

## WE WERE SOLDIERS

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I hadn't given much recent thought to my military career in the long ago but driving cross-country from Tulsa last spring brought me up short. Half way across Missouri on the interstate that follows old Route 66, I spotted the telltale sign marking the turnoff for Fort Leonard Wood. Fort Lost-in-the-Woods we called it four decades ago when I was dispatched there, fresh out of college, for eight weeks of infantry basic training. Named for the general who fought Geronimo, the base was carved out of the Mark Twain National Forest as the Fifth Army's training center -- 70,000 acres of hills and rock, every square inch of which we seemed to examine on our bellies during that bleak introduction to military life.

I had dreaded the idea of the Army interrupting my budding career but international tensions demanded otherwise, so I resigned myself to the inevitable. If truth be told, I'm not sure to this day if I really qualified. The bus hauling us to the examining station made an unexpected pit stop just before we lined up for physicals. So when right off the bat the docs asked for a specimen, my well had run dry. Astride the latrine next to me, a muscular Muslim from Detroit recognized my plight and happily volunteered to fill my jar with his overflow. Whether under false pretenses or not, I passed anyway. In short order I was introduced to the GI haircut, PT at dawn, KP and the grease trap, the infiltration course-- it was all as tough and humiliating as the age-old design called for.

Strangely, though, soldiering wasn't as forbidding as I had suspected it would be. Some of our leaders turned out to be a good bit more human than some of the college professors I had so recently left behind. The overall tone of barracks living was amazingly high-minded, a far cry from life in a college dorm.

I grew particularly fond of our aging first sergeant, a grizzled Puerto Rican named Quitero Roldan. He drove us hard by day but displayed a fatherly sympathy for our homesick concerns. He worried about our physical progress and the girl friends we left behind. "If you are fat, we'll take it off, and if you're skinny, we'll put it on and you'll leave here with your life's weight," he told us. As for the girls, he wisely advised that if they don't wait for you, they weren't worth it in the first place. Well, I was jilted two weeks into basic and I stand here today at least 40 pounds over his weight limit.

By the time my enlistment ended and I had been transferred from the rocks of Missouri to the swamps and bugs of South Carolina, I wasn't exactly brain-washed but I had developed an appreciation for life in the infantry that I hadn't foreseen. I had learned to shoot straight and was reasonably confident that my M-1 could carry me safely through combat. Above all, my days in uniform erased my college cynicism about things military.

I had spent my teen years poking fun at my father's tales of his World War I heroics at Camp Taylor. But now I entered adulthood admiring his sense of patriotism and affection for the sergeant major's uniform he once wore. Mark Twain was right. I came home from my stint in the Army surprised to discover all that the old man had learned while I was gone.

Looking back, some experts in American public opinion would argue that civilian regard for the military at that time was beginning to lessen as World War II memories receded and the country tired of the endless Cold War tensions. A seedbed was being formed for the radical turnabout in attitudes that Vietnam would bring only a half-dozen years later. So I suppose my own experience ran somewhat counter to the outside world. But it gave me a valuable vantage point from which to witness the tragic drama that was about to unfold.

As if I needed any more convincing, it wasn't long before I was to meet a career soldier who made an indelible imprint on how I would ever after regard military people.

My wife and I hadn't been married long before we were introduced to a fellow Hoosier named Tom Metsker. He had married one of my wife's sorority sisters and was one of those larger-than-life figures whose outsized personality was evident from our very first encounter.

Tom was a Foreign Service brat. His father worked in Japan, Korea and later Africa for the Agency for International Development and the American Red Cross. Tom and his sister spent their early childhood abroad. His mother brought them back to Indiana for high school while their dad was engaged in a hardship tour. Family members debate to this day whether the father was a closet agent for the CIA. There is some sketchy evidence. Those who find the notion preposterous point to his gentle nature but another relative argues that gentleness would have been a perfect cover for covert activities.

Early on, Tom displayed exceptional athletic prowess. His high school football team won the state championship. He was a track standout, a pole vaulter, and a fierce competitor. He possessed an irrepressible streak of derring-do.

So it seemed logical that for college Tom ended up as a cadet at The Citadel, the West Point of the South, where the training is based on four pillars of academics, spirituality, physical fitness and military conduct.

