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Mrs. Michael Ackerfeld
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Dear Denise,

I heard with great sadness of the passing of your Michael, and I wanted to extend my condolences.

Earlier this week I received an e-mail from "Dutch" DeGroot letting us and all the other veterans of the 23rd MP Company know.

Over the last two decades my opportunities to meet with "Big Mike" were often limited to veterans' gatherings that involved our unit from Vietnam or the Americal Division Veterans' Association. There were always great stories, anecdotes and laughter late into the night. I vividly remember when DUTCH helped surprise Mike with the appearance of his MP patrol partner, Mike Casey, when one of the reunions was in Worcester, MASS... the joy of that reunion after more than two decades was something special to witness.

Here in Illinois I am a member of several veterans' service organizations (*although the Veterans of the Vietnam War is not one of them*) and I witness the great work done by those who are ADVOCATES for veterans' rights, veterans' benefits and veterans' healthcare. I know this was part of Mike's "calling" as a Service Officer (*you too I understand*) and I must admit that I have a special admiration for him and you in that role. It seems that veterans' advocates like your Michael are always up against great odds in helping those less fortunate, but they are tireless in the pursuit of fairness for those who have served this nation and now needs its assistance. A remembrance of that role in Mike's life is a GREAT LEGACY for you and your children to remember and cherish. Having a true sense of service helping others is not something easily learned these days, but once felt it can make all the difference in our lives.

On this past Memorial Day I remembered Mike along with others with whom I served or knew before and during my military service in Vietnam. In the town I raised my family in we have a large memorial with valiant war dead dating back to the Civil War. I stop there on days other than Memorial Day, because the Vietnam tablet with its twenty-two names include fellows I went to school with, attended Scout camp with knew through their siblings. I often find myself at moments like that thinking of others who lived elsewhere that I knew. Your Mike will now join my personal "Band of Brothers" for remembrance sake.

RIP, "Big Mike..." or perhaps to better capture the spirit of Mike, it would be better said, "Le Chaim!"

Yours in Veterans' Service,

Brian J. Mulcrone
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