



## Former RAA added to Georgia Vet Hall of Fame

**H**is service was many years ago, but it was not forgotten. Atlanta Branch 73 retiree and former NALC Region 9 Regional Administrative Assistant Charles Windham was inducted into the Georgia Military Veterans Hall of Fame in November.

The hall of fame honored Windham for his “heroism and numerous acts of selfless bravery in Vietnam.”

Windham started carrying the mail in 1965 but was drafted into the Army in 1967. Recognizing his potential, the Army put him into an accelerated promotion program and he soon rose to the rank of staff sergeant. After his training at Fort Benning, GA, Windham was sent to a jungle warfare training facility at Fort Polk, LA, known as “Tigerland.”

“You knew, if you went to Tigerland, exactly where you were going,” he said. “You were going to Vietnam.”

From 1965 to 1975, service personnel from the United States fought alongside forces from South Vietnam and its allies against communist North Vietnam, whose military was backed by China and the Soviet Union. The draft in the U.S. ran from 1940 to 1973.

At Fort Polk and with further training in Vietnam, Windham prepared to take on the role of a leader of long-range reconnaissance patrols (LRRPs). He and four other LRRP unit members, with a Vietnamese guide and translator, would go into enemy-held areas to gather intelligence and sometimes engage the enemy.

“We would go out from three to seven to 10 days, depending on the



operation,” he said. “We would be put into an area where there were no other military operations to observe enemy operations and to find out what intelligence we could get.”

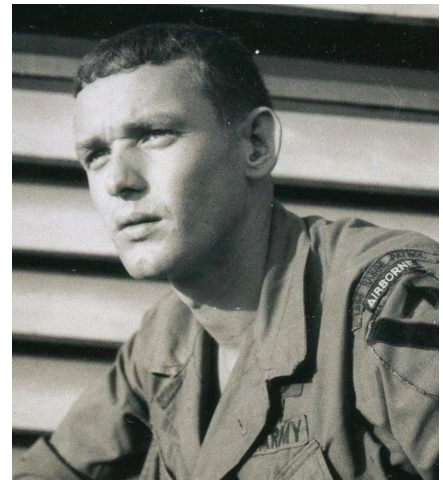
Windham completed 38 LRRP missions and distinguished himself in three of them. On Oct. 23, 1968; Dec. 7, 1968; and Feb. 9, 1969, Windham’s patrols encountered heavily armed North Vietnamese fighters and firefights broke out. Each time, the hall of fame noted, Windham displayed “undaunted courage, determined resolve, exemplary gallantry and brotherly care for his fellow soldiers.”

In one firefight, Windham was wounded by a grenade blast but continued to provide covering fire for his comrades to help them escape harm. He also dragged a wounded fellow soldier to safety under intense fire. For his actions, Windham was awarded the Purple Heart, two Bronze Stars and a Silver Star.

After completing his service, Windham left the Army and returned to carrying mail in his native Georgia. He served Branch 73 as a steward, trustee and vice president, and the Georgia State Association as vice president. He was named a regional administra-

**Above: The Georgia Military Veterans Hall of Fame inductees (Charles Windham is 7th from r)**

**Below: Windham in his Army uniform**



tive assistant for Region 9 in 1988, a post he held until retiring from the Postal Service in 2000.

Windham, whose daughter nominated him, was one of 17 veterans honored by the hall of fame last year, including former Georgia Sen. Max Cleland.

“It’s a great honor for me,” Windham said. “It’s probably one of the greatest honors that anyone could receive if you’re a veteran and you served.”