In point of fact, no discipline could completely contain Tom's youthful spirit. He never sat still. He once rappelled down the side of The Citadel library in full face paint and camouflage. In his junior year, en route back to campus from helping his team win the Southern Conference track championship, he stopped at a roadside fireworks stand, bought a five-shot aerial bomb and later slipped out in the still of night to place it with delayed fuse under the regimental commander's window. The ensuing explosions brought startled cadets leaping from their beds while the prank's perpetrator slipped away

undetected.

Tom wasn't quite so lucky in his senior year when he engineered a caper that is still celebrated in the legends of The Citadel. The school's homecoming football game was coming up and one night Tom convinced 15 fellow gymnasts they should raid arch-rival Presbyterian College. They piled into three cars for the four-hour drive and in the cover of midnight darkness entered the small Presbyterian campus. One group of them broke into the trophy room and took away all the treasures. Another spray painted in big yellow letters "PC got no guts" on the stadium press box. Still another limed the football field to spell out "Citadel 77, PC 0." As they prepared to escape, Tom eyed a welcome sign hanging from a high pole and decided to claim it as one last souvenir. He shimmed up the pole, unhooked half of the sign and was reaching for the other half when his hand slipped. The heavy object clattered noisily to the ground below. Lights started coming on as the raiding party scrambled to their vehicles. Tom turned his ignition key but the car's engine failed to start, again and again. The panicked cadets decided to pile into the other two cars and make their getaway, escaping along a stretch of newly built but unopened interstate highway, with lights out. They arrived back in Charleston only minutes before reveille but were detected making a run past the guarded main gate in the pre-dawn. It didn't take long for the abandoned car to be traced to Tom. When confronted, he steadfastly refused to identify his co-conspirators. So the military tribunal, which found him guilty of gross poor judgment, meted out a punishment of walking so much guard duty he had time for little else during the balance of his final year in college. Nonetheless, the school did award him a diploma at graduation time.

These high jinks suggested the presence of some of the very leadership qualities the military sought. Tom had a serious side as well. He was a student of history and the idea of defending his country appealed to his idealism. He spoke of it as the job he wanted to do. So it was almost a foregone conclusion that he would become a U.S. Army officer and pursue it as his career choice. A lithe six-footer with an engaging personality, he cut an impressive figure.

He and Cathy met on a blind date and they eloped on October 5, 1962. He shipped out for Germany three days later. She went back to college and rejoined him in six months when he returned to Ft. Benning, Georgia, with his combat-ready unit. He was well on his way to becoming a Green Beret in the Special Forces, marking his entry into the ranks of the Army elite. He had been trained as an airborne infantryman and had been to Ranger school. His next assignment would take him to Washington to study the Laotian language. Ten days before he left, Cathy gave birth to their first child, a daughter they named Karen.

It was about that time that Tom and I struck up a friendship, getting acquainted while our wives attended weddings of their college crowd. I had seen my share of military personnel but Tom topped them all in his energy, his conviction, his overall presence. He was about ready to make the rank of captain but I thought I could foresee the day when he would wear the silver stars of a general.

Looking back, it seems strange that the two times we were together in the year before he shipped out for Vietnam, someone was around who inadvertently pointed up the qualities in Tom's character.

The first time was at a party at Christmas 1964 where another guest, an anti-war activist from Minneapolis, tried to lecture him.

"Look," Tom replied with no rancor, "I hate war as much as you do. If I didn't, I probably wouldn't be doing what I'm doing. The thing you don't understand is that freedom has a price - and each new generation must be willing to pay it. Your kind of peace talk sounds fine, except it doesn't work. It ignores the facts of life."

Later when he was visiting I took him to the YMCA for a workout because by that time he had orders to go to Vietnam and he wanted to keep a keen edge on his superb physical condition. In the weightlifting room another fellow started needling him about the futility of his job.

"I'm a professional fighter," he replied, "a professional killer, if you want to call me that. I get paid for what I do and I'm doing it by my free choice. But there's something more to it than that. I can't explain it - it's not only a job I want to do, it's a job I have to do."

With his August departure for Vietnam drawing near, Tom found a house he rented for Cathy and their infant daughter in the small Indiana river town of Newburgh so she could be near her family. My wife and I happened to be living in an apartment just down the street. It was clear that ominous clouds were gathering over Indochina. Just before Tom left we talked about the dangers he faced. He was under no illusions but typically he was excited about going because it was his job to be there. He made me promise to take care of his "girls" and we planned to share a special bottle of wine on his homecoming the following August.

