

My Choices for Memorial Day 2022 Remembrance

By John K. Roberts

I did not make these choices of four casualties out of 9 KIA's that I served with in Vietnam to be self-serving. There is a reason I chose them.



George McClintic was in the same training company as I in boot camp. We graduated and went to ITR (Infantry Training Recruit) together. We arrived at Pendleton, CA for staging and advanced training at the same time. We flew to Okinawa and then to DaNang, South Vietnam together where we were assigned to different squads in the same platoon. We served in Quang Nam Province the first month and a half, running patrols side by side and were medevac'd together (*my first time*) on the same helicopter to our rear area at LZ Baldy (*south of DaNang*). We talked during the evening, mostly about him looking forward to going home and marrying his high school sweetheart in Pittsburgh, PA.

George was a nice and decent guy who died that night, during the morning of October 14, 1969 of malaria in the hospital bed next to me.



Cyril (Cy) Townley was also in a different squad in my platoon but had arrived in Vietnam 8 months prior to my arrival. We were acquaintances but not what I'd consider friends. We spent every day within a stone's throw of each other but rarely had a reason to speak. We were attacked one night and were only a few yards apart when an enemy mortar fell into his squad killing two of its Marines and badly injuring Cy. In the middle of the battle the

Lieutenant came to me and said if we could get him out, he might be saved. He told me to take two of my men and secure a place for a helicopter to land. We would be out in the open and setting ducks under the flares being launched over us and I considered it a suicide mission but didn't think twice about whether to do it or not. I placed my men and took the most exposed position to cover the helicopter. The mission was accomplished and we were not attacked but stayed in our positions the rest of the night.

Cy, from New York City, died during the flight to the hospital on November 13, 1969.



Daniel Jurgensen came to my squad as a replacement for one of my fire team members. He had been in Vietnam a month longer than me and had come down from a unit up north. We became friends quickly and he was a good Marine besides being a good guy. When I was shot, he was the first to come to me and provide covering fire. He took my place as point man after I was put on a medevac'd.

David, from Waterloo, Iowa was killed a few minutes after seeing me safely aboard the helicopter on November 14, 1969.



Howard Burns was our Corpsman, easy to like and a genuine nice guy. He had arrived in Vietnam a month before, was conscientious and always willing to help. When I was wounded and under fire, Howard was the first to arrive, treating my wounds to keep me from bleeding to death while facing death himself. When the Lieutenant took my hand grenades and threw them into the bunker a few feet away, Howard lay over me to protect me from further injuries.

After I was safely on the medivac and Daniel Jurgensen was wounded, Howard, from Adrian, MI came to Jurgensen's aid as he had done for me. Howard died while treating Daniel Jurgensen on November 14, 1969.

These four were my friends and brothers until the ends of their lives.

This year for Memorial Day, Chapel Hill member John Roberts conceived of an idea that we are putting into practice to honor the memories of those brave men and women who gave their lives in service to our country, as well as their families and friends like you.

*Throughout the morning on **May 29**, we'll have two special display areas in the lobby for those who sacrificed their lives in past wars as well as one for those who have served in past wars and have since died.*

Here's how it will work: we'll have two separate forms...one for loved ones who died in past wars, and one for loved ones who served in past wars and have since died. You pick up or download a form and fill it out; include the name, a photo (if you have one available), military branch/rank/war or conflict/casualty date or date of passing. Then return the form to us and we'll add it to the display on May 29.

Learn how to participate by visiting www.chapelhillpc.org/memorialday.