

## **Jeremy Paul Amick is in Eugene, Missouri.**

This past week, I visited with Eugene area veteran Wes Scott regarding his service as a tank commander in the Vietnam War.

A 1963 graduate of Jefferson City Senior High, Scott went on to earn his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the Missouri School of Mines in 1968. He was employed for several months for an oil field company in Arkansas before receiving his draft notice in December 1968. After being inducted into the U.S. Army, he completed his basic training at Ft. Leonard Wood and then attended advanced training at Ft. Knox, Kentucky, learning to work with the M-48 Patton tanks.

"When we approached the end of the training, they offered me the opportunity to attend either an NCO (non-commissioned officer) school or officer's training," he said. "The officer's training would add to my military commitment while the NCO school would not, so I chose the NCO school." He continued, "I didn't realize at the time that they were pushing NCO schools because they were losing tank commanders in Vietnam."

Spending several weeks training at Ft. Riley, Kansas, Scott was deployed to Vietnam in January 1970 and assigned as a tank commander with 1/77th Armor under the 5th Mechanized Infantry. Their primary responsibilities consisted of patrols along the DMZ and guarding Firebase A-4 at Con Tien at night. The tankers operated north of Quang Tri and the strip they patrolled was six to eight miles wide and no civilians were allowed inside it.

On May 5, 1970, Scott's platoon was called upon to support an infantry company on patrol near the DMZ. While heading out, a personnel carrier threw a track and Scott's tank was ordered to stay behind to provide protection while repairs were made. The infantry company and the three other tanks soon encountered enemy resistance, resulting in the death of two tank commanders and Scott's appointment as platoon sergeant.

Scott received his discharge and in 1971, married Betty Foster; the couple raised a son and daughter. In the years after the war, the veteran was employed as a mechanical engineer in state government, completing 30 years of full-time and nine years of part-time employment prior to his retirement in 2009. Since that

time, he has found enjoyment though restoration of classic automobiles on his farm near Eugene.

Scott has many interesting and intriguing observations he shared from his experiences in Vietnam, the details of which I look forward to sharing in the coming weeks.

