

Richard Kaukani  
U.S Army  
1964-1970  
2018

### Richard Kaukani

Richard Kaukani, was a sergeant in the US Army. Kaukani worked on Hawk missiles during his time in the war. He was first deployed to Germany from 1965 to 1967, afterwards he went to Florida in 1967 through 1970. While in Germany he noticed a lot about how they lived and their culture. He also noticed that being in the service during wartime opens a new door to the way war can be viewed and because of what he saw, he gained experience from his time in service. He realized that even if you haven't seen combat, you can still know the discomfort of war. Through Kaukani's experiences of going to war his life has been greatly impacted and he feels that he would do it all over again if he had to.

While in Germany he worked on a missile base. Even though he wanted to be in demolitions, he was stationed at the base and had to learn how to do his job on the spot without having any sort of schooling beforehand. He learned that being on a missile base had its advantages and its disadvantages. An advantage was that he didn't see combat in Vietnam which was a very bloody war with many casualties. The disadvantage would be isolation from the town away from the base, how the stress would be high there due to short supplies constantly, and the news from the war. He believes that, "war is hell", which was true in Vietnam and any other war. Given that Kaukani was originally from the peaceful state of Hawaii, the shift to Germany caused him to feel as though it was a transition, "from heaven to hell". With stress comes ways to relive it and Kaukani had some ways of relieving the stress. They liked to ride the Hydraulic missile battery like a hydraulic bull or going to town and making merry with his fellow soldiers. To make matters better Kaukani met his future wife in a town in Germany in 1967.

Towards his last days in Germany he got in a accident where he was thrown from a truck, due to faulty brakes, then was ran over by the truck behind him causing him to be out of service for several months. This unfortunate incident led to him being transferred over to Key West, Florida due to disability leave. When he went to Florida, most of his friends were going to Vietnam to fight in the war. He wanted to go with them but he had to stay. While in Florida, there was many things that reminded him of home, like the coconut trees. Kaukani reminisces of when he was there, by recalling how he climbed a coconut tree to get a coconut and as soon as he got to the top he then realized what he was doing and that he couldn't get down and once he did he had cuts all over his arms. That was one of his most memorable stories of when he was in Florida. After serving in Florida, he no longer was in service and was able to go back home with his wife.

After the war, Kaukani went back to his home in Hawaii and found his parents were happy that he was still alive and doing well. His father was very proud of him because he served in the Army and fought for his country. Two and a half years after service, he and his wife moved to California and to start a family. He later became a California Highway Patrol officer and served proudly. He did keep in contact with one of his friends from his time in service even though he moved away and they still have each other's Facebook. Today, Kaukani sees the Army as now being less brutal and less strict compared to his time in the service when it was really strict. He still would go back and serve again if he could and he is proud to have served his country.

Kaukani has shown that even if a soldier had not seen combat, he can still have an enlightened view of the war. He also gained first-hand experience on the impact war can have on both the soldiers in the front lines and those who are behind the lines. When he considers his

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feelings after the war, he realizes he is happy he went to serve his country. In the end, he believes it shaped him into the man he is today and he's very proud that he was able to go serve.