

Dennis Jones

Vietnam



1) When did you enter the military?

I entered the military in 1965, after Highschool.

How old were you when you entered and how long were you in the military?

I was 18 years old, and I was in the military for four years.

2) What boot camp did you go to? How long was the boot camp? Did you go to a second Boot camp? If so then why?

I went to a marinecore bootcamp, its in Paris Island so thats were you start out you go to boot camp and its a 30 days long.

did you go to a second boot camp ?

Yeah, we had what we call ITR infantry training regimine and thats a second boot camp.

where is paris island

its in south carolina.

did you join voluntarily

yes I did

what made you join the military

at that time probably there wasnt any war going on so at that time it was the ability to get away from home and see the world.

What branch of military were you in?

I was in the marines, the United States Marine Core

What equipment did you use on a daily basis?

On a daily basis we juist had our, well uh before you went over seas you just use your normal uniform, there want any gear other then your normal riffle to march with, but most of the time at that particular time I was on what they call an engineer outfit, and the engineers basically had a dailly routine of like going to work and learned how to operate and work with heavy equipment and learned about exposives. So there was quite a bit of shcooling involved

What rank did you achieve?

I was corporal

What type of heavy equipment did you use?

well ah in the engineers we used road graders,... all kinds of heavy equipment, we used earth moving tractors, things that we could use to clear the roads or brush or provide for landing strips and what we used them mainly for is what we called "LZs" or "Landing Zones" and we would knock down trees and clear the underbrush and provide a landing zone for the choppers to come in, for the helicopters. That's one of the main reasons, you also used them for getting to explosives, providing a place where you can detonate explosives and be protected so then you wouldn't blow yourself up

Were you wounded while in the military?

yes i was

In what way were you wounded?

well we were on perimeter guard and we were tested by the VC and I was wounded one evening and where I ended up being medevaced where I actually ended going back to the States

What do you mean by being tested?

well what they would do is they would try to infiltrate your perimeter and they would keep you alert, they would throw satchel charges, explosives in to try to keep you and test your lines of defense so that they could harass you, shoot at you, all that kind of stuff.

Where were you stationed?

when i was in Vietnam i was in GONG-HA, Kaimlow (6:10 look up the spelling) and that part of vietnam, the northern Province of veitnam

were you in any famous campains or battles?

well nothing famous no.

Did you recieve any awards or medals for your time in service?

Yes i have the campaing ribbon for the campain, i have the purple heart for the wounds that i had and there were other service ribbons that I had that the marine core gives out to various campains for hte time you were there in the country. So there is a Vietnam service ribbon so thats a ribbon for if you served in Vietnam that you wear with your ribbons and there were one or two other ribbons given out by the actual marine core.

When you were using the explosive did anything ever go wrong?

ah no thank god, so i have all my fingers and toes. They taught us well how to use C4 and some of the explosives, some of the tings we would use to protect our perimteter, you know. And we learned how to use it properly.

Which ribbon that you recieved had the most value?

well of course the purple heart cause your wounded, you know cause most of the time unfortuneatly you get purple heart it is because you past away and only your friends and family know you got it, thats probably the one and then there was a campaign ribbon.

Did you go back to Vletnam after you were injured?

No, Well yes because i was initially medevaced to Okinawa and then I had to go back to the country and then went back to the states. SO yes i went back but, not for any campians or not for any operatiuons

what does it mean to be medivaced?

Medevac is medical evacuation and then so if a soldir r was shot or broke his leg or wasnt able to or needed medical assistance and he was out in the field where you coiuldne be looked at you would be medivaced to the nearest hospital. That means the chopper would fly in and land and take off and take him to the hospital whether it was a hospital on a ship, they had ships made into hospitals and they also had facilities in parts of the country that they had regular hospitals that they built.

WHat was a normal or average day for you in the military?

in the military or in Vletnam?

I guess in vietnam

in vietnam basically you had a structure where you had to stand guard you had the specific things that you did, wether it was sweeping the roads in the morning and you put on gear and you look for land mines then you go to chow. you would have a normal ah you would have a structure to it, there was always somebody that was doing something in a coarse of a day and some days you got to relax and that was pretty much it.

