

BIOGRAPHY



LT COL THOMAS W. "TOM" WILLIAMS USMC (RETIRED)

On 20 December 1944, Tom Williams was born Tom Collins in Savannah, GA. Abandonment by his biological father at the age of six months old, profoundly impacted Tom's early life causing his mother to farm him out to relatives while she worked to make a living for them both.

At the age of six years old, Tom's mother met and married U.S. Air Force Major Carl F. Williams Jr. This fortuitous marriage would bring about a radical change in Tom's life. As a military dependent, he immediately found himself traveling the world, living in foreign lands, learning about Ancient Roman history and archaeology, assimilating a basic conversance in the French, Arabic, and Japanese Languages, as well as being immersed in their respective cultures.

After Tom's dad retired, his family moved to the Williams' ancestral homestead established in 1832, in Dooly County Georgia. Yet again, living, working, and learning to manage the family farm would have another major influence on Tom's future interests, especially regarding his love for the agrarian way of life.

From 1964-68 Tom attended North Georgia College (NGC) acquiring a BA degree in history and a minor in psychology and political science. He then attended the Marine Corps' Officer Candidate School (OCS) at Quantico, Va., where he set the Marine Corps' record of 52 seconds for the Obstacle Courses and was the Platoon Honor Man. He then completed The Basic School (TBS) for all newly commissioned Marine Corps 2nd lieutenants, also at Quantico, graduating in the top 10% of his class. Before leaving Quantico, Tom then attended and graduated from High Intensity Language Training (HILT) for Vietnamese.

As an infantry officer, Tom deployed as a 2nd lieutenant to Vietnam in 1969-70 where he commanded an infantry platoon in Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, followed by commanding a reconnaissance platoon as a 1st lieutenant in Alpha Company, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division.

Subsequent to this combat tour, Tom commanded the Shore Party Platoon at the 1st Marine Brigade, followed by commanding the 81mm Mortar Platoon in 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment at Kaneohe Marine Corps Air Station, Hawaii. Twenty-five months later, on two days' notice, Tom was redeployed back to Vietnam, as a captain, where he served as a school trained aerial observer. During this second combat deployment, Tom was imbedded with a Vietnamese O-1 Bird Dog squadron flying 183 combat missions from Hue Phu Bai Airfield, during the 1972 Easter Offensive.

During his twenty-nine-year career, Tom participated in six amphibious deployments: four Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs) and two Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEBs). In 1976 as a school trained Communications Officer, he participated in the Non-Combat Evacuation Operation (NEO) of Beirut, Lebanon. In 1980-83, under secret orders, he was assigned as the regimental operations officer for developing the one-of-a-kind Mechanized Combined-Arms Task Force (MCATF), at Twenty-nine Palms, CA. In 1983-86, he was the Infantry Weapons Officer at Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC) Washington, DC, responsible for replacing or improving all Marine Corps infantry weapons. From 1986-90, he was the Amphibious Operations Officer for Commander Sixth Fleet's NATO staff, Commander Striking Forces South (CSFS) in Naples, Italy, responsible for coordinating all NATO amphibious training exercises throughout the Mediterranean Sea. That was followed by his participation in the First Gulf War, 1990-91, as a G3 operations officer with I MEF HQ. His last major active-duty assignment was as the G3 for the first Marine Component HQ to the European Command (EUCOM), in Stuttgart, Germany, 1993-96. After retiring in 1997, he spent eleven years as a contract mentor and trainer, six years in Saudi Arabia (1998-06) and five years in Afghanistan (2006-12).

Currently, he lives an agrarian life on a 75-acre cattle property, Camelot, located on the Lamington Rain Forest Plateau in southeastern Queensland, Australia. He raises beef cattle, sells free-range eggs, and is a beekeeper, a gardener, and is developing his home into a Bed & Breakfast, while also writing a series of books, Heart of a Marine, in which he shares his Marine Corps experiences and his life's lessons learned.

Tom Williams