# In Recognition of Class of '65 Veterans June 14, 2025, 60<sup>th</sup> Class Reunion



*Lest we forget those from the 1965 East Aurora High Class who served during the Vietnam War Era and later* 

# PREFACE

The East Aurora Class of 1965 graduated during the Viet Nam war at a time where every 18-25 years old male was required to register with the Selective Service System and were eligible for the military draft. Today, 18-25 years old males are still required to register with the Selective Service System, but there presently is no military draft. The 1960's was an era of political unrest with much hatred directed towards the US military. The term PTSD was unknown, and military veterans were many times treated harshly. We lost two of our classmates while serving: Sgt Greg Peffer who was killed in action on January 22, 1971, and Dennis Smith in an automobile accident while serving in Germany. We had several classmates who were injured in Viet Nam and who received one or more purple hearts. Some were even disabled.

The class of 1965 had three classmates who made the military a career:

- Don Bennett US Army Lt. Colonel retired O5
- Dick Marvin US Navy Captain retired O6
- Dennis Wright US Navy Captain O6

We have lost the following veteran classmates since graduation:

Jerry Dittman	9/2005		
Robert (Bob) Allen	12/2024	Alexander Barajas	8/2014
Ben Kalsto	3/2024	Rich Langford	1/2014
Stan Larson	5/2023	William (Bill) Murphy	1/2025
Greg Peffer	1/1971	Willnis (Willy) Platacis	11/2024
Phillip Simmons	5/2014	Dennis Smith	1972
Jeff Travis	10/2022	Michael Wilhelmi	9/1992

This document is intended to recognize and thank those in our class of '65 who served our country in time of war for our present freedoms. I apologize if I missed recognizing any classmate who served but is not listed.

I would like to dedicate this book to both Dennis Smith and Greg Peffer who died while serving our county.

Thank you, fellow classmates and veterans,

John P Nelson, East Aurora, Class of '65

# VETS at 50<sup>th</sup> Class Reunion



Jack Amwoza, Norm Rebenstorf, Jeff Travis behind, Luigi Testone, Dick Elliott, Jeff Buda, Tom Kennedy, Mike DiSantis, Unknown, Ron Jakious, Jim Mathieu, Dan Pugh, Darryl Snyder behind Dan, John Nelson, Dick Marvin, John Miller, Ron Bennett, Dick Lamphere

#### **Rich Adams HS**

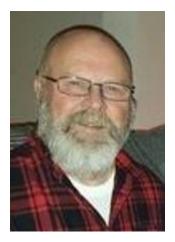


Name: Rich Adams Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): 11B Infantry Years of Service: July 1969 – Feb 1971 Final Rank: Spec 4 Final Location: Viet Nam Other Comments: Volunteered for ranger unit, transferred to helicopter unit as a door gunner on a light observation helicopter (loh) called hunter killer team, 25th division, Cav D Troop Awards: Silver Star Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star, 5 Air Medals

# **Robert Allen HS**



**Bob Allen Recent** 



Name: Robert Allen Branch: US Navy Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Years of Service: Final Rank: Final Location: Viet Nam Other Comments:

Deceased 12-16-2024

# **Charles Anderson HS**



Name: Charles Anderson Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Heavy Equipment Operator Years of Service: 3 Years 1966 - 1968 Final Rank: E5 Final Location: ULM Germany Other Comments such as service history: Vietnam 1966-1867, Ft. Stuart GA 1967, ULM Germany Jan 68-Dec 68

# **Donald Banks HS**

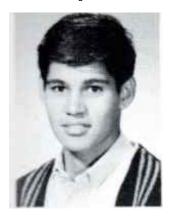


**Donald Banks Basic Training** 



Name: Donald Banks Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Years of Service: 1966 - 1968 Final Rank: Corporal E4 Final Location: Ft Riley, Kansas Other Comments such as service history:

# Fred Barajas HS



**Fred Barajas Military** 



Name: Fred Barajas Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Years of Service: Final Rank: Final Location: Other Comments such as service history:

## **Alexander Barajas HS**



Name: Alexander Barajas Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Medic Years of Service: Final Rank: Master Sargeant E8 Final Location:

