



## QUARTERMASTER

Hello, my name is John O'Dea.

I was born in Boston on January 20, 1951. During my youth I lived in Roxbury, Dorchester, and finally West Roxbury. I enrolled in Boston Trade High School after attending St. Theresa's grammar school. When I finished at the trade school in 1968, the war in Vietnam was raging. Several of my friends on the block had been K.I.A. This fact, along with the government's contention that the communists were pushing to take over the globe, inspired me to want to avenge the deaths of my friends.

I joined the army in February of 1968. During my basic training I became very impressed with the airborne spirit. I wanted to be "more" than just another soldier. I signed up for jump school. After graduation from airborne training, they assigned me to the 82nd Airborne Division where I spent the next year at Fort Bragg.

In April of 1969 D.O.D. finally sent me the orders I had hoped for - Vietnam with the 173d Airborne Brigade. Some of my best and worst memories were etched into my brain while "in country".

I returned back to the world on July 7, 1970. Feeling the need to enhance my education, I enrolled at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, where I earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology, with a minor in Anthropology. Thank you Uncle Sam for the G.I. education benefits. During my college years I felt the need for immediate gratification, so I started making furniture and worked at building things.

I then worked in biological research for a couple of years, followed by a stint at teaching at the junior high level. Truly rewarding, but a labor-of-love job with a meager salary. Although I enjoyed teaching, the money just wasn't adequate, so I got accepted into the Carpenters' Union in 1984.

Sometime in 1988-89, Roy Wheelock called me and informed me of the 173d Chapter. Seeing the patch and talking with a few of the guys brought back so many emotions that I was overwhelmed. I joined immediately and have been very active maintaining and growing the Barnes Chapter IX ever since. I was extremely happy and proud to have been President of the chapter during the '98 Boston Reunion.

Sincerely,  
John J. O'Dea, Jr.