

VIETNAM WAR VETERAN REUNITED WITH DOG TAG

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Charles Thompson: I set about with three of my best buddies, deciding to have a great trip, the trip of a lifetime. So we decided to go to Vietnam. I was also interested in the conflict, and what had happened there. It certainly had a cultural impact around the world. We were travelling North, up the coastline, just north of a town called Hue. Not knowing much about the area, we soon learned it was quite significant, a lot of battles had occurred there.

There was a guy on the side of the road who had a number of items, sort of bits of rusted metal, artifacts. It was in there that I made the interesting discovery. There was a dog tag. So I managed to rub off the dog tag and I could make out the name and it read “R A Tilghman Junior, US Marine Corps” and had a service number of there, so I felt compelled to return it to the person’s family.

Richard Tilghman: I went over to Vietnam in February of 1968. I was initially stationed just south of Da Nang, until I joined the aerial observer and flew in the backseat of a couple of airplanes. I don’t remember losing the dog tag. We used to wear them several ways, we sometimes tied them into our boot, down on the lace, put the lace of the boot through it and we also wore them around our necks, but I must confess, I do not remember losing it.

Charles Thompson: I was really excited when I managed to finally track down Mr. Tilghman. Not only had I been able to complete my goal and find Rick, but it also turned out that he worked in Finance and I was able to contact him directly through his company.

Richard Tilghman: I came into work, I get in at about 7.30 and I was checking my emails from the night before and one had arrived at 6.58 on December 1st, 2015. This one had a line in the subject line that I think “I have something that I think you would like to have” and I was expecting this to be an offer of 5 million dollars as long as I gave them all my pertinent information, but luckily Charles added the phrase “that I received on a recent trip in Vietnam” and I think the word Vietnam was what stopped me from deleting the email.



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The first thing I did was I looked up Charles on LinkedIn and found out that he was at BNY Mellon and I knew that we did a lot of work with BNY Mellon.

Charles Thompson: A contact at Mischler Financial very kindly emailed BNY Mellon and it managed to filter back down to me and I was completely surprised – they had agreed to sponsor me to go out, which was something I was very excited about and totally wasn't expecting.

Richard Tilghman: The most amazing part of getting the email and the dog tag was the fact that Charlie took the effort of feeling some responsibility for tracking down either the family of someone that might have been lost and perhaps never found to provide closure, and I think that was the emotion that got me the most.

It was nice to get my dog tag back but I was absolutely flabbergasted that Charlie wanted to take the effort to track me down.

Charles Thompson: Part of the reason for originally going to Vietnam was to learn a bit about the conflict and what had occurred out there, and I certainly could never have imagined that I'd go on to learn this much and to have this experience.

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