

SPECIALIST 5 THEODORE (TED) KETCHAM VIETNAM VETERAN

By Richard Long

It's fall 1969. Theodore (Ted) Ketcham was losing his focus with a college education, emphasis on English, Minnesota State University, Mankato, MN. He decided instead to enlist in the US Army and went to Fort Bragg NC for his basic training. Even tho he tested high in other areas, he was assigned to the infantry division. Off to Fort Polk, LA the location of advanced infantry training.

As fate would have it, then under orders to report for duty in Okinawa, orders were changed to Schofield Barracks, Honolulu, HI. He was told not to unpack because he would immediately be leaving for Vietnam. Those orders never came either so only his duffle bag served time in Southeast Asia. Instead, Ted worked in personnel processing veterans either headed to or returning from Vietnam.

In Hawaii, he went up 4 times in a helicopter but never landed once. Yup, PE assessments, he rappelled to the ground. Also one evening while watching the sun set from his beachside location, he opened C-rations to have dinner. He was surprised to notice the veggies came from a plant in St James, MN, a very small agriculture town near his home.

He credits his success as an educator later in life, with a comment from a Lieutenant in basic training. He said if you were able maintain a philosophy of health and well being you would have a successful military experience.

Specialist Ketcham, we honor you and thank you for your service.