later we began to find our brothers from Charlie Company and later visited the grave of our platoon leader. There in Augusta GA we found a peace we had never been able to find. At that point we decided we would visit each gravesite of our brothers of Charlie Company who died in 1970-71. We found as we held these memorials the families also found closure and peace. The simple answer: It is the right thing to do. Today this will be the 16th memorial we have held for our fallen brothers. We are here to honor CPL James D. Davis.

Jim Harris introduced the members of the Charlie Company memorial team and the nine states represented,

Bob Lister read the poem "**A Soldiers Reflection**"

The air was hot and harsh it took away my breath,
Fear tried to capture me as I stepped into a land of death.

The smells which overwhelmed were unknown to my senses,
Transported to Camp Evans surrounded by razor wire fences.

As I looked around I see eyes staring; seemed distant, so cold,
These were not men; but boys, this war had made them old.

Not me; I will never be like that, was the thought that came to me.
I am not like them; their eyes so dim, faces worn, this I would never be.

I looked at their tattered clothes, well-worn boots, faces dirty as I told my name.
They took so little interest of who I was but attentive, from where I came.

Hoping I was from their hometown or somewhere within their state,
They looked for something in common to share, beside a common fate.

We fought beside each other in the jungle, or on a mountain height.
We became more than brothers, willing to die for the other in a fight.

It didn't take long to find out; don't take stock to the color of a friend.
It didn't matter your ethnic birth we become brothers to the end.

No one talked of attaining medals or prestigious awards to win,
For the secret of making men heroes, is found within a friend.

We eased through the heat of the jungle and trudged the mud of monsoon,
We quietly stalked through the jungle and lay in wait beneath the moon.

Eye seeking, ears listening, smells in the air; on our senses we must rely,
For we knew if we made the smallest mistake someone could surely die.

I stared deep into our jungle home straining to see what the threat would be,
To lead them into the depth of fear; into a perilous pit of what you cannot see.

Was it the endless hours without sleep, or consuming vigilance each day?

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finally CPL JAMES D. DAVIS with an extended silence and at that time his squad sergeant from Vietnam, Bob von Almen called out "HE IS HERE, HE LIVES IN US"!

SGT von Almen then presented our regimental battle flag to Jimmy's family. "On behalf of the members of the 506th Airborne Infantry Regiment Association, please accept this Currahee Battle Flag as a symbol of your loved one's service to our regiment."

Glenn Shuman of Laverne OK read the poem

"Live Brother Live",

I sit here thinking about my brothers, both young and old,
you stood for us in distant lands, your stories yet untold.
You came from all around; North, South, East and West,
proved to those who challenged, you're the very best.
You returned to your home; back to family and friends
but deep within your soul; the war will never end.
You relive it at night; within the fog of your dream,
the memories, and pains of war, sometimes so extreme.
Here at home you can't forget, the brothers left behind,
memories of those men; plays always in your mind.
Questions invade your daily thoughts; even as you work,
if I had done things different, what if, always seems to lurk.
But those who did not return, no different than me and you,
what would our fallen brothers want and expect for us to do?
Live well my brother, live for me; for I am alive through you,
build great things and live for me, in everything you do.
Laugh, love and live your life, as the dear friend I knew,
for as long as you continue brother, I will continue too!

By Gary Gilliam

SGT Christiansen called the team to attention, the VFW honor team fired their 21 gun salute, as we held the salute through TAPS.



Individually each team member approached Jimmy's headstone, placed their quarter on the grave stone of our brother and then rendered a final salute to CPL James D. Davis.

The family thanked those who attended; as well as, those who sent letters to the family, shared thoughts and prayers, all of which were greatly appreciated.

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Jimmy's Family with the Charlie Company Memorial Team

The Charlie Company team was made up of Glenn Green Puxico MO, Rolland Christiansen Eldon MO, Glenn Shuman Lavern, OK, Leigh Freeman Omaha NE, Ken Pitetti Wichita KS, Bob Lister Jefferson OH, Frank Matsko Streator IL, Bob von Almen Alton IL, Ron Middlebrook Bartlett TN, Dave Simonds New Canaan CT, Jim Harris Cheyenne WY, Tom Weides Kearney NE, and Gary Gilliam Potosi MO.