

In loving memory of Bryce R. Kramer (December 8, 1933-November 25, 2005)

On December 2, 2005, a very cold, windy, but sunny day, at the Ft. Indiantown Gap National cemetery in Pennsylvania, several VLOA members represented the Vinh Long Outlaw Association in paying last respects to one of our founding members, Bryce Kramer. Although Bryce had asked Gloria not to have a lot of people at his service, she said she wanted to have more than just the immediate family attend. As a result, over 50 people from various parts of Bryce's life came to pay their respects.

The committal service began with a short invocation by the local VFW post chaplain. An honor guard of three members of the VFW fired a salute volley for Bryce, followed by taps. Joe Clelan, who has been assisting Gloria Kramer with arrangements for the service, was adamant that the service include a live bugler, rather than a recording. Joe located a bugler, whose playing of taps reflected the dignity and honor due an American serviceman. The honor guard commander then placed three cartridge casings from the salute volley inside the folded national colors and presented the colors to me. It was my great honor to present the colors to Gloria with the thanks of an appreciative nation for his service. Col. Richard Pace, the post chaplain from Carlisle Barracks, PA (where Bryce and Gloria have attended services for many years) reflected on the virtues of faith, hope, and love, with particular emphasis on the greatest of these, love, which Bryce continually showed for his family, his friends and his nation.

Gloria had asked me to say a few words, which I was proud to do. After the cemetery service, Joe Clelan had also arranged for a get together at the Community Center at Ft. Indiantown Gap with a wonderful buffet meal. Other VLOA members who attended were Olen Thornton, Joe Clelan, and Bill Hensinger, who lives nearby and saw Bryce's obituary. Jeannette (Sanford) Smith, Jack's widow, drove up from Atlanta and accompanied us to the service. She and Gloria have been friends since Vinh Long days. I assured Gloria she would forever be part of the VLOA family.

Bryce was a great friend and a great soldier. All of us who attended his service reflected on what being a member of the Vinh Long Outlaws has meant to us, particularly when, as we pay our individual respects as we did yesterday, we represent the entire VLOA organization.

Submitted by Tom Anderson