The leave-taking was especially tough on Cathy. Not only did she have a baby to care for but she was expecting another child. She forged ahead, though, and tried to line up a job teaching school.

We heard from Tom a while later in a brief note, reporting that he had arrived at his new post on August 6. He mentioned that he was learning to eat wild dog, presumably as part of his work as an adviser to the South Vietnamese army (ARVN), assigned to pacify villages in the early stages of the Vietnam struggle. Counter-guerilla warfare it was called. But most of all he wanted to be assured that we were watching over his family.

For some time the Pentagon had been experimenting with the creation of air assault infantry units - a fresh and deadly new chapter in the art of warfare. The idea was to introduce the use of helicopters to speed the infantry into battle with scalpel precision, inserting them in places where they could surprise and destroy enemy forces. The

concept had been successfully tested at Ft. Benning in the largest field exercises since World War II. So in a televised address on July 25, 1965, in one of the initial major escalations of the worsening situation, Lyndon Johnson told the nation he had ordered the airmobile fighters to Vietnam. The force was renamed the 1st Air Cavalry Division and carried the historic colors of a proud fighting force whose exploits began in the Civil War and extended through service in the Pacific during World War II and in Korea.

Because President Johnson refused to make a formal declaration of war and believed he could carry out the fight on the cheap, the division arrived in Vietnam short of key personnel. So in October an "Infusion Program" was devised to fill these slots with officers and noncommissioned officers already in Vietnam in other units. They were presumably knowledgeable about the enemy. It was that program that brought Capt. Tom Metsker to the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, as its S-2 intelligence officer. Ironically, the 7th Cav is the same regiment that General George Armstrong Custer commanded at Little Bighorn.

Tom had the good fortune to team up with a man who would become a legend of the Vietnam fighting, Col. Hal Moore, the battalion commander from Bardstown, Ky., by way of West Point and Harvard. Each morning he and Tom shared a five-mile run together around the new air cavalry base at An Khe. Colonel Moore liked Tom so well he wanted him to command one of the battalion's four companies as soon as an opening developed.

In this autumn of 1965, America's high command was increasingly frustrated by its inability to combat the elusive tactics of the Viet Cong and was under mounting pressure from the Washington politicians to show results. The role of the newly arrived air cavalry was to launch "search and destroy" missions in Pleiku province in the Central Highlands of that skinny country hugging the South China Sea. It was a military maxim in that part of the world that the force which controls the Central Highlands controls South Vietnam.

The war into which the United States was increasingly being drawn was now reaching a critical juncture. Ho Chi Minh, leader of North Vietnam, had accepted a daring plan from his younger military advisers to begin sending units of his own People's Army to the south to accelerate the fight that up to then had been carried out mostly by indigenous Viet Cong guerillas. Three superbly trained regiments, numbering more than two thousand soldiers, were sent down the Ho Chi Minh Trail to establish a base in the hills and caves of the 2400-foot Chu Pong massif that hugged Vietnam's border with Cambodia and served as a key funnel into the Central Highlands. They, too, were spoiling for a fight. Their leaders wanted to learn how to combat the new American mobile force and to see how their foot soldiers would fare against the high tech enemy.

So the stage was set for the first major military engagement between U.S. troops and regular units of the North Vietnamese People's Army. And it would take the form of the first full-scale search-and-destroy mission ever to be conducted using airmobile warfare tactics.

The man chosen to lead the assault was Colonel Moore. He was assigned 16 Huey troop transport helicopters to shuttle his 450-man battalion, and two 105 mm howitzer batteries of 12 guns each to provide close artillery support.

The dueling ground would be the Ia Drang Valley, a remote and inaccessible sanctuary used by the Communists as an infiltration route into the south in their long war with the French. The exact spot picked in aerial reconnaissance by Colonel Moore for the helicopter assault was a 100-yard clearing, no bigger than a football field, amid a tangle of scrub brush, ravines and huge sun-baked termite hills. To the immediate west rose the Chu Pong massif. The place would be forever known as Landing Zone X-ray.

