



# Veterans' Roll Call

**Thomas Smearcheck, MSGT AFR (Ret.)  
... Finally Retired**

My first memory of the military was listening to my Dad talk about his WWII submarine encounters. That was just enough to encourage me to enlist in the Navy shortly after graduating high school. At age 20, I enlisted in the Navy SEABEES. I began my training at Gulf Port, MS. I spent my next 8-9 months in Guam updating their infra-structure. After my enlistment ended I joined the US Navy Reserves where I served for 4 years. Years later, from 1982 through 2007 I served as a Medic with the 911th Air Force Reserves, Pittsburgh.



In 2003 I felt an additional call to duty. I volunteered and served as a Medic from 2003-2004 supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. I was stationed at Camp Wolfe, Kuwait. Wounded from Iraq were airlifted to our base. We served as a staging area until the wounded were again transported to Ramstein AFB, Germany. I worked the 7 PM - 7 AM shift 6 days a week. In

2006-2007 I again decided to volunteer and serve with Operation Noble Eagle/Enduring Freedom. My new duty station was at Camp Ali Al Salem, Kuwait. The base was 23 miles from the Iraqi border. This time I was in charge of 15-20 Medics on a 12 hour daylight shift, 6 days a week. Our wounded were transported to the hospital at Ramstein AFB, Germany or Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.



After 30 years combined military service, I retired from the Air Force Reserves in November 2007. It was an honor and a privilege to serve this wonderful country of ours. I hope I have honored the memory of my Dad, my Uncle John, and my father-in-law. He was a twice-wounded Army Sargeant who humbly received the Silver Star, Bronze Star, 2 Purple Hearts, (a quadripelagic for a year), numerous Oak Leaf Clusters, and served in 8 invasions.



Today, after 30 years of service with the state, I am finally retired. December 31, 2014 was my last day as a Charge Nurse at Southwestern Veteran's Center, Pittsburgh. I am now devoting my time to my family. My tomato patch, my catch-and-release fishing, and my wife's Honey-Do List are now long-over due priorities.