



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE
COMMISSIONER DAWN BUCKINGHAM, M.D.

1700 N. Congress Ave. • Austin, TX 78701-1495 • 512-463-5339 • FAX: 512-475-1415

PRESS RELEASE

**Voices of Veterans: Captain John Delcambre Shares
His Story of Service in the United States Marine Corps
and the United States Navy**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 08, 2024

Contact: Kimberly Hubbard
(512) 936-9582
media@glo.texas.gov

AUSTIN — Today, Texas Land Commissioner and Veterans Land Board (VLB) Chairwoman Dawn Buckingham, M.D., is proud to introduce the next installment of the series highlighting the VLB's Voices of Veterans oral history program. This week, we highlight the service of Captain John Delcambre who served in the United States Marine Corps and the United States Navy.

Delcambre was born in Fort Worth in September 1978. His father was in the U.S. Navy and served in World War II. After graduating from Marine Corps boot camp, Delcambre was deployed to Vietnam and served with the Third Battalion Third Marine Regiment in the Vietnamese Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). When asked how he felt about being deployed to Vietnam, he said, "I was excited. That's what Marines do. That's why Marines exist."



VOICES OF VETERANS

name

Delcambre, John

military branch

**Marines,
Navy**

rank

CPT

conflict

**Vietnam, Gulf War,
Iraq/Afghanistan**

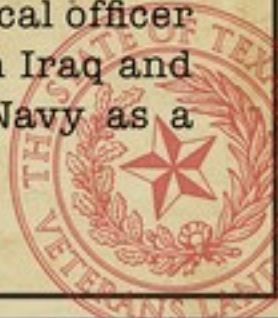
date interviewed

09/09/2020



interview
available on
voicesofveterans.org

John B Delcambre joined the U.S. Marine Corps at the age of seventeen in 1966. In December 1966, he went to Vietnam, where he received three Purple Hearts from injuries he received during combat. Mr. Delcambre graduated as a general surgeon from Texas Tech, and in 1980 went on an International Red Cross mission to Cambodia. He joined the Navy Reserves in 1990 and served in Desert Storm. He also served as a medical officer with the Navy Seabee Battalion and had tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. Mr. Delcambre retired from the Navy as a Captain in 2014.



He was the youngest man in the platoon, and many of his fellow Marines took him under their wing and showed him how to stay alive in the jungle. Delcambre got his first injury during an ambush on Easter Sunday with a heavy mortar attack. He recalled, "I got blown up five or six feet, and I got shrapnel all in my left chest and my sacrum and was medevaced in the middle of the night." They lost many men over that weekend.

He was eventually transferred to the First Battalion Ninth Marine Regiment. Delcambre said that this battalion was known as "The Walking Dead" because they lost so many fighters and urgently needed support. He was injured a second time with this battalion,

saying, "I had a grenade hole through my arm, in the bicep, but I was still able to use my arm, still had to stay and fight." He recovered from that wound, but was injured a third time while fighting near the Northern Vietnamese border, bringing his total number of injuries to three in just six months.

After this tour, Delcambre went into pre-med in the early '70s and was accepted into medical school at Texas Tech. In 1980, Delcambre was a third-year surgery resident but dropped everything to go back overseas and help with the refugee crisis at the Thai and Cambodian border after Vietnam invaded Cambodia.

"I volunteered to take an American team along with the International Red Cross out to the border and set up medical camps there and did surgery with all the parties... that was one of the most exciting assignments I ever had."



VOICES OF VETERANS

VLB CHAIRWOMAN, DAWN BUCKINGHAM, M.D.

In 1982, he graduated from Texas Tech, went into private practice in Longview, Texas, and joined the Navy Reserve. As a Navy reservist, Delcambre was called back to serve in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm during the Gulf War in 1990 and 1991.

In 2005, he began serving in Iraq as a battalion surgeon, known as the Chief Medical Officer and traveled to several outposts around the country. He recalled traveling with a convoy during this deployment when his vehicle drove over an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) that happened to not go off due to a battery malfunction.

"I was with a Commanding Officer... I was the Medical Officer, and if that thing had gone off, we would have lost you as the C.O. and me as the battalion surgeon... that was stupid and something we're able to laugh at now."



VOICES OF VETERANS

VLB CHAIRWOMAN, DAWN BUCKINGHAM, M.D.

Delcambre's last tour was with the Navy Seabee Battalion in Afghanistan. He returned to the States in 2010, retired from working at Texas Tech in 2013, and retired from the Navy in 2014. For his service, he received three Purple Hearts and three Navy

Commendation Medals. When talking about his favorite medal, Delcambre displayed his keen sense of humor, saying, " The absolute proudest medal I've got is the Marine Good Conduct, which represents three years of undetected crime when I was just old enough to serve."

After being asked if he was affected by Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS), Delcambre said, "Just like every cop and every surgeon who has to take a trauma call and every fireman," demonstrating an acute understanding of PTS's far-reaching effects.

He has a son who joined the Marines and encouraged anyone considering joining the military to understand this choice's significance, saying, "First of all, that's gotta be your highest priority. You've gotta have a passion for it and never do anything for the money that you're gonna get." He professed that serving his country was "the greatest time in my life," and he enjoys helping others whenever possible.

To listen to Captain John Delcambre tell his story, click the button below:

[Captain John Delcambre's Story](#)

Veterans can email VoicesofVeterans@glo.texas.gov to tell their stories. Please note that the Veteran must be a resident of Texas at the time of their interview.

Voices of Veterans is a state agency's first Veteran oral history program. It records the stories of Texas Veterans through their time in service and after returning home from combat.

The VLB records interviews with veterans over the phone or in person. Their interviews are then permanently archived in the Office of Veterans Records at the GLO, where they join the historical documents of other Texas heroes such as Sam Houston, Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, and William Barret Travis.

Veterans' interviews are also available to researchers, historians, genealogists, and the public. These precious records inspire future generations and remind us of our Veterans' sacrifices.

To listen to the over 500 archived stories of Veterans documented through the GLO's Voices of Veterans oral history program, click the button below:

[Voices of Veterans](#)