**Other comments such as military history:** Alexander graduated from East Aurora H.S. in Aurora, IL. After several jobs he joined the U.S. Army and became a medic. While in the Army Reserves he trained troops to drive and operate various military equipment and also taught self-defense to the troops. In civilian life, while he was in the Army Reserves, he became a paramedic in a nursing home in Geneva, IL for many years. He was a retired Master Sergeant

#### Deceased 8-25-2014

# **Don Bennett HS**



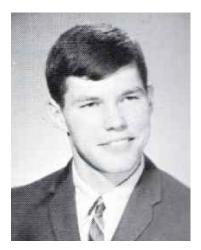
Name: Don Bennett Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Helicopter Pilot, Paratrooper and Military Intelligence Years of Service: 27 Final Rank: Lieutenant Colonel Final Location: Iraq & Midwest Other Comments such as service history:

# **Ron Bennett HS**



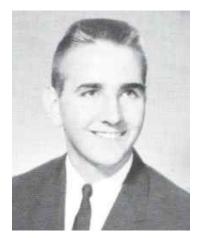
Name: Ron Bennett Branch: US Armay Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Quartermaster Ft. Lee Va Years of Service: 1965 - 1967 Final Rank: E5 Final Location: Other Comments such as service history: drafted 28 Dec 65 went to Fort Polk -Basic training and first school for supply training then went to Fort Lee Quartermaster training then to the Fulda Gap on the East-West border with the 14th Armored Cavalry.18months made e-5...

# **Bob Brookner**



Name: Bob Brookner Branch: Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Years of Service: Final Rank: Final Location: Other Comments such as service history:

#### Jeff Buda



Name: Jeff Buda
Branch: US Airforce
Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Air Freight/Passenger Service
Years of Service: 1966-1970
Final Rank: E4
Final Location: VIETNAM 67-68. Assigned to Marine 3rd Recon
Other Comments such as service history: Battalion at Dongha on the DMZ for 5.5 months and then moved to Dakto and an Army artillery unit and Green
Beret camp for 5.5 months at the Laotion border. That is where I spent the Tet offensive.

# **Gary Chambers HS**

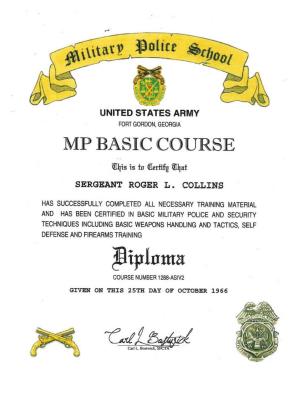


Name: Gary Chambers Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): 71H30 Years of Service: 1970-1971 Final Rank: E5 Final Location: Special Forces Det Bad Tolz, Germany Other Comments such as service history:

# **Roger Collins HS**

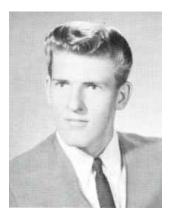


Name: Roger L. Collins
Branch: US Army
Trained Military Occupations Specialty (MOS) Military Police Officer
Years of Service: 1966 – 1972
Final Rank: Spec 4
Final Duty Location: Ft. Lee, VA
Other Comments: Police Sergeant, Honorable Discharge Medal, Illinois Soldier Ribbon,
National Defense Medal, American Defense Medal, Arm Service Ribbon, Vietnam Era Medal





# **Bruce Deuschler HS**



# **Bruce Deuschler Basic Training**



Name: Bruce Deuschler Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Years of Service: Final Rank: Final Location: Other Comments such as service history:

#### **Mike DiSantis HS**



# **Mike DiSantis Military Photo**



Name: Mike DiSantis Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Field Wireman Years of Service: 1966 - 1968 Final Rank: Sgt E5 Final Location: Viet Nam Other Comments such as service history:

# Jerry Dittman HS



# Jerry Dittman Basic Training



Name: Jerry Dittman Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Years of Service: Final Rank: Final Location: Other Comments such as service history: Deceased 9/2005

