



The rustle of Vietnam Era uniforms, the rattling of handled weapons, the quiet talk while camouflage is applied, the sobering realization of pending action once again. Could this be war? Is there an approaching battle? No, it's just *The Last Patrol* from the *Suncoast Vietnam Veterans Association* preparing for a once again to perform their tribute. A Tribute performed only at selected veterans events before huge anticipating crowds. And always, **always**, performed with respect for their brothers and sisters who did not make it home from distant lands.

As stirring words are spoken and the music and battle noise of the Vietnam Era are played, this group of dedicated veterans, many of which are decorated combat veterans of Vietnam, appear through a cloud of smoke and the swirling sounds of helicopters. They are once again **ON A MISSION**.

As the audience watches, the Last Patrol appears to be simply a unit of highly trained personnel going about their patrol, deploying in the classic diamond formation. Then suddenly, they are standing around a helmet on top of a rifle sticking in the ground. Taps is played, and each patrol member stands, saluting proudly, to give last respects to a fallen comrade. After the brief ceremony, the patrol once again moves out. At the forthcoming news that their mission has been canceled, the patrol gathers in a circle around the Machine Gunner, to pay silent tribute to those POW-MIAs left behind.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, each patrol member steps forward to identify himself and his position on the patrol. After all have done so, the patrol once again moves out, this time to merge into the audience, to embrace and thank those who came, to utter once again **Welcome Home**, and to find solace in an effort once again well done. This group of men and women who make up the effort behind *The Last Patrol* and its dedication are all members of the *Suncoast Vietnam Veterans Association, Inc.* from the Tampa Bay area in Florida. This veterans group has been in existence continuously since 1984. If you have an appropriate venue and would like for this unit to **DO A MISSION FOR YOU**, please click on the "Contact Us" page.