

## RON GOODPASTER

Ron Goodpaster was born on November 25, 1942 to Carl & Muriel Goodpaster at the Whitlatch Clinic in Milan, Indiana. He had two brothers: Bob and Kenny. There were three sisters: Mary Etta, Janet and Kay.

Ron attended Dillsboro Grade School and graduated from Dillsboro High School in 1960.

Ron entered the United States Army on November 2, 1966, a day he will never forget, because 10-11 inches of snow paralyzed this area and he spent the first night in the Army in the Fountain Square Hotel in Cincinnati, because all the roads were shut down. The next day they were able to reach Ft. Knox, Kentucky late that night and Army life officially began. His platoon sergeant was Malcolm P. Libbey and he would be killed in action in Vietnam on October 12, 1967. Ron entered the Army with several friends he worked with at Seagrams Distillery. Ron Wise, Gary Sidebottom, Willard Baker, Philip "Peanut" Schuler, Steve Utter, PG Gentrup and Tony Walker. He was my bunk mate, with me up above so he could kick and harass me. After basic, Ron was sent to Ft. Polk, Louisiana for Advanced Infantry Training (AIT). He then received his orders for Vietnam and was sent to Quan Loi, just east of An Loc in the Binh Phuoc Province of South Vietnam. Here he was assigned to the 1/26th Infantry of the First Infantry Division or the "Big Red One". He met up with Donnie Miller, from Aurora, who was already assigned there. They were friends and worked together at Seagrams.

There was plenty of action in that area of Vietnam and the Viet Cong seemed to be everywhere. Ron's unit was in a lot of combat situations and that led to him being promoted rapidly. It's hard to

believe that Ron was only in the Army for 14 months and promoted to Staff Sergeant or E-6. Those who understand the military would say “no way” or “impossible”. He made E-6 and was an E-5 when I arrived in country in August of 1967. Later, Ron was promoted in January of 1968 to E-6. He returned to the USA in May of 1968 and was assigned to Ft. Carson, Colorado for the last six months of his enlistment.

One of the reasons for his fast advancement in rank was because they were on patrol and Ron, with a few of his fellow soldiers, smelled smoke, and crawled in on two Viet Cong and captured them as Prisoners of War. That’s not easy to do.

His military awards include the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Combat Infantryman’s Badge (CIB), Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm, Army Good Conduct Medal, Bronze Star with “V” for Valor, Army Commendation Medal with “V” for Valor, Presidential Unit Citation, Meritorious Unit Citation and the Expert Shooting badge for M-16.

Ron Goodpaster and Donnie Miller served with Medal of Honor Recipient, Robert F. “Bobby” Stryker, who the Stryker Military Vehicle is named after.

Ron married Linda Transier on Sept. 19, 1964 and they have two daughters: Regina “Gina” (husband, Reid) Hensley and Rhonda Goodpaster. There are four grandchildren: Kayla, Logan and twins Grant & Gabe Hensley. Ron and Linda celebrated their 58<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on September 19.

Ron worked at Seagrams and then took a position with the United States Postal Service and eventually became the Postmaster in Aurora. He retired as the Postmaster in 1998.

Ron was one of the “founding fathers” and charter members of the Southeastern Indiana Vietnam Veterans of America, Lary D. Fogle Chapter 71 in Aurora. He was the first Commander/President of the local VVA. He is a member of the Dillsboro American Legion Post 292, past Prisident of the Aurora Lions Club and was the Grand Marshal of the Farmers Fair Parade in 1998, member of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), and a past president of the South Dearborn Swim Team Club. Ron was on a trip to Washington, DC in 2010 with 50 Vietnam Veterans from Southeastern Indiana, including serveral he went thru basic training with.

Ron has proven himself as a True American Hero, a great American Patriot and one who served and lived up to the words of Duty-Honor-Country. It’s because of men like him that we are all able to “Live the American Dream”. May God Bless him, his family and the United States of America.