



**DANIEL E. EVANS**  
**E-4 AIRBORNE – U.S. ARMY**  
**VIETNAM WAR**

At age 17, Daniel E. Evans, son of John and Loretta Evans entered the U.S. Army where he served his basic training at Fort Knox, Kentucky before advancing to AIT engineer training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. He then signed up for U.S. Army Airborne training and entered the 1st Air Cav on August 30, 1965 at Fort Benning, Alabama. Two days later he received a call from his brother who told him “...whatever you do don’t sign up for Airborne, they’re shipping them out left and right for Vietnam...” (this warning came 2 days too late). By September 30, 1965 he was landing in a troop carrier on the beach outside Qui Nhon, Vietnam. He relates that the first order he got upon landing was “.....You’re Home, Dig a Hole.....” and by 10 p.m. that night they were drawing enemy fire. He had just turned 18 years old on the way to Vietnam.

Evans, and several of the men he had trained with, went to Vietnam as a tight knit group of young men who were sure they were invincible. Shortly after arriving at the war front he found himself working his way through the mountainsides while dodging enemy fire. In one firefight the company’s radio operator was hit and seriously wounded. His commanding officer grabbed the radio equipment and threw it at him and said “.....son, you’re now the RTO.....call in fire support...” He learned on the fly how to operate the equipment and earned the “handle” of

“Left Tackle 36 India”. It was soon apparent to Evans that the radio operator was a prime target of enemy fire.

He remembers many of the battles as though it was yesterday.....memories that are like the events happened only yesterday. PTS (Post Traumatic Stress) and wounds from poisoned bungee sticks, give Dan Evans constant reminders of his service days. As we discussed the time he spent in Vietnam, Evans told me about the two people who stand out in his mind yet today as being highly influential during his stint in Vietnam. One was 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. East who was always excited to ‘blow stuff up’. If there were ordinances set up to explode and they weren’t set off by incoming enemy, then 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt East was all too happy to go out and blow them up himself. One of the other people he shipped overseas with was Platoon Sgt Jimmy Lynn Brooks of Alabama. Jimmy Lynn always had a litany of jokes to lift the spirits of the other men. Dan Evans remembers the day that Jimmy Lynn was killed as one of the days he will never forget. He went on to reiterate that life in “Happy Valley” was anything but happy. Happy Valley is located in the Bong Son Mountains (Central Highlands of Binh Dinh Province). The **Battle of Bồng Sơn** was the second most major battle for the US 1st Cavalry Division, an airmobile unit of divisional strength, during the Vietnam War. The battle was part of **Operation Masher**, also known as Operation Whitewing. Jimmy Lynn Brooks is forever etched in Dan Evan’s memory.

Dan Evans was one of 4 brothers – Daniel, John Jr., Ward and Paul. Daniel and Ward served in Vietnam - John and brother Paul served elsewhere during the Vietnam War Era. In April of this year, Daniel was awarded (long overdue) with the Purple Heart Medal. He will be presented with the Purple Heart for war related injuries by his brother Ward Evans during the Mercer Memorial Day 500 awards ceremony.

Today, Daniel Evans and his wife Karen (Warrick) live in Hermitage. They are parents of Kimberly Baker, Melissa Boyle and Aaron (Jodi) Evans. Daniel also has a daughter Denise and a son Daniel. The Evans’ also have 7 grandchildren.