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APUSH

Staff Sergeant Randell S Carder U.S.A.F.

Warmth was brought to the Carder family, as a bright miracle was born on a crisp November day in Newton, Kansas. The year was 1949, when young Randell Carder was welcomed into the world. Although Kansas was his birthplace, when his courageous father, after serving in World War 2, was recalled during the Korean War, he moved to Portsmouth, Virginia and later to sunny Santa Ana, California where his incredible story would begin to blossom into something not even he was aware of. With the draft underway, out of high school, young Randell decided to take the reins of his future into his own hands by enlisting in the United States Air Force. By doing so, the young graduate would steer clear of any military job not worth his potential. With his interest in the elaborate works of mechanics and engineering, finding an occupation came fairly easy to him. Not only was he AFSC, 32870 Avionics Communications and Navigational Aids Senior Technician, but he was also cross trained in Avionics Electronic Counter measures. In order to properly fit his AFSC, like all heros who fight for our country, he first needed proper training. In order to do so he attended various, highly rigorous, and demanding on the job training for what he would one day do wherever he was stationed. After months of studying and hard work he was able to graduate from the highly esteemed U.S. Air Force Non-Commissioned Officers Leadership school. He was stationed in Lackland AFB Texas, from August to mid September to complete basic military training. He was then stationed at

Keesler AFB Mississippi from mid September to June to study fundamentals and theory of electronics. In the same month of June he was sent to Nellis AFB Las Vegas, Nevada where he studied Avionics Communications and Navigational Aids Tech. He was able to work on the F4 “Phantom 11”, and F 100 “Super Saber”. After eighteen months at NELLB AFB, he was stationed in Pleiku Air Base, Republic of South Vietnam where he worked on the Tactical Air Squadron, all avionics equipment, aircraft electrical, and electronically fired munitions.

Unfortunately, the aircraft stationed overseas was different from the work he had previously encountered in the United States. This however did not stop himself and his peers. He was a crew member on an aircraft, and when he was not busy he helped the engine specialist and worked on the O-2A “ Bird dog”, an observation and attack aircraft. Being the clever young man that he was, along with his friends, he would pull clever pranks on his comrades who seemed to do this to pass the time. Using clever words they knew only as an avionic technicians, they did send out fellow mates on wild goose chases for supplies, people, and certain parts that would not exist. These people they had pranked did not know this. These seemingly harmless acts of fun created unity and bonds between friends faced with the responsibilities of many pilots lives.

Time and time again such bright men would come up with jokes and clever ways to show their brilliance amongst each other. He was a growing adult in a war started by forces much bigger than he, but fighting for a cause only he could justify within himself. Everyday, when the hours were grueling, and the pain seemed to engulf his being, he would look at a certain finger of his hand. On it lay the most precious gem that he held close to his heart, a black ring that seemed to hold his whole world. It took him back to a place where the sun danced on his skin, the wind tickled his cheeks, and the clouds enveloped him in a hug. Whenever he gazed upon his hand he

would run his finger over the engraved words, that read “Love Jenny”. The ring was the root of his hope. It promised a tomorrow filled with love and determination. Among the chaos and the bloodshed created by mankind, he had someone who loved him and still to this day loves dear Randell with all her heart. His girlfriend then is now his wife, Jennifer Carder. Along with the wife he loved, he was blessed with two beautiful daughters, each with the intelligence passed down from their parents. Although his tour of duty lasted a year and a day, Randell continued his military work until he retired from the service after eight years. With inflation up, finding a good job after Vietnam was very hard not just for himself, but for many families. Randell was working within days with the help of his experience in electronics and electromechanics. After five years of working on blood cell machines for a biomedical company, traveling and working for an analog equipment company, taking part in the city of Riverside public utilities, he finished his credentials to achieve his major in electronic engineering, Randell found the simpler things in cub and boy scout troops where he could influence and encourage many young and older boys willing to take part and serve their community. In his experience, Randell did, and still does feel the effects of the Vietnam war heavy on the consciousness of our nation. The lack of planning and strategy back then caused major setbacks, but although this took a sour turn, Carder still feels this had a positive impact on how men and women today are affected by past weights on many American lives. The accomplishments achieved by Randell Carder will stick with us as the roar of the aircraft taking off into the sun stuck with him.