

Valerie Gutierrez  
Period 4

Thomas Heath  
Army  
24 years of service  
Interviewed 2017

## Thomas Heath

Thomas Heath was born on March 5th, 1936, in Georgia, Crawfordsville. In December 5, 1955, he ran away from his home at the age of 19, he went to Atlanta in hoping to find a job. Thomas was interested in joining the Marines, while working in a hotel, he asked a friend where he could sign up and join the Marines. On accident, he joined the Army instead, the accident happened out of fear and stepping into the wrong door to join the Military. After joining he was sent to Fort Jackson in South Carolina for basic training for three years, after those three years he planned to join the Marines. Three years later, he was sent back to Atlanta. Thomas decided to join the Army again after trying to look for a job, and he stayed for 24 years.

Thomas was sent to Alaska , this was his first overseas tour and stayed for two years and for fun he would play football and go dog sledding. Soon he was sent to Korea, he was a nurse and was in nursing areas for wounded soldiers, at times Russian planes would fly by the areas causing a slight panic but the planes were just there to scare them. In 1966, he was sent to Germany, he stayed for two years and a half. He said that he really enjoyed Germany.

In 1966 Thomas was sent to Vietnam to an intensive care center which means he usually saw gruesome injuries. His center was on the front line and would take in women, children and sometimes men. Vietnam was a bad time for him, he had plans to stay for two years but after the first day the bombing changed his mind quickly that's how bad it was for him. At night everything was dangerous, Thomas couldn't really sleep at night since there could be a bombing or a shooting. There were a lot of situations where he couldn't really trust people in Vietnam, in the day the barber would cut your hair and at night he would shoot at you, he said that Americans seemed to trust their enemies a lot.

After Vietnam in 1996, Thomas retired after going through the war. He said he had a great time serving in the Army and got many benefits after service. In 1999, he went into college thanks to the military sending him off with a good record. Thomas has no desire to go back into service again and because he could enjoy his benefits too. He sometimes thinks about the men he served with and that he misses them at times but he doesn't worry too much also.

Thomas visited his family shortly after and had one son of his own which served in Iraq and in Cuba. He retired in California and still lives there today.