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FEATURED

## Calvert twin remembers brother killed in Vietnam

By TAMARA WARD [tward@somdnews.com](mailto:tward@somdnews.com) May 27, 2016



Staff photos by Tamara Ward

Linwood Reynolds of Prince Frederick thumbs through a scrapbook of his deceased twin brother's accomplishments with his own grandson, Dominic Reynolds, 12. The elder Reynolds' twin brother, Sherwood Reynolds, died in combat action in 1968 during the Vietnam War.

Line 2 of the casualty statement from the Department of Army reads "DIED 26 February 1968 in Vietnam from gunshot wounds received during ground action."

Those 13 typed words on the 5-by-7-inch white form is one of many keepsakes Linwood Reynolds has in a scrapbook honoring the memory of his identical twin, Sherwood Reynolds.

“We were born Oct. 25, 1946. We attended Brooks High School. We dressed alike,” Linwood said.

Sherwood was older than Linwood by five minutes. The twins were two of six boys and a girl born to Brookie and Mary Reynolds of Harris Road in Prince Frederick.

The pair were inseparable. They joined Brooks United Methodist Church in St. Leonard together at the age of 12, and at 18, they enlisted in the U.S. Army together in 1965 for a four-year tour.

They were stationed at Fort Jackson in South Carolina for basic training then left for Fort Dix in New Jersey for advanced infantry training.

“We went in the military on this buddy-buddy plan hoping we wouldn't be separated,” shared Reynolds. “When we got to Fort Dix, it was time for us to be rotated again. They sent us both to Germany.”

Under the Army's buddy program, which exists today, a recruit and a friend are allowed to enlist and train in the Army together.

However, they sent Linwood to Berlin, and Sherwood to Baumholder, Germany, just 12 weeks after their enlistment date.

“We were fighting it. We told them we came in on this buddy-buddy plan,” Linwood said. “They told us that was only for basic training and advanced infantry training.”

Forced to go their separate ways for the first time in their lives, the twins corresponded by mail until they ran into each other at non-commissioned officer school in Bad Tolz, a small town in Germany.

“I had no idea that he was going — he didn't tell. I wound up going a week later [than him],” Linwood said. “We were shocked to see each other.”

The surprise reunion was the first time the brothers saw each other in almost two years. After they graduated from the officers' training school, they returned back to Berlin and Baumholder.

“He wrote me a letter telling me he had to go to Vietnam,” Linwood said. “He said he was going to go home first and asked me if I would come home, too, so we could be together.”

Reynolds said he told his brother his “money was funny” and that his brother sent him cash for a flight home so the pair could hang out before Sherwood left for Vietnam. The year was 1967, the third year of their tour.

“When it was time for him to go ... I went with him to the airport. That's as far as I could go,” Linwood of the last time he would see Sherwood alive.

Linwood Reynolds returned to Berlin and continued to stay in contact with his brother through letters until February 1968.

“I remember ... they called me out of formation and told me 'you have to go to Red Cross,'" he said. "First thing that came to my mind was that my grandmom probably passed. I get to Red Cross and they tell me, 'your brother has been killed in Vietnam and you have prepare to go home, but don't be in a rush because it's going to take awhile for the body to get back home to Maryland.'”

“That kind of shocked me in a way. I had to come back to my unit and tell them what happened,” he said.

Linwood said a month later he took leave and went home, but still managed to get home before the body of his brother.

Linwood did not tell his parents that Sherwood had died before Linwood arrived home. However, a telegram was sent to the courthouse and a preacher, William Plummer, delivered the telegram to their parents prior to Linwood's arrival.

Once at home, Linwood said he and his father went to Sewell Funeral Home in Prince Frederick to confirm and identify Sherwood's body.

Linwood said he suppressed his feelings when he saw his mirror image, the brother with whom he once shared a womb and his formative years.

“I was strong. I didn't shed a tear. When we had the funeral, I did not cry. I don't think crying would have made it any better,” he recalled.



In the wake of Sherwood's death, the family received multiple letters, which his mom kept, along with all the letters he wrote to her. One U.S. Army letter revealed his heroism.

“The letter said he got killed by a small arms fire. They were on a search-and-destroy mission and his squad was pinned down and he was trying to get the sniper,” Linwood said. “Since he was the squad leader, he was trying to take care of the safety of his men and he pursued where the fire was coming from.”

Linwood Reynolds said other squad members were injured, but his brother, to his knowledge, was the only casualty.

Less than a year after his brother's death, his four-year tour was up. If he had survived, his brother's tour would have ended as well.

“I got out of the military in 1969,” Linwood said. “I didn't want nothing to do with the military. I was sort of mad at the military.”

He said he later acknowledged, “things happened out of our control,” and he does not hold the military responsible for his brother's death. Ten years afterward, he resolved his feelings and joined the U.S. Army Reserve for 18 years before retirement.

In the years between his brother's death and now, Linwood married and had one son, whom he named Sherwood, in his twin brother's memory. The younger Sherwood Reynolds served in the U.S. Air Force.

Now the grandfather of three boys, Linwood Reynolds retired from the Federal Bureau of Investigation in 2003, where he had served as a fingerprint examiner for 33 years.

Today, he is active in the church, is a member of the American Legion Gray Ray Post and spends quality time with his wife of 40 years and grandkids. He said often reflects on his time with Sherwood.

“As I have gotten older ... I find myself not as strong as I used to be,” he said. “It would bring tears to my eyes.”

There's a monument in the courthouse that honors fallen African-American warriors. Sherwood Reynolds is the first of five servicemen under the memorial that recognizes those who served in Vietnam.

Linwood Reynolds said he is saddened that no one recognizes the men individually during their annual Memorial Day or Veterans Day celebrations, and would like to hear their names called out and their families invited to lay a wreath in their honor.

“By going into the military at a young age like that, and you died for your county ... it's a shame that nobody knows who these people are,” he said. “Last year, I went to a ceremony. I asked a young man, does he know who the people [on the memorial] are? He said, 'I don't know who they are.'”

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