

Hometown Hero Roy Jacobson

By JoAnn Miller

Roy Leslie Jacobson, a graduate of both Manitowish Waters Grade School and Lakeland Union High School (1961), was raised to believe that service to your country was important. Roy's too-short life reflected what he believed.

He enlisted in the U.S. Army and volunteered for Special Forces. As a Green Beret in Vietnam, he was commended for heroism in ground combat and earned the coveted Bronze Star for Valor in 1965.

Leaving the U.S. Army, he was employed by Air America and the CIA, operating Hmong and Lao commando teams throughout Southeast Asia. Roy earned a bachelor's degree at UW-Superior and a master's degree in boreal ecology from the University of Alberta in Canada. He then worked as an ecologist and game warden in Canada in the Yukon and Northwest territories, living and traveling with Eskimo and Dene hunters. Roy wrote 12 publications on boreal and cultural ecology that are used by the Canadian Wildlife Service.

In 1980, Roy and his family moved back to Wisconsin where he joined the DNR, serving as Deputy Director Northern Region and Assistant Director, Office of Environmental Law Enforcement. As a Special Conservation Warden, he was responsible for Wisconsin's first felony conviction for an environmental crime. He also provided training for foreign environmental enforcement programs and trained Vietnam's first game warden.

In 2001, Roy retired as a Ranger Supervisor for the Northern Highland American Legion State Forest. He remained active in retirement as a guest instructor at the U.S. Army Special Warfare Center and School and at Gogebic Community College. Beginning in 2005, he was responsible for organizing and mailing more than 135,000 packets of donated vegetable and melon seeds to Special Forces A Teams in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Roy's book "Hai Si" was published in 2010 and is the story of his Special Forces A Team experience from 1964-1966 at Ben Cat in Vietnam (available on Amazon).

He was a member of VFW Post 9536, Mercer; the Ironwood American Legion Post 5; and the National Eagle Scout Association.

Roy Jacobson was a hometown hero who left us too soon in 2012.