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Period: 1

### Rodger Siems

Born on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 1929 Rodger grew up to become an Anaheim High School student-athlete playing football and running track, and Rodger Siems saw a good future with a successful agricultural career after his education was completed and he wanted to become a farmer just like his father. In his senior year at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, he noticed students that were in the military had better chances of becoming engineers just like he had wanted to become. Therefore, his new goal was to go to the military to help better his future by becoming an agricultural engineer.

Rodger enlisted in the Air Force and was sent to San Antonio, Texas for boot camp training. Then got transferred to Wichita, Texas to finish his training. He thought that he would not have to endure any fighting in the air force but he was very wrong. When he first started boot camp there were 120 people with him but by graduation only 88 people were left. Although, during boot camp, he found himself being disqualified from flying, which was the main reason he chose the Air Force, because he got into an argument with a lieutenant. He was then put in charge of marching new recruits around the base while his other classmates were training. Soon, an officer approached him and offered him an opportunity to get out of the base and get stationed at Fort Belfort. No second thought was needed.

The trip was a two day train ride to get there and most of the men with him were from the Middle West. But before they got shipped out they had a chance to visit their families so he found a plane that was headed to Long Beach and then found a ride to Anaheim to see his family. Once back from their family visits, they were shipped to the San Francisco Bay, Fort Stonen. Rodger also shared that one of his most inspiring memories was when he flew under the bridge surrounded with World War 2 soldiers. He witnessed first-hand a rare sight, a green vision, a miraculous sight in the sky. While at

the fort, they discovered that they would be sent to Korea to fight in the war.

When the Korean War broke out, he was sent to Korea and was stationed at the Air Base Kunson. When they finally boarded the ships the fleet was supposed to go to Pearl Harbor but since there was a typhoon they headed north towards Alaska, the fleet was gone exactly one year to the day. Once the typhoon passed, they arrived at Fort Kunsan. The soldiers got a train and visited Hiroshima to see how the bomb had affected the city and they arrived, they were stunned because they realized that acres and acres were ruined. While walking around they could see the shadows of the peoples bodies on the bridge when the bomb went off. Once they got back to the ship they were soon sent to Korea to be on the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. While on duty, he supplied the heavy equipment and was in control of running the lights in the plane runways. While in Korea, he would visit Inuziki with some friends and became a tourist enjoying the experiences of Korea that not many could do. While the fun was over and the soldiers were back from being tourist, the enemy would try to put fear into them with loud noises and trembling yells in the jungle. They had to be careful because snipers were watching and if you made the wrong move, your life was over.

Rodger shared a time when he was on base and the enemy broke through the barrier from the front and back. So three to five of them grabbed their M-2 Carbines, ammo, first- aid, and water and rushed through the front knowing that it was the weakest area for the Chinese to attack. Like for what every soldier trained, they had to fight to survive. They were in the jungle for three days, and being as stealthy as possible, they also taped their dogs so they did not make noise. Rodger also shared that when they were in the jungle, they met a Korean man who fed them, cat.

Rodger and his friends would visit Japan and occasionally stay at the Imperial Hotel, only problem was that the hotels were built for Japanese height not American. One day they wanted to take a bath so they went down to the public bath house but they didn't realize that it was a men, women and children bath house to they had encountered a very awkward moment. Another moment was when some of the soldiers adventured into an eighty- foot Buddha statue and found a staircase inside of it,

they ended up climbing the entire way to the top and poked their heads out only realizing they had just interrupted a ceremony.

In Korea, it took thirty six points to get back home, a soldier achieved two points a month and additional points for every battle they were involved in. Rodger was only in Korea for a year. When back in the U.S. He was active for four years and in the Air Force for four years. After the war, he became a staff sergeant and handled his duties as strongly as he could to make sure his country was running without harm. When he retired he went to do what he was originally planning, he became a farmer and lived like that for forty-one years. After the war, he met his lovely wife, Pat, whose father was in WW2. She moved all over the country when she was young.

Rodger believes that the military is something people should experience because it helped shape his life into a strong, intelligent man who would do anything for his country. This is the story of Rodger Siems' military past.