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HEROES
ON VETERANS DAY

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Pictured with Owen is his wife, Sara, and daughter, Danica.

OWEN BOCK, PERRY GA
AIR FORCE VETERAN 1996-2000
AIR NATIONAL GUARD 2005-PRESENT
TARA POOLE | CONTRIBUTOR

Owen Bock joined the U.S. Air Force after graduating high school in 1996 and actively served for four years. He was deployed twice during that time: once to Saudi Arabia in 1998 and again to Kuwait in 1999.

Owen then took a five-year hiatus from the military. He returned in 2005 as a member of the U.S. Air National Guard where he currently serves as an E6 Technical Sergeant.

"I chose the Air Force because I was more interested in airplanes than anything else," said Bock. "The Air Force is very diversified and has a lot of applications to the outside world."

As an E6 TSgt in the Air National Guard, Bock is responsible for maintaining power production for the base as well as performing numerous other civil engineering tasks, including maintenance of the runway arresting gear.

"We work 12-hour days, usually five days a week," he said. "We perform daily inspections of the generators and the runway cables and change the oil in the generators every 300 to 500 hours," he said. When he's not serving in the Guard, Bock is employed as a Tech Specialist/Drafter with the Mercer Engineering Research Center (MERC) in Warner Robins where he works on blue prints and 3D CAD drawings for DoD contracts.

"I've been with MERC for nine years," he said. "They are extremely helpful and supportive of my work with the Guard. They actually go above and beyond compared to other companies."

As a member of the Air National Guard, Bock is occasionally deployed for training purposes. These training deployments, or DFTs, can last from a few weeks to several months at a time and can be domestic or international.

"We were sent to Portland, Maine, a few years ago to help the Boy Scouts build a dining facility, and we went to Armenia for three weeks last year," he explained. "We do more training than actual mission deployments in the Guard."

Bock has enjoyed his time in the military.

"I enjoy it immensely! I wouldn't have come back if I didn't like it. It's been great training, and I've made great friendships," he said. "You get to meet all kinds of people and get to see a lot of places you wouldn't see if you weren't in the military."

PAUL NOLES, PERRY, GA VIETNAM WAR VETERAN 1967-1969

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Noles was responsible for directing artillery and mortar fire onto a target.

"I would go out with the rifle companies, and if we saw enemy troops and wanted to bombard them with mortars, then I would take their coordinates and estimate the range and have them fire a few rounds. From that, I adjusted until I was hitting the target I wanted to hit," he explained. "And if we were out and got ambushed, then I did the same thing. I had to call in support from the mortars to try to hit the enemy."

Mr. Noles was stationed in the south part of South Vietnam. "There was a lot of water and rice paddies," he stated. "You had to be careful with the rice paddy dikes because the enemy would set booby traps in them. Most days we got two hot meals — breakfast and supper. Lunch was C rations. And

"WHEN I HAD TO GO FOR MY PHYSICAL, I GOT A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES — MR. LYNDON B. JOHNSON — AND IT SAID 'GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. YOU HAVE BEEN SELECTED BY YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS.'

you got two sodas and two beers a day unless you were out in the field. I did go two days without eating once because we got ambushed and were in the jungle, so for about two days we had water and that was about it."

Mr. Noles returned to Vietnam in January 1968 during the Tet Offensive and served three months in Saigon. His final six months in the Army was spent at Fort Benning as an SEO Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO). While at Fort Benning, Mr. Noles served on burial detail as a flag folder

and member of the rifle salute. He also served as the Safety NCO on the firing range. During his final two months at Fort Benning, he tested new weapons the Army was developing. One such weapon was the M16 rifle with an M79 grenade launcher mounted on the bottom, which later became the M203.

According to Mr. Noles, he might have stayed in the Army longer had the Vietnam War ended.

"I had made a little bit of rank, but if I had stayed in the Army, within three to six months, I would have been back in Vietnam. Vietnam was no place for a 19-year-old."

However, Mr. Noles is a firm believer in the military.

"I am one of those that believes everyone should spend time in the service," he said. "I'm a firm believer that we wouldn't have the problems we have now because the military holds you accountable, and you're taught to really get along with people and that people are different from you. The ones that say I don't have a job or I don't have any ability to do anything, you can always join the military, and you can get a college education. I came back and used my GI benefits, went to college and got my college education. Everybody should give two years to Uncle Sam."



Paul Noles age 18-19



Paul Noles was drafted into the U.S. Army Infantry in May 1967 and served until May 1969. He is a veteran of the Vietnam War.

"When I got drafted, I didn't have a lottery number. You had to sign up for the draft when you turned 18, and each district or whatever had to furnish so many people a month. I guess I was one of the lucky ones," he said. "When I had to go for my physical, I got a letter from the president of the United States — Mr. Lyndon B. Johnson — and it said 'Greetings from the President of the United States. You have been selected by your friends and neighbors.' But it wouldn't tell me who those friends and neighbors were who had selected me!"

Mr. Noles was deployed twice to Vietnam — the first time in October 1967 where he spent 11 months and 27 days as a Forward Observer (FO) for the "Four-Deuce" (M30) mortar platoon in the 199th Light Infantry Brigade. As an FO, Mr.