

Stories from Vietnam

These next few stories are of a rather controversial nature. There will be graphic descriptions of things I saw while I was a combat Infantry soldier in Vietnam.

There will even be descriptions of things our own government did to “screw” our own military personnel trying to do their “duty”.

Some people may even try to deny that these things ever happened. Some may even try to say that I have fabricated these stories.

I just want to go on record and say that the U.S. government is the best “magician” I have ever seen –what you see is not always what you get, or, is real.

Zero
Time: May 20, 1969 — April 22, 1970
Place: Fire Support Patrol Base Rach Kien, located in the Upper Delta region of the mighty Mekong River, 12 miles south southwest of Saigon, on the border of the U.S. military tactical & IV Corps.

Unit: 2nd Squad, 2nd Platoon, C Company “Charlie Company,” 5/60th Infantry, 3rd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, U.S. Army Vietnam

During Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training (AIT), I met a lot of new Army inductees.

I took Basic Training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and was sent to Fort Gordon, Georgia, for AIT fitness conditioning since I had signed up for Army Airborne School and Rotary-winged Aircraft Pilot Training. Sadly, I had to decline both schools at the end of my AIT due to my father’s health, and was put into the Army Infantry at

the last moment.

Most of these new soldiers would do fine – I figured. A few of these new inductees would not survive the Vietnam War – I just knew this by observing their actions and listening to them.

One such new soldier was in my Platoon during AIT at Fort Gordon, Georgia. I believe he came from the hills of Missouri and was a true hillbilly. This skinny guy’s appearance reminded me of Zero in the newspaper comic Beetle Bailey. He was a loud-mouth and a know-it-all. I do not think that he intentionally disobeyed direct orders given to him – my opinion is that he was not intelligent enough to remember them long enough to correctly carry them out.

He was constantly, loudly, blaming someone else for his short-comings. When we were given written instructions, he would always mess up and do the wrong thing – because he could not read.

We always wondered why the Army took this “dumb hayseed” guy from very rural America in the first place. It was almost like cruelty to a dumb animal. Now, do not get me wrong, here, because I am a farm boy from rural Kansas.

When I got to Vietnam, I just sort of forgot about the guys from Basic Training and AIT. I had to use my full mental ability to try and survive the war.

One day, I just happened to run into one of the guys I trained with at AIT. He wanted to know if I heard about the guy in our AIT group that we called “Zero.” I told him that I had not heard. He said Zero was assigned to an Army Infantry Unit clear up north in the mountainous area of I Corp, near North Vietnam.

It seems as though he was giving these guys fits, and one day while out on a combat patrol he was running his mouth and not paying attention to what he was doing. He missed seeing the trip wire to a 155 mm Howitzer Artillery shell boobytrap. It shut him up – but, sadly, he took five other brave combat soldiers with him.

I just shook my head sadly, and said, “it figures.”

Note: It took me several years after being discharged from the Army in late 1970 to understand why the Army

took fellows such as “Zero.”

We were all drafted in mid-1968, right after the VC/NVA instigated their massive attacks on all of the hamlets, towns, cities, U.S. military bases, and ARVN outposts throughout South Vietnam – it was called the Tet Offensive of 1968. The U.S. Army suffered a lot of dead and wounded casualties during this period, and it needed to replace these numbers with viable soldiers **NOW.** I saw young men who were drafted that never

should have been accepted by the Army due to physical and mental shortcomings. But the Army needed “warm bodies” to fill the ranks vacated by the dead and wounded from battles in Vietnam. It is a well-known fact the U.S. military greatly lowered the bar for military acceptance standards regarding mental and physical attributes of the drafted inductees in mid-1968 in order to refill the ranks in Vietnam. These lower-than-average soldiers reached Vietnam in mid-

1969, and as a general rule, they caused more problems than they were actually worth to the U.S. military in Vietnam.

I experienced soldiers such as these in my Army combat Infantry Unit in Vietnam, and we tried our best to help them understand the ways of war in our area of operation. I am sad to write they were usually the first to get wounded or die during our combat missions – usually taking other brave soldiers out with them.

Editor’s Note: Vietnam veteran, Arlen “Butch” Proffitt has put his memories and experiences in Vietnam May 20, 1969 to April 22, 1970 in a collection of stories.