What did you gaurd?

well we would guard our own equipment, our own facilities, our own building, where we were encamped where our camp was, we would

have a perimeter guard so that was all part of it, you know. so whether it was you know doing night guard or were guarding an ammo dump that was near by you know that was all part of it. You had to keep watch on all the facilities that you had close by

What was your most common routine while you were at war or battle?

well the routine was I guess just clean your weapon making sure you were ready to protect yourself or going on guard duty or going on. You know most of it was getting yourself prepared. Some days you would actually have to work you would work on the heavy equipment or you would work on the other things in the compound there always needed something to be done. Whether it was to take out the trash or from the most menial things right up to the most important things. Some days or weeks you would have mess duty where you would go and give out the mess where guys would go eat breakfast lunch or dinner. you'd actually put it on their plate, give out pieces of bread, whatever it took... wash the dishes... that was all part of it

what type of firearms did you use?

Well when I was there we had M14s, was our issue, we also had 45s, 45 caliber hand guns, but ah I had a M14 most of the time I was there.

Did you ever use any heavy weapon artillery?

no... no I never got to be a part of that.

while you were at war what helped you pass the time?

Well sometimes to pass the time you would write home, write letters home and you know things like that a lot of times you know you would just read a book. You had access, people would send you books and

news papers and all things like that. They had the stars and stripes that was passed out and it gave you all the information about what was going on during the war. You also had a radio so you could listen to the radio.

Who did you write to?

well, I wrote to my parents, to my girlfriend, to you know all the folks at home. PEople wrote to me so I wrote a letter back.

Did you ever get a care package?

oh yeah, i got a lot of care packages

What did you listen you listen to on the radio?

well at that time they had country-western music, they had rock'n roll they had all kinds of news you know

What help you get through the hard times if you had any?

well you know just ah reading letters and ah knowing that your basically there, well when i was in the serivce you were only in Country for 13 monthes so alot of guys counted the monthes. Knowing that you had a limited amount of time, they all looked foroward to their date to leave you know. SO that was a way to pass to and look forward to something

When you got back from the war did you perspective on anything change?

not initially, but at that time, it was very politcal at that time, there was a lot of political change going on in the country so there was a lot of

people who didn't like the war so they had a lot of politics that were going on.

Did you carry anything with you from the military after the war?

No not really... Do you mean by a rifle or weapon i would commemorate the war by?

yeah

no not really...

How did you take the criticism when you got home?

Well you know it's pretty hard when you came home, at that time they had a lot of protest against the war. So it wasn't too hard to know or feel people didn't want to be part of the war, but I was able to put it behind me and not let it bother me that much.

Have you brought a picture?

yeah I brought 2 pictures. the first one is just a um of me in the marine core photograph. They basically take before you go overseas and it's just in your blues.





Do you mind if I show the camera

no not at all

was this taken in U.S. soil?

yes it was taken in california before we went to go over to Vietnam.

ANd then i brought a picture of the guys in my platoon.



also when was this taken(first photo)  
that was taken in 1966

and then like I said I brought a picture of the guys of my platoon, when I was in Nam and we were horsing around and that's me (points to the man farthest to the left) and the other guys and we were laughing and kidding around, trying to make light of the... , we set up a sheet as a back drop to our, ah, our what we called the Whooch and ah we actually had a camera on a tripod which at that time is a big thing, to take a picture remotely. SO this is 1966 so this fellow here (points to the guy at the bottom most right) was his camera, he set it up and it was one of the first times where you could actually time the camera to take a photo graph. Ok, so caught ourselves laughing and we all had good smiles on our face... enjoying ourselves.

WHen you got back were you still in contact with any of your freinds?

No not at this time.

But were you initially when you got back?

Yeah, for a short time, maybe one, two or three years.

Excuse me can you tell me what year the second picture was taken again?

they were both taken in 1966

both of them?

yeah, 1966

Can you show this one to the camera as well?

yeah sure

Is there anything that you would like to add or say that I missed or anything that you would like to talk about?

No, it actually was a long time ago its hard, its hard to relate right now because you know the young guys are going to Afghanistan, and overseas now. They have a whole different you know... it's a shame we still have to provide men to go over and fight a war but ah, that's the way that it seems to be happening so.. but ah I put it behind me and I am able to focus on you know providing a life for my children and my family. a lot of guys couldn't put it behind them, that's the sad part about war.

thank you for your time sir

ah thank you buddy

