



Stephen C. Smith

Steve enrolled in UTA and its ROTC program in September 1959, and during his senior year in 1963 he served as a battalion commander. He was a member of the Sam Houston Rifles drill team for four years and was the First Sergeant his senior year. He was selected as a Distinguished Military Student and approved to be a Distinguished Military Graduate, but Steve delayed his graduation and commissioning due to family circumstances. Steve was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant of Infantry in July 1966.

Upon completing the Infantry Officer Basic Course (IOBC) at Ft. Benning, GA, he completed the Military Assistance Training & Advisor course at Ft. Bragg, NC. Steve was promoted to 1st Lieutenant in August 1967, and he deployed to South Vietnam, as Executive Officer of a five-man district-level advisor team that was headed by a Captain and included three sergeants located in the Mekong Delta (IV Corps). His duties included training and conducting offensive and defensive combat operations with local Vietnamese Regional Force and Popular Force (RF/PF) units. The primary mission was to protect the district population from Viet Cong (VC) local and main force operations. He also participated in implementing the South Vietnamese (SVN) government's Revolutionary Development program, which was designed to defeat the VC militarily, and to disrupt their attempts to establish a "Shadow Government."

Steve served frequently as mission commander in the Command & Control (C&C) helicopter of nighty "Firefly" search and destroy missions in his district or the entire province. These missions were flown from dusk to dawn seven nights a week. In February 1968 during the Viet Cong (VC) and North Vietnamese Army Tet Offensive, his RF/PF troops and team fought main force VC units intent on occupying the district and provincial capitals. He continued his C&C role with

Firefly missions and flying the backseat of O-1 aircraft on reconnaissance missions, while acting as the Assistant S3, Provincial Officer, Operations Section.

Steve was promoted to Captain while in transit returning from Vietnam, and in 1968 he became a U.S. Army Advisor with the USAR's 104th Division (Training). CPT Smith then attended the Infantry Officer's Career Course from 1971-2. Upon completion, the Infantry School retained two of Steve's monographs in its library as reference material for Infantry officers. From 1972 until 1973, CPT Smith was Commander, Combat & Combat Support Company (CSC) of the First Battalion 37th Armor Battalion, First Brigade, First Armored Division Katterbach, Germany, about 75 miles from the Czech border. Steve was transferred to Fort Wolters, Texas, and released from active duty on September 29, 1973.

Military Awards and Decorations: Combat Infantry Badge (CIB), Bronze Star Medal, Air Medal w/Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Commendation Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, and Vietnamese Campaign Medal.

In 1974, Steve started his civilian career with Redman Industries in Dyersburg, TN as a Production Supervisor, followed by a promotion to Assistant Production Manager. In 1977, he transferred to the American Greeting Corporation plant in Osceola, AR as an Industrial Engineer, specializing in production of greeting cards. Recognizing his capability, dedication, and ability to enlist the cooperation and support of others, over the next 18 years AG management assigned him some of its most difficult projects and tasks at the Osceola plant, such as production line streamlining and database creation.

When AG decided to explore Just-in-Time Line (JTL) manufacturing, Steve was asked to create their new experimental JTL for envelope manufacturing and job flexographic printing. Steve succeeded beyond expectations. Senior management then tasked him to create and implement other more complex JTLs. Steve was equally successful in getting those lines into smooth production with much benefit to the company.

In 1995, he became an entrepreneur and created Paragon Consulting Services (PCS). Steve was awarded a contract with Leaf Brands, one of the world's top ten confectionery companies. Steve made recommendations that Leaf adopted to make current operations more efficient, thus saving Leaf Brands several million dollars in logistical and operations systems while lowering costs.

In 1996, Steve pivoted and became manager of Sharecroppers Restaurant in Blytheville, AR, responsible for everything but the kitchen. The restaurant had seating for 175, was often filled to capacity, and had regular clientele from as far away as St. Louis. He was active in the local Chamber of Commerce, and the restaurant supported meal deliveries to the elderly and sick in the community. He retired from the business at age 70.

Steve has been a consistent and loyal supporter of UTA and its ROTC program. He is engaged to Sheila K. Dobbs, and both reside in Blytheville, AR.