



**SGT. CLARE "BUTCH" BLAIR
U.S. ARMY - VIETNAM**

Clare "Butch" Blair entered the U.S. Army at the age of 17 on July 27, 1965. He was the son of Robert and Jean Blair of Hermitage, PA. Butch came from a large family of 8 siblings.

During his 18 months of "in country" Vietnam service, he served mainly in Vinh Long in the Mekong Delta area. He landed in Vinh Long with an MOS of Supply Sergeant, but being the time period of the TET Offensive, he was fast placed into positions where he was trained and needed. Since he had completed Artillery Training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma and further infantry training in Fort Knox and Fort Riley before shipping out to Vietnam, he was put into the positions of driving fuel tankers and then went on to perform as a helicopter door gunner.

Sgt. Blair doesn't like to relate the happenings he experienced in Vietnam as they are experiences he doesn't care to remember any more than he has to. As he related during our interview...."These experiences are memories that keep me awake at night - experiences that no young man of 18 should ever have to go through. These experiences are the reason I have a gun in every room of my home and the reason I'm on constant guard. My best experience during my time over there was when I boarded a plane and flew out of Saigon for home. I can relate to these young guys and gals coming home from today's wars - no war is easy - they're all horrible".

Butch Blair relates how hard it was to find a job when he came home from Vietnam. It was a different time than it is today. No one wanted to hire a Vietnam Veteran, we were spit on and called names because of our service over there. I try to relate to and help the young vets coming home from today's wars by working with the Mercer County Veterans' Court as a volunteer mentor. I've been told by many of them that this program and the mentoring I do has made a real difference - a real change - in their lives. Sgt. Blair meets with the Veterans' Court presided over by Judge Wallace every other Thursday and is a mentor to 2 veterans active in the court system presently.

Sgt. Blair also operates Butch's Veterans' Warehouse (phone number: 724-877-1212) which is a project he started to gather and distribute furnishings, clothes, appliances, etc. to veterans who are returning to civilian life and need these items in their transition.

Sgt Blair earned three (3) Bronze Service Stars, Vietnam Service Medal, Expert Marksman Medal, the Republic of Vietnam Medal and the National Defense Service Medal.

His family consists of his wife, Donna Blair, and children: Robert J., Clare Jr, Brian S, Evalyn Bateman, Tamara Blair and Thomas (deceased), Kenneth (deceased) and several foster children he has helped to raise over the years. Additionally, he has several grandchildren and great grandchildren.