The plan called for Moore's battalion to be ferried into X-ray from the Special Forces camp at Plei Me, 14.3 miles to the east. It was a 13- minute, 15-second chopper ride away. Even if all went well, it would require four hours to get all four companies of the battalion on the ground since the landing zone could accommodate no more than eight helicopters at a time. The artillery support would be located at Landing Zone Falcon, four miles distant.

At approximately 10:30 a.m. on Sunday morning, November 14th, 1965, Colonel Moore boarded the first chopper accompanied by Tom Metsker as his intelligence arm, and by his sergeant major Basil Plumley, his radio operator and Tom's interpreter. The craft was piloted by Maj. Bruce Crandall, known by his radio handle as "Ancient Serpent 6." He was the commander of the helicopters in the Ia Drang Valley and was later cited for heroism after flying 756 separate missions. Preceding this vanguard of airborne troops was a carefully coordinated artillery and aerial rocket barrage to clear out the landing zone. Just as the shelling was lifted, the first eight choppers swooped toward the opening in the jungle below at 110 miles per hour, dropped down to disgorge their passengers, staying on the ground hardly 10 seconds, and quickly soared off to pick up another load. The arriving troops fanned out rapidly into the area surrounding the landing zone while the battalion leaders established a makeshift command post around one of the termite hills.

It was a perilous moment made more so by the fact that the Americans had, without knowing it, landed virtually in the middle of the three regiments of the People's Army -- the 66th, the 33rd and the 320th. The North Vietnamese commander, Sr. Lt. Col. Nguyen Huu An, sat in a command bunker on the adjoining mountain hardly 1½ miles away. As soon as he was apprised of the enemy's arrival, he ordered an attack. The well armed troops began organizing along their mountain hideouts and started moving into position down the network of trails into the valley.

By 12:15 p.m., with roughly half of the Americans landed and the arrivals lurching on C-rations, the shooting started. Small probing actions soon became a crescendo of steady automatic weapons fire. By 1 p.m. the North Vietnamese were attacking in large numbers. The two sides soon became locked in a savage battle as the continuing waves of helicopters dodged intense gunfire to bring more force to bear on

the deteriorating situation.

At 1:30 p.m., Colonel Moore and his radio operator joined Sgt. Plumley and Tom near the dry creek bed that was a key feature of the landscape north of the landing zone. There the fighting was especially intense with the enemy forces trying to break through the Americans' lines of defense. Sgt. Plumley remembers Tom dropping to one knee, firing his M-16 rifle as North Vietnamese soldiers became clearly visible only 75 yards away. Within minutes a gunshot struck Tom in the shoulder, rendering him unable to continue fighting. He was bandaged by Sgt. Arthur J. Newton of Alpha Company and sent to a collection point for the rapidly rising number of wounded.

It was soon obvious that never before had the North Vietnamese carried the fight to a U.S. unit with such tenacity. They were attacking from four points and the American defenders, drawing on their raw courage, were repulsing them from point-blank range. At times the combatants fought hand to hand with fixed bayonets. The Americans employed withering M-60 machine gun fire, mortars and hand grenades. Artillery support had zeroed in precisely, using radioed coordinates. The ensuing curtain of exploding shells offered some safeguard to the perimeter of the landing zone, however fragiley. Four thousand rounds of protective cover would be fired into X-ray that day. Overhead, U.S. planes and gunships strafed the area with bullets and bombs as circumstance allowed.

Casualties mounted on both sides with the brave Americans giving more than they were getting. Tenaciously they held to their tiny position in the jungle clearing, North Vietnamese dead were stacked atop each other in some places. The roar of the battle was deafening. Those who were there described the horror as unimaginable. Veterans from the Korean conflict said later they had never experienced such fury.

It was not until 2:30 p.m. that the last company commander could be ferried into the battleground with his men. He was Capt. L. R. (Ray) Lefebvre, who arrived with lead elements of Delta Company. As his Huey landed, he was startled to see an enemy soldier standing in full view just ahead, firing at the descending craft. Quickly he directed his men to take up positions at the western edge of the landing zone. No sooner were they in place than a wave of up to 200 North Vietnamese fighters tried to overtake the landing zone itself. A steady blast of automatic weapons fire accompanied by tactical aerial support turned back the assault. But within seven minutes Capt. Lefebvre was "shockingly" wounded, his right arm shattered, bone protruding, his dangling hand mangled. He was in danger of bleeding to death as he was placed in a poncho and dragged to the command post where Tom also awaited evacuation for his shoulder injury.

