

## SERGEANT BOB SCOTT—Airborne all the way!



When I think of Scotty, I immediately think of this little guy, weighted down with equipment: hand grenades, something bulging out of ever jungle fatigue pocket. Scotty was the epitome of a soldier. Few of us ever reach our destiny in a way—a few have it thrust upon them without asking: this was Bob Scott. If there was anything that was his destiny, it was being a soldier, a paratrooper, a grunt, ground pounder, a fighter. He seemingly was born for it. How can you be born for such a thing. You can't; it is called being a combat soldier. Scotty, having had it thrust upon him, embraced it. I have many images.

Being a chaplain often brings with it lots of ambiguity, meaning questioning. What is my role? What am I doing here? Scotty once said to me, “don't worry about that stuff, it will take care of itself. What you have to be concerned about is me and all my guys.” I never forgot it. It was the single best piece of advice that I received in Vietnam or ever for that matter.

After Vietnam, for years, I was not in contact with Scotty but then we had our first reunion around the dedication of the *Vietnam Memorial*. There Scotty was, the same in many ways, but not the same. He, like all of us, could never truly be the same. War had enacted its toll; the aftermath of war had laid hold to all of us, through no fault of our own—we fought a war in Vietnam and then another at home. But, there was something about being together that brought us back, put us back in our AO—our *area of operations* in Vietnam. It was there, we were all together. Nothing had changed and everything had changed.

In subsequent years as we have had our reunions, mostly the *A Company* ones, we have been mesmerized by the idea of being together again decades after Vietnam. It was a surreal experience. We told our war stories, we recounted events, we laughed, we cried and we remembered!

Last year, Scotty helped me raise money to build a school in Vietnam. We named the school after Kenny Dyer, Scotty's best friend from Vietnam. Those two guys were a team of “point men.” *The bravest of all*. Scotty will always be “The Point Man.” In his book, *Rhymer in the Sunset*, Phil Woodall has a poem about Scotty called “Point Man.” Scotty wrote a book about Vietnam. One day, I want to see it published and called, simply, *Point Man*.

In many ways, Scotty was living on borrowed time. The writer of Ecclesiastes said, *for everything, there is a season, and time for every matter under heaven*. We are sad because we will miss the physical presence, the strength, the dedication, and the joy that Scotty brought to our lives. We are relieved—now he has passed from this life into the next. It is a continuing process—life and death. The circle is unbroken, it is broken. It is the process. We are born, we live our lives the best we can and then we die. It is the process. And, for all of us, this is the way it is.

***Sergeant Bob Scott knew this more than most.*** The poet, Angelo Patri, said it like this, “in one sense, there is no death. The life of a soul on earth lasts beyond his departure. You will always feel Scotty's life touching yours, his voice speaking to you, that spirit looking out of other eyes, talking to you in the familiar things he touched, worked with, loved as familiar friends. He lives on in your life and in the lives of all who knew him.

Airborne Scotty. The green light came on and you exited, soared, and made a perfect PLF (parachute landing fall). Scotty, we'll miss you.

Jerry Autry

Chaplain, (COL), USA. Ret [-BACK TO HOME PAGE](#)



Xmas at Chu Chi



Doc Smith waiting for Scotty

# Scotty's Vietnam



Company A, 1/501 Airborne Infantry Battalion, BACK TO HOME PG.  
101st Airborne Division

