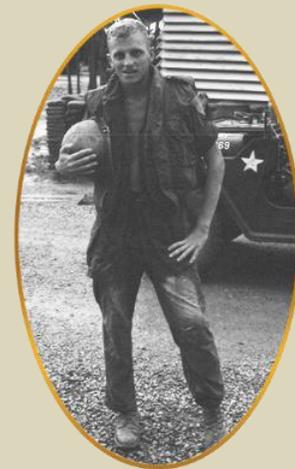


Rob Rottkamp

- *Interviewed by Kyle DeSantis, Joshua Consentino, Eamon McEnaney, Kim Cercena, Perry Verrino*
- *Date: July 28, 2020*
- *Documented by Nico Cercena*



Branch: Army

Rank: Specialist E-5

Years of Service: 1967 to 1969

Locations of Service: Vietnam

Medals: Congressional Soldiers Medal

Rob Rottkamp lived in Long Island, NY growing up. He believed that it was his duty to serve. He was drafted and deployed in August, 1967

When he was drafted, he was taken on a train from Penn station to Fort Bragg, North Carolina. When he got out of the train, it was over 100 degrees outside. Training was brutal under his Drill Sergeant, Sergeant Garcia, who was a Vietnam veteran. His daily training consisted of waking up at 3:00 and running 3-4 miles. Training was a breeze for Rob, as at the time he was in perfect health. To get in the mess hall you would have to crawl and climb over and under obstacles and pass other tests of physical conditioning. At the end of training, he had to pass one final test. It was to run a mile under 5 minutes with combat boots, throw a grenade, shoot a rifle and do tasks he practiced during training. He believes that things like the army and boy scouts gives you character.

His first time in service, he was stationed at Zion Vietnam and his job was to pull tanks out of battle. Being part of the Evac team led him to command a M88 retrieval tank. He saw a lot while retrieving tanks. During his service, Rob didn't fear death. He only feared brain damage. During his service in Zion, he saved a man's life for which he later he received the Congressional Soldiers Medal. He saved the man when he was incapacitated under a vehicle. When he saw the injured man, he took the crane, hooked it onto the vehicle and started to pull it up. When pulling, he went past the weight limit to save the guy's life.

The food while serving was terrible. He ate C rations, tankers stew and a lot of canned foods. The best food he had there was the spaghetti and meatballs. He lost about 80 pounds due to bad food and illness.

The best thing about staying there was some days you would be able to get Sundays off so he could go to church. Rob noted that “you only appreciate a thing when it is taken away from you.”

During the stay the best thing was the day when he would get the chance to drink a beer. In addition, he also kept a diary.

When they finished serving, people didn't like what they did in Vietnam and disrespected the Veterans. Some men committed suicide after the war due to pressure of the public who were opposed to the war.

When he returned from Vietnam, he earned a degree in mechanical engineering. Seven years ago, Rob joined the VFW Post 672 in Brewster. NY.

Fight for what you want, education is key.