

Veteran of the Month January 2006

Congratulations to William "Bill" Paris!



In partnership with the Veterans Coordination Commission, we are pleased to present the January, 2006 Veteran of the Month – William "Bill" Paris.

A native of Lansing, Michigan, William Paris enlisted in the United States Army in June, 1962. He served in both the enlisted and officer ranks until his retirement. Bill was initially trained as an armor crewman but went on to serve in most of the enlisted ranks and in a variety of skills in Korea and Germany in the mid 1960s. Bill re-enlisted and went to Infantry Officer Candidate School and upon graduation was sent to Vietnam and placed in command of an airborne infantry platoon in combat. During parts of 1967 and 1968, Bill's unit was involved in almost every major engagement. He was given the Silver Star, Bronze Star Medal with w/V device, and an Army Commendation Medal w/V device for actions against the enemy.

In the fall of 1968, Bill volunteered to attend helicopter flight school and returned the next year to combat with an air cavalry unit. As the Reconnaissance Platoon Commander, Bill was involved again in heavy action against the enemy in both Vietnam and Cambodia. He was awarded another Silver Star for gallantry, along with the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Purple Heart medal, for wounds received when he was shot down and missing from action. After a daring rescue, Bill went back to flying as the unit's troop operations officer once he was released from the hospital. Bill went on to staff and command duties in the Army, retiring as a Major in 1982.

After retirement, Bill served as a Deputy Sheriff in Colorado for three years. He then worked for the Disabled American Veterans and for a period of eight years, represented veterans with both the US Department of Veterans Affairs and the Social Security Administration as an advocate. Bill and his wife, Joan, helped open the first shelter in the United States for single veterans. He again retired from the workforce as Chief of Security for a resort hotel in Colorado due to medical problems stemming from his service in Vietnam. Bill continues to serve veterans and their families by assisting with appeals to the Social Security Administration for Disability without pay. He is also a member of the Honor Guard of Post 1273, of the VFW in Rapid City.

Bill's military awards are: Silver Star w/V device, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star medal w/V device, 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart Medal, Meritorious Service medal, Air medal w/19 Oak leaf cluster, Army Commendation medal w/V device, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Good Conduct medal w/4 bars, National Defense Service medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign medal w/6 campaign stars, Korea Defense Service medal, Reserve Service medal, Army NCO Schools, Army Service medal, Army Overseas Service medal w/2d numeral, Republic of Vietnam Medal w/60 device. Korean Presidential Unit Citation, Republic of Vietnam Presidential Unit Citation, Army Valorous Unit citation and the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry.

Bill is a life member of the VFW, the Disabled American Veterans and the Purple Heart Society. He has written several articles for service magazines, and was honored as the US Armor Society's Author of the Year in 1975.