# **Dick Elliott HS**



# **Graduation Photo**



# Dick Elliott Basic Training

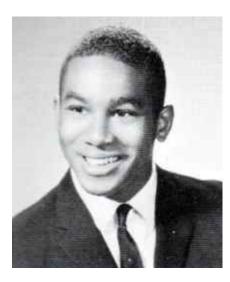




# **Dick Elliott**

Name: Dick Elliott Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Printer's Apprentice 83A10 Years of Service: 1966-1968 Final Rank: Specialist E-4 Final Location: Ft. Lewis, Washington Other Comments such as service history: Honorably Discharged on July 18, 1972

#### **Keith Fortman HS**



#### **Keith Fortman Basic Training**



Name: Keith Fortman Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Fuel Truck Driver Years of Service: 1966-1968 Final Rank: E4 Final Location: Ft. Leonardwood, MO Other Comments such as service history: Attended basic training at Ft. Polk, LA with a number of East Aurora Classmates

# **Richard Jackson H**



# **Military Photo**



Name: Richard Jackson Branch: USMC Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Air Wing Supply Years of Service: 1966 - 1970 Final Rank: Sgt E5 Final Location: Cherry Point NC Other Comments such as service history: Volunteered Viet Nam 1969-1970

#### **Ron Jakious HS**







#### 2 1/ i ler Boat

Name: Ron L Jakious Branch: Navy Trained Military Occupation Specialty: Boatswain's Mate Year in Service 1965 -1969 Final Rank: E4 Final Location: Viet Nam

**Comments:** I joined the Navy reserves in 1965, left for Vietnam in 1968 and was honorably discharged in 1969. I was awarded the Vietnam medal and (3) **Purple** heart's for combat (s) on the US Navy river boats. I was a member of the River Assault Division One Eleven. Our motto was 'WIN THE DELTA COME HELL OR LOW WATER" and were known as the Mekong Marauders! I have been in real estate/ insurance for over 50 years in Aurora, IL.



# Bjorn (Ben) Kalsto HS



Name: Ben Kalsto Branch: US Airforce Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Years of Service: Final Rank: Final Location: Other Comments

Deceased 3-09-2024

#### Tom Kennedy HS



# **Tom Kennedy Basic Training**



Name: Tom Kennedy Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): 408 Map Printing Years of Service: Drafted 2 years Final Rank: E5 – Spec 5 Final Location: Ford Island, Hawaii Other Comments such as service history: Secret Clearance to print maps of Vietnam, Cambodia, North and South Korea. Basic Training – Ft. Polk, La; AIT FT. Belvoir, Va

# Dick Lamphere HS



Name: Dick Lamphere Branch: US Air Force Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Security Service Years of Service: Four Final Rank: E4 Final Location: Pakistan Other Comments such as service history:

# **Rich Langford HS**



**Rich Langford Military Basic Training** 



Name: Rich Langford Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Years of Service: Final Rank: Final Location: Other Comments such as service history

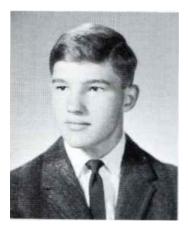
#### Deceased 1-13-2014

#### **Richard Larson HS**



Name: Richard (Dick) Larson Branch: US Air Force Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Communications Computer Specialist Years of Service: 1967-1971 Final Rank: E4 Location: Sacramento, CA Other Comments such as service history: Spent 1969 to 1970 in Thailand

#### Stan Larson HS



Name: Stan Larson Branch: US Marine Corps Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Years of Service: Final Rank: Cpl E4 Location: Other Comments such as service history

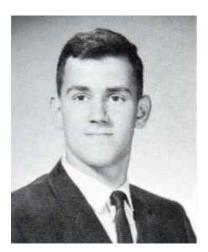
Deceased 5-12-2023

# Gary Losey HS



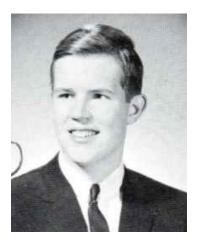
Name: Gary Losey Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Years of Service: 1969 - 1971 Final Rank: E5 Location: Fort Hamilton, Brooklyn NY, Stuttgart Germany and Ludwigsburg Germany (7<sup>th</sup> Corps) Other Comments such as service history

