

Suzy Baghdadi  
Lucy Wang  
Yuqing Liu  
Dafne Zambrano  
Period. 5

Terry Mcneill  
Army  
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## TERRY MCNEILL

Terry McNeill was born in 1945. McNeill means son of Neill in Irish. There is draft and men have to sign up when turning eighteen. Then people are on waiting list. It's kind of like lottery: when the name came out, people have to join the army. For Terry McNeill, he volunteered his draft. He gave them his number to pick him. He went into army because he wanted to be a fireman. Two years of military is required for being a fireman. In 1963, he graduated from high school and he played all the sports: football, basketball and baseball. His father wants him to learn engineering of fireman and work as fireman on railroad like his family. He was a fourth generation of workers on the railroad. So when he graduated, summer of 1963, his father took him to bar store, put him on a train and said "you can be a fireman" like him. Until he was there two months, a coach, from San Bernardino Valley College, came and found him and his friend, who was a teacher in Riverside after War. They were both quarterbacks and the college needed quarterbacks. So they were given scholarships for playing football and Terry McNeill also got a job in that scholarships as a student fireman at the fire department. He went to school in the daytime and worked as fireman at night when he was going to college and he thought that was a good job. So he wanted to change his major from Art to Fire Science. In 1966, he was graduated from college and that's the time when Vietnam War was going on. The fire department couldn't hire him because he didn't have a military out of the way. So that's why he

volunteered his draft and was drafted in 1967. In January, he went to Fowler, doing basic physical training. That's how they teaches to be a soldier. There is hospital in training place and they needed 7 different kinds of shoots, all in one air gun shot, to prevent disease. Fowler is a beautiful, gorgeous place, cited right on the ocean. The army have them to graduate from there then the army sent them to somewhere else, like vans training, helicopters or whatever branch of service they are gonna be put in and the soldiers got training again, which is three months, from January to March. 95 kids of Terry McNeill's graduate class went on the army and 9 of them were in the same basic training class and they were the guys he played football together with. He highlighted all his friends in the Fowler Book. McNeill said "attending army was just like you had a father and mother. He told you what to do and everything was just 'Yes, Sir' 'No, Sir' . So you just take the orders." When people in service, they learned a lot: how to make bed, how to eat properly, etc... So it was a good experience. However, while he worked in fire department, he already did this and already used to do that. So military is just extension of that. For the first day of service, there were 250 men 60 helicopters in San Francisco landing. And the second thing is watching the bridge on the ground smaller and smaller, and going on the fight and they are going on the war that was really hard on the carrier, with 3000 their soldiers going to Vietnam, they got into long since rough seats and everything. When they got to Vietnam, they unloaded the supplies and the caves of rifles. We did not have any barriers sleep on the ground. On the first night there, a bomb went off, a night flare which means the soldiers were being attack. All they have was N60 rifle which is the rifle we saw on TV. After that it was pretty good, they started building things, build bricks and build bunkers. He was in the branch of helicopters. The soldiers had two choices: pumping gas or flying. Terry McNeill choose the flying, he was a door gunner. They got along with each one everyday. So they get to know

everyone very well. They had a pet, monkey, which was so cute. There were people cleaning the engine, fixing the helicopters and there were one pilot, one copilot, three chiefs, two door gunners, and a guy on the back. Once, a Vietnam lady took care of one of their friends who got injured in the war. There were something in the helicopters like GPS told them where they were.

When he returned from the war in 1968, it was pretty sad that no one regarded them as hero. He took off the uniform because nobody respected it. He did not talk about the war to anyone not even his family for a long time. So that is why Terry McNeill is happy to be in King High School to talk about his story. When he got home nobody thought as a hero, they thought him as a “baby killer” , which really hurt him at that time, because he was over serve our country, doing what the captain told him to do, and he did not get treated back here. So he just recently started wearing his bends and made him proud of his service. He played baseball, Football. He spend his time Sunday resting, his work day starts at 7AM and end At 7PM, 12 hours flying they never knew what’s area they going always different places . They was watching movies, he hit by a bullet in his hand . He said parents advice “ put your kids at 19 years old in the service so they can learn self-reliance because a lot of kids now they don’t know how to cook or make a bed for themselves , he went to the service 19 years old and turn at 21 ti Vietnam , his advice is ask your parents anything you want to know about history cause when your parents gone there is no one answer your questions, he have a son and he never talk with him about war and his history until when his son was in college asked him the dad said why you didn’t ask this before , he thought no one want to hear stuff like this . He want his son be a fireman like him , he saw his family after the war he married at 20 years old , and here when he became a fireman and her wife wants a kid . He played 5 sports at high school, he feel proud about his service , his Mom and Dad passed away, he came from good family, they was so poor ,

his brother sign to the service but they didn't take him, when he was a kid his dream was to be in the service, the company he was on it has 16 helicopters. He's living with his wife she's nurse, his first wife dead "his son's mom" at 34 , he had a hard time , but he a happy guy, he don't live in Riverside, but he came for king high remember.