



Arthur K. Borland, RM1, USN

RM1 Art Borland was assigned to AFVN as a Teletype Repairman at the Key Station in Saigon and at Pleiku in 1968-1969.


The following was received from his wife, Kay in April 2015

I want to give you information concerning Art's time with AFVN in Vietnam so that his name can be placed on the list of those who had served during that period of time and who have now passed away.

You won't believe this but I've saved every calendar since the year we were married in 1965 and retrieved the 1968 and 1969 calendars to get the date he left for Counterinsurgency Training at Little Creek, VA (8/4/68), came home for a few days (8/23/68) and left for Vietnam (8/27/68). That's when I started marking off each day as I had always done when Art would go on a cruise aboard ship until he came home. I know Art was initially stationed at AFVN, Saigon as a teletype repairman and operator and at some point was transferred to Pleiku (Qui Nhon?). I know he made many trips to other AFVN stations I'm assuming to repair the teletype equipment at each site. I especially remember his stories about being sent to the TV/radio station near the Cambodian border (one site at the base of the mountain and the other site on the top of the mountain) because that's where he was exposed to Agent Orange while looking down watching it being sprayed and feeling it on his skin. A Mountainyard (not sure of the spelling but native people like our American Indians) village was nearby and the women would do the laundry for the American military. Their husbands had been forced to help the VC and the wives would always warn the American military about an impending attack at night by telling them to be careful that night. Art wound up being part of the defending soldiers when the VC would hit. I remember him telling me that the guys would say how they liked his visits but every time Art would visit the site, the VC would hit that night.

Art flew home 8/7/69 - actually 20 days before he was originally scheduled to return. I remember him saying he'd been offered to be made Chief (E-7) (he was an E-6, first class) if he would stay through August and he had said no, he wanted to go home. Later on in his career he took the Chief's exam 15 times and had passed it 13 times but was never chosen.





I know his weight was a big factor in not making Chief. For years Art was put on diets and followed through the chow line by the Corpsman telling him what he could and couldn't eat. But inevitably Art would gain weight! When he retired 9/1/78, he weighed 270 lbs. One month after retiring, he received a letter from the Department of the Navy telling him he had to either lose weight or be discharged.

The ironic part was by the time Art died, he was down to less than 100 pounds. His food was so restricted due to renal disease when his kidneys were at 37% function. I often think back to 1984 when we found out he had very high blood sugar levels from lab work done prior to initially being seen by a doctor at the arthritis clinic at Walter Reed Army Hospital . Afterwards, I had checked out his military medical records from DeWitt Army Hospital at Ft. Belvoir located in northern Virginia and found labs going back to 1979 showing he had elevated blood sugar levels but it was never disclosed to us and never treated. If he had been informed and treated, he may not have gone through all the debilitating results of uncontrolled diabetes: renal disease, two heart attacks, vascular disease which narrowed the arteries around his heart resulting in cardiac catheterization and bypass surgery, narrowed arteries to both legs causing two thirds of his right foot to be amputated and 85% closure of the right carotid artery causing insufficient oxygen to the brain resulting in vascular dementia. But even through all of this, we had a full life. For our last 49th wedding anniversary trip in May 2014 we visited NASA outside of Houston on the way to Galveston Island. It was a wonderful relaxing trip for both of us and something to fondly remember..

I'll be putting the house on the market as soon as I get finished with a few needed repairs and once sold, I'll be moving back to Virginia where our sons and their families live. Art was buried at the Quantico National Cemetery just outside of Quantico Marine Base in Prince William County in northern Virginia on December 5th. It was a lovely service with a Navy Chaplain, Navy bugler and two Navy honor guard. I was so glad that all our little family were there besides my brother and his wife from New York State. I plan to move near our youngest son living just outside Richmond, Virginia - only about an hour's driving distance to the south. When my time comes, I'll be buried with Art as well. It will be difficult to leave Texas but I'll be taking a lot of good memories of our twenty two years here in San Antonio. It's actually the longest we've lived in one place in all our almost 50 years of marriage. But they were good years being a Navy family and something I'll always treasure.

Kay Borland, April 2015