Some of Mr. Proffitt’s experiences are pretty strongly related, but getting through his tour had to have been life-altering. I am fortunate to be able to share these stories with our readers:

Short stories written by Arlen “Butch” Proffitt about his battlefield and other experiences during his tour of duty as Army Combat Infantry Soldier with 2nd Squad, 2nd Platoon, Company C “Charlie Rangers”, 5/60 Infantry, 3rd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, Fire Support Patrol Base Rach Kien, Long As Province, Vietnam

Area of Operations: III and IV Corps Tactical Zones.

Introduction

My name is Arlen H. Proffitt. My family and friends call me “Butch”. I was born on January, 19, 1949, to Harold and Helen Proffitt, and grew up on the family farm located eight miles southwest of Sterling, Kansas.

I attended the Sterling School system, graduating from Sterling High school in May, 1967. I attended the Fall semester of 1967 at Butler County Community College, Eldorado Kansas, and the spring semester of 1968 at Hutchinson Community College, before deciding not to attend any more college after May 1968.

I was drafted by the Selective Service and inducted into the U.S. Army on December 5, 1968 at the Kansas City Induction Center

Timothy L. “Tim” Fosdick

Timothy L. “Tim” Fosdick, 63, passed away, Thursday, May 22, 2025 at Ellsworth, Kans. He was born January 16, 1962 at Council Grove, Kans. to Harvey and Ruth (Betty) Fosdick. Tim married Florence “Flo” Strouse in Ellsworth County May 19, 1990. He retired from Ellsworth Coop and was working as a custodian at Ellsworth High School. He also cleaned St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Holyrood and helped his wife, Flo set up for mass at St. Ignatius Catholic Church in Kanopolis where they are

members. Tim was a member of the Knights of Columbus in Odin.

Tim is survived by his wife Flo Fosdick of Holyrood; son Charlie Fosdick (Amelia), Ellsworth; daughter Jessica Fosdick (Sterling Mills), Holyrood; grandchildren, Braylin Honomichl, Donovan Fosdick, Harvey Fosdick, John Fosdick, Remie Mills, and Ellie Mills; brother Terry Fosdick; father-in-law and mother-in-law, Charles and Margaret Strouse; sisters-in-law, Laura Falk (Brian), Veronica Strouse, and Peggy Benavidez (Ben);

along with several cousins, aunts, uncles, nieces, and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents.

Funeral mass was held Friday, May 30, 2025 at St. Ignatius Catholic Church of Kanopolis.

Memorial contributions can be made to the Tim Fosdick Memorial Fund, c/o, Parsons Funeral Home, PO Box 45, Ellsworth, KS 67439. Condolences can be left at parsonsfh.com.

(Published in the June 5, 2025 issue of the Plainville Times)

•Elon

box that held about 20 pills, including ones with the markings of the stimulant Adderall.”

When he rolled into town along with his motley crew of late teens and early twenty-somethings, the claim was that Musk had come to save the lowly taxpayers from big “government waste.”

Frankly, you’d have to be just about as high as Musk to believe that line of crap for even a moment. The South African born oligarch slept in the Eisenhower executive offices. Alongside his mother and

son, he traveled aboard Marine One. The U.S. Marshals office deputized his private security detail. All this was at the expense of those lowly taxpayers.

As for the Department of Government Efficiency?

The annual budget for the United States is roughly \$6.8 Trillion. “DOGE” purportedly resulted in a \$150 billion savings. DOGE’s expenses, however, were \$135 billion. This equals a net savings of \$15 billion, or 0.002% of the U.S. budget. To date there have been zero fraud indictments and over 280,000 federal jobs

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eliminated. For his part, Musk continues to earn more than \$8 million per day in taxpayer dollars, not counting the new government contracts he secured over the 4 months he was here in town.

And so, with his chain-saw and apparently Stephen Miller’s wife in tow, the richest man in the world leaves Washington even richer. The lowly taxpayers, on the other hand, have nothing to show for it. Returning our astronauts safely home was the least he could do.

Lucille Marjorie Prater

Lucille Marjorie Prater, Plainville, Kansas, passed away June 1, 2025, at Hays, Kans., at the age of 98. She was born February 4, 1927, to Carl and Barbara (Schauer) Pfannkuch in the family farmhouse in Phillips county, Kansas.



Lucille Prater

Raised during the Great Depression, Lucille learned the value of hard work at a young age. Whether it was harvesting wheat with scissiors, milking the family’s famously temperamental cow before school, or helping at her parents’ business after classes, Lucille’s industrious spirit remained steadfast throughout her life.

