

RICHARD “RICK” NOLTE

U.S. Navy veteran Rick Nolte spent his 21st birthday going through a fierce firefight on the front lines in the outskirts of Da Nang in Vietnam. This was quite a change from the Antelope Valley where he graduated from AVHS with the Class of 1965.

Rick was the head corpsman attached to the 3rd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment and the 1st Medical Battalion in Vietnam. Hospital Corpsmen served as enlisted medical specialists for the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Marine Corps, where they rendered emergency medical treatment which included initial treatment on the combat field.

From 1968 – 1969, Rick took care of his comrades, taking care of them through mortar barrage and firefights on the front lines; giving a tracheotomy with a ballpoint pen; sleeping standing up, leaning against a wall in the heavy rain surrounded by mosquitoes; filling his bandolier with medical supplies instead of ammunition; and dealing with foot-long centipedes and leeches dropping from the canopy at An Hoa. As a Corpsman, Rick was trained to handle multiple casualties under fire. He also assisted in the morgues and was a section leader in triage where he prepared the wounded for the doctor in charge. He received a field promotion to the rank of Hospitalman 2 while in Vietnam.

‘CORPSMAN UP!’ was the dreaded cry declaring that another Marine’s life was in jeopardy. And yet the call of ‘CORPSMAN UP!’ announced that the best we had to offer to the wounded Marine was on the way. Hope, was on the way. A quote from the 3rd Battalion, 26th Marine’s website.

In the U.S., Rick was stationed at Oakland Naval Hospital and Long Beach Naval Hospital. He was honorably discharged after 4 ½ years of active duty at home and abroad. After his military service Rick spent 34 years with the L.A. Co. Sheriff’s Department in the Antelope Valley from 1973 – 2007.