

E-mail Received from MN3 Michael Snell, USNR

Well as far as how did a Mineman end up in Afghanistan. Well, I can give you the short version. Currently I am part of CHB-14 (Cargo Handling Battalion). I have been told it is because I have 16 years of experience as an over-the-road truck driver prior to signing up for the Navy. Anyway, I was suppose to go to Bagram to work in the Post Office for six months. I am to the understanding that I am the first Mineman in the history of the Navy to attend the Postal Clerk "A" school.

Well after 3 months of pre-deployment training and two days prior to flying over to Afghanistan my mission was cancelled. I was given three options. 1. To go back to drilling reservist status. 2. Get on the next cycle to Bagram and work at the Phoenix Reserve Center. 3. Get on the next available mission, what ever it is. It would either be to the Horn of Africa or

Afghanistan. Well I decided to take the next available.

I got a call about a month later from a detailer asking if I had an interest in going to Afghanistan to work on MRAPS. Well I had to find out what an MRAP was. Two weeks later I was at Camp Atterbury in Indiana going through 3 months of combat training. I was on what was known as a Provincial Reconstruction Team (AKA PRT mission).

After the training was complete and we actually made it to our FOB (FOB Wright) it was discovered that there were civilian contractors that worked on the MRAPS. There was actually talk about sending me home. Well there was an opening in the supply department. I took that and found myself spending a lot of time in the armory.

I was able to learn a great deal about small arms from a GMCM Joe Love, he is retired. He told me he helped the Navy develop the slim mine.

While I was there I kept very busy. I worked in medical during MASCASULTIES, worked with locals to build things around the FOB, work with the Afghan Border Patrol on small arms instruction or whatever was needed.

Well like I said that is the short version. My deployment was supposed to be 6 to 8 months long. My last order revision was written for 542 days (17 months, 3 weeks and a few days)

Our command was made up of Navy Officers. We had the best CO. It was a joint Navy, Army and Air Force mission.

MN3 Michael Snell USNR received a Purple Heart, Combat Action Ribbon and the Combat Action Badge for action in Kunar Province, Afghanistan on 07/03/10.

Navy Master Chief Mineman, Glenn Niemitalo

Navy Master Chief Mineman Glenn Niemitalo of East Greenbush has received a Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service in the Afghanistan war. Niemitalo also received a Navy Combat Action Ribbon, an Army Combat Action Badge and a NATO International Security Assistance Force Medal. He earned the awards while serving as a quality control engineer with reconstruction teams in Paktika and Khost provinces. His Provincial Reconstruction Team Khost Afghanistan unit was comprised of Army, Navy, and Air Force personnel. He earned recognition while overseeing the construction of projects by Afghanistan contractors and training Afghanistan engineers. After he returned to the United States, he received the awards during a ceremony at the Naval Operational Support Center in Glenville. As a reservist he is assigned the center.

Denis "Rusty" McBride, MN2/1st Sargeant

I was in Viet Nam from Nov 17, 1969 thru Nov 17, 1970. I was first assigned to Civic Action in Da Nang. I later received the Navy Commendation medal with combat V(for what I donâ€™t know). In March of 1970 I transferred to the Naval Advisory Group in Saigon. I was assigned to River Assault Group 91(later changed to Mine Interdiction Division 91). My HQ was out of Cat Lai, but the RVN river mine sweepers were assigned to the Saigon area. We patrolled both the Dong Nai River and the Saigon River for controlled mines. My unit received the RVN unit citation ribbon and I won/earned the Combat Action Ribbon for action on the Dong Nai River(1970). There were two other Minemen that were assigned to this Unit, one being Ron Adams MN2 and another MN3 who for the life of me I cannot recall his name. While I was there Ron was on patrol 5 out of every 8 days but was not awarded the CAR. We were constantly in harms way but they were always shooting at everybody else until they got tired and took us on. My name is Denis "Rusty" McBride MN2 (while in the Navy). After "A" School in Charleston, I was assigned to NOF Yokosuka, and was assigned to the Mine shop and was a duty coxswain.

After leaving the Navy, I became a cop in Arizona and joined the Army National Guard. I then transferred to the California Dept of Fish and Game as a Game Warden. During that time I remained in the National Guard attaining the rank of E-8/First Sergeant. I retired from the military after the first Gulf War from a Armored Unit. My MOS was 11B, which was infantry.