My trips to Florida to visit my Grandad hold a special place in my heart. I remember being around 8 years old and asking about a tattoo of a horse on a crest he has. He brought me into his office and told me about his service. Every time I visit, he shows me more photos and tells me more stories about his friends he served with or tales from the ground in Cambodia. I was always captivated by his experiences and motivations. These talks mean so much to me. They shaped how I approach solving complex situations in my life, friendships/communities, and my drive to learn.

As I move from my high school in downtown Chicago to the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's Grainger school of Engineering, I take with me my Granddad’s lessons of community building, open-mindedness, and relentless drive. I plan to study Environmental Engineering. I’ve always had a huge passion for the environment and innovation.

I am so grateful to the 11th Armored Cavalry for awarding me a generous scholarship to help me continue pursuing my passions, specifically in environmental engineering through college. I feel so privileged to be able to honor George Joseph Bodnar and his service to this country and to represent the 11th Armored Cavalry.

Kaitlin Cywinski, granddaughter of Timothy Kerns, D co., KIA George Joseph Bodnar, 8/15/1968