

## Illinois Guardsman Remembers Father, All Veterans

Written by Sgt. 1st Class Rob Fafoglia, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment  
Monday, 04 November 2013 11:15

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ROCKFORD, IL (11/04/2013)(readMedia)-- Veteran's Day means something different to everyone. For some, it is a time to grieve for what has been lost. For others, it is celebrated for the freedoms fought for and gained.

For Illinois Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Lawrence Orsborn Jr., it is a moment for reflection and pride.

"Twice a year, on Memorial Day and Veteran's Day, families and friends meet at the LZ (Landing Zone) Peace Memorial located at Midway Village in **Rockford, Illinois**," said Orsborn, a recruiting and retention noncommissioned officer with Company D, Recruit Sustainment Battalion in Aurora, Ill. "The event is held to pay honor and tribute to the veterans, both living and on the wall of the memorial. They are Vietnam veterans from Winnebago County."

Orsborn said both are solemn days to remember and honor those who came before and served their country.

"It's not about the sales we see on TV...it's about the men and women of the past who gave the ultimate sacrifice for their beliefs," said Orsborn, a **Rockford, Ill.**, native. "It allows peace for the families of those who were lost, and a way to honor who those men and women were. To

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not forget their memory, to hold that piece of history close to your heart."

Orsborn's father served in Vietnam during the Tet Offensive, from 1967 to 1969. His example ultimately influenced his son to join.

"My father's influence is everything I try to hold dearly each day," said Orsborn. "To teach new recruits to be proud of our flag, and the rights of freedom for all those oppressed, no matter where that takes you or what you may face."

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Stephen Cooper, the Joint Force Headquarters' command staff chaplain, usually does the benediction and closing prayers for these events. He said the day is full of meaning for all veterans and must be remembered.

"We stand on the very tall shoulders of the Soldiers, Marines, Airmen and Sailors who went before us," said Cooper, also a **Rockford** native. "We must never forget our heritage and the blood, sweat and tears that were shed building that heritage. For Vietnam veterans this is perhaps even more the case since, for the most part, they did not receive their due recognition and honor when they came home."

Cooper also said this day holds a special significance for Orsborn.

"These events are extremely significant for Staff Sgt. Orsborn," he said. "Not only is he a combat vet himself, but his father's name is on the LZ Peace Memorial wall as a fallen Vietnam veteran."

Orsborn agreed the day means much to him.

"On those hallowed days, I get to stand and read the fifth panel of names," said Orsborn. "I stutter, I cry...I am proud to read the name, Lawrence Edward Orsborn Sr., my own name, my namesake, my father and my best friend. It hurts each and every time. Family and veterans are

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always encouraged to speak. The voices heard echo in the wind and our hearts."

This year marks the 50th anniversary since the Vietnam War. Cooper emphasized the importance of events such as these, as they have a direct impact on those serving today.

"Anecdotally, this very group of Vietnam vets was key in my 'recovery' from my time in Iraq," he said. "I grew up with Vietnam vets as my heroes. To have them look at me, a fellow combat vet, in the eye and consider me a brother was incomprehensibly momentous to me."

Orsborn echoed this sentiment.

"The importance of the Vietnam war is vast," Cooper said. "From a historical perspective, it opened up the racial balances of our own country. Men volunteered and were drafted. Women saw the grimaces of combat as nurses, saving lives both physically and mentally. Back home our nation was at war over serving or not. The younger generation needs to understand what choices can do to our country."

As the years go by, Orsborn said he will continue to participate in events like these and honor the

memory of all veterans.

"It is very humbling to speak of these brave men; to speak of the passion I have for the memory of my father," Orsborn said. "I can honestly say that my heart yearns to talk to him again, to show him the man I have become and the children I have raised, to show him the Soldiers I have enlisted and the passion I display to them about service to this great nation."

Orsborn said his father is and will continue to be his role model in both his military career and life.

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"The main inspiration I have is my dad's shell casing from his funeral," he said. I carry that every day with me, everywhere I go, no matter my clothing. It is with me, as is my dad, eternally."