

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



Jimmy M. Ray

Date: April 23, 2011
Nick Name: Jim
Wife's Name: Emma
Kid's Name: Monica (20), Denise (20), Anthony (18)
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Co. & Platoon OCS: C3
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MOS: 1802 / 4002 / 3002
Rank: Lt Colonel

After leaving Quantico: Went to Tank Officers School at Camp Pendleton and then directly to the 1st MarDiv in Vietnam 1966 - 1967

Vietnam Tour:

Attached To: 1st Tank Battalion, 1st MarDiv

Jobs in Nam: Platoon Commander, 2d platoon "C" Company for 9 months then was Battalion Civil Affairs Officer for Phong Bac hamlet for last 4 months in country

Locations in Nam: Assumed command of 2nd Platoon operating independently at Chu Lai reporting directly to 1st Tank Battalion Commander. After two months we moved north to Marble Mountain at DaNang to rejoin "C" company

Operations in Nam: Commanded a detachment consisting of my tank platoon, an Ontos platoon and a rifle squad in support of the Korean Marine Blue Dragon Brigade on Operation Lee which took place south of Chu Lai in the Binh Son area. Upon rejoining "C" company at Marble Mountain I supported the 1st Marine Regiment in their TAOR which was roughly bounded by DaNang, Hoi An, Route 1 and the coast. I served as the armored officer in several battalion sized operations and participated in numerous daily patrols on company and platoon level sweeps.

Experiences to Share:

Best:

Commanding troops in combat and at the end of my tour helping the natives build an elementary school, medical dispensary, and outdoor theater in Phong Bac hamlet. I published my Vietnam memoirs at the Texas Tech Vietnam Archive under "Jim Ray" as the "Collection Title" on the search page.

Worst:

A major "lesson learned" on my 1st operation in the field was that the gold bars on a 2d Lt glistening in high silhouette from the tank commander's cupola of the lead tank attracted a lot of unwanted attention from Viet Cong snipers. Blackening the bars with MNU solved the problem.

Favorite Memories:

My Vietnam combat tour was the high point. Although I had interesting and demanding assignments throughout my military career, none could even remotely compare to the challenges and responsibility of commanding Marine ground troops in combat. I was fortunate after my Vietnam tour that the Marine Corps took advantage of my prior business experience and academic background in a way that was not only beneficial to the corps but provided me the leadership and technical skills and tools to be successful as a leader in my professional career upon retirement

Medals Received:

Navy Commendation with combat "V", Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Achievement Medal, Certificates of Commendation, numerous campaign medals and ribbons

Jobs:

In Service:

Fresh out of Vietnam and the Data systems Officers Course at Shepard AFB I was assigned as the Wing Data Processing Officer for 2d MAW at Cherry Point as a Captain on the staff of MajGen Marion Carl. I went from there to MCTSSA which was then at MCAS Tustin where I was the software Officer on the Automated DASC project. Many of these projects, then underway at MCTSSA, were the pioneer systems utilizing radar, computers, digital data links, and satellites that evolved into the cruise missile and GPS technology that are now commonplace in the advanced weapons systems currently deployed. I then attended the Amphibious Warfare School at Quantico and went from there to the 3d FSR in Okinawa where I directed the implementation of SASSY, the latest and greatest ground supply system at the time. I then returned to El Toro where I was assigned as the IT officer on the 3d MAW staff of MajGen Andrew O'Donnell with BGen J.K. Davis as AWC and Col Hal Vincent as Chief of Staff. This was an interesting but less intense assignment that gave me the time to earn an MBA from Pepperdine. Soon after promotion to Major I was assigned as Director of the 4th Force Automated Services which supported the 3d MAW at all its locations. My final assignment was as the Director of the Regional

Automated Services Center at Camp Pendleton after promotion to Lt Colonel

Other Comments:

I retired on 20 from the Marine Corps in 1983 and assumed a management position with Northrop Grumman in Los Angeles on the B-2 Stealth Bomber program when it was still on the drawing board. My initial assignment was to organize the department and recruit the staff that develops the logistic system for the B-2. I went on to assume responsibility for the manufacturing operations and engineering systems used to fabricate and assemble the aircraft on the assembly lines at Pico Rivera and Palmdale. Upon a corporate IT reorganization, I was promoted to the same responsibility at the corporate level with responsibility for all Northrop Grumman programs. I retired for the 2d time in 1993 soon after the B-2 made its first flight and returned home to Texas where I joined the Computer Sciences Corporation as an Account executive. During my CSC career I logged a lot of air miles while serving in several executive positions on the British Aerospace, ING, Lockheed Martin, Pratt-Whitney, and Raytheon accounts before retiring for the 3d and final time in 2002. I now spend a lot of time traveling, riding my bike, hitting the gym, and pretending to be a golfer on a regular basis. I have been happily married for 52 years to Emma who shouldered a lot of family responsibilities while I was away performing my duties. Her support and the enjoyment of my children and grandchildren have made all the sacrifices and hard work absolutely worthwhile. While proud of all my grandchildren, two granddaughters are sort of following in my footsteps. Denise will be the I-1 Company Commander in the Corps of Cadets at Texas A&M in her senior year and her sister Jennifer is a freshman at the Air Force Academy.