

REMEMBERING JIM MORRISSEY

By Howard Goldstein

It was December, 1968, and the holiday season was quickly approaching. The packages that were sent early as to not arrive late for Xmas were increasing in number each day. The men were looking forward to the upcoming festivities and the anticipated holiday cease fire.

My platoon was in the field and not scheduled to return to base camp until December 24th. Although enemy action was non existent this time, the men still needed to keep their attention on our mission and allow the passing days leading up to the holidays to go by with the same readiness and resolve as if it were any other time of the year.

Then word came out to us that each our platoon was to send two men to the USO Xmas show w/ Bob Hope and Ann Margaret. What a distraction from our daily routine. Who would go? When would they leave the field to get ready? When would they return? The choice of which two men would go to the show was very difficult. With four squads to be represented and only two picks to be made, it was hard to satisfy all. As my memory had faded a bit, I seem to remember that the decision was made that the platoon would vote on one of the picks, majority rule, and that I would chose the second as the Platoon Leader's pick.



This plan would allow for the entire platoon to vote one man the honor of representing them all. A popularity contest if you will, but all for one and one for all. The second man to be chosen by me was to be a sort of acknowledgement of my appreciation for the work and commitment to our team.

I can not remember the name of the platoons pick, but I will never forget the name of my pick. You see, James Joseph Morrissey, a mild mannered, red headed, all American boy from Pennsylvania, and had been KIA on 29 Dec.'68 Jim left the field on 22 Dec. and returned to base camp on 26 Dec. His stories of the show and recollections of the experience as told to the rest of the men made them feel as if they were all at the show. Jim brought the pleasure of a short time away from the war home to the men and lifted their spirits a bit.



This story is a small token of my appreciation of Jim's service to our platoon, and friendship to many as well as me. I could not have picked another man as fine as Jim.

I think of Jim daily, as I do another fallen brother, John Edgar Marason, who was killed in action on December 2nd, 1968. Both of these men died in separate ambushes of their Armored Personnel Carriers while driving to bridge locations for nightly support.

This year, 2008, will be the 40th anniversary of their deaths, but I prefer to celebrate their passion for living.

Thank you both for your service and the ultimate sacrifice made for your family and country.



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