

When did you enter the military?

“It was 1968”

What boot camp did you go to?

“I was in Fort Dix NJ boot camp”

How long was the boot camp?

“At the time it was 8 weeks”

Did you go to a second boot camp?

“I did an AIT they called it, Advanced Infantry Training and that was at Fort Dix also.”

Why did you go to this type of camp?

“It was mandatory. You do 8 weeks of basic training and then 8 weeks of another training of whatever you specialized in it could be anything from infantry to artillery to motor pool driving a jeep or a tank or a truck that’s the secondary boot camp they send you to.”

Did you join the military voluntarily?

“I did”

What made you join the military?

“At the time Vietnam was at the height of fighting and the country was in a little disarray about supporting the war or not supporting the war. Since I wasn’t going to college I thought the army sounds mighty good to me so that’s what I did, I joined the army. I said I’m gonna fight for my country and that’s exactly what I did.”

What made you choose that particular branch of military?

“My father was in the army during WWII. Most of his brothers were in the army. I decided the army was a good choice for me. I had a brother who was in the marines just ahead of me so I didn’t want to be a copy cat so I went Army.”

What equipment did you use on a daily basis?

“I don’t know if you mean state side or in Vietnam. Stateside it was training. You were trained on what combat duty was going to be like. In Vietnam the training was on equipment. I was in an artillery unit so we had a weapon, a bayonet. I had wet weather gear, helmets a really large assortment of things you had to carry and wear at the time.”

What rank did you achieve while in the military?

“the rank of sergeant”

Were you wounded while you were in the military?

“No I wasn’t. I was very fortunate not to be.”

Were you in any famous campaign or battles?

“There were a few battles we were in. I don’t know if they were famous. They probably never made it back home on the news. But to us they were very significant due to the fact that you had to take a certain amount of ground. I don’t know if they are famous. It was just something we were told we had to do; it was where we had to go. It was basically an everyday occurrence for us.

Did you receive any awards?

“Yes I have the Vietnam Service Ribbon, the Vietnam Campaign Ribbon, the Distinguished Service Medal, and a Meritorious Service Medal.” *(given to members of the United States Armed Forces who distinguished themselves by outstanding meritorious achievement or service to the United states subsequent to January 16, 1969.)*

How did you get some of your awards?

“ I guess what you do at the times of things that happen that you are confronted with that someone says that okay I saw what you did and they go to the next level of command and they put you in for that and they review it. You are awarded that medal. It’s almost like getting another rank, your time and service for whatever happened that day.

What was a normal or average day while you were at war?

“A normal day consisted of, if I go back to when I first went in, early rise probably run about 5 or 6 miles, then you go to breakfast. After breakfast you go to training, whether its rifle range, or hand to hand combat, confidence course, or obstacle course. Then you have lunch. After lunch there is more running. That was a basic day in basic training. Then later on your normal days whether they be in combat or not were always being aware of your surroundings.”

What was your normal or most common routine while you were at war or battle?

“Let’s see, it was always on the lookout. I was on a fire base; it’s a fire support base that had artillery cannons on it. Wherever we were we were kinda like on our own. We had perimeter wire, which was set up, and we were in the middle of it and we had to keep guard duty 24/7. You had to be awake, to make sure nothing was coming.”

What type of firearms did you use?

“I had an M16, automatic and I also carried a 38 pistol on shoulder holster.”

Did you use any heavy weapon artillery?

“Well I was in an artillery unit so they would shoot artillery every day. I was with the 155 millimeter or Howitzer as they called it. We shot every day. We had an FO which was a forward observer. He would go out and find the enemy, call back and we would fire on them from it could be a mile away or eight miles away

depending upon how far out in the field he was. We used they call it H.E. rounds which were heavy explosive rounds. We used them quite a bit.”

While at war what helped you pass the time?

“I guess all the guys I was with. Getting letters from home or packages from home, that kind of helped because everyone shared a little something From their families , girlfriends, moms or whatever. What-ever they got they shared. That helped us pass the time and not think about things that confronted us. Just being with a bunch of guys that watched out for each other helped us pass the time.”

What did you like to get in your packages?

“Cookies and stuff like that. Maybe news papers from home that you didn’t get to read. Anything, anyone could send us we enjoyed a lot. We weren’t very big or a lot, but when we got something it was great.”

While you were at the war what helped you get through the hard times?

“That’s kind of tough. There were some hard times, but like I said we all had each other. No matter if someone was killed or wounded we all slept together and got through it together and that’s all I can really say about that.”

After you came home from war did your perspective on anything change?

“Yeah, I didn’t like the way the country was going at the time. This was in the 60s with war protesting. You serve three years in the military. You are doing the right thing for your country. Then you come home and no one cares you know? It was kind of depressing but you go with it. To me and a lot of my friends that was not what happened when we left. We were all volunteers or got drafted. We thought we were doing the right thing for the country. It turns out that it wasn’t an honorable thing to do for a lot of people. For us it was an honorable thing to do for our country.”

Did you carry anything from the military with you after the war?

“what do you mean ?”

Did you carry any photos or awards?

“I have always kept something. I have a little can opener I had since the day I went into the service. It’s been with me for forty three years. I keep that to remind me where I was, and what happened.”

Is there anything you would like to add or say that I may have missed? Or is there anything you would like to talk about?

“I think this was great what you are doing. The way the country is now with the war, everyone after 911, everyone was like let’s get up and kill everybody. Now everyone is like let’s bring the troops home and get on with our lives. It is almost like it was in Vietnam. We were going to fight the communist and free these people. After a certain amount of time people get disgusted, they just want to see it end, and stop these young men and women from getting killed. It’s basically the same. I was dead against getting involved in a war because I knew what was going to happen. There were certain things we needed to do as a country because we were getting attacked. But now the war is lingering people are getting killed, it’s time to end it and have a peaceful military.”

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