The fight had grown so intense that the Americans were in desperate need of more ammunition. The Huey landings, however, were proving more and more hair-raising. Responding to Colonel Moore's radioed calls for help, Major Crandall and his top flying mate volunteered to bring in a load and to take away some of the wounded, including Capt. Lefebvre and Tom. But it would have to be quick. Moore directed the landing at the far end of X-ray, exposing himself to the withering fire. Rapidly the ammunition was thrown off the hovering craft and seven of the seriously wounded clambered aboard. Tom took the last open seat. Then he saw the stretcher party rushing up with Lefebvre. He got down to give up his place to the bleeding Delta Company commander and to help put him aboard through the Huey's open door. As he was lifting the stretcher, Tom was shot in the back by a sniper. The impact hurled him forward into the chopper at the moment the craft started rising into the air. The crew chief pulled him aboard just as the rotors of the overloaded helicopter hit the treetops on its ascent from this valley of death.

When Major Crandall arrived back in the staging area at Plei Me less than 15 minutes later, Captain Thomas Curtis Metsker was pronounced dead. He was 26 years of

age. He had literally given up his life for his comrade.

It would be hours before Colonel Moore and those on the ground in X-ray learned that Tom had been killed.

He was one of the 305 young Americans who died in the battle of Ia Drang, which continued to rage for two more hellish days and nights at LZ X-ray and then for two even bloodier days at nearby Landing Zone Albany, involving the 1st Battalion's sister unit, before the two sides drew back. By way of comparison, no regiment at Gettysburg, North or South, suffered the casualties incurred by the 7th Cavalry at Ia Drang.

As soon as it ended, both sides recognized they had been engaged in a battle that would prove to be one of the most significant of the Vietnam War. Both sides considered they had won a signal victory. In the grisly calculus of Gen. William Westmoreland and his command staff, the body count of 3561 North Vietnamese dead translated into a kill ratio of 12 to 1, giving birth to the ill-fated American strategy of attrition. Meanwhile, Ho Chi Minh and his military high command gained confidence from the fact that they had managed to withstand the high tech fire storm of the newly arrived Americans and had fought to no worse than a draw.

The nightmare of Vietnam would last another eight long years. By the time it was over, 58,000 American lives would be lost. But that, as we know, would be only part of the agony.

It was in the early evening of November 14th when the Defense Department notification of Tom's death some 36 hours earlier reached the little house on Water Street in Newburgh. We received a phone call from Cathy's cousin reporting the crushing news and rushed down the street to be with her. There was nothing that could dispel the numbing grief. Cathy had suffered a miscarriage the month before and now she had to face this worst burden of all. She was a 24-year-old widow with a 17-month-old child.

Tom was buried with full honors at Arlington National Cemetery. The young men from the wrestling team he had coached while stationed in Washington joined the mourners.

Meanwhile, the Vietnam protest movement was taking shape as a major factor in the American political landscape. In the same month as Tom's burial, across the continent the first mass antiwar demonstration was being organized in San Francisco by the Beat Generation poet, Allen Ginsberg. Already the poison of a nation against itself was abroad in the land and it was destined to take many more deadly turns.

Public opinion was turning decisively against the war effort, with a significant number of Americans no longer believing that their country's motives were righteous in seeking to prevent a Communist aggressor from taking over an independent country. The political leadership in Washington became accustomed to lying about the war's

progress. The draft became a mockery of evasion by those who could afford to do so. Those draftees who couldn't later turned to drugs and racial violence.

When soldiers who survived Vietnam started coming home, it was to no welcome, no parades, no respect. They were told on the plane to change into civilian clothes before they got off. They learned never to talk about their service. They watched as Hollywood demonized them.

The widows and their families were treated to not much better. Many of their fellow countrymen who came to hate the war couldn't differentiate between the wars itself and those who had been ordered to fight it. The soldiers who saw it as their duty to go were branded as well.

Looking back on those awful days, Cathy recalls that she "wanted to die." The pain was "indescribable" and would last for years. She threw herself into a teaching job and eventually remarried but the scars left by Tom's death never properly healed, in part because a nation in upheaval would not permit healing.

If anything, Tom's death was even worse for the daughter who never knew him. As Karen grew up and was thrown into a radicalized culture, she was haunted by the ever-present question of why did her father have to die.

