



OUR HEROES

BILL ALLAN

**Charter President
of the American Legion Riders**

June 25, 1968 started off as just another day for Specialist 4 Bill Allan of the 446th Transportation Company based out of Dong Ha, South Vietnam. Troops needed supplies so Bill volunteered for the lead convoy truck to haul those supplies. Just outside the village of Calu Bill's truck hit an IED that exploded with such force rendering the 5 ton diesel destroyed. The blast catapulted Bill out of the vehicle. However, Bill always lined the floor of his truck with sandbags and his forward thinking saved his life as the sandbags absorbed the shrapnel that was intended for him. Bill was shaken, but he was still in one piece. Bill's Commander gave him the next day off for a little R & R. However, that night a Texan named John Henry pleaded with Bill to ride with him in the next days' convoy. Bill initially refused as no soldier gives up R & R easily. However, the Texan explained there was no way anyone would get hit with two IED's in two days so Bill's presence would guarantee his safety. Being a good friend, Bill agreed, but made John Henry promise to position the truck in the middle of the convoy and to line the cab of the truck with sand bags; just in case.

Once again, on a dirt road outside Calu, Bill's truck hit an IED and once again the big 5 ton diesel was rocked by the blast. Bill was again catapulted out of the vehicle, but this time, Texas logic failed and Bill was severely injured. Bill remembers the explosion and thinking he lost part of his leg; and then remembers being Medevac'd out by chopper.

Given the chaos of war Bill did not receive a Purple Heart Medal for the wounds he suffered on June 26, 1968. However, during 2009, Bill began working with a VA Rep and was finally awarded the Purple Heart Medal for wounds he suffered 41 years earlier. Bill believes his own experience illustrates the VA system can work for Veterans, at least sometimes.

Bill's impact on Post 712 is significant and long-lasting. During 2009, Bill partnered with JoAnn Simmons and Tom Bodner and formed the American Legion Riders of Post 712. He then accepted the unanimous vote to serve as the Riders' Charter President and lay the foundation of Riders activities for the future to come. To this day the Riders remain a strong and active group within the American Legion Family and Bill continues to volunteer as a current Vice President in the organization he launched.

After the Army Bill made his way to Wall Street where he worked as the Lead Electrician of the New York Stock Exchange retiring in 2004. Bill's life partner of 44 years is Donna, who herself is an ALA member and active in Post activities. Bill and Donna returned to the Pittsburgh area during 2006 to be close to their son's Bill and Brian, their six grandkids and daughters-in-law Jen and Melissa. On any given day you may see the Allan family at the Post enjoying a family dinner or supporting a charitable event. That's just who they are.



