



**SPECIALIST MICHAEL DAVID DEAL
3RD SQUAD, 1ST PLATOON, COMPANY B, 1ST BATTALION (M) 50TH INFANTRY
1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE)
SEPTEMBER 1967 - FEBRUARY 1968**

Michael Deal, age 65, of Pomeroy, Iowa died March 29, 2013 at the VA Hospital in Des Moines, Iowa.

Michael David Deal was born August 20, 1947 in Indiana the son of William and Coral Deal. He graduated from Ben Davis High School. From there he served in the Army from 1966 to 1968. Upon which time he moved to Iowa.

In June of 1970, he married Valerie Marlatt. To this union were two children, Crimson and John. He graduated from Buena Vista College with a teaching degree in History.

Michael enjoyed metal detecting, fishing, and hunting with his "Indy boys." He was an avid NASCAR fan. In his spare time, he enjoyed spending time at Fort Dodge Coin and Stamp.

Those left to cherish his memory include his wife, Valerie of Pomeroy, Iowa; daughters: Crimson of Pomeroy and Shana of Pomeroy; son, John of Early; six grandchildren; one great grandson; brother, Billy Deal of Indiana; several step brothers and sisters; nieces; nephews; extended family and friends.

Michael was preceded in death by his parents, William and Coral; one sister, Sheri and one step sister.

Obituary & Photo is from The Fratzke & Jensen Funeral Home



THE 50TH INFANTRY REMEMBERS



COMBAT INFANTRY BADGE

Burial:
[Newell Cemetery](#)
Newell
Buena Vista County
Iowa, USA



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The following message was received on Veterans Day, 2013:

"Mike Deal and my husband, John (Jack) Brodigan, were friends during basic training and "boat people" in 1967. They reconnected here in Iowa for the past several years with phone calls and visits to each others homes. Mike's death was difficult for Jack to say the least. The circumstances of Mike's death are unbelievable.

Alinda Brodigan"

Register Exclusive: Veteran died after alarms were shut off

Nurse testifies he disconnected equipment monitoring blood oxygen levels of Vietnam veteran Michael Deal.

Written by [Clark Kauffman](#) For the Des Moines Register.

An Iowa veteran died at a Des Moines hospital in March after a nurse deliberately shut off the alarms used to monitor patients' conditions, newly disclosed state records show.

Michael Deal, a 65-year-old Army veteran from Spirit Lake, died March 29 at the Veterans' Administration Central Iowa Healthcare System.

Bernard Nesbit, a registered nurse in the hospital's telemetry unit where patients are kept for continuous monitoring, was subsequently fired for having turned off an array of alarms that were hooked up to all of the patients in that unit.

At a recent public hearing dealing with Nesbit's request for unemployment benefits, the hospital's human resources specialist, Greg Smith, testified that due to unspecified past disciplinary issues, Nesbit had been working on a "last chance agreement" with the hospital when the incident took place.

He said an internal investigation showed Nesbit had turned off the alarms, one of which was designed to alert nurses to any drop in the patients' blood-oxygen levels.

"Did anybody die because he had an alarm turned off?" Administrative Law Judge Teresa Hillary asked Smith.

"We did have a patient death who passed away that night," Smith testified. "A review by the respiratory therapist indicated that the oxygen levels in his blood had continued to drop through the night. We don't know that intervention would have made a difference."

During the hearing, Hillary asked Nesbit if he had shut off the alarms.

"I very well could have," he testified.

Later, in response to the same question, he was more definitive: "Sure," he testified. "Yes." He said the alarms were always going off, even if the patients weren't in distress.

One of the exhibits in the unemployment case is an email from a respiratory therapist, Jason Swenson, sent to others at the hospital five days after Deal died.

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In the email, Swenson said there were “numerous interventions” that could have prevented the death had he or a physician been aware of the drop in blood-oxygen levels.

“I feel this patient’s outcome would have been completely avoided with these interventions,” Swenson wrote.

Deal’s relatives, some of whom live in the Spirit Lake area, declined to comment on the matter, but the family’s lawyer said they learned of the issue with the alarm several months after Deal died.

Under federal regulations, Veterans Administration hospitals are required to inform families when a patient dies due to an “adverse event.”

Deal had served with the Army’s 50th Infantry, 1st Cavalry Division, between September 1967 and February 1968.

“My understanding is that he was drafted the day after he graduated from high school,” said attorney Robert Johnson.

“Michael was totally disabled as a result of service to his country in Vietnam. He was a soldier. He was injured by shrapnel from exploding land mines during combat.”

Deal grew up in Indiana, and moved to Iowa after his discharge from the Army. He graduated from Buena Vista College in Storm Lake with a teaching degree in history. His hobbies included fishing, hunting and NASCAR.

In his email to colleagues at the hospital, respiratory therapist Swenson described the actions he and a colleague, Daryle Jager, took the night Deal died:

“We found the patient unresponsive, ashen, pale, cyanotic and unresponsive. ... Daryle check(ed) for a pulse as we began calling out to the RNs, requesting a Code Blue be called. ...

“There was a 5-10 minute delay in the code not being called due to reasons I am not sure of, but we called out several times, ‘Is the code being called?’ ”

He said that he later checked the patient monitors and it appeared that all of the alarms in the unit had been shut off for roughly three hours. During that time, Deal’s blood-oxygen level dropped “slowly” from a normal level in the 90s to the 30s — a dangerously low level — for 45 minutes before he and Jager realized what had happened.

The morning after the incident, registered nurse Jane Jager, wrote to her colleagues: “It is unfortunate we had another Code Blue (again!) right after shift change last night. ...

“It was apparent that all the alarms were turned off on occupied rooms and the alarms on the empty rooms were all on. ... We might need further discussion on these findings for better (patient) care.”

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Nesbit had worked for the Veterans' Administration Central Iowa Healthcare System since September 2005. The hospital has 275 beds, about half of which are dedicated to long-term care, similar to a nursing home.

During the 70-minute unemployment hearing, Nesbit and the judge repeatedly clashed, with Hillary frequently interrupting Nesbit and cutting off both his answers to questions as well as the questions he posed to Smith, the hospital executive.

At one point, Hillary told Nesbit to "shut up" and she seemed to anticipate, and block, many of his questions before they were posed.

"Has it been your experience —," Nesbit tried to ask Smith.

"Nope," Hillary interjected. "Move on."

"And so I'm clear, the reason —," Nesbit later started.

"Asked and answered," Hillary said. "I'm the decision-maker. ... I'm really clear on the questions that have been asked and answered."

In defending his actions, Nesbit testified, "There was absolutely nothing wrong with this guy until —."

"Until he died, you mean," Hillary interjected.

At the hearing, Hillary asked Smith whether, in the seven months since the incident, the hospital had reported Nesbit's actions to the state licensing board for nurses.

"No, we have not," he said. "We plan on it. We're just working through how that's to be done."

"What do you have to work through?" Hillary asked.

"There's a lengthy process," Smith said. "It has to go up to the central office in the VA for approval to be reported to the state licensing board, and we're not sure how that process works."

In a decision made public Oct. 23, Hillary denied Nesbit's request for unemployment benefits, saying the evidence was "overwhelming" that he had shut off the patient alarms.

Nesbit declined to comment on the case when contacted by The Des Moines Register.

Dwayne Rider, public affairs officer for the hospital, did not respond when asked whether the hospital ever reported the incident to the state board that oversees Nesbit's nursing license.