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Gerardo Mendez

Period 03

US Marine

Six years of service

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### Greg Smith

Many people decide they want to join the military to serve their country and the loved ones living in it. An example of someone doing that is a U.S. Veteran Greg Smith, he was born in Welland, Canada in 1945. He joined the United States Marine Corps when he was eighteen years old. He graduated from high school when he was seventeen years old. All throughout High School, he had a great time playing sports. Throughout high school, he was an athletic student, he played football but, playing baseball was way better he said. He was a busy student and participating in many high school activities; along with always studying in school and staying ahead of his class, he soon started college at eighteen, a year later he left college to become a U.S. Marine.

Greg Smith was nineteen when he left college to go into the Marines, he wanted what he called the more challenging and more difficult branch. The United States was still drafting people at the time, but that didn't stop him from wanting to join, despite the fact he was a Canadian. He knew he was going to be drafted soon, but did not want to wait, he signed a six-year contract with the Marines. Greg started his service in 1963. After four years of service,

the Vietnam War had changed dramatically. Things got worse and worse but Smith did not want to return to Canada. He was sent to the war in Vietnam.

Smith later stated “We had the training to go fight in Vietnam”. He went to many places for training first he was stationed in Kaneohe, Hawaii as an Infantryman. Next, Okinawa for the same thing, Infantryman. Then, Vietnam as a scout/squad leader. Lastly, he attended Camp Pendleton as an M.P. He saw combat in Phu Bai/ Chu Hai in Vietnam. The M.O.S. (military occupation specialty) he was assigned was 0311 and 0369 Infantry squad leader.

Smith had a very supportive team called “his family”. They did not want him to join if they knew a war was about to happen or already happening, which in 1963 was not. He however received letters back home few times. Around his fifth year in the service he married his wife, who was twenty years old, he was twenty-two years old. Smith has two children, one daughter and one son both graduated from high school years ago and now have families of their own. A memory Greg shared was the time when he met his wife. While an MP he pulled her over and gave her a ticket for some random thing. He said that if she agreed to meet up with him somewhere to hang out with him , after work he would tear up the ticket. She ended up agreeing, but little did she know the ticket was fake and was just an act to get her to go out with him.

Smith mentioned a few times that after his service, he would never pick up a firearm again nor ever fire another one in anger. He had been awarded a “purple heart” and is now retired. Greg is currently working as a docent on the USS Midway in San Diego where his wife and he both live. He did not regret joining but he does regret not keeping a journal to record all of his experiences, and many things he learned. One piece of advice he has to anyone who wants to join the military is to go to college first, as he did. The G.I. Bill helped pay for it so he didn't

have to worry about the cost of it all. Greg Smith is now retired at home, living on the border of Mexico with his wife.