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BUTCH BERG: PURPLE HEART RECIPIENT KEPT PERSEVERING

Vernon “Butch” W. Berg Jr. never quit. Despite several traumatic experiences through his lifetime, Berg, a Purple Heart recipient, was the only one to dictate his path.

Berg grew up on a family farm in Gilmantown before enlisting in the U.S. Marines at the age of 17 and honorably serving in Vietnam. After just three months, though, his deployment was cut short following a near-death experience. He was stationed on the border of Cambodia and Vietnam when he took on enemy gunfire, taking multiple rounds to the head.

Berg was severely wounded and left physically impaired following the incident. A fellow Marine who happened to be rushing past at the time helped get him to safety.

“I asked him to get me the hell out of there,” Berg said.

A helicopter stormed in, picked up Berg and transported him to the Philippines. He was stabilized and then was rushed to Japan before being transferred to Hawaii for further examination. From there, he was flown to California and then Maryland, where doctors told him the unfortunate news: He would never be able to walk again or use his left arm.

In typical fashion, the diagnosis never dampened his willpower. Through hard work and dedication, he prevailed and miraculously walked once again with just the assistance of a



Butch Berg, a Vietnam Veteran and Purple Heart recipient, passed away peacefully at the WVH at Chippewa Falls on June 26th.

cane.

Although bullet fragments embedded in his head served as a constant reminder of the trauma he once faced while serving, Berg went onto live a happy and successful life. He served in the military until 1969 and was the recipient of a Purple Heart Medal for his grueling journey.

“I did what I had to do,” Berg said. “I’d go back to Vietnam and do it all over again tomorrow.”

Berg passed away at the age of 71 on June 26 at the Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls, a place he called home for the past three years. He was remembered at his funeral service for being grateful in helping others whenever he could and spending as much time as he could with his children and grandchildren.