

Bailey Brown, Chris Teske

Period 2

Walter Mendoza

Army

Years of service: 11

Walter Mendoza

Walter Mendoza grew up in Redlands, California when he was a young man. He grew up with military in his blood. His brother, cousins, uncle and his father all served in the military. Brother and two cousins served in the Vietnam War at the same time. His uncle served in the Marine core out in the Pacific and his father was a cook in the army stationed in England. He went to Redlands High school and played varsity football, he really enjoyed playing .Walter graduated from Redlands High School in 1974 and when he got out of High School he had no job and no intension in continuing his education. Then he found the military and on April 9th he enlisted into the Army. This wasn't his first choice he was about to go into the Navy and he looked at the Marines and Navy until he saw that the Army had more to offer him in his carrier and his future.

Army boot camp to him wasn't physically too bad but it had him going on the mental part. This didn't stop Walter loved the Army and had no regrets of what he was doing. After boot camp he attended air craft Maintenance School where he learned to work on helicopter like the the Cobra. On January 15th Walter was shipped off to the third infantry at Germany. Mr. Mendoza loved Germany and the German people. He said that he liked the culture and how nice the people are. Walter loved the base he was stationed at. They had a pizza place, a library, and a

bowling alley. He stayed on the second floor of the three story barracks. He always carried a rose ring and a cross on his dog tag. Mr. Mendoza loved flying in the helicopters it was his favorite thing to do, he would go any chance that he had. Walter was promoted rank Sergeant E5, earned his wing. Walter was most proud of earning his wings with the third infantry division.

Walter had two very funny stories, one was when October fest was going on and this new guy came on base from Florida. Everyone was drinking beer and the beer in Germany was much stronger, but that didn't stop the rookie on pounding them down. Walter and his friends told the guy to take it easy but by the time they left, the rookie was ahead about two or three beers. When they stopped at the fair ground to get a bite to eat the new guy was puking his guts out over a trash can tourists gathered around to take pictures and Walter and his friends laughing of course.

Another story from Walter was a frightening experience; a helicopter went down by a new pilot. The new pilot flew it into some trees, the helicopter landed into an artillery zone. This is where they fired all of the explosives in the field. Walter and some friends had to go get the helicopter with a truck and get it out of there so they didn't get blown up by friendly fire. They managed to get the chopper off and Walter said it wasn't as bad as he thought it was.

When he was in basic training they fired a M16. Each year they would fire their weapon because they had to get certified. Walter wrote many letters to his family. When Walter went on leave for about two weeks he goes visit friends and family. Also went out with a girl for a little. Walter said he tried to make it just like a normal day on leave.

Walter traveled to many places like Northern California, Virginia, Colorado, Washington State, Italy, Austria, and Germany. He said that he loved to travel. His first day at Germany where he was stationed- was very dark. When he was on the base in Germany he and his friend

had a lot of fun like site seeing, trying new foods, bowling, and going to bars. Some people complained about being on the base but Walter and his friend loved the base and really loved Germany..

Walter said the uniforms weren't much different than the ones today they only changed a little bit. Walter stated "I'll stand by the United States right or wrong". He is a very patriotic man who loves his country and loves the service. Walter was the youngest of his family with his mother, father, and two brothers. When Walter was older he had 2 kids, and remarried when they were older. After he was through with his time in the Army he did not have any conflicts with people but he knew of some of his friends did. After the military he drove trucks for around twenty years picking up things for people. Walter is a very nice man and I am happy to have interviewed him about his life. I thank him for taking his time to come and I thank him of his time of service.

