

THEY SERVED IN SILENCE

The Story of a Cryptologic Hero SP5 Samuel C. Martin



And in that time when men decide and feel safe to call the war insane, take one moment to embrace those gentle heroes you left behind.

Posted by Bill Nelson on Samuel C. Martin Tribute Site

SP5 Samuel Calvin Martin was born in Greensburg, Kentucky on December 22, 1946. Known as Sammy to his friends and family, he graduated from Green County High School in 1964, and shortly after, enlisted in the United States Army. After initial testing, he was selected to serve in the Army Security Agency (ASA), the cryptologic element of the US Army during the Vietnam era. After basic and advanced training at Ft. Devens,

Massachusetts, he served with the 2nd ASA Security Detachment in Aschaffenburg, Germany before deploying in 1966 for his first tour in Vietnam. In early 1968, he redeployed with the 101st Radio Research Company, 509th Radio Research Group (RRC), to begin his second tour "in country."

The roots of the 101st RRC go back to the early '60s, when it first began service in Vietnam. By 1966 it was providing indispensable cryptologic support to the US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), its joint elements, Military Assistance Command Thailand (MACTHAI), and those support elements of the US Army Republic of Vietnam (USARV).

Sammy's duties as a Signal Security Specialist involved the monitoring of friendly radio communications to ensure that the rules and standards related to proper Operations Security or OPSEC were used and maintained. Lax communications practices could result not only in the loss of a tactical advantage over the enemy, but also the loss of the lives of his fellow soldiers. In addition to his main duties, by the time he was on his second tour, he had developed a wide range of additional cryptologic skills and talents that he put to good use in support of mission requirements.

On 17 May 1968, Sammy volunteered to go on a "search and destroy" operation. It proved to be a fatal decision. During the mission, he lost his life when he was felled by a land mine. For his courage and bravery that day, he was awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

Sammy's death was met with shock and sadness by his friends and family. A cousin related, "...we came from large families in a small town and spent a lot of time together. He was with his brother David in Vietnam when he was killed, and we were devastated when we got the news, David ... brought him home and we celebrated his life and patriotism, they were both on their second tour in Viet Nam. I still think about the great times we all had growing up."

SP5 Samuel C. Martin was buried in Greensburg City Cemetery near his boyhood home. In an effort to honor his memory, the following was posted on a tribute site to Sammy's service and sacrifice: "If you are able, save for them a place inside of you ... and save one backward glance



101st Airborne soldiers marched beside the hearse which carried the body of Sergeant Samuel C. Martin Monday from the Coward and Parrott Funeral Home to the final resting place in the Greensburg Cemetery. All Greensburg businesses were closed for the funeral.



when you are leaving for the places they can no longer go ... Be not ashamed to say you loved them ... Take what they have left and what they have taught you with their dying and keep it with your own ... And in that time when men decide and feel safe to call the war insane, take one moment to embrace those gentle heroes you left behind...." It is in this spirit that we honor and remember the life of SP5 Samuel C. Martin.

