



## Donat J. "Don" Gouin MSG, USA

Name: Donat Joseph Gouin  
Rank/Branch: United States Army/E8 [when captured]  
Unit: DET 5 American Forces Vietnam Network  
Date of Birth: Unknown  
Home City of Record: Central Falls, RI  
Date of Loss: 05 February 1968  
Country of Loss: South Vietnam Loss  
Coordinates: 162912 North 1073438 East (Hue)  
Status (in 1973): Returnee Category:  
Aircraft/Vehicle/Ground: Ground

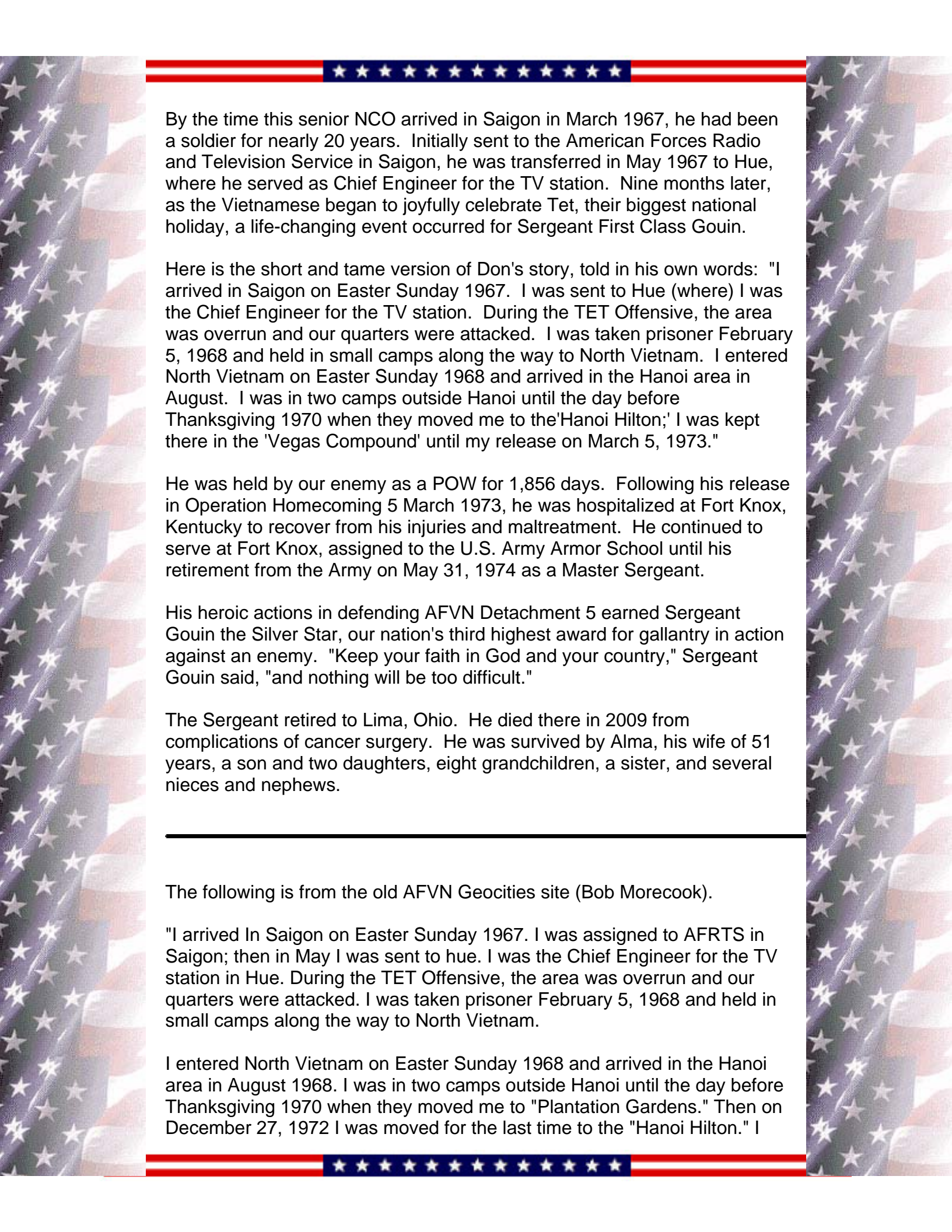
Source: Compiled by P.O.W. NETWORK from one or more of the following: raw data from U.S. Government agency sources, correspondence with POW/MIA families, published sources, interviews.

