

CHRISTOPHER GEORGE MORBITZER

Class 33A-67

is honored on Panel 3W, Row 134 of
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Full Name: CHRISTOPHER GEO MORBITZER
Wall Name: CHRISTOPHER G MORBITZER
Date of Birth: 6/19/1947
Date of Casualty: 8/19/1971
Home of Record: PETERSBURG
County of Record: CITY OF PETERSBURG
State: VA
Branch of Service: ARMY
Rank: CAPT
Casualty Country: SOUTH VIETNAM
Casualty Province: DINH TUONG



CPT Morbitzer was killed in action while serving with Advisory Team #66, Military Assistance Command Vietnam.

I Think Often of You, Friend

Even though I am balding, graying and my knees are bad now, I still see you as a brave, young American warrior hero.

Posted by: Bob Blair

Relationship: Fellow MAT Team Leader

March 16, 2006



MY FRIEND CHRIS

My good friend Chris Morbitzer and I arrived in Vietnam on the same day in January of 1971. We drew our jungle fatigues, field gear and weapons, went through in-processing as roommates and then to the MAT advisor school at Di An together. We were both artillerymen, veterans of European tours, paratroopers, had commanded batteries and were graduates of the Artillery Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill, now, surprisingly, about to be assigned to infantry officer slots as Mobile Advisory Training Team leaders. We were both married to the loves of our lives. He was married to a beautiful girl he had met in Germany. He showed me her photo. I was married to my high school sweetheart. I showed him her photo. We were both captains by then and were finally slated for teams in the Mekong delta. We talked a lot during our brief few weeks together before going on to our final assignments. He thought he might like to make a career in the Army or maybe go back to school after Vietnam to follow in his father's footsteps as a Petersburg, Virginia physician. We both loved sports cars. He had owned a British roadster and I was a Corvette man. We traded our "Booney" hats as his was too small and mine was too large...he had a big head. I still have Chris's hat. Looking back, it seems a very short time to have become best friends but soldiers are sometimes like that.

Chris went to Dinh Tuong province while I was assigned to Keim Giang. We both lived in small hamlets with a platoon of government militia called Popular Forces and advised them on the best ways to maintain security. Our five man teams consisted of a lieutenant assistant team leader, and senior non-commissioned officers in heavy weapons, light weapons and medical advisory slots and we captains as team leaders. By day we helped build market places, rice mills and clinics, shook hands, spoke our best Vietnamese and did "marketing and PR". Our daytime activities caused the most problems for the VC and it was obvious in 1971 that we were winning that game in the Mekong delta. By night we did our best to harass or kill as many VC as possible in night ambushes and airmobile operations. We were on our own often many miles from higher headquarters and other Americans. MAT teams were notorious weapons collectors and often had a vast arsenal of the small arms and mortars of the world. Our main weapon, and the one that made us the most formidable was the PRC-25 radio. With that radio we could call down incredible violence from the sky in the form of artillery or close air support from choppers, prop fighters or even flights of F-4's with a variety of ordinance including napalm. It was rare that the VC would attempt to take us on head to head preferring instead to do hit and runs, ambushes or mines and booby traps.

On August 19, 1971 Chris opened the door of a large metal shipping (CONEX) container at his team...probably something he had done a hundred times before. Chris did not know that the door had been booby trapped by the enemy and he was killed instantly in the resulting explosion. He was just 24 years old. One of Chris's NCOs, SFC Jerome A. Browder of Knoxville, Tennessee, was also killed in the blast. I was devastated when I heard the news days later. I said a prayer for Chris that day and have thought of him nearly every day since then. When I think of him, he is still a handsome young warrior hero while I'm an aging, fat, bald guy when I look in the mirror.

His wife still lives in Virginia. So great was their love that she has not remarried to this day. He was a good guy and I still miss him.

I have visited my friend Chris at West Panel 3 on the Memorial several times and the feeling is always the same. It is a sad, melancholy calmness and I feel that I am in the presence of good friends and real heroes. Chris is not the only one I visit there and I always feel good after the visits. There is no politics associated with the wall for me and I am lucky that I fully believed in what I was doing and actually enjoyed it. No nightmares interrupt my sleep, I hear no screams, I have no regrets and I'm thankful for that.

I do sometimes wonder how things turn out like they do. There were several times during my tour when that if very minor things had not happened or maybe had happened, my name would also have been on that panel with Chris's. I don't spend much time thinking about the whys of that.....except when I visit the wall. It is a good and peaceful thing.

RIP Buddy

RCB

Robert Blair – posted on the yahoo group site November 11, 2009