



Judson M. Ray was born in June 1947 and raised in Clayton, a small town in rural North Carolina. In November 1965, he volunteered for the US Army. Following training, his unit, comprising approximately 4,000 young men, was transported to Vietnam in a Troop carrier ship. During his deployment he was in six major battles, with the largest one occurring on November 21st, 1966.

After serving nearly three years, Mr. Ray was discharged from the US Army on August 14th, 1968. Mr. Ray stated that one thing he will never forget is the many heroic and unselfish acts performed by average ordinary men. In April 1980, Mr. Ray joined the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). He was the first Agent in the nation and the FBI to be admitted as an expert witness in the area of Criminal Investigative Analysis to the Federal, State and Military Courts. Agent Ray retired from the FBI in 2004 and now devotes much of his time to travel, reading and limited consultative service in the area of Criminal Justice.

I was born on June 27, 1947 and was raised in a small town in rural North Carolina; the name of the town is Clayton. During the mid to late 1800's it was one of the richest towns in the country largely due to the production of cotton, tobacco and timber.

My dear mother bore my father twelve children: nine (9) boys and three (3) girls. I was the seventh child. Sadly, all, but myself and my baby brother are deceased. All died before the age of 60, mostly from lung cancer and heart conditions. My mother died from heart problems at 47 and my dad died at 57 from a stroke. I was only 13 when my mother passed away. We grew up as tenant farmers (sharecropping) on various rich white men's farms.

Like all Black families during that time, we could barely make ends meet. At the end of harvest season my daddy would always find himself still in debt to the farm owner. We never owned a home and for the most part my siblings and I slept three to the bed. I never knew that there was such a thing as a toothbrush until I joined the army. I went to public schools in



Johnston County, North Carolina. I started school in 1953; one year before the Supreme Court's decision that outlawed segregated schools in the United States. I was forced to continue in a segregated school system for 12 years because North Carolina did not want to integrate their schools, which would have allowed Black and White kids to go to school together. Obviously the Black schools in such a system suffered tremendously from lack of resources; consequently, we ended up with a less than quality education. Thank God many were able to overcome that deficit.

I volunteered for the US Army in November 1965. I joined because there were no jobs and I did not have money to attend college. I had always been very active in school; I played basketball and baseball, so I was fairly well conditioned. However, nothing could prepare you for the disciplinary measures and expectations. Many of my fellow army buddies were not able to complete the rigorous basic training. The conditions were very regimented; you were told when to go to bed, when to get up, when to eat, when to go to the bathroom, etc. It was awful but all of that training and discipline paid off once we were on the battlefield.

I was sent to Fort Jackson, South Carolina for three weeks for induction into the Army. Following induction I was then sent to Fort Hood, Texas where I began three weeks of basic training. Basic training follows a military doctrine designed to break down the individual person and re-make him into a human that obeys commands without question or reservation and is willing to lay down his life for his country. It is during basic training that the soldier learns how to march, how to be a gentleman, how to look out for your buddy, how to shoot pistols, shotguns and rifles, how to make his bed and how to keep everything clean within his control, how to respect the opposite sex and generally how to become a productive member of a team that will depend on each other in difficult situations.

After completing basic training, I was sent to Fort Meade, Maryland, where I received my Advanced Infantry Training (AIT). During AIT it was determined if we were to be assigned as basic foot soldiers, truck drivers, cooks, tank drivers, medics, etc.; I was selected to become a tank driver.



My only overseas assignment was to South East Asia in the country of Vietnam. While there, I was engaged in Laos, Cambodia and Thailand. Following AIT, we prepared to be deployed to Vietnam. It took us 28 days to voyage across the Pacific Ocean. We landed on August 5th, 1966 in a place called VungTau, which is on the coast of Vietnam. Upon arrival we drove our tanks off the ship and into the shallow waters of the coastline. We did not make contact with the enemy during our coming ashore.

I was in six (6) major battles while serving in Vietnam. The largest one occurred on November 21st, 1966. I was part of a convoy that was escorting about 80 vehicles carrying materials and equipment to our base camp from the depot in Long Bin; a distance of about 40 miles. We only had about 40 men escorting the cargo when two battalions of North Vietnamese combatants ambushed our convoy. They numbered about 300 to our 40, but we had superior firepower and with the help of the Air Force, managed to beat them back. Civilians traveling on the road that day were caught in the ambush and many of them were killed as a result of our exchanging fire with the enemy. We managed to kill about 100 enemy combatants, but we lost four of our men. I got a small nick to the corner of my left eye during the fight, but did not require stitches or hospitalization. The only other time I required medical treatment while in Vietnam was due to developing Dinghy fever, which resulted in my being hospitalized for about six days.

I lost my very best friend, Ray Johnson, who was killed in that attack on the night of November 22nd, 1966. Johnson, along with myself, the platoon sergeant, and three other guys were sent out to serve as early warning to ensure that the enemy did not come back and try to attack the convoy again. At about 1:30 AM, a small squad of North Vietnamese combatants made contact with us and we exchanged fire with them. When we withdrew, Johnson did not follow. About five minutes later, he staggered into the position where I had taken cover. Within moments he died there on the spot. I was able to contact his mother years later to tell her his last words. I will never forget him.

