

DEAN RUSSELL ORN

Class 46A-67

is honored on Panel 29W, Row 13 of
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Full Name: DEAN RUSSELL ORN
Wall Name: DEAN R ORN
Date of Birth: 1/17/1946
Date of Casualty: 3/11/1969
Home of Record: NAPPANEE
County of Record: ELKHART COUNTY
State: IN
Branch of Service: ARMY
Rank: 1LT
Casualty Country: SOUTH VIETNAM
Casualty Province: QUANG NGAI



1LT Orn served with Headquarters and Service Battery, 6th Battalion, 11th Artillery, Americal Division. He was killed in action while serving as a Forward Observer with Company C, 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry, 11th Infantry Brigade.

Good Times at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky

Dean and I were at Ft. Campbell, KY together. The Army was in the process of re-activating the 6th Infantry Division. When that project was scrapped after 6 mos., we were all transferred to the Basic Training Brigade at Ft. Campbell. Little by little, most people came down on orders to Vietnam. I can still remember the good times Dean and I had, running around Post and chasing women in his little red sports car. Then in March, 1969, I heard he had been killed in Vietnam. I don't think I was sober for a week trying to cope with the loss. He was a great guy and a lot of fun. So long, Dean!!

Posted by: Robert L. Duerler
Relationship: We served together
April 28, 2001

We served together

Dean replaced me as the Artillery Forward Observer for C 4/21 Infantry. He was a classmate of mine at Artillery Officer Candidate School, Ft Sill, Okla.

Posted by: Ed Mihalacki
Relationship: We served together
September 27, 2007

Lost and Found

Dean, I, and Marty Martinez went to Basic Training at Ft. Campbell, KY back in the 1965-66 time frame. It was a cold cycle that winter, complete with snow and freezing rain that loaded up our eyelashes while marching or doing PT, but the warmth of our mutual friendship overcame the obstacles as we transitioned from civilians into soldiers.

We then were assigned to a Leadership Preparation Course at Ft. Lewis, WA, prior to AIT. Our friendship continued to grow amidst the tall pines of the Ft. Lewis rain forest as we learned the tools of our trade and small unit tactics.

After AIT, we were tight. It was unsettling to split up for three different OSC programs across the country. I went off to Infantry OCS at Ft. Benning, Dean to Artillery at Ft. Sill. After we were commissioned, each of us served for a time in the states before shipping out to Viet Nam, settling into our craft. Assigned to steamy III Corps in Viet Nam, I still had no idea where either Dean or Marty could be until one day out of the blue, Marty walked into my office/hooch in Tay Ninh. Somehow he had found me among the 500,000 troops in country. After the mutual excitement of our mini-reunion, Marty told me that Dean had been killed while serving as an artillery forward observer attached to an infantry company. I felt as though a truckload of concrete blocks had been dumped on me. I did not know until this very night when I found Dean's listing on the Virtual Wall that he died on 11 Mar 69, the same day I arrived in Viet Nam.

Dean, you're a good man. I've thought fondly about you for all these intervening years, especially the emotional "anniversaries" we all carry around inside. Why it was you rather than me, I'll never know, but as long as I live, you will be remembered warmly and often. You did all that was asked. You answered the call, and did your duty. Sleep well, my friend.

Posted by: Rhea Rippey
Relationship: We served together
September 7, 2003

A Note from The Virtual Wall

Although assigned to H&S Battery, 6/11 Arty, First Lieutenant Orn was an Artillery Forward Observer with C Company, 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry, 11th Infantry Brigade. C Company lost four of its own men in the same incident:

SP4 James H. Horton, Holden, WV
SP4 Walter L. Moore, Irving, TX
PFC Robin W. Richardson, Excelsior Springs, MO
PFC Bennie J. Graham, Decatur, MS

From the 6th Battalion, 11th Artillery Staff Duty Log

MARCH 11, 1969 6-11 H & S Artillery at 110205hrs vicinity grid BS797395 Charlie Company 4-21 Infantry received 35-40 60mm Mortar rounds followed by ground attack very heavy small arms fire and Automatic weapons fire. Gun Ships and Spooky dispatched with results 4 US KHA 1 6-11 1LT FO and 6 US WHA (E) with 5 US (M). 6-11 Artillery reports FO 1LT DEAN RUSSELL ORN LISTED AS KIA with Charlie Company 4-21 Infantry was 3 KHA from mortar fire which turn out to be 4 KIA PFC BENNIE JOE GRAHAM, SP4 JAMES HARRISON Horton, SP4 WALTER LEE MOORE AND PFC ROBIN WILLIAM RICHARDSON ARE LISTED AS KIA. Bravo Company 4-21 Infantry reports 5 WHA (E) and 4 WIA (M).

From the Virtual Wall

In recognition of his bravery, Dean was posthumously awarded the Silver Star by the U.S. Army. The government of South Viet Nam posthumously awarded him the National Order of Viet Nam and the Cross of Gallantry with Palm. His other medals and awards include the Viet Nam Service Medal, Republic of Viet Nam Campaign Medal, and the Expert Badge with Machine Gun, Automatic Rifle, and Rifle bars.

A memorial from his nephew
Dean R.Orn 2nd
1 Jun 2001

After the 6th Infantry Division was deactivated at Fort Campbell, Kentucky in 1968, Dean and I were temporarily assigned to the same Basic Training Company. He had a little red sports car (MG, I think) and we used to run around together a lot. We were both young and single and we had a ball together.

Dean came down on orders for Vietnam in December, 1968. In March, 1969 I heard he had been killed. He was the first guy I knew personally that was killed in Vietnam. I was drunk for 3 days.

I will never forget Dean and the great times we had at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Rest in Peace, Brother.

From a friend,
1LT Robert L. Duerler
13 Nov 2006

Lt Orn replaced me as the Artillery Forward Observer with C Co 4/21st Infantry. He was an underclassman at Officer Candidate School when I was an upperclassman.

Lt. Orn was killed in Quang Ngai Province, I Corps, along with 4 other soldiers of Charlie Co. It is difficult to describe the hostile environment of that awful place where these men died.

110-degree mountainous jungle with razor sharp grass, so thick that it was difficult to travel more than a few miles a day. The swamps were full of leeches, mosquitoes, ants and deadly snakes. Couple that with the ever-present booby traps set in every clearing and trail. No friendlies, only NVA/VC equipped with the latest Soviet weapons who were determined to kill American soldiers.

Forward Observation was extremely hazardous duty requiring young artillery lieutenants to direct cannon fire on targets at very close range. I left Charlie Co. and returned to Ft Sill Artillery School to instruct Officer Candidates on how to survive. That's where I received a letter informing me of Orn, Moore, Horton, Richardson, and Graham.

"But we in it shall be remembered-
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother"

From a fellow officer,
Ed Mihalacki
30 Mar 2005

