
VOTE IN HONOR OF A VET

Andre St. Laurent US Marine and Army Special Forces

Name Andre St. Laurent
Hometown New Britain, CT
Currently Deceased
Rank Not indicated
Unit US Marine and Army Special Forces



A US Marine and Army Special Forces Green Beret Vietnam Veteran. He was a Silver Star and Bronze Star Recipient with four Purple Hearts. He was awarded the Combat Infantry Badge, Master Parachutist Badge, Military Free Fall Badge, amongst other awards. More information will be passed along when it becomes available. Please keep his family in your prayers.

As part of the U.S. Army's mobile force in Vietnam, Andre J. St. Laurent's detachment regularly fought enemy troops on their own terms.

St. Laurent and nine other U.S. soldiers were crouched in a South Vietnamese jungle on the morning of Nov. 17, 1967, when they noticed a peculiar pruning job. He recalled how the Vietnamese had meticulously stripped leaves off every branch from knee-level down -- providing sight lines for a Vietnamese machine gun nest.

"You could see from a foxhole, but standing up, you couldn't see down," said St. Laurent, 63, of the Terryville section of Plymouth, who received the military's Silver Star on Sunday. Thirty-three years after he took command that Nov. 17, U.S. Rep. Nancy Johnson, R-6th District, awarded St. Laurent his commendation for gallantry in combat.

"We never dreamed it would be a base camp there," St. Laurent recalled during an afternoon reception at Johnson's district office on Myrtle Street. "Unfortunately, we found them waiting for us."

All 10 U.S. soldiers were hit by a barrage of machine-gun fire that killed the front "point man." St. Laurent took over as patrol leader for the group's supervising sergeant, who was seriously wounded in the head. St. Laurent detonated explosives to give his soldiers a smokescreen to help their escape, guided U.S. aircraft to fire on the Vietnamese base camp, and dragged the dead soldier's body out.

The shrapnel he received in the fighting remains in his knee. But obtaining the Silver Star took several tries, even though St. Laurent's first sergeant, Bernard W. Newman, recommended the medal soon after the battle, St. Laurent said. After five years on and off in Vietnam from 1967 to 1972, St. Laurent bears multiple stripes and a chest full of decorations.

These include four Purple Hearts, three Air Medals -- with a "V" for valor -- after he was shot down in his helicopter three times, three Army Commendation Medals, and three Presidential Unit Citations. .

"I kept going back because all of my friends were there," said the Canadian-born St. Laurent, who grew up in Waterbury. He joined the Marine Corps at 17 and switched to the Army at 26. "I had to support them, and they did the same for me."

When St. Laurent finally returned to the United States, he decided to lay low, feeling the unpopularity that service in Vietnam brought.

Home of the free because of the brave.

Remember those who served. All gave some. Some gave all.