



The Indiana Gazette CRVING INDIANA COUNTY PA SINCE 1800 Local News **Zwire!**

- News
- Classifieds
- Community
- Directory
- Shopping
- My Zwire!

Home -> News -> News -> Top Stories Wednesday 7 April, 2004

NEWS SEARCH

Top Stories

Advanced search

Gone but not Forgotten

By: JON HALBERG, Gazette Staff Writer

March 10, 2002

[Click Here, Learn More](#)

- ▼ News
 - Top Stories
 - Subscribe
 - Contact Us
 - Photo
 - Guidelines
 - AP News
 - Today's Photos
 - Sports
 - Local Scores
 - AP Sports Wire
 - Outdoors
 - Obituaries
 - Weather
 - Indiana Co. Bicentennial
 - Family Leisure
 - Health
 - Technology
 - Women in Business
 - Business
 - Automobiles
 - Bridal Guide
 - Announcements
 - Columnists
 - Archives
 - Letters
 - Submit A Letter
 - Letters to Home
 - Guestbook
 - Entertainment
 - TV Guide
 - PA Lottery
- ▶ Sports **Almanac!**
- ▶ Sports **Wire!**
- ▶ School **News**
- ▶ Photo **Gallery**
- ▶ Community
- ▶ IUP
- ▶ Classifieds
- ▶ Coupons
- ▶ Millennium **Project**
- ▶ Business **Directory**
- ▶ Our **Newspaper**



Anita woman's Web site honors Vietnam veterans

Bernard L. Himes (Courtesy of the Amethyst Heart Web site)

ANITA - After the Sept. 11 World Trade Center attacks and the war in Afghanistan, [Mona Garzoni](#) said, now more than ever, we need to remember those who fought and died to protect their country.

That's part of the reason she designed a Web site dedicated to her brother who died in Vietnam 34 years ago.

"I don't think we'll ever forget," said Garzoni, of Anita, north of Punxsutawney.

Garzoni's "we" includes not only friends and family who remember a young Bernard L. Himes enlisting in the Marines soon after graduating from Punxsutawney High School. It also encompasses the many veterans and other visitors who have been to her Web site and gotten to know something about her brother and the way life was during the Vietnam era for many families.

The site, with background music from the late 1960s, features photos, maps and poignant letters home from the young soldier who was Garzoni's big brother.

"The site is about Bern and 58,000 other Americans who died in southeast Asia," Garzoni said. "Fifty-eight thousand homes had either a brother, a father or a son killed in Vietnam."

Garzoni said that all who went, not just those who were wounded or killed, are owed a debt of gratitude.

"I think they're all heroes," Garzoni said. "Just to have gone to

CertifiChecks.com
BUY Indiana County **First.com**

Trader Horn

[Click here for more information!](#)

▶ Cool Links
▶ Fun and Games
▶ Consumer Guide
▶ Personal Finance
▶ Lifestyles

Vietnam makes them heroes."

About 1,000 people a month visit the Amethyst Heart Web site, Garzoni said. There they get a close look into the life of a young man who died early but left a lasting impression.

Garzoni works on the site nearly every day from her desk in the basement of her two-story home in the village of Anita. The name, Amethyst Heart, comes from the connections between the purple amethyst stone and the Purple Heart medal her brother was awarded posthumously.

READER POLL

What should be done with the Pledge of Allegiance

and the phrase "under God?"
E-mail us with your comments.

- Leave it as it is
- Remove the phrase, but keep the pledge
- Leave the phrase in, but make the pledge optional
- If the phrase remains, remove the pledge from public schools

[view results](#)

Garzoni said that although the site won't bring her brother back, it may help keep his memory alive.

"I think people need to see what it was like in 1968," Garzoni said as she looked at a photo of her brother's tombstone in the

Anita cemetery. "When they read Bern's letters and see the photos, they see what it was like - being 18 years old and ending up here with flowers and a stone - gone at 18."

Himes was being trained as a tank mechanic when the Tet offensive changed his plans.

"During the Tet offensive, President Johnson took every available Marine and put them into the infantry," Garzoni said "These men had no training and did not start running patrols until they got to Vietnam."

Handwritten letters posted on the site tell a poignant story of a young man, "just a kid," Garzoni called him, thrown into the heat of battle quickly after arriving in Vietnam.

In a note to Garzoni, then his 13-year-old kid sister, Himes wrote to let her know he'd soon be sending money home for a 1969 Mustang he was planning to buy.

"I'll give you a ride, I promise," he wrote.

But even as he wrote a letter to his little sister, the battles he faced daily were never far away.

"I have a patrol tonight," he wrote. "These guys just won't quit until we're all dead or in the hospital. There are 12 from my company (in the hospital) already and two dead."

"Dear Mom and Dad," reads another letter, "I am back in battalion after an operation. It didn't turn out so good. We had five killed and 13 wounded."

Later, he wrote: "We've had about 30 casualties this month. It better slow down soon."

Bern Himes died May 17, 1968. That morning he was assigned as fire-team leader for Company I. As the company crossed an open area, it found itself facing heavy mortar and small-arms fire, according to Garzoni.

In a letter to her parents, Himes' commanding officer wrote that Himes was killed by an "explosive device" that detonated

nearby. Most likely, he was killed by a mortar round, Garzoni said.

"I remember feeling sick in my stomach," Garzoni said. "It hit my parents really hard. They never talked about it too much, but it really affected them."

The father, Reed Himes, died in October and was laid to rest beside his son in the Anita Cemetery



Click here for more information!

buried his son in the family cemetery.

Mother Phyllis Himes said that the day she found out about her son was one she'll never forget.

"It was awful - it was just a dreary old day," Himes said. "I was working at Montgomery Wards and this major came into the office and told me he'd been killed."

"It's 34 years already; it don't seem that long," Himes said. "They trained him to be a mechanic, and when he got off the plane, they handed him a gun.

"I hope people never forget."

On the Net:

www.members.aol.com/_ht_a/kiddobobs/myhomepageindex.html

©Indiana Printing & Publishing Co. 2004

Reader Opinions

Be the first person to voice your opinion on this story!

Back to top 



E-mail this story
to a friend



Voice your opinion
on this story

Copyright © 1995 - 2004 PowerOne Media, Inc. All Rights Reserved.