

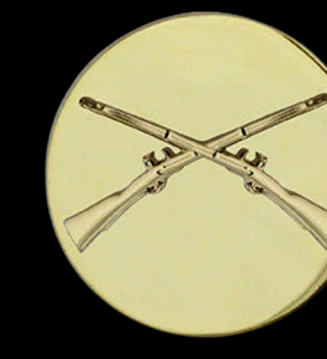


RUSSELL KEITH BLATZ

(SEPTEMBER 10, 1946 - JANUARY 8, 1968)



Army
Specialist 4



Infantry



A Company,
3rd Battalion,
39th Infantry



9th
Infantry
Division

Years of Service: 1966 - 8 JAN 1968

Medals & Awards:

Bronze Star

Purple Heart

National Defense Service Medal

Vietnam Service Medal

Vietnamese Civic Action 1st Class

Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation

Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal

Combat Infantry 1st Award

Infantry Shoulder Cord



Specialist 4 Russell Blatz thrived in the United States Army, according to his friends from home. Drafted in 1966, SP4 Blatz began his tour of duty in March, 1967, and just a few months later, was awarded the Bronze Star with "V" device for heroism. SP4 Blatz was cited for distinguishing himself "by valorous actions on July 7, 1967, in a cordon and search operation near Rach Kien, Vietnam."* In this operation, Blatz and his comrades had been navigating thick vegetation when a booby trap injured four of the men. Blatz immediately attended to the most serious injuries, while warning others of additional traps. Repeatedly, Blatz traversed thick, trap-laden grass in order to acquire bandages, treat casualties, and lead medics to the injured men with "complete disregard for his own safety."* His life-saving efforts, and his "courage and devotion to duty"* earned him a promotion from Private First Class to Specialist 4.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Russell Blatz moved to Lynchburg in 1961, where he lived with his sister, Mrs. Hazel Jensen, on Timberlake Road. A graduate of the class of 1965, he played softball and basketball at Brookville High School, was a member of the History Club and Varsity Track team, and lettered in varsity golf. Blatz left a lasting impression on those who knew him in his youth. A younger next-door neighbor remembered Blatz as "the coolest guy in the world," who taught him how to swim and loved "listening to Beatles music really loud." In 2023, a fellow Brookville High School alumnus, Ted Stables, honored Blatz on Memorial day, promising "your high school friends and I will never forget you."**

*Blatz's Bronze Star Award citation

**The Wall of Faces