#### **Chuck MacDonald HS**



Name: Chuck MacDonald Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): 02J – Clarinet Player, 02L Saxophone Player Years of Service: 2 yrs 11 mos 5 days Final Rank: Spec 4 Er Final Location: Germany Other Comments such as service history

#### **Dick Marvin HS**



#### Dick Marvin – Military Command Photo USS Reasoner



Name: Dick Marvin Branch: US Navy Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Surface Warfare with a secondary in Financial Management Years of Service: 26 Years Final Rank: Captain Final Location: Pentagon. Other Comments such as service history: Dick's story: Lentered the Navy with polidea what life

**Other Comments such as service history:** Dick's story: I entered the Navy with no idea what life at sea on a small combatant was like and, to my great surprise, I liked it and was good at it. I started out with two cruises to Viet Nam (both involving hostile fire) and then a Med Cruise and two deployments to West Pac. The Navy is a demanding profession but if you are lucky enough to get command of a ship, definitely worth it. My last cruise was when I was in command and we were there for Desert Storm in 1990. I was commander for six Iraqi ship boardings some involving air and Seal assets.

# **Bob Mateas HS**

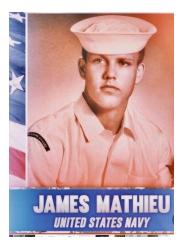


Name: Bob Mateas Branch: Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Years of Service: Final Rank: Final Location: Other Comments such as service history

#### Jim Mathieu HS



#### Jim Mathieu Military Photo



Name: James (Jim) Mathieu
Branch: U.S. Navy
Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Naval Intelligence
Years of Service: 1965-1969
Final Rank: Petty Officer Second Class
Final Location: I was stationed on board the aircraft carrier USS Bon Home Richard stationed our of San Diego, California.

**Other Comments such as service history:** I worked in the Air Intelligence Division on board my ship. I did three tours in Vietnam. Of the various work assignments was to make up target folders for the pilots who flew missions off of my aircraft carrier over Vietnam and other destinations. Made up the pilots target folders briefing the pilots prior to take off and debriefing them when they returned to the ship. Prior to be assigned to the Bon Home Richard I spent a couple months assigned to a flight squadron at the Naval Air Station North Island San Diego being assigned various clerk assignments.

# William Murphy HS



#### William Murphy Military



Name: William Murphy Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Years of Service: Final Rank: Final Location: Other Comments such as service history

Deceased 1-13-2025

### John Nelson HS



#### John Nelson Basic Training



Name: John P Nelson

Branch: Colorado Army National Guard, Company A, 140th Signal Battalion, Buckley Air National Guard Base

Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Unit Supply Specialist Small Weapons Repair 92Y Years of Service: 1970-1976

Final Rank: Staff Sargeant E6

Final Location: Camp George West, Golden Colorado

Other Comments such as service history: Duties included small weapons repair E4, company clerk E5, Supply Officer E6, Signal Communications officer E6, Honorably Discharged Feb 1976. Attended NCO School, Received Denver Post Outstanding Colorado National Guard Award

### **Dale Neuenkirchen HS**



Name: Dale Neuenkirchen Branch: US Air Force Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Baker Years of Service: 1966-1968 Final Rank: E3 Final Location: Lackland AFB, San Antonio, Texas

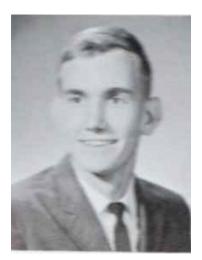
**Other Comments such as service history:** Dale attended basic training at Lackland AFB in Texas and onthe-job training as a baker at Malmstrom AFB in Great Falls, Montana where he made friends with the base commander who came daily to get pies, cookies and other baked goods. He received orders to Elmendorf AFB in Anchorage, Alaska. Prior to deployment and while on leave, Dale was hospitalized at Mercy Hospital with a near fatal illness. He returned to Lackland where he underwent medical treatment. His final location was Lackland AFB. He received a medical disability and honorable discharge after spending 18 months at Lackland.