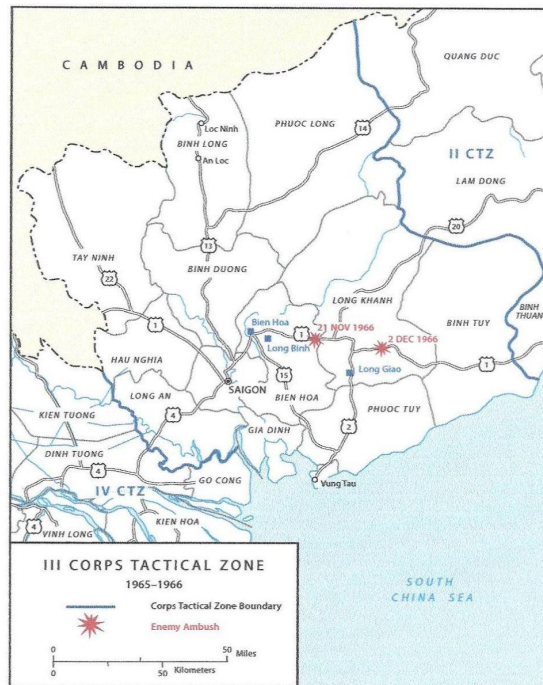


I was discharged from the Active US Army on August 14th, 1968, after serving nearly three years in the Army. During my service with the United States Army, I received the following awards and citation: [1] The National Defense Service Medal with Bronze Star; [2] Republic of Vietnam campaign medal with devise, 1960; [3] Combat Infantry Badge (1st award); [4] 1C/C bar; [5] sharpshooter (rifle M-14); [6] Expert (rifle M-16).

I suffer from a degree of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and I have declining heart disease that can be attributed to Agent Orange. Of course; when young men are sent off to fight in defense of their country, nothing is able to get in the way of their feelings that they are doing the right thing. However, as they grow older, they realize that sometimes the country makes mistakes, especially in the area of geopolitics.

I consider myself a patriot and have always believed that service to one's country and community were paramount. I have had nearly 60 years to ponder our involvement in Vietnam. I have concluded that our decision to go to war in Vietnam was a mistake. It also troubles me that we as Americans have never repaid the Vietnamese people for all the suffering that they had to endure. Our veterans are provided medical assistance and disability income for what Agent Orange did to many of us, but the sheer number of Vietnamese victimized by Agent Orange may never be determined. I can never forget looking into the eyes of dead combatants and civilians who died in a war that should never have happened.

For the past thirty years on Memorial Day and Veterans Day, I have attended a wreath laying ceremony at the "Wall" in Washington DC to honor the brave men that I fought alongside who were killed during the war.


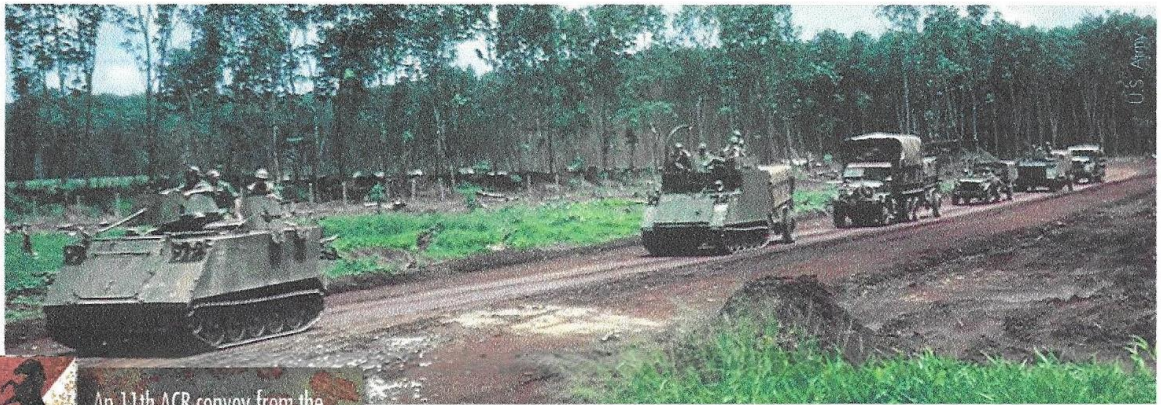


Above: An M113 armored cavalry assault vehicle (ACAV) from the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) prepares to escort a truck convoy.

Below: M113 ACAVs and an M48A3 Patton tank form a defensive perimeter.



An M132 armored flamethrower in action.



An 11th ACR convoy from the Blackhorse base passes a row of rubber trees.

Vietnamese M113. Concluding that the site was on "good solid ground," Cobb recommended, and Seaman ac-

clear missions and at night mounted ambush patrols to deter enemy action. Meanwhile, the 2d Squadron

