



**Lieutenant Colonel Joseph James Smartz  
U.S. Marine Corps (Retired) – Vietnam**

LTC Joseph James Smartz served 22 ½ years in the United States Marine Corps, but has dedicated his past 56 years to the service of his country and our U.S. veterans. LTC Smartz entered the U.S. Marine Corps May 15, 1957. He has served at bases in Okinawa, California, Hawaii, Virginia and Vietnam. His career included two (2) tours of duty in Vietnam at the Chu Lai Airfield and sea duty along the littoral coast of Vietnam. He was the Marine Corps Representative to the Center For Naval Analysis during the development of the LCAC (Landing Craft Air Cushion). He also served a tour of sea duty, being home ported in San Diego, CA. He also served on the staffs of CG, FMFLant and CINCLANT and attended the Armed Services War College in Norfolk, VA.

After retirement from the Marine Corps, he and his wife, Nancy, reside in Sharpsville where he was born and raised.

In 1983 he was appointed as the Mercer County Director of Veterans Affairs, a position he held for 18 ½ years, the longest serving Director of Veterans Affairs in the history of Mercer County.

While serving as VA Director, he was awarded the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Commendation Medal for commendable service to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (the first Mercer County resident to ever receive this medal).

LTC Smartz is the person responsible for writing the computer program that tracks all veterans buried in Mercer County cemeteries and provides information to the Veterans' Organizations as to the number of flags and holders they are to receive each year for Memorial Day. His program was adopted by the state of Pennsylvania and has since been utilized as a model for all 67 counties in the state.

During his term as Director, he was instrumental in bringing the VA Medical Clinic to Mercer County two days a week. This later evolved into a fully established Mercer County VA Medical Clinic which is open 5

days a week with full time medical doctors and support staff. He retired from Mercer County government in June of 2002.

LTC Smartz was an accomplished athlete and was inducted into the Mercer County Sports Hall of Fame in 1998.

Upon establishment of the Mercer County VA Clinic in Hermitage, LTC Smartz "Jim" was the first certified volunteer at the Clinic, later being appointed as the Director of Volunteer Services. He reports he is ".....happy to be alive, well and able to continue in his positions of service to the veterans of Mercer County.....".