

Ralph Waldo Israel Jr. (1950 – 1969)



By Sherie Mata

Ralph Waldo Israel Jr., one of 12 children in the Israel family, was born on Wednesday, April 12, 1950 in the city of San Diego and was raised in National City. He attended Kimball Grammar School, Chula Vista Jr. High School and graduated in the year 1967 from Marian Catholic High School. While attending Marian, he led the life any ordinary teenager would. Ralph enjoyed golfing, going on outings with his Boy Scout Troop and served as an altar boy at St. Anthony's Church in National City.

Once he graduated from high school he volunteered to join the army (December 5, 1967) because he knew he was reaching the age requirement to be drafted. By then Israel was 18 and was sent to Germany for 1 year for general training. During his training session he only took one leave of 30 days in 1968 to spend with his family and friends.

On December 21, 1968, he was sent to Quang Nam, Southern Vietnam with the ranking of SP4 (E4). He was part of the 198~ LIB with the MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) code of 1 1B20. He served as a machine gunner with Company C, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, 198th Infantry Battalion, Americal Division and frequently went on patrols in the Chu Lai region. He had been recently selected as "point man". Even though he was only in active duty for about one year, he received several medals, flags and recognitions, many for being such a "sharp shooter".

Wounded on patrol in February, he became a casualty on Wednesday, April 16, 1969, only 4 days after his 19th birthday. His type of casualty was what's called a "ground casualty"... similar to in the line of fire. It was labeled as AI due to small arms fire.

For his wounds, he received the Purple Heart and his name is etched not only on the Vietnam Veteran Memorial Wall and the Vietnam Veterans Peace Memorial in Balboa Park, San Diego, but now also in the streets of Chula Vista, Ralph Waldo Israel Jr.'s home town. He is buried at the Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery in San Diego, CA and his grave is located at Plot: O 3083-E. He was buried on April 25, 1969. His name was also added to the Stardust Spacecraft in a NASA microchip as an outreach program. More information can be found at:

<http://stardust.jpl.nasa.gov/overview/microchip/faq.html>

SP4 Israel's name appears on the Vietnam Wall at Panel 27 West, Row 94. He is survived by his parents, six sisters, Roberta, Yvonne, Aurora, Mary, Helen and Martha, and three brothers, Ronald Dennis and Joseph Gigger.

