



Dale Hahn

Storekeeper Second Class Petty Officer, United States Navy
Viet Nam
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At the age of 22, and after two years at Ohio State University, I dropped out of college and then I received my draft notice. I joined the Navy and went to boot camp in Great Lakes, Illinois. Right after boot camp, I married. I was ordered to the Naval Supply School in Newport, Rhode Island. When we graduated 13 weeks later, about 25 of the 40 class members got orders to go to Viet Nam. I received orders myself to go to Da Nang, Viet Nam.

Before going to Viet Nam, I was sent to Escape and Evasion School down in Little Creek, Virginia. In the event of capture, I would be prepared to take care of myself. During the first week, we learned about the Vietnamese language and customs. The next two weeks involved weapons training with everything from a 45-caliber pistol to an M50 machine gun, survival training and captivity in a mock P. O. W. camp. The camp was quite gruesome and realistic.

I arrived in Da Nang in September 1967 after a 40-hour trip from Columbus Ohio. I handled supplies at the Naval Facilities Engineering Command in Da Nang for a year.

At Camp Tienshaw at the base of Monkey Mountain, the Viet Cong,(VC) mortared and shot rockets at us all night every night. Fortunately, they did not succeed in blowing us up. Individual VC also tried to overrun our camp. We could hear our sentries' 50 caliber machine guns going off at night as they shot the enemy trying to get over the fence into our camp. Also, I often saw Huey gun ships (helicopters) shooting tracers at invading VC.

I'll never forget the 1968 TET Offensive. Two regiments of North Vietnamese, a complement of maybe 10,000 men, planned to overrun Da Nang. After getting flack jackets, helmets, and M16's, we stayed in bunkers all night waiting. Fortunately, the Marines and the Army stopped them and took care of us. To this day they're my buddies.

Martha Ray, the comedienne, came to Viet Nam to entertain the troops. Because the VC attacked while she was on stage, she was rushed away in a helicopter. We all took cover, but nobody was hurt.

I returned from Viet Nam on September 7, 1968. My next tour of duty was aboard the USS Essex in Quonset Point, Rhode Island, as Storekeeper Second Class Petty Officer for the electronics system location. It was an interesting tour of duty. At the time, I was paid \$300 a month.

I was next assigned to MCB40 (Construction Battalion, Seabees). Later we went to the Boston Navy Yard where the carrier was put in mothballs. After I oversaw the moving of the ship's supplies into warehouses, I was sent to Solomons Island, Maryland, for a year or so as storekeeper for a recreation center at the Pautuxet Naval Air Station. Then I returned to Davisville, Rhode Island, where I was discharged.

After service, I worked in Washington, D.C., and then in Atlanta, Georgia. I've been in the insurance business for twenty eight years. We came to Tyler in 1994 and to GABC four or five years ago. We've made a lot of wonderful friends in Forerunners and in the Sunday School class. It has been a wonderful experience.

I was a Presbyterian but not a devout Christian; however, my mother was and she prayed me through the whole war. I feel close to the Lord right now, but I didn't know him then.

We have two sons who live in Austin. The older one is married.

Life is wonderful.