

USMC Class 38th OCC/BC 3-66 Alumni Profiles



Andy Blenkle

Date: June 4, 2007

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Nick Name: Andy

Co. & Platoon OCS: C3

Wife's Name: Mary

Co. & Platoon TBS: E1

Kid's Name: Andrew (36), Matt (33), Patrick (28)

MOS: 1303 / 0402 / 9904

Sean (24)

Rank: Colonel

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After leaving Quantico: Attended the Marine Corps Combat Engineer School at Camp Lejeune for 6 weeks, graduating end of July 1966

Vietnam Tour: August 1966 – September 1967

Attached To: 7th Engineer Battalion now called the 7th Engineer Support Battalion

Jobs in Nam: 5 wks Platoon Commander August – September; Transferred to D Company as a Combat Engineer Platoon Commander of 3rd Platoon October 1966 – June 1967 and remained until transferred to the Battalion S3 ship in June 1967

Locations in Nam: DaNang Air Base Southern minefield clearance; Around the Dai Loc, Hill 37 area; Liberty Road from Hill 37 An Hoa

Operations in Nam: Unknown

Experiences to Share:

Best:

Company moved to Hill 37 by Dai Loc in Dec. of '66. At that time my platoon conducted the morning road sweeps either down to the Son Thu Bon River (Liberty Road) or north to hill 41 along what was called Route 5 after the rainy season of 1966/1967. 3d platoon conducted a road recon of Liberty Road from Phu Loc 6 to An Hoa. In January 1967, 3d platoon moved to Phu Loc 6 and began to repair, upgrade and open Liberty Road to An Hoa. E Company 2/5 provided our security; Captain Patrick Hiessing was the CO – a great guy. Booby traps and mines resulted in several Purple Hearts. We were ambushed 3 or 4 times. Would call in arty and go back to work. The unnerving aspect of this road work was the fact we had no way of changing our routine. Where we stopped the day before, we began work the next morning and had to closely inspect the area for mines and booby traps.

In January we moved from Phu Loc 6 to My Loc 2 – down the road a bit. When the platoon began the task of opening Liberty Road, I didn't bring my whole platoon. Since the infantry was undermanned, I eventually brought my whole platoon over to provide additional security. Liberty Road was opened to traffic in February 1967. After Liberty Road was opened we continued to do road sweeps and would meet the 1st Engineer road sweep team from An Hoa at the intersection of Liberty Road and a railroad bridged. We also repaired blown culverts and other road damages.

My platoon was a great group of young men. We were tight. I carry those memories with me today.

Worst:

We were in our own little world at the time-keeping the road open. We could see and hear air and arty strikes around us at times. Later, much later, I learned about Operation New Castle in March 1967.

During TET 1967, I was tasked to take an MRS 100-a tractor-and a trailer; go down to An Hoa and pick up the first load of coal from the coal mine in that area and bring it back to DaNang.

Favorite Memories:

In Service:

The hardships and good times shared with my comrades of all ranks and services; great corpsman's; meritoriously promoting young Marines; watching one of mine become a Warrant Officer; Mentoring troublesome Marines as they turn it around and obtain an Honorable discharge;

After Service:

My wife, Mary, who was at my side through thick and thin allowing me to have a successful career in the Corps and at the same time raise four boys.

Medals Received:

Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Commendation Medal

Jobs:

In Service:

El Toro; MAG 11 Maintenance Officer, Ground Equipment '74-'75, El Toro; Reserve and Recruiting Branches 9th Marine Corps Dist. HQ, Kansas; Command and Staff College '78-'79 Quantico; CO 9th Engineer Support Bn, June '79 – June '80 Okinawa; Military Sealift Command-Director Atlantic European Plans Div '80-'83 Washing DC; HQMC-Installations and Logistics Dept. –Engineer Equipment Acquisition; Sponsor Project Officer '83-'86 Washington DC; G4 Marine Corps Bases Japan, Camp Butler, '86-'89; CO Brigade Service Support Group 5 and Inspector 1st Force Service Support Group, Camp Pendleton '89-'90; III MEF Engineer Officer Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm '90-'91 Saudi Arabia; Inspector 1st Force Service Support Group '91-'92; Retired April 1, 1992
Staging Bn Co CO '67-'68, Camp Pendleton; S3A/Co CO 5th Engineer Bn '68-'69 Camp Pendleton; Student Engineer Officer Advanced Course '70 Ft. Belvoir, VA ; Base Services Officer MAG 11 DaNang Jan.'70-June '71; CO 3d Combat Engineer Bn, June-Dec '71 Okinawa; Engineer Officer MABS11, MAG 11 Jan '72-'74 MCAS,

After Service:

Currently I teach Social Studies at a California Juvenile Detention Facility in Orange County, CA. This is my 10th year.