

## **CHAPLAIN (COLONEL) RICK BLANK CALIFORNIA STATE GUARD BIOGRAPHY**

Chaplain (Colonel) Rick Blank grew up in an Air Force family. His father flew B-25s in Europe in WWII and C-46s and C-119s in Korea during the war, and later France, before transferring to the USAF Office of Special Investigations, until retirement in 1973.

Chaplain Blank graduated from the U. S. Naval Academy class of 1968. At graduation he was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Air Force. After flight training and qualification in the F-4 Phantom, he flew 248 combat missions with the 366 Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) "Gunfighters" out of Danang Air Base, Vie Nam. Then followed with four years with the 36th TFW at Bitburg Air Base Germany.

After transfer to Homestead AFB Florida, he switched to inactive status to go to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He graduated with a Master of Divinity and pastored a church in Norman, Okla.

Blank was then recalled to active duty and stationed again at Homestead AFB for three years in F-4 instructor duty. After being selected as Tactical Air Command Instructor of the Year in 1981, he was called to Headquarters United States Air Forces Europe by the Director of Operations to work in Exercise Plans. He then was transferred to Mather AFB in Sacramento for squadron command, but was grounded from flying due to a medical condition, and finished his final five years active duty in engineering, retiring in 1993.

Then followed 22 years as engineering project manager contractor working on Air Force, Navy and USMC projects, retiring in January 2015. Blank entered the California State Military Reserve (now renamed as the California State Guard) two days later as a chaplain.

Blank is now serving as the Command Chaplain for the California State Guard, and as Deputy State Chaplain (deputy to the National Guard State Chaplain). He also serves in the veterans and teaching ministries at Emmanuel Faith Community Church in Escondido.

Blank is Airborne qualified (Fort Benning), Navy Parachutist qualified (SEAL Team 2), and Navy SCUBA diver qualified. Significant awards include the Distinguished

Flying Cross with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Air Medal with 13 OLCs, the Meritorious Service Medal with one OLC, the Vietnam Service Medal with three battle stars, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Ribbon, and the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm.

Chaplain Blank and his wife Ruth just celebrated their 50th anniversary. Their family service connection continues with a son flying UH-60 Blackhawks for the Army, currently stationed at Fort Riley Kansas (currently on nine-month downrange deployment), and daughter serving as a speech therapist at Mokapu Elementary School on Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe.

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