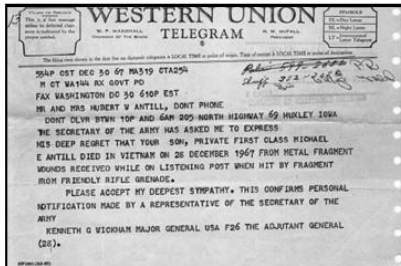


Mike Antill
Private First Class
4th Battalion, 9th Infantry
U.S. Army
Tay Ninh Province, Vietnam
Killed in Action, December 28, 1967



By Boyd Antill

My brother Mike started his service in Vietnam on December 9, 1967. When he went to get on the Greyhound bus in Ames to go to Camp, protesters were there. They were lying down in front of the tires to try to keep the bus from going. My dad was really upset about that. I mean, these guys were going to go no matter what. There was a short delay that was not good, and not relevant. But that's just the way the protesters were back in the sixties.

Mike enlisted in late summer, early fall of '66. He went through Basic in Fort Polk, Louisiana. He was going to get drafted, so he enlisted. He got malaria down there in Fort Polk. Imagine that in the United States! He lost about 30 pounds. But he looked good when he came back. He was engaged to Sherry, a gal from Illinois. He met her up in Minnesota, fishing. We went fishing at Lake Winnie all the time. They were going to get married, but that never happened. He was only over there about two weeks. He was out on a listening post trying to direct fire in because the enemy was coming. He was out there in no man's land and a shell fell short and got him. He was one of those in that statistic that weren't there long. This was in Tay Ninh Province.

When we got word, I was still in college and

working at the store in the afternoons up in Ames, for Hap's. It was probably about 4 or 5 o'clock. Mom was there after getting off her job at Iowa State. Then these two service men came to the shop door and came in. It's just like they say in the movies, when you see them you know it's not good. They had stopped at the house first in Huxley and Grandma Julie was there, Dad's mom, by herself. She had to get the information by herself, which wasn't good. But they told us she was okay when they left. And she was. She was a pretty tough old bird. That's how they do it, just drive up and come in and tell you, and then they're gone. He was killed December 28, 1967. Three days after Christmas.

He didn't have any special training for this. They just send somebody out. It was a job. It was your time to go out, it was your turn to go out to the listening post. They just sent somebody out to see if anybody's coming. And you're just sitting out there in the bushes by yourself. There might be somebody else fifty yards away, but you're out there on your own. He had a radio to guide the fire. He was guiding fire in and something fell short. They said he died instantly. Merv Ihle could have told you. He went down and picked the body up in Des Moines when it came in with the funeral director. It was great that he went down there. Good friend of Dad's. And us. Good customer back in the day, Ihle Implements.

That automatically took me out of serving. I was the sole surviving son, so that took me off the draft boards. I didn't need to be the sole surviving

son. I felt that maybe I should have been over there and not him. You never know. What is, is.

I don't even remember what the two guys who brought the news looked like. You don't remember that. They were there for a half hour, then they were gone.

My parents took it very badly. They took it really rough. Mom was probably a little better than Dad, but Dad was just a basket case after that. Everything either happened before Mike was killed, or everything happened after Mike was killed. That was the defining line. And up at work after that I took care of the store. Everything he talked about was Mike. Even with all the customers who all knew Mike. Because Mike had worked at the store too, for ten years. It got to me. Pretty heavy, you know? It's all Mike, Mike, Mike. That's my brother, but I'm still here. Dad never got over it. Everybody tried to help out, all his friends and customers. '68 was a tough year. Then we got into racing, so Dad had something to do. It was fun, it was a distraction. We'd gone up to Minnesota fishing all the time to this resort on Big Winnie, and people from there even came down for the funeral. A lot of people from up there came down because Mike would go out on the launch with them. Dad would go up all summer, and I'd take care of the store. I'd send customers up every week. I'd send a different customer up to go fishing with him, and that was good. So he had a lot of fun up there for a lot of years.

His friends were a couple of years older, so I didn't run around with them. Mike had a lot of fun in school. He was a great drummer. He should have won the Bill Reilly contest on TV. There were four of them. Mike was on the drums. They had a trumpet player, a trombone, it was like a swing band. They got second. I thought they should have gotten first myself. I'm not prejudiced, but boy he could play the drums! Larry Hansen on the trumpet, probably Jerry

Persons on sax, and I don't know who was on the trombone. Maybe Kent Thompson.

One other story, I'm sitting at home here about four or five years ago. There's a knock on the door and this guy comes in and he looks familiar. We always played pool at Iowa State when we were going to college. Mike was down there, then two years later I was down there shooting pool. This guy comes in and says who he is, and he says, "I've got your brother's pool cue here." I said, "Really? How'd you get that?" He says, "He owed me 25 bucks from shooting pool, and didn't have it at the time, and he told me to hold onto his pool cue." Then he went to Vietnam. And this guy had been to Vietnam too. Not in the same place as Mike. But he came back, and lived in Des Moines or Ankeny, and he just had a wild hair and looked me up.

They had a big deal up at Iowa State where everybody that went to Iowa State who was killed in a war was put in the Memorial Union on the walls. They finally put the Vietnam people on there. So they had a big thing there that we went to. All the names of people that were killed in Vietnam that went to Iowa State.

We didn't keep in touch with his fiancée. I knew her folks and her brother. I'd fish with them sometimes. I think the folks notified her.



**Mike Antill
Bronze Star
Certificate**



**Iowa State
Vietnam Memorial
Ceremony for
Mike Antill**