
EDWARD "KOS" KOSMALSKI, 1968-1969, Sergeant E5, Scout Section Leader & Mortar Section Leader
Track Assignments with the 1st Platoon, C Troop, 3rd Squadron, 5th Cavalry included . . .
Scout Section Track 13 (M113 Armored Personnel Carrier) and
Mortar Section Track 10 (M106 Mortar Carrier with 4.2-inch/107mm mortar)

Despite his mother's warning: "Now Eddie, don't volunteer for anything!" Ed did it anyway to find "life was good" in the Army

I was born in Philadelphia PA on January 28, 1948. With the exception of my time in the U.S. Army, I have lived continuously in the same section of the city. After graduation from Frankford High School in 1965, I worked as an apprentice machinist for a company that was primarily a contractor of parts for various military equipment and systems.

Being young and restless, I decided to volunteer for the draft, and was subsequently inducted into the Army on March 13, 1967. I underwent Basic Training at Fort Bragg NC and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Jackson SC where I was assigned the MOS of 11C10 (Infantry Mortar Crewman). Still restless, I volunteered again - this time for Vietnam. The Army promptly accommodated my request.



Upon my arrival in RVN as a PVT in August 1967, I was assigned to the 9th Infantry Division at Camp Bearcat, 20 miles northeast of Saigon. I was soon sent over to the 3rd Squadron, 5th Cavalry headquarters where I was immediately assigned to Charlie Troop, rushed out the door, and taken to the field to join up with the 1st Platoon. When I arrived, the platoon had already set up its defensive position for the night.

Unexpectedly, my initiation to the platoon happened that night when I was introduced to the platoon leader, LT David Fowler. He could not pronounce my name. So, from that point on, LT Fowler affectionately referred to me as "Pole-lock." No sooner had the news of LT Fowler's nickname for me circulated the platoon, than all the men had begun to call me "Pollock." At that point, it was too late for me to bother trying to meddle with my destiny. They liked the nickname, and I was certainly not offended by its use. I am sure, if LT Fowler had not given "Pollock" to the platoon on a silver platter, the men would have probably latched onto my usual nickname of "Kos." The nicknaming of kids was a normal part of growing up in Philadelphia with many kids carrying over their nicknames into adulthood. I am still called "Kos" by some of my long-time friends. Eventually, "Pollock" was used as the call sign for our scout track in order to confuse any NVA (North Vietnamese Army) and VC (Viet Cong) soldiers who were monitoring our radio transmissions.

First assigned temporarily as the second M60 gunner on Track 13, I was soon re-assigned to the

mortar section due to my having the MOS 11C10. After two weeks as a mortar crewman, I decided my preference was to be on Track 13. My volunteering to return to the scout track got me nowhere. I next resorted to pestering LT Fowler until he agreed to move me back to Track 13. With the exception of the last month of my tour, Track 13 was my "home away from home" – first as a gunner, then as the driver, next as the track commander, and ultimately as the Scout Section Leader. My last month with the 1st Platoon was necessarily spent as the Mortar Section Leader on Track 10. For my performance of duties on Tracks 13 and 10, I received three speedy promotions, first to PFC, then to SP4 and finally to SGT (MOS 11C40).

While our Area of Operations (AO) was initially in the area of Camp Bearcat in the III Corps Tactical Zone at the southern end of RVN, by March 1968 the 3/5 Cavalry was relieved from the control of the 9th Infantry Division and transferred to the far north to operate within the I Corps Tactical Zone. Our new combat base was located at Wunder Beach, and the range of our new AO was south to the City of Hue and north to the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone). I left RVN at the end of my tour in August 1968, and was discharged from the Army at Fort Hood TX on March 13, 1969.

When I returned home I discovered my former employer's metalworking company no longer existed. I joined the Rohm & Haas Company, a major Philadelphia-based specialty chemicals manufacturer, as a pipefitter apprentice. In 1975, I decided to leave Rohm & Haas to join the Laborers' Union as an apprentice laborer in general construction. Still restless, in 1979 I joined the Carpenters' Union as an apprentice in commercial construction. Over the years, I worked for multiple contractors, and progressed through the ranks from apprentice carpenter, to journeyman, to foreman, and finally to superintendant before I retired in June 2009. Surely, I must have set the single-person record for having completed the most apprenticeships in Philadelphia.



Linda and I were married on September 26, 1970. We have one child, Edward Jr, and two grandchildren. As one might expect, our son is also known as "Kos." Linda and I are about to happily celebrate our 40th anniversary. Together, Linda and I took up boating several years ago. We have a 30-foot cabin cruiser in berth at a Philadelphia marina. We really enjoy making regular excursions on the Delaware River, and going on leisurely cruises all the way to the Chesapeake Bay and along the Jersey shoreline.

I am no longer young and restless, but I am still of a mind to volunteer.

LIFE HAS BEEN GOOD!

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