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5th Period
U.S History

Charles Kelcher

Veterans have protected and provided us with the freedom that we have today. They are willing to make sacrifices for our country even to death. They are true heroes and yet most, if not all don't feel like they are. Often times a lot of veterans come home and are forgotten and homeless. Its important for us to recognize them and keep their sacrifice and memory known throughout future generations.

Charles Kelcher was born on September 2, 1947 in Montebello, Ca. He was just eighteen years old, short of nineteen when he enlisted on June of 1966. He served in the Army during the Vietnam War for three years. The first year was training in the U.S, while the second year was spent fighting in Vietnam, and the last year was just fun and games in Germany. In Germany he met a woman named Barbara who was Polish and became his lover for eleven months. They were both of the same age at that time, but their love affair had to be a secret because Barbara's father hated Americans. She showed him things of her country while he showed her things of his. Unfortunately before they even knew it, it was time for him to go back home. If he was more mature enough he said he would of asked her to marry him. Overall Charles loved the army, and Vietnam experience.

During his time in war he tried not to shoot anyone and successfully conquered that. He didn't want to be in the Navy because he doesn't like to swim, neither Air Force because the planes crash. He also didn't like the Marines because he had two cousins who were in the Marines and they were really snobby, and disrespectful. All his combats were successful even though they had a few casualties. He was a E4 Buck Sargent and made his way up to a First lieutenant after the Army. His specialty was water treatment and he was a Engineer in the National Guard after serving the Army.

One of Charles memorable moments in war was when his airplane crashed just a little after he turned nineteen. It was July 1968 when he was volunteered to sit back seat of an Aircraft. The crash happened in the Virgin Jungle in Vietnam where he was stationed for eleven months. It lasted only a few seconds but had felt like a lifetime. The jungle was tearing the airplanes to shreds, and had landed on a tree that was ten feet off the ground. Charles saw bright florescent lights, then everything went black. When he woke up there was a gasoline smell so he woke up the pilot and they took off. They were in enemy territory plain in sight. Fortunately they managed to survive, were rescued, and did not become prisoners of war. Even though he survived he has lots of nightmares till this day, flashbacks when he sees green ropes, and has nerve damages in his left ear. He has had lots of surgeries for his ear and nothing has helped, he gets occasional migraines each month. This goes to show the many sacrifices that veterans put up with even long after the war they have served in.

Veterans sacrifice a lot, some die, while others suffer from permanent damages fighting for our freedom. It is important for us not to take our freedom for granted, we need to keep our veterans memory long after they are gone. Future generations need to know the sacrifices being made for our countries freedom. These man truly show what it means to be an American. Veterans shouldn't be casted off once they get back from war, they should be embraced and respected for all that they have done.