



Harry L. Ettmueller, SFC, USA

SFC Harry L. Ettmueller, USA, was the Chief Engineer at Hue, 1967-68. He was captured by the North Vietnamese during the TET '68 offensive on February 5, 1968 and remained a POW until March 5, 1973.

I have not been able to find Harry's obituary, which is what I would normally place here. In lieu of same, here are Bob Morecook's and John Bagwell's messages of February 14 & 15, 2020, notifying everyone of Harry's passing. The are then followed by a number of other messages of condolence.


From: Bob Morecook
Dated: March 13, 2020
Subject: AFVN'er Harry Ettmueller seriously ill - last of the Det 5 POW's

Earlier today I received a telephone call from Harry's son Stephen who told me that his father, SFC Harry Ettmueller, last of the Detachment 5 AFVN POW's, was seriously ill. Harry had a heart attack and was taken to hospital where he had further heart problems, and, after five CPR attempts, was successfully revived. He remains in hospital at this time. According to his son, he is expected to live only a few more days. SFC Ettmueller has a number of awards to his credit, including the Silver Star for his aggressive interaction with the enemy in Hue, prior to his capture. I know you will want to reach out to him and his family. You can send him a card at the address below. (I will be sending one in my name, and also on behalf of all of us).

Send a card to: Harry Ettmueller, Patient Mail, Ascension Seton Hospital, 1201 38th St, Austin TX 78705 from Bob Morecook

Narrative: Harry Ettmueller was born in 1944 in Pleasantville, New Jersey. He enlisted in the U.S. Army on January 7, 1963, and was trained as an Artillery Plotter, where he served with the 35th and 17th Artillery Brigades at Fort Meade, Maryland, from March 1963 to May 1964. Ettmueller next went through Crypto Repair and Television Repair School at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, from May 1964 to July 1965. He then served as a Television Broadcast Engineer, serving in South Korea with AFKN from July 1965 to June 1966, and then with the U.S. Military Assistance Command in South Vietnam with AFVN from June to November 1966. Sgt Ettmueller then returned to South Korea, where he served from November 1966 to March 1967, and then returned to the U.S. Military





Assistance Command in South Vietnam assigned to the 1st Signal Brigade and then AFVN Headquarters. On February 5, 1968, Sgt Etmueller was captured in the city of Hue when the city came under attack by Viet Cong and North Vietnamese military forces, and was later moved to the North Vietnamese prison system. After spending 1,857 days in captivity, he was released during Operation Homecoming on March 5, 1973. Etmueller was briefly hospitalized to recover from his injuries and then trained as an Army Clinical Specialist. He served with the 41st Combat Support Hospital at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, from November 1975 to June 1976, and then as an instructor with Company B, 3rd Battalion at the Academy of Health Sciences, also at Fort Sam Houston, from June 1976 until he left active duty on July 5, 1977. On April 8, 2007, Harry Etmueller was inducted into the United States Army Public Affairs Hall of Fame.

His Silver Star Citation reads:

Staff Sergeant Harry L. Etmueller distinguished himself by gallantry and intrepidity in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force while serving with Detachment Number 5, American Forces Television Station, Hue, Republic of Vietnam, on 2 February 1968 during the Communist "Tet Offensive." At approximately 1900 hours a much superior numerical force of North Vietnamese Regulars attempted a sneak attack on the quarters of Detachment Number 5 personnel located at Number 6 Tran Duc Street, Hue. Although suffering from wounds received in the right thigh by an enemy fragmentation grenade on 1 February 1968, then Specialist Five Harry L. Etmueller, with total disregard for his personal safety and previously incurred wound, took a position outside the entrance to the rear of the building and deterred an enemy attempt to enter the building. His immediate actions during the enemy's initial assault and during the 16-hour battle that followed was instrumental in deterring the enemy's attempt to overrun Detachment's Number 5 position and thereby contributed to the saving of the lives of the detachment members. His position was later overrun and he was held as a Prisoner of War until his release on 5 March 1973. Staff Sergeant Etmueller's heroic actions are in keeping with the highest tradition of the services and reflect great credit on himself and the United States Army.

From: John Bagwell
Dated: March 14, 2020
Subject: I regret to inform you ...re Harry Etmueller

I got back to Dallas late last night and was exhausted so did not post anything about Harry.

I made it down to Austin in enough time to see Harry before he passed. The hospital had everything locked down for the coronavirus and for awhile It looked like I would not get in to see him. They had the ICU waiting room closed and only allowed two close family members in each room. Just before I got there they "coded" him for the second time. That apparently changed the protocol and at that time they allowed as many that wanted





to come into the room. Harry had his eyes open, but I am not sure he understood anything. I relayed to him the many messages I had received from others in this group and my appreciation for him being a good friend to me over the years. I was with the family when he passed.

Harry has two adult sons from his first wife, who are struggling to cope with this. I met them, his current wife and some other friends. Harry is from New Jersey. I am not sure if he has much family back there. His mother died a number of years back. He has lived in Austin, Texas for a long time.

The family will probably have a memorial service around Austin at some time. He will eventually be buried, as a true hero should, in Arlington National Cemetery. The family was appreciative of all of the AFVNers and their support.

I'll keep you posted on anything I hear.

On another note, I was worried about going to Austin on Saturday. Traffic on a good day is terrible in Austin. This was the weekend that South By Southwest was scheduled but cancelled. When I arrived it was eerily quiet on the roads. There was some traffic but not like anything I had seen in Austin in 40 plus years I have been going there. If it wasn't for the coronavirus, I would probably still be stuck in Waco!

