

Who's the other Vietnam veteran with Cardinal O'Brien?

✖ Before taking this job four years ago, I first had to pass inspection with the publisher, Cardinal Edwin F. O'Brien. When he inquired about my background, I explained my understanding of chain of command with the aside that when he was jumping out of helicopters in Vietnam as a U.S. Army chaplain, one of my brothers was on the ground there and my father was stationed at the Pentagon.

Fast forward to January of this year, when Cardinal O'Brien helped Deacon Rod Mortel open a new high school in St. Marc, Haiti, and I was able to eavesdrop on some very neat catching up he had with Jim Taneyhill, a parishioner of St. John the Evangelist in Hydes and one of the leaders of the Archdiocese of Baltimore's outreach to Haiti.

The photo here shows the two in a room at the Good Samaritans School in St. Marc that serves as a makeshift medical office for Taneyhill on his missions of mercy to Haiti. Long before he became a respected dentist and Cardinal O'Brien headed the Archdiocese for Military Services USA - which includes the U.S. Naval Academy - and then Baltimore, their paths probably crossed in Vietnam.

After Taneyhill graduated from Loyola Blakefield in 1965 and Loyola College in '69, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and became a helicopter pilot with the 48th Assault Helicopter Company, attached to Da Nang. For most of 1971, he ferried soldiers into the stuff, and one of them might have been Cardinal O'Brien, who served the Special Forces.

"From the cockpit, these were faceless guys boarding," Taneyhill said. "I have no idea if I ever dropped off the cardinal, but we were in Da Nang at the same time he was heading into the field."

The aforementioned trip to the Good Samaritans School began with one of the more interesting greetings Cardinal O'Brien received during his time as the 15th Archbishop of Baltimore. Check out this video to see how the boys of Good Samaritans welcomed him with their take on American pop.