It was a question many of us who loved Tom carried in our hearts as well. For years I could not fly into the Washington airport without contemplating the deeper meaning of the life of the man who was buried in that prominent graveyard below.

Tom had died a hero's death but Vietnam had eliminated the place of heroism in our way of life.

The ancients well understood that virtue promotes the commonweal and that honor is the touchstone of virtue. But by the latter half of the 20th Century in the United States, the very word honor had come to sound alien, thin and hollow. When America's cognoscenti heard it, they thought they must look to see what design against their liberty and their comfort the word concealed. In that confused era, they distrusted honor as a principle of moral and political life.

As he sought safety on the battlefield of Shrewsbury, it was Falstaff who famously questioned the concept of honor, dismissing it as nothing more than a "word" or mere "air." Falstaff would have fit well with America's flower children and their adult sympathizers.

Surviving the fiery hell at Ia Drang had been a young, rifle-toting United Press war correspondent from Texas, Joseph L. Galloway. "I owed my life to those soldiers," he later explained. "I swore on leaving that place that I would do my best to tell the story of how they died, that I would do what I could to ensure that they and their deeds live in American history." So by the time the 25th anniversary of the pivotal battle drew near,

Joe was a senior writer at *U.S. News & World Report* and he proposed that he and Hal Moore provide the account he had promised.

Thus, the magazine's cover story for its issue of October 29, 1990, told for the first time how American soldiers had fought with such bravery and honor in the little-known battle that shaped the war. A jaded nation seemed at last to stop and ponder. For Cathy and Karen, as well as for the scores of other families of survivors, Joe Galloway's account offered facts they had never been able to learn about how their husbands, fathers and sons had lived and died.

Wanting to know more, Cathy decided to write a letter to Joe. He put her in touch with Colonel Moore. Out of those contacts she and her daughter learned that Ray Lefebvre had endured an 18-month recovery from his near-fatal wounds and was now a trucking executive in Georgia. So Karen wrote asking if he planned to attend the Ia Drang Alumni reunion in Washington for the 25th anniversary observance and if so, could she meet him. He hadn't intended to go but the letter convinced him he should. There he met for the first time Cathy and Karen. He was able to tell Tom's daughter that had it not been for her father's actions, he "probably would not be alive today."

At that same reunion was another veteran of the battle who had attended The Citadel with Tom. He delivered to Cathy the ruck sack Tom had been wearing when he was killed, explaining that "I have been looking for you for 25 years."

For Cathy and Karen, such encounters allowed the long-needed healing to begin.

The favorable public reaction to the *U.S. News* article prompted Random House to ask Joe Galloway and Colonel Moore to expand the story into a book. They had spent 10 painstaking years researching and writing the historical narrative that now emerged as *We Were Soldiers Once... and Young*. When the book was published in 1992, it became an immediate best seller. For second year classes at West Point, it also became required reading. Eventually even Hollywood was willing to lay aside its stereotypes about Vietnam and to convert the book into last year's popular movie that for once treated the misunderstood warriors with sympathy and admiration.

The role of Tom Metsker seemed to strike an especially poignant chord with many. A university president whose son was planning to attend The Citadel was so moved that he suggested the school needed to memorialize the man who had laid down his life for his comrade in arms. Last fall The Citadel established the Thomas C. Metsker Leadership Education Fund to celebrate the heroism of its 1961 graduate.

And there is a final O. Henry twist. Joe Galloway, who did so much to help heal the wounds of so many and has been hailed by Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf as the finest war correspondent of his generation, became a widower. Tom's daughter, Karen, was prying herself from an abusive marriage that had produced three children. Out of their meetings at the Ia Drang reunions, a warm and protective friendship grew between the war correspondent and the young woman who had lost a

father in the battle he had covered. On October 24, 1998, Joe and Karen were married. Today they live happily in a suburb of Washington, she a graduate architect/designer and he back at his old stand, teaching a new generation of reporters how to cover a war.

Not far from them, just off Constitution Avenue across the Potomac River from Arlington Cemetery, stands the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. And there on Panel 3 East, Line 49, is etched the name of Captain Thomas C. Metsker, Indianapolis, Ind., Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry. With silent eloquence, it commemorates Tom's last full measure of devotion.

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'And fight and die  
is death destroying death'  
-- Carlisle, *Richard II*, Act III, 2

### SOURCES

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