## **Dale Nichols HS**



Name: Dale E Nichols Branch: US Air Force Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Aircraft Mechanic Years of Service: 1967-1971 Final Rank: E4 Sgt Final Location: Shaw AFB South Carolina Other Comments such as service history:

# **Greg Peffer HS**



Name: Greg Peffer Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Years of Service: Final Rank: Sgt Final Location: Viet Nam Other Comments such as service history:

Killed in Action January 22, 1971

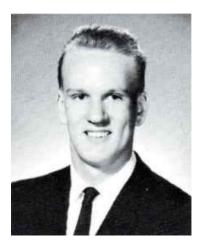
### Willy Platacis HS



Name: Willnis (Willy) Platacis Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): 11B Combat Infantry Years of Service: 1969-1971 Final Rank: Sargeant E5 Final Location: Viet Nam Other Comments such as service history: Viet Nam: Pleiku and the central highlands mostly. Aero Rifle Infantry Platoon, 7/17th Air Cavalry Regiment

Deceased 11-19-2024

## **Richard Pool HS**



Name: Richard Pool Branch: US Airforce Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Plumbing Years of Service: 4/66 – 2/70 Final Rank: Sgt E4 Final Location: Michigan, USA Military History and Comments:

# Danny Pugh HS



Name: Danny Pugh Branch: US Army MOS: Truck Driver Years of Service: 1966-1968 Final Rank: Spec 5 Military History: Viet Nam

#### James Rahn HS

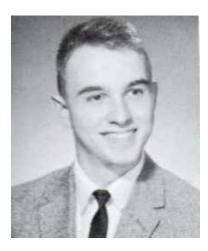


James Rahn Viet Nam Photo



Name: James (Jim) Rahn
Branch: US Marine Corp
Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS):
Years of Service: 1965 – 1969 (Dec 1966 – Dec 1967 Viet Nam)
Final Rank: E6 Staff Sergeant
Final Location: Kansas City Headquarters
Other Comments such as service history: Basic training at MCRD San Diego Basic Infantry and MOS Training at Camp Pendleton then came 10 months with the 2nd Marine division at Camp Lejune NC. My tour in Viet Nam came next. Then 18 months with Hqtrs 9th Marine District in Kansas City MO.

### **Norman Rebenstorf HS**



## **Norman Rebenstorf Military**



Name: Norman Rebenstorf Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Finance Years of Service: 1967 - 1969 Final Rank: SP5 Sergeant Final Location: Frankfurt, Germany Other Comments such as service history:

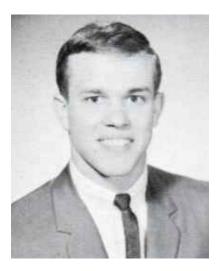
#### **Stephen Ruten HS**



Name: Stephen Ruten
Branch: US Air Force
Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Aircraft Mechanic 43151C plus advanced level 43151C which is a unique, more advanced and highly specialized MOS.
Years of Service: 1966 - 1972
Final Rank: SSGT
Final Location: Reese Air Force Base, Lubbock, TX
Other Comments such as service history: My best assignments were Transit Alert and the Crash Crew recovery operations. Also being on Post Dock inspections doing the Flight test with the test pilot after periodic dock maintenance. I enjoyed the few times I went TDY overseas to get the A-37s ready for duty. They had the role of protecting ground troops and were before the A-

10s which were much better for that job. "

## **Ron Singer HS**



Name: Ron Singer Branch: US Air Force Security Service Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Intercept Operator Years of Service: Final Rank: Staff Sgt Final Location: Misawa AFB Japan/Kelly AFB Other Comments such as service history:

# **Phillip Simmons HS**



Name: Phillip Simmons Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Years of Service: Final Rank: Final Location: Other Comments such as service history:

Deceased 5-1-2014

## **Dennis Smith HS**



Name: Dennis Smith Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Years of Service: Final Rank: Final Location: Germany Other Comments such as service history:

Killed in Car Accident in Germany while serving

### **Darryl Snyder HS**



## **Darryl Snyder Military**



Name: Darryl Snyder Branch: US Navy Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Damage Controlman DCZ Years of Service: Four Final Rank: E5 Final Location: Norfolk, VA