From: Bob Morecook
Dated: March 15, 2020
Subject: I regret to inform you ...re Harry Ettmueller

Dear Fellow AFVN'ers


I regret to inform you that AFVN veteran former SFC Harry Ettmueller died today at 4:12 pm central time in Austin Tx.

A former POW, Harry was the last surviving POW from the fighting at Detachment 5, Hue during Tet 1968. Surviving still is, of course, ifellow veteran John Bagwell, who was able to escape as the fighting began, and who is a member of this list. The family intends that Harry be interred at Arlington National Cemetery. When I have more information about services and burial, I will let you know.

Yours truly,

Bob Morecook





From: Bob Morecook
Dated: March 15, 2020
Subject: I regret to inform you ...re Harry Ettmueller

Hi John,

Thanks for your account. I (and we all) are glad you could make it down there. When funeral services are announced I hope to attend, health and health risks allowing. If so, I hope to meet you then, if you are able to come.

Yours truly,

Bob Morecook

From: Ken Kalish
Dated: March 15, 2020
Subject: I regret to inform you ...re Harry Ettmueller

It gives me a sense of my own mortality, as Harry and I are the same age. And, if the rumors I heard shortly before my departure (3 Aug 68) are, in any way, accurate, how lucky I am, that somewhere up above, I had a guardian angel covering my butt. As the saying goes, "There, but for the grace of God, go I."


RIP, Harry. We salute you and your service.

Ken

From: Bob Morecook
Dated: March 15, 2020
Subject: I regret to inform you ...re Harry Ettmueller

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From: Marc Yablanka
Dated: March 15, 2020
Subject: I regret to inform you ...re Harry Ettmueller

Received the following 2019 Army News Service piece about Detachment 5, Harry, John et al, from Marine combat correspondent Bob Bayer, who's in my book:

https://www.army.mil/article-amp/216790/trapped_soldiers_endure_brutal_firefight_during_siege_of_hue

From: Michael Miller
Dated: March 15, 2020
Subject: I regret to inform you ...re Harry Ettmueller

Thank you, Bob.

RIP SFC Ettmueller.

From: Steve Pennington
Dated: March 15, 2020
Subject: I regret to inform you ...re Harry Ettmueller

RIP SFC Ettmueller. I have read about his exploits. He is a true hero and patriot. SLP
Thank you, Bob.

From: Randy Kafka
Dated: March 15, 2020
Subject: I regret to inform you ...re Harry Ettmueller

I never knew SFC Harry Ettmueller, only knew of him. For that I can be thankful. "hang tuff" Harry.

kafka sends



From: Rick Frederickesn
Dated: March 15, 2020
Subject: I regret to inform you ...re Harry Ettmueller

Thank you for keeping the group informed John. For a man who has beaten the odds so many times, it's almost implausible that Harry could once again be facing a life threatening enemy. God bless him. I have written you a personal note John to your email address. Wishing the best to our treasured Det. 5 survivors. Respectfully, Rick

Rick Fredericksen

From: Rick Fredericksen
Dated: March 16, 2020
Subject: I regret to inform you ...re Harry Ettmueller

In this day of mourning for our colleague Harry, let me add two related things. First a thank you to John Bagwell for being AFVN's point man at the crucial moment, and for passing along personal messages to Harry and gathered family members. Second, I re-post below what I believe is the most thorough account ever written about the battle at Det. 5. More background and more photos, it serves as an inspiration for all of us at AFVN, and special tribute for Harry and his colleagues in Hue. The photo seen, as of today, is the last surviving broadcaster from Det. 5. God Bless Harry Ettmueller



Old Asia Hands : TV Station's Final Days

As the Tet Lunar New Year holiday approached in late January 1968, a staff of six men was operating the expanding broadcast facility. Two others had just arrived from the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) to help launch the detachment's new radio service. Spec. 5 Steven Stroub and Spec. 4 John Bagwell had been working at the 1st Cav's oldasiahands.blogspot.com

The photo is John Bagwell.

From: Ken Kalish
Dated: March 16, 2020
Subject: I regret to inform you ...re Harry Ettmueller

He will be missed.

Ken

Facebook Postings



John Bagwell
14 hrs · 🌐

Just found out my friend Harry Ettmueller is in the hospital in Austin following a heart attack. Harry and I were together in Vietnam at a radio tv station in Hue. Harry spent time as a POW in Hanoi. He is a fighter. Please pray for him and his family.



👍❤️😭 Rick Fredericksen and 28 others · 18 Comments

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Shirley Brandwood Casavan John I'm praying for your friend Harry Ettmueller, that he is stable now and on the way to Recovery in the name of Jesus, Amen. God bless you all, Shirley ❤️

Like · Reply · 8h



Lois Lovett Buck Prayers for this American Hero.

Like · Reply · 6h



Karen Unger Will pray

Like · Reply · 4h



DAnna Zimmer Praying!

Like · Reply · 3h





Facebook Postings (Continued)



Like · Reply · 14h



Lisa Niles Maratea Sending prayers ! Would he have known my dad Courtney Niles ?

Like · Reply · 13h



Raymond Bagwell Prayers

Like · Reply · 13h



Kymerli Norman



Like · Reply · 13h



Thomas Grady Baskin Prayers for Harry!

Like · Reply · 13h



Rick Fredericksen Yes sir. Praying for Harry. He is one tough soldier, but the battle is formidable.

Like · Reply · 13h



Mary Lee Collins Sending prayers! ...

Like · Reply · 12h



Ginger Robinson Bennett God, please heal Harry!!!

Like · Reply · 11h



Edwina Mitchell Wooten Praying for Harry!

Like · Reply · 11h



Cheryl Cantwell 🙏 prayers

Like · Reply · 11h



Paulette Rangel Praying for Harry

Like · Reply · 11h

[This may not be a complete list.]

