

He graduated from Garner-Hayfield in 1965. In high school Dennis ran track both his junior and senior years as a half miler in both the open 800 and 4x800. Dennis was a member of Future Farmers of America (FFA), Future Teachers of America (FTA), 4-H and the high school band. Upon graduating, Dennis attended, then, Mason City Junior College, but like many during that time he was drafted into military service. Dennis enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1967 and was honorably discharged as a Sergeant in 1972. During that time period Dennis married his high school girlfriend, Sandy Schaefer, class of 1967, and had two children, Jason and Jill. After leaving the Marine Corps, Dennis farmed with his dad and completed his Associate in Arts degree at NIACC. Dennis moved his family and graduated from, then, Mankato State with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education and a minor in Special Education.

Dennis returned to the Marine Corps as a Second Lieutenant in 1975. Over the past forty two years his family has moved over twenty six times and he has been stationed on both coasts, in Washington, DC and overseas. Dennis has combat tours in: Lebanon, DESERT SHIELD/STORM (Kuwait/Iraq), OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (Iraq) and OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (Afghanistan). He has also deployed to Guantanamo Bay Cuba, Okinawa, Australia, Korea, Norway, Japan, Egypt, Chad, Kenya, Senegal, The Republic of Georgia, Romania, and Germany in support of training and operational missions. Most importantly it gave Dennis the opportunity to train, mentor and enhance his leadership skills with America's finest men and women. From 2002 to 2012, as a Marine General Officer, Dennis was assigned to Special Operations Command, Deputy Commander First Marine Expeditionary Force Iraq, Marine Special Operations Command, Second Marine Expeditionary Force, Marine Forces Europe/Africa and Marine Forces Command.

Dennis and Sandy retired to Charlotte, North Carolina and Chesapeake, Virginia in 2012, where they thoroughly enjoy their children and grandchildren.