Lucille graduated from Logan High School with the Class of 1946. She married Leman Dwight Prater December 14, 1947, at Hays, Kansas, beginning a loving union that would last 40 years until Leman’s passing in 1988.

Lucille’s career journey was as varied as it was impressive. She worked in local grocery stores—where she first met Dwight—and became a familiar face as a checker in both Logan and later C.O. Mammel’s in Plainville. She was also employed at Travenol, sold Avon, assisted her husband in his State Farm office, and eventually found her true calling in real estate. Lucille earned her Real Estate Broker’s license and opened her own business, Quality Real Estate, in Plainville, serving her community with care.

Despite her many profes-

sional accomplishments, Lucille’s heart always belonged to her family. She cherished time spent with her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. She loved tending to her flowers, visiting with friends, and making sure those around her felt loved and supported.

A life defined by dedication to family, hard work, and quiet resilience, Lucille leaves behind a legacy of love and service. She will be missed dearly and remembered always.

She is survived by her daughter, Dixie Prater Odum, Hays; son, Randy Odum (Kim) Prater, Plainville; grandchildren: Shane Odum, Parker, Colo., Sarah Odum, Wood-Ridge, N.J., Angie (John) Norton,

Schoenchen, Kans., Justin (Andee) Prater, Plainville; step-grandchildren, Tristan (Carissa) Houser, Hays, Trever (Kaelyn) Houser, Plainville, and Brianna (Dylan) Bloom, Wamego, Kans.; great-grandchildren, Jackson Norton and Corbyn Marquess; and step-great-grandchildren: Brooks Houser, Cole Anderson, and Cailyn Houser.

She is preceded in death by her parents; husband; stillborn sister; infant brother Erwin; sister, Maxine Zaltosky; and nephews, Craig and Ricky Zaltosky.

A Funeral Service is planned for 11 a.m. Thursday, June 5, 2025, at Plainville United Methodist Church. Burial will follow at Plainville Cemetery. Visitation will be held Wednesday, 5:30–8 p.m. with the family receiving friends 5:30-6:30 at the funeral home in Plainville.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorials to United Methodist Church – Plainville and may be sent to Plumer-Overlease Funeral Home, 320 SW 2nd, Plainville, KS 67663.

Online condolences may be left for the family at www.plumeroverlease.com.

(Published in the June 5, 2025 issue of the Plainville Times)

Legal Notice

(First published in the Plainville Times, May 22, 2025) 3t *(First published in the Plainville Times, May 29, 2025)* 2t

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF ROOKS COUNTY, KANSAS

IN THE MATTER OF THE)
ESTATE NORA J.)
HAMMERSCHMIDT,)
Deceased)

Case No. RO-2025-PR-000013

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

THE STATE OF KANSAS TO ALL PERSONS CONCERNED:

You are hereby notified that on May 20, 2025, a Petition for Probate of Will and Appointing Executor Under Kansas Simplified Estates Act was filed in this Court by Cheryl C. Seirer, petitioner for the estate of Nora J. Hammerschmidt, deceased.

All creditors of the above-named decedent are notified to exhibit their demands against the estate within four months from the date of first publication of this notice, as provided by law, and if their demands are not thus exhibited, they shall be forever barred.

