



Lance Corporal Phillip Schneider

United States Marines - Vietnam



Phillip Schneider joined the U.S. Marines at the age of 19 years old in July 1968. Schneider was originally from Sharon, PA and later of Grove City, PA and Carlton, PA. He attended boot camp at Parris Island, North Carolina and was then deployed to Vietnam in January of 1969. He traveled to Vietnam aboard a regular civilian airliner. As the airliner entered Vietnam airspace two phantom jets positioned on either side and escorted the airliner to the Da Nang airstrip. This is when Phillip Schneider started to realize the level of danger that awaited him & his brothers-in-arms once they landed. It was only days until the action heated up and the sandbag bunkers became an all too familiar place of cover. The Viet Cong and North Vietnam Regulars were everywhere. "There wasn't a day go by that someone I knew was wounded or killed".

In early 1969 the second Tet Offence was in full swing and Phillip Schneider, along with the rest of his platoon, were assigned to secure and guard a bridge that was vital to the war effort – a main pipeline of supplies needed by the war effort.

Schneider had just gotten off guard duty around 2 a.m. and had gone into the bunker to try to sleep for a few hours. Sleeping in the bunker was difficult due to a pesky rat (as big as a small dog) running back and forth across him as he tried to sleep. Schneider got up and went outside behind the bunker to try to sleep there.

The next memory he had was of hearing the voices of Viet Cong as they moved through the area which they had just ravaged with RPG and B40 rockets. Schneider, badly injured and covered in blood, lay still pretending to be dead until the enemy had left the area. It was then he realized he couldn't move and there were no other survivors from his squad. He, alone, had survived. That survival came with a traumatic head injury and shrapnel injuries to his side, hip and leg. Soon, surviving Marines from the other squads from across the river and the other end of the bridge were loading him into a medivac helicopter. For four days he was in a coma from which he woke to paralysis of his right side. After 6 months in the hospital in Philadelphia he was discharged and sent home "whole, but broken". "I see guys in wheelchairs, with legs and arms missing and I thank God I'm alive. If it wasn't for that rat waking me up I wouldn't be here right now," he says.

Schneider received a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart for his sacrifices and efforts during the Vietnam War. As he said so well, "My goal is to keep working toward getting back to 'normal' but I don't think there will ever be a 'real normal as it once was' for any man or woman who served in a time of war".

Phillip Schneider has a daughter, Amy (wife of Matt) Polinski of Tampa, FL; and two sons, Nick Schneider and Phillip P. Schneider, both of Grove City, PA.