# Other Comments such as service history:

- Was in charge of Division on USS John King DDG3
- Went to Navy Shipyards for Ship Overhaul
- Went to Guantanamo Bay Cuba for Underway Training
- Last Station was USS Vulcan AR5 where I was made mast at arms for the remainder of enlistment

### **Aaron Stills HS**

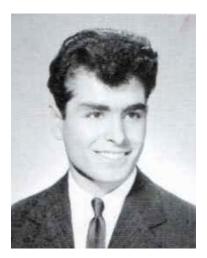


## **Aaron Stills Military**



Name: Aaron Stills Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Transportation Years of Service: 1970 - 1976 Final Rank: Specialist E4 Final Location: Silver Spring, Maryland Other Comments such as service history: Appointed Chaplin Assistant, Terre Haute, Indiana

# Luigi Testone HS



Name: Luigi Testone Branch: Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Years of Service: Final Rank: Final Location: Other Comments such as service history:

## Jeff Travis HS



Name: Jeff Travis Branch: Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Years of Service: Final Rank: Final Location: Other Comments such as service history:

Deceased 10-4-2022

## John Visor HS



Name: John Visor Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Armored Personnel Carrier (APC) Driver Years of Service: Four Years Final Rank: Spec 4, E4 Final Location: Viet Nam Other Comments such as service history: Recipient of Purple Heart

## Michael Wilhelmi HS



Name: Michael Wilhelmi Branch: US Airforce Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Years of Service: 66-70 Final Rank: Final Location: Other Comments such as service history:

Deceased 9-5-1992

## **Terry Wagner HS**



Name: Terry Wagner Branch: US Marine Corp Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): 0/31/0300 Years of Service: Two Years Final Rank: Cpl E4 Final Location: Naval Air Station, Marine Detachment, Norfolk, VA Other Comments such as service history

### **Dennis Wright HS**



### **Dennis Wright Military Photo**



Name: Dennis Wright
Branch: US Navy
Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): Supply Officer
Years of Service: 1965-1998
Final Rank: Captain – O6
Final Location: Commander, Defense Contract Management Command International
Other Comments such as service history: Enlisted out of High School, December 1965. Was initially
trained as a Storekeeper. Remained Enlisted attaining rank of E-5 Storekeeper Second Class. Was
accepted into an Enlisted to Officer program, essentially a Navy scholarship at the University of
Nebraska (BSME). After graduating and commissioning as an 1100 Line Officer, served on old WWII era
Destroyer (USS Eversole DD-789) providing Gunfire Support Missions off the coast of Vietnam in
1972. Later transferred to 3100 Supply Corps serving as Supply Officer on one of our Fleet Ballistic
Missile Submarines, USS George Bancroft (SSBN-643) Gold Crew. Later served on two aircraft carriers,
Assistant Supply Officer on USS Midway (CV-41) and Supply Officer on USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN72). Final duty station was Commander, Defense Contract Management Command International with

57 offices in 23 countries. Retired September 30, 1998. After retirement in 1998, worked as an EXPAT for Brown & Root (later morphed into Halliburton KBR, then just KBR) and deployed with them for the 2003 Gulf War. Then in 2005 formed my own company, Peregrine Development International, a micro mini-KBR. Finally retired-retired in 2016. Presently reside in the Philippines.

### Larry Yates HS



Name: Larry Yates Branch: US Army Trained Military Occupational Specialty (MOS): 11B4P – Advanced Infantry Training: Light Weapons, Ft. Gordon, GA. Larry became airborne qualified at Ft. Benning, Ga. Years of Service: 1965-1968 Final Rank: Sgt E5 Final Location: Mainz Germany Other Comments such as service history:

- 12/18/65 12/10/66: An Khe Vietnam, assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division. An Khe was the largest helipad in the world. At An Khe Larry became Airborne/Air Mobile.
- 2/67-9/67: Fort Campbell, KY, assigned to the 101st airborne division, 101st Airborne Division,
- 10/67 6/17/68: Mainz, Germany assigned to the 1st Battalion 509th Infantry 8th Infantry Division which was an Airborne/Mechanized Infantry unit.