



James Boyd Reay papers

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A Brief Biography

I am the fourth of eight children who grew up in a modest home in the 1950's near the south shore of Lake Minnetonka's stunning Wayzata Bay. My parents and siblings all enjoyed hunting while I alone had no interest in guns. As the first in my family to attend college, during my freshman year at Bemidji State I wanted to become an elementary teacher but I struggled with the juxtaposition of my evangelical church teachings and my homosexuality. I didn't return for my sophomore year and was eventually drafted. I still hoped that God would guide my life to some useful purpose. Alas, following Army Basic Training I was immediately bussed to another Army Base for 8 weeks of Advanced Infantry Training and following a brief time at home, I was flown to Vietnam as a light weapons infantry soldier, receiving a Purple Heart for shrapnel injuries on my first day in the field!

Following military service, I returned to University but dropped out again. Struggling through the following years, I finally came to terms with my sexuality, determined my own personal spiritual beliefs, and met a wonderful man through a mutual friend at a Sunday Brunch on Lake Minnetonka. We have been together ever since. I'm thankful for our 40-plus years together. We love traveling domestically and abroad. I have been blessed to visit all 50 States and have vacationed on six continents.

My combat experience and Purple Heart injury caused some lasting Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) including a blood phobia, but it did not prevent me from enjoying a long, happy, and fulfilling life.
I am a lucky man!

James Boyd Reay
11018 West Palmeras Drive
Sun City, Arizona 85373
623.974.4218
jimreay@gmail.com
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