

# Saluting Our Veterans: Chris Moniz



by Nate  
Winkler

This is the latest installment of Saluting Our Veterans, where we will spotlight local Southcoast residents who have honorably served in the military. You can read our first interview with Pete Despres [here](#).

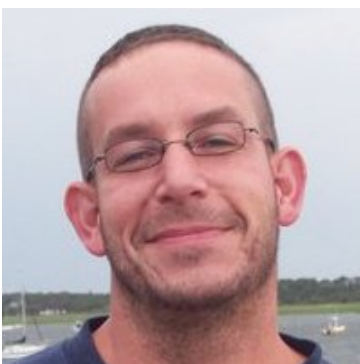
**Name:** Chris Moniz

**Branch of Service, (Active/Reserve):** USMC Active Duty

**Years of Service:** 4 (Aug. 1993 – Dec. 1997)

**Primary Military Occupational Specialty:** CH53E Helicopter Mechanic (6113)

**Nate:** What was the motivating factor for you deciding to serve your country by joining the military?



Chris Moniz

**Moniz:** I grew up in New Bedford and really lacked direction or a plan. The summer before my senior year of high school I went to talk to the military recruiters, and the Marine recruiter was impressive, both in what he had to offer and his

relentless pursuit of getting me to sign on that dotted line. I bought what he was selling and entered the delayed entry program.

**Nate:** Briefly describe your career/service path (Boot Camp, Duty Stations, Etc.)

**Moniz:** I shipped out to Parris Island, South Carolina for Basic Training the day after my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. From there it was Marine Combat Training at Camp Geiger, North Carolina, then onto Millington, Tennessee for Basic Helicopter School. I then completed schooling at Marine Corps Air Station Tustin, California and was assigned to a squadron on the same base, HMM-465 helicopter. I was deployed to the South Pacific on several occasions, including Okinawa, South Korea, and Thailand, as well as shipboard service on the USS Belleau Wood as part of a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU).

**Nate:** Which duty station/deployment were you most fond of and why?

**Moniz:** Being stationed at Tustin, which is nestled nicely between Los Angeles and San Diego, was a dream. It was unlike anything I had experienced in New England on many levels, and I adapted quite nicely. My brief stay in Thailand was also a memorable experience.

**Nate:** Did you participate in combat operations? If so could you describe?



The CH53E "Super Stallion" is used for long-range mine sweeping and heavy-lift for the Navy.

**Moniz:** No, although we were given a Warning Order while I was on the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) for a relief mission in Cambodia. We later stood down.

**Nate:** Which individual from your service stands out as the one who had the biggest impact on you and why?

**Moniz:** My Squadron Sergeant Major of HMH-465, SGT. MAJ Donald Franklin, was a man's man. Tough and firm, but was always fair and treated us with dignity and respect. He was the senior enlisted Marine in our squadron for the duration of my time there, and I couldn't imagine having a better leader of Marines.

**Nate:** How did your military service affect the way you have approached your life and career?

**Moniz:** The Marine Corps instilled the discipline and "get it done" mentality in me. Things aren't always going to go your way, you just have to fight through it and get the job done. I think in today's world, where so many people expect things to be handed to them, having that mindset is definitely an advantage.

**Nate:** If you had it to do all over again, would you still have

decided to serve? Would you encourage or discourage your children from joining the military?

**Moniz:** I absolutely would do it again, I have no regrets whatsoever. As for my children, I would want them to make the best decision for them, but if they had well thought out plan that included military service and learning a trade courtesy of Uncle Sam, I'd have no problem supporting them 100%

**Nate:** Thank you, Chris for serving our country and for taking the time to share your story with us. "Semper Fidelis", from one Marine to another.

Are you or someone you know a military veteran that would like to be recognized? Let us know by dropping us a line at [info@newbedfordguide.com](mailto:info@newbedfordguide.com). Any branch of service, wartime or peace, young or old. Every Veteran has a story worth telling.