



## New Morris County Veterans' Service Officer wants to serve those who have served America

By Marlene Bohr  
Service is a word that James (Jim) Williams of Naples totally understands.

After devoting a number of years to the military service, he is now serving others, and their relatives, who also spent time in the service.

Williams has accepted the position of the Morris County Veterans Service Officer as of September 1.

Williams, himself a veteran, is originally from Abilene. After a term in the military, he worked in Dallas where he met his wife, Cindi.

"My wife and I married 20 something years ago and shortly after that we moved to Naples out on Highway 77," Williams said. "She is

the daughter of Doug and Joyce England."

Williams went in the U.S. Army in December of 1968. He went to basic training at Fort Bliss in El Paso.

"I left there and went to Advanced Infantry Training (AIT) in Fort Belvoir, Virginia," he said. "After AIT, I got orders for Vietnam. I was in Vietnam from 1969 to 1970 as a combat engineer and attained the rank of Sgt. E5. I got out of the military in December 1971."

Williams has a bachelor's degree in business from Dallas Baptist University in Irving.

"Once I was out of the service, I went to work in 1971 for the Veterans Administration as a veteran's benefits counselor," he said. "From 1971 to 1979 I worked at the regional office in Waco assisting veterans in obtaining their benefits. In 1975 they asked if I'd be interested in going to the VA Hospital in Dallas and work with patients confined to bed, so I did.

"In 1976 we had a van that would go to the rural areas and I was one of the select few who worked on the van in the rural areas. We set up the van and opened the doors. We put it in their local newspapers what day we would be

there. We would pull up in that town that day and spend the entire day working with veterans who did not have access to the VA counselors. It was very rewarding."

Williams said he has had many memorable moments through the years in helping veterans and looks forward to serving veterans again.

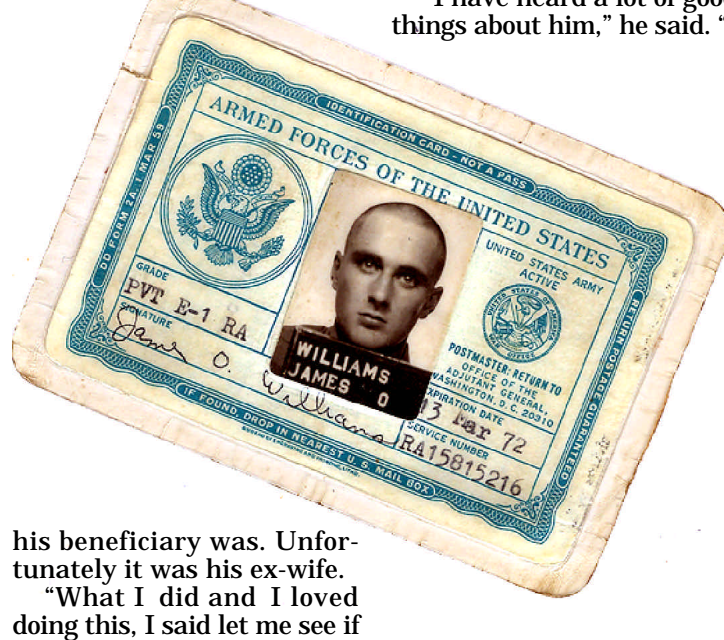
"One of the most memorable ones I remember is I had a widow of a veteran come into the van to seek advice," he said. "The man was a World War II veteran and the widow came in to see about getting his life insurance. We researched it and pulled it up to find out who

Williams worked for a period of time for the city of Hurst.

"I retired from Hurst as a building official," he said. "That is the one who is responsible for all the building inspectors, the examiners who are over the plans and over the department issuing permits. I then went to work in Mount Pleasant as a building inspector and did that for about five years and retired again. Then I did consulting work for the city of Atlanta as their building inspector and set up their permit programs."

Williams said he had met Jim Garner very briefly several years ago.

"I have heard a lot of good things about him," he said. "I



his beneficiary was. Unfortunately it was his ex-wife.

"What I did and I loved doing this, I said let me see if I can locate the ex-wife. I will contact her personally and let her know the man has died and explain the circumstances. I said I would ask if she would relinquish the claim on that money and give it to the wife who married him after the war. After eight weeks, I got in touch with the ex-wife and after several minutes, she was most agreeable and relinquished her rights to the veterans' life insurance money. She told the widow she could have the insurance money. That was the highlight of my time going out to the rural areas. It was so good to see the rightful person get the insurance money.

The one thing I will never truly forget is her smile and her being so appreciative.

It was in 1945 when he got out of military and remarried in 1950 and never thought about changing the beneficiary."

have some big shoes to fill."

"I want to keep the friendly environment at the courthouse so when veterans come in they know they have someone who does care, that has been there and knows what they feel. I am not only talking about the veterans, I am talking about the widows, spouses and the children, as all those are entitled to benefits. I want to make sure I do everything possible so they may receive their entitlements. That is my goal."

"I think my job is to serve them as they have served this country. That will be totally unconditional service."

Williams and his wife are members of the First Baptist Church in Omaha.

"My wife and I volunteer every month at the Hands Extended Food Pantry in Naples," he said. "I believe in God first, family second and job third."

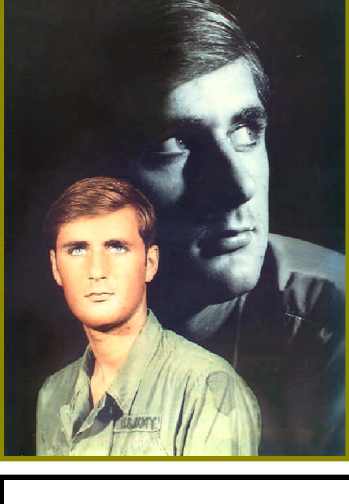


JIM WILLIAMS AT HOME IN VIETNAM



A busy life

His new job as the Morris County Veterans' Service Officer will keep Jim Williams busy and with his family there is no free time for retirement and just sitting around. He and Cindi are the parents of three children, a couple of in-laws and three grandchildren. They took time to pose, above, with Bradley, a '94 Pewitt School graduate, who is attending the University of Arkansas. Another son, Bud, and his wife, Jayme, live at Marietta, and daughter Christie, and her husband, Ryan Mueller, reside in Colorado. KC Photo



THE EARLY DAYS WITH "UNCLE SAM"

