



VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND

RAM CHAVEZ

Retired educator and Vietnam veteran

Ram Chavez of Corpus Christi, Texas, joined the U.S. Army in April 1967 and, after basic training, was assigned to the Medical Training Center at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, where he trained to become a medic. By September, he was on his way to Vietnam, where he was assigned to the 199th Light Infantry Brigade. He served first with A Company and then D Company, 4th Battalion, 12th Infantry.

Chavez was awarded the Bronze Star with a “V” for Valor for his actions on Feb. 23, 1968, when he saved the lives of two Americans and retrieved a dead U.S. soldier while under enemy fire.

As he was wrapping up his tour of duty in May 1968, he decided to join a truck convey on his way out in order to help the battalion surgeon set up the aid station at the next firebase. This was to be his last duty on the way home. But, on May 6, he was helping with the wounded at the aid station when he saw the body of the man who had replaced him come in. Chavez had to go back. That night, he was wounded during an ambush, but continued to work and saved the life of another soldier. He earned the Silver Star for his actions that day, but the citation was lost, and it would be 40 years before Ram Chavez was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry under fire.

Chavez had a love for music that continued for his entire life. After he returned home from Vietnam, he taught music education at the junior and senior high school level, earned his master’s degree in school administration and then became a middle school administrator. In addition, he served his community in a variety of ways, most recently as staff director of the Texas Senate Committee for Veteran Affairs and Military Installations under the chairmanship of Texas Sen. Carlos F. Truan.

As a young musician, Chavez played with name bands of the Coastal Bend of South Texas. Later on, he founded the Veterans Band of Corpus Christi. He has served as president, chairman or commander of many organizations in the music field, the veteran’s community and the local community.