



Steve R. Kennedy

Steve grew up in Dallas, graduated from Kimball High School, and entered Arlington State College in 1962. He joined ROTC and majored in History. Steve was a member of the Sam Houston Rifles precision drill team serving as Songbird, Squad Leader, and Guidon Bearer. He was a member of the NCO and Officers Club and was a Platoon Leader in his senior year of 1967.

Steve was commissioned as 2nd Lieutenant, Infantry, only nine hours short of completing his BA in History, having served out his four-year college draft deferment.

Steve reported to Fort Benning for the Infantry Basic Officer Course and was selected for Army Aviation Flight School training. He then qualified on the UH-1 helicopter, received his Aviator Wings in January 1968, and deployed to Vietnam in March 1968. Steve joined the 174th Assault Helicopter Company at Duc Pho, Vietnam, from 1968 until 1969 when he transferred to Fort Wolters, Texas, as an Instructor Pilot and then Flight Commander. During this period, Steve developed a Tactical Cross Country Flying Course consisting of four one- to two-hour missions to simulate combat flying conditions to include at least one search-and-rescue mission. The Aviation School adopted this course for all pilots. Steve branch-transferred to Military Intelligence where he was a Distinguished Graduate of the Army Security Agency Basic Officer Course, and he next completed the Fixed Wing Qualification Course on the U21 aircraft.

Steve deployed back to Vietnam for a second tour, assigned as Executive Officer of the 146th Aviation Company. After a battalion reorganization, Steve served with the 138th Aviation Company in Hue, later moving operations to Da Nang. In February 1972, Steve was reassigned to the 303rd Army Security Agency Battalion at Fort Hood after completing the Military Intelligence career course as an Honor Graduate. He was a Liaison Officer to the III Corps, then Company Commander of the 373rd Army Security Agency Company, which became the Army's only combat-ready Tactical ASA Company. As part of the Army's drawdown in 1975, Steve left the active Army as a Captain.

Steve's military awards include two Bronze Stars, Meritorious Service Medal, 36 Air Medals, Vietnam Service Medal with seven stars, Valorous Unit Award, two Meritorious Unit Awards, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, and Senior Aviator Wings.

After his Army career, Steve worked for Southwestern Bell in 1977. He then joined Southwest Airlines as the Company's first telecommunications professional. Among his many achievements was upgrading the data information system on weather, dispatch, and reservations, which resulted in cutting dispatch times. Steve also developed a dispatch system at Southwest Airlines Headquarters that allowed dispatchers to contact aircraft anywhere in the continental United States. He stayed with Southwest Airlines until he retired in 2007, after more than 25 years of service.

In 2019, Steve's son-in-law, Joseph Carpenter, who has a B.A. and M.A. in History from UTA and now works for UTA's Department of History and Geography, conducted an oral history interview with Steve for the UTA Library program, Maverick Veterans' Voices. Joseph learned that Steve had not received his college degree due to the end of his college deferment back in 1967. He led a team effort within the College of Liberal Arts to help Steve graduate from UTA. Steve finally received his long-overdue BA in History in May of 2021.

Steve is active in his church and serves as a Deacon and a Finance Committee Member. He is also actively involved in the 174th Assault Helicopter Company Association, serving as Chaplain, member of the Board of Directors, and managing the Company Store. Steve has been a member of UTA's Cadet Corps Alumni Council since 2011 and is a Board Member, serving as the CCAC Chaplain.

Steve is married to his college sweetheart, Wilma, and they reside in DeSoto, Texas. They have three daughters, Janie, Amy, and Georgianna (who is married to Joe Carpenter). Steve and Wilma have five grandchildren.