

ROBERT BUTTRUM BIOGRAPHY

EARLY LIFE

Robert Buttrum was born in 1947 in Jasper, Georgia, where he worked at a carpet mill before the war had begun. He had just graduated high school when he was drafted, leaving him no choice but to face the unknown realities of the war at only 18 years old.

INVOLVEMENT IN THE WAR

The war had already been going on for quite some time when he was drafted in 1966, which was also the same year the highest number of soldiers were being drafted altogether. He was shipped to Fort Benning and Fort Polk for training, then to Delaware where they then sent them off to Vietnam. He was stationed there for a year, and then came back home in April of 1968. During his time at Vietnam, he was in the 1st battalion in the 18th infantry.

His work in Vietnam consisted of working machine gun detail, and at this point in time he was a private PFC. It was then that he realized he needed to make rank in order to do certain things. Within just a month or so, he became a Sergeant E5.

KEY EVENTS

A major aspect that affected Robert in Vietnam was Agent Orange. While out on the fields, chemicals were being put out as a defoliate, doubling as a use of chemical warfare at the same time. It wasn't until later on that numerous health problems were linked to these chemicals, with many healthcare and insurances providing proper help for soldiers affected by it.

Another major event that occurred while he was serving was the Tet Offensive, which was the attacks by Viet Cong and the North that took place throughout South Vietnam. While the goal was to cripple South Vietnam's and the United States' moral and tactical strategies, the North fell short and eventually lost control over the South. Although the US won, it deeply scarred the public's perspective of the war, and the belief that it was easier for the US than it seemed. There were thousands of casualties, and damage on both sides.

BACK HOME

After his time in Vietnam, he returned to the United States in '68, where he helped train incoming soldiers in Colorado at Fort Carson. Shortly after, he was directed to shift their training for combat duty to riot control, due to the increase and intensity of the Anti-war protests throughout the US. The National Guard was also involved and helped them, as they grew in size around this time of the war.

After he served his required 6 years, Robert returned to his home in Georgia, where he adjusted to his new life and became a hard working young man. He was also awarded the Bronze medal for his service. He also met his wife, Diane, where they now reside in Tuscaloosa, AL.