

VETERAN OF THE MONTH

Tellico Village VFW Post 12135

Richard (Rich) Vinnece was born in Iowa. He and his family eventually moved to Ohio when he was in the third grade.

In 1966, Rich received his draft notice, but he chose to enlist into the Maine Corps. He attended Basic Training at Paris Island and then was sent to Camp LeJeune for training as a Combat Engineer. Upon completion of the Combat Engineering school, Rich was assigned to Camp Pendleton in California.

Rich spent his time at Camp Pendleton training, preparing with his unit for Vietnam.

After nine months, his call for Vietnam duty arrived. Rich was sent to the 3rd Marine Division, 11th Engineers, where his duty was mostly on the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) building bunkers. Then came the Tet Offensive during mid-winter in 1968.

He was sent to a tank battalion for mine sweeping duty for one month just south of the DMZ. After the Tet Offensive, he was told to pack up for 2-3 days. Well, it wasn't until 90 days later that his unit finally came out of the bush. They ended up building a new base in the "middle of nowhere."

Rich remembers serving in Vietnam had its moments, too many at times. However, the friendships made while serving were an amazing lifetime gift. During his tour, he was MEDEVAC'd to a hospital ship in August 1968, and then was sent home. Rich was honorable discharged from Marine Corps service on August 25, 1968.

Thanks to the Veteran Affairs (VA) education benefits, Rich was able to earn two degrees and enjoy a great life. He will soon celebrate 55 years as a VFW member. Rich and his wife are enjoying their Tellico Village journey.

The Tellico Village VFW Post #12135 General meeting is held at 7:00 p.m. in the Tellico Village Yacht Club every third Wednesday of the month. Further information can be found on the Post website at: <https://www.tvvfw.org/>.