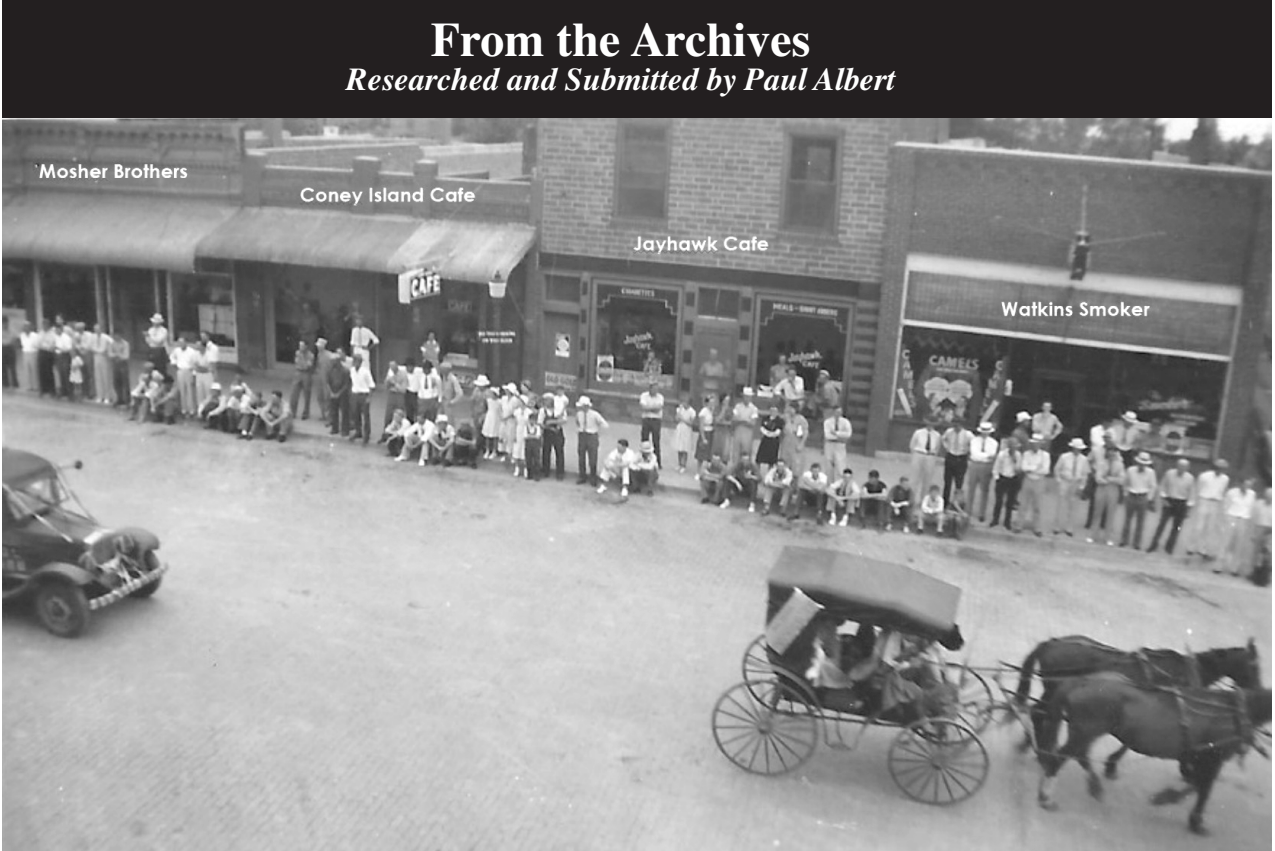
Cheryl C. Seirer and
Gene F. Hammerschmidt
Co-Executors

Terry L. Cikanek, Sup. Ct.
#10150
CIKANEK LAW OFFICE
P. O. Box 517
Stockton, KS 67669
(785) 425-6731

The City of Plainville is in possession of utility security deposits that have remained unclaimed for more than three (3) years following disconnection of services. Pursuant to K.S.A. 12-822, the following customers have not made a demand for return of the security deposit and, despite reasonable efforts, have whereabouts unknown to the City of Plainville:

Andy Anderson Drilling
CD Feeders
Crop Production Services
DC Services
Dan’s Dirt Works
Garvert, Don
Halling Water Well Service
Mid Kansas Waterwell Service
Plainville Livestock Commission
Rafter R Cattel Company
Western Well Service
Duncan, Brandon
Fellhoelter, Lee & Carol
Graham, Lori
Johnson, Eugene
Johnson, Gayle
Osborne, Donald & Margie
Percy, Alan J
Plainville Chiropractic Center
Skaggs, Judy
Thompson, Cindy

This serves as a notice that if a demand for a return a deposit is not received by the City within sixty (60) days after last publication of this notice, that the deposit will be relinquished to the City’s utility operating fund.



Continuing down Mill Street with the 1938 Frontier Days Parade this picture includes four businesses. Moshers Brothers was a hardware and appliance store owned by Roy A. and Thelma Moshers and Amos and Maude Moshers. The business closed in 1971. Coney Island Cafe operated from 1933-46 at three different locations. At the time, Coney Island Cafe was operated by Letha Dugan who later opened Letha’s Cafe in the now restored location on the south side of Mill Street. Jayhawk Cafe, owned by Bud Wiley, was in operation from 1931-39. Oren Watkins was the proprietor of The Smoker from 1930-73. The Smoker later became the Pool Hall.