

Ripcord: A Biography of Floyd Alexander

By Blake Davis

Floyd Alexander was born on October 29, 1949, in Jerseyville, Illinois. He graduated from Jersey Community High School in 1968, and enlisted in the Army in 1969, at the age of 19. Floyd decided to enlist, as he figured he would be drafted anyway.

Floyd went to Ft. Leonard Wood in Missouri for his basic training. He remembers basic training as a tremendous amount of exercising, and running, running and more running. He was then transferred to Fort Sill, Oklahoma before being sent to Vietnam for active duty. He served his country for eleven and half months in Vietnam during his 2 year service to the Army. He achieved the rank of Sp-4.

Floyd's nickname in Vietnam was the Illinois Ace. His job classification was Artillery 13 Alpha 10. The weapons he used were the 105 Howitzer and M-16 assault rifle.

Floyd was part of a specialized small team in the Vietnam War called LRRP's (Lurps). LRRP's stood for Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol. Their job was to complete highly dangerous special operation missions deep into enemy territory. Floyd was a forward observer in Vietnam, and he had to order bomb drops ahead of his unit.

While being part of LRRP's, they weren't able to eat in a mess hall or field kitchen. They had to eat individually canned, pre-cooked food called C-rations. Floyd would sleep on the ground most the time, leaning against a tree. He couldn't lay down when he slept; he would have drowned because of all the rain in the jungle.

Floyd had no free time during his stint in Vietnam. He was constantly on duty. He didn't get to celebrate any holidays, either, as he had to stay on duty at all times.

Floyd hated his time in Vietnam. When he returned to the United States, he did not get a very good reception. He recalled an incident in Texas with hippies calling him a "Baby Killer." Floyd felt some of the problems were caused by a liberal democratic media.

Floyd doesn't like to retell many stories from his time in Vietnam, but there is a book about his time there called "Ripcord". In this book, it tell the story of many brave men that served in Vietnam. It recalls the time the Floyd saved another man's life, by lying on top of him and playing dead, while Vietnamese soldiers executed several wounded men in that area. Even though Floyd was kicked in the head by that soldier, he didn't respond, and the soldier miraculously walked away. After it was clear, Floyd carried his injured friend to safety.

Floyd was awarded several medals from serving in Vietnam, including three bronze stars. Those medals include: the Vietnamese Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Air Medal, Bronze Star, Bronze Star with "V" device for valor, Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster for valor, Combat Gallantry Cross for valor (the North Vietnamese award equal to our Medal of Honor, the highest honor), Combat Infantry Badge, Screaming Eagle Medallion for valor, National Defense Ribbon, Expert Rifleman's Medal, 101st Airborne Division Merit Badge, Silver Star, and Commendation Medal. He donated these awards to Texas Tech University for their War Museum.

After his stint in the military was over, he returned to this area to work at Laclede Steel. He still resides in Jerseyville, with his wife Diane. He also has two married daughters, five grandchildren and 2 step-grandchildren.



FLOYD ALEXANDER
VIETNAM WAR

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THOSE
WHO
SERVE**

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