

**Burkhart, Joseph John (Joe), 1st Platoon**

28 June 1943 - 20 May 1995

Interred: Tampa, FL



Joseph John Burkhart (Joe) was born on 28 June 1943. He worked with his father at their Stone Quarry Shop in Bedford, Indiana. He joined the Marine Corps Platoon Leaders Class (PLC Jr/Sr) Program in May 1962 while enrolled at Indiana University – Bloomington (IU-B). He was a swimmer/diver, and a Center for Intermural Football at IU-B. He chose the PLC option because there was “esprit de corps” a sense of pride, friendship and togetherness. Joe earned a BA in German from IU-B. On the morning of 28 May 1965 he attended his military commencement commissioning ceremony, and later that day married Susan K. Buzzard who he met at IU-B. He got a two-year deferment from the USMC to work on his graduate degree, teaching German and Psychology at Portage High School in Indiana. Although Joe did not receive his MS in Secondary Education from IU-B before reporting to the Basic School in June 1967, he later conferred his MS degree in June 1970, three months after his release from the Marine Corps.

Joe reported to Basic School Class 1-68 Alpha Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon in Quantico in June of 1967. He graduated on 22 Nov 1967, received orders for West PAC, and was assigned to 3/9 as an O3 infantry officer. He was deployed to Vietnam, receiving a Navy commendation medal for his Heroic Achievement while serving as a Platoon Commander with Company L/3/9. Joe’s platoon was moved to Dong Ha where he was an S-4 until he returned to state side. Joe was assigned to Camp Lejeune, NC, where his wife Susan gave birth to their only child, Kirsten Kay on 24 Oct 69.

Capt Burkhart chose to pursue his career in education and thus was honorably discharged Aug 1971. He taught German and coached swimming at Huntington North HS. He went on to be a principal in Goshen, Elkhart, and Edinburgh, Indiana before finally deciding to move to Florida in 1978. There he worked as an insurance agent for almost twenty years. Joe was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma in 1994. He suffered from two bouts of congestive heart failure in 1995 and succumbed to complications from Amyloidosis on 20 May 1995. His health problems were attributed to exposure to Agent Orange. Joe is interred in Tampa, FL.

**USMC Resume:**

PEBD 04 May 1962; HoR: Bedford, IN; DoR 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt 29 Jun 65.

The Basic School Class 1-68 Alpha Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, Jun-Nov 1967

Vietnam: 3/9 H&S CO, Bn S-4; Jan 68 to 22 Jan 69

Reported to Camp Lejeune, NC. Jan 1969 March 1970

Released from active duty: USMC 29 June '65 to 17 March '70

**Personal Reflections about Joe Burkhart:**

**From Joe's wife Susan, 13 Apr 2015:** Then came basic school at Quantico in June of 1967 where the days began and ended at the BOQ. Those of us that dropped our men off who lived off base would sit in our cars and wait 3-5 hours while they did night training. The woman that stayed always found something to talk about and this made for some lasting memories.

Joe was so mad that he survived Vietnam but yet he could not beat this deadly disease. He cleaned his guns every day until he died trying to think of a way to survive this early death. He always told my daughter, "You have to learn how to do it yourself; I'm not always going to be here to help you." Our daughter has many of his traits and reminds her kids that she was raised by a Marine, so there will be no fear, no whining, and you will succeed at all you do.

**From Rod Arena, 8 Apr 2015:** Yes I remember Joe Burkhart from both 1stPlt 1-68 and 3/9 in 1968. We both joined 3/9 CP located initially in Dong Ha but was operating in Northern I Corps for our entire tour. He was assigned to H&SCo, on the Bn staff as the S-4A, probably because he was one of those 1stLts in our class, and I went to Co M as a PltCmdr. During the following weeks and months our paths didn't often cross but when they did I remember him frequently accompanying the resupply helo lifts to the field and taking a great deal of pride in pushing the beans, bullets, and band-aids out to the troops. Checking the 3/9 Command Chronology website shows that Joe was CO, H&SCo 11-31 July 1968 and then as the Bn S-4 from Aug 1968 to 22 Jan 1969 when he rotated home as a Captain. My best to Susan and daughter. S/F Rod