Video Log
John W. Bates
Vietnam
USMC
Born: 08/03/1944

Interview Date: 01/09/2012
Interviewed By: Robert Weisel

00:00:00 introduction
00:00:40 Bates explains how and why he joined the Marines.
00:01:28 explains how the Tet Offensive impacted his decision
00:02:14 reported for Officer Candidate School 10/14/1968 at Quantico, VA
00:02:34 explains reason for going through 2 Officer Candidate Classes before getting commissioned as Second Lieutenant 4/18/69.
00:03:40 Bates then started 21 weeks of The Basic School.
00:03:45 explains the purpose of Basic School.
00:04:10 next came 6 weeks of training in tanks at Camp Pendleton before being sent to Vietnam to join the 1st Tank Battalion, First Marine Division
00:04:35 discussed Headquarters at Hill 55
00:05:00 Bates was assigned to a platoon that was located just south of Marble Mountain, with a portion of the platoon at An Hoa.
00:05:45 explains why he chose tanks
00:06:10 describes the mud at An Hoa
00:07:05 describes arriving in Vietnam on 12/23 or 24/1969
00:07:40 talks of not knowing the difference between incoming or outgoing artillery.
00:08:00 describes duties
00:08:55 explains his frustration with his “good luck”
00:09:00 describes relationship with his second-in-command, Gunnery Sergeant Hansen
discusses problems with replacement for Hansen
explains Company Commander and frustrations felt by men after the war who were reverted to enlisted ranks
describes a typical day at Sea Anchor, the name for the site just south of Marble Mountain
explains how the terrain made use of tanks difficult
describes his frustration at the lack of action
describes a mortar attack
describes his first day at Danang
Bates is taken to First Division Headquarters.
explains the extraction of the tank unit
describes the injury of marine on a tank that hit a mine
explains the lack of casualties in his unit
talks of mistakenly volunteering to become an infantry officer
is assigned to 2nd Battalion at Sea Anchor as an infantry officer
is reassigned after a few days to replace the wounded legal officer
explains how his friend won the Silver Star
describes duties from early April until mid-October
Bates is transferred out of Vietnam to the 3rd Shore Party Battalion on Okinawa.
describes the trip by ship from Danang to Okinawa
explains the 3rd Shore Party Battalion
describes duty of signing documents
Bates did his Christmas shopping on Okinawa and was transferred to the U. S. just before Christmas 1971
Bates assigned to unit responding to Congressional inquiries at Marine Corps Headquarters, Washington.
described the unit and it workings
explains the power of Marine Corps headquarters
explains that because of good writing skills he was assigned to the elite group writing replies for the Commandant of the Marine Corps

described the preparation of documents for the signature of Commandant

explains the signatory chain of command

explains how long he was on active duty

describes staying in the reserves and duties while in reserves

explains pay and GI benefits

Bates finishes law school and leaves reserves.

gives brief biography

explains civilian career

describes reasons for no PTSD

stayed in touch with family by letter

explains why he never joined veteran groups

describes the futility of Vietnam

describes being saddened by the war and the waste

discusses parallels of Vietnam with wars today

explains that anti-war protesters did not harass him

explains he doesn’t look for sadness