REMARKS: RELEASED BY PRG on 3 Mar 73

MSG Gouin died in 2009

The following is from: <http://www.maco.net/biographies.html>

Don Gouin, a native of Central Falls, Rhode Island, enlisted in the Army in 1947. Following radio operator training, he was initially assigned to Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. In 1952 he was reassigned to Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, and the following year to Fort Wainwright, Alaska. After serving as a Field Radio Repair instructor at Fort Gordon, Georgia, he received his first overseas assignment, to Pakistan, in March 1954. In July 1955 he was sent to the Advanced Television School in Los Angeles. He was then off to the Army Pictorial Center in New York City from March 1956 to March 1958. His next overseas assignment was to Ethiopia, from June 1958 to February 1961. He then returned to the Army Pictorial Center for ten months. His next assignment was an uncharacteristically lengthy tour of five years duration at Fort Monmouth, and then came his third overseas assignment; this time to Vietnam.

The page is framed by a border of the American flag, with stars on the left and right sides and a horizontal band of stars across the top and bottom.

By the time this senior NCO arrived in Saigon in March 1967, he had been a soldier for nearly 20 years. Initially sent to the American Forces Radio and Television Service in Saigon, he was transferred in May 1967 to Hue, where he served as Chief Engineer for the TV station. Nine months later, as the Vietnamese began to joyfully celebrate Tet, their biggest national holiday, a life-changing event occurred for Sergeant First Class Gouin.

Here is the short and tame version of Don's story, told in his own words: "I arrived in Saigon on Easter Sunday 1967. I was sent to Hue (where) I was the Chief Engineer for the TV station. During the TET Offensive, the area was overrun and our quarters were attacked. I was taken prisoner February 5, 1968 and held in small camps along the way to North Vietnam. I entered North Vietnam on Easter Sunday 1968 and arrived in the Hanoi area in August. I was in two camps outside Hanoi until the day before Thanksgiving 1970 when they moved me to the 'Hanoi Hilton;' I was kept there in the 'Vegas Compound' until my release on March 5, 1973."

He was held by our enemy as a POW for 1,856 days. Following his release in Operation Homecoming 5 March 1973, he was hospitalized at Fort Knox, Kentucky to recover from his injuries and maltreatment. He continued to serve at Fort Knox, assigned to the U.S. Army Armor School until his retirement from the Army on May 31, 1974 as a Master Sergeant.

His heroic actions in defending AFVN Detachment 5 earned Sergeant Gouin the Silver Star, our nation's third highest award for gallantry in action against an enemy. "Keep your faith in God and your country," Sergeant Gouin said, "and nothing will be too difficult."

The Sergeant retired to Lima, Ohio. He died there in 2009 from complications of cancer surgery. He was survived by Alma, his wife of 51 years, a son and two daughters, eight grandchildren, a sister, and several nieces and nephews.

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The following is from the old AFVN Geocities site (Bob Morecook).

"I arrived In Saigon on Easter Sunday 1967. I was assigned to AFRTS in Saigon; then in May I was sent to hue. I was the Chief Engineer for the TV station in Hue. During the TET Offensive, the area was overrun and our quarters were attacked. I was taken prisoner February 5, 1968 and held in small camps along the way to North Vietnam.

I entered North Vietnam on Easter Sunday 1968 and arrived in the Hanoi area in August 1968. I was in two camps outside Hanoi until the day before Thanksgiving 1970 when they moved me to "Plantation Gardens." Then on December 27, 1972 I was moved for the last time to the "Hanoi Hilton." I

was kept there in the "Vegas Compound" until my release on March 5, 1973."

Sgt. Gouin's background includes 20 years of service in the Army before his capture in 1967. Born in Central Falls, Rhode Island in 1929, he enlisted in the Army in August 1947. He was stationed at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii from 1948 to 1952, at Ft. Wainwright, Alaska from 1953 to 1954 and at Ft. Gordon, Georgia from 1954 to 1955. He attended the Advanced Television School in Los Angeles from 1955 to 1956 and then was assigned to the Army Pictorial Center, New York City from 1956 to 1958. From 1958 to 1960 he was assigned to Kagnew Station, Asmara, Eritrea (Ethiopia). He returned to the Army Pictorial Center in New York for a year and then was at Ft. Monmouth, New Jersey from 1961 to 1967. In 1967 he went to Vietnam.

He was awarded the Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Vietnam Campaign Ribbon, and the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

At present, Sgt. Gouin is in Fort Knox, Kentucky with his wife, Alma Jane Batch Gouin and his three children, Elizabeth Jane, Barbara Jean and Carl Joseph. He is assigned to the Armor School TV Division.

Personal Reflections: "I want to thank the American people for their reception, especially the people in Lima, Ohio, my wife's home town, and Central Falls, Rhode Island.

"I want you to remember this: Keep your faith in God and your country and nothing will be too difficult."

December 1996 Donat Gouin retired from the United States Army as a Master Sergeant. He and Alma reside in Ohio.



Donat Gouin sitting on the steps to the TV Van at Hue.