

Christiana Torres

Period 1

Jim Mckinley
Air Force
21 Years in Service
2018



Jim Mckinley

From intense disciplinary training, to long hours of traveling, applying all sorts of skills, and experiencing eye-opening situations are just a few things our remarkable veterans had to face. Our U.S. Veterans have impacted our country in a significant way. They bring out true dedication and patriotism that shape America today. Among them, Jim McKinley enlisted in the Air Force serving twenty one years.

Jim McKinley was born on February 10th, 1948 in Illinois where he eventually followed the footsteps of his father and his uncles who served in World War 2 along with his great uncles who served in World War 1. Growing up, he has always tried being involved as much as he could, whether it being in high school and joining various activities, majoring in art in college or being involved in veteran organizations. During his time in college, he went through a rough patch with the introduction of alcohol. Eventually, took the opportunity to sign for the military on October of 1968, where there the G.I. Bill supported him. Joining the Airforce was a better fit because in the draft he might lose his life and with the other branches of military.

In December of 1968, Mckinley was sent to San Antonio, Texas for basic training in Lackland Airforce Base. He explains, “Basic was strict. From working out to shining shoes. The whole thing about the service is that you learn to do what they say immediately! If you can't

follow orders, you won't work out in the service.” After basic, he was sent to Tech school in Denver Colorado, training to be a Weapons Control Systems Mechanic on the F-4E aircraft. “The cool thing about working as a Weapons Control Systems Mechanic on the F-4E was that it was all secret. There was never homework because you couldn't take anything out of school. They locked everything up, all your notes, all your books and all your paperwork. They put everything in a big safe everyday.” A year later, November of 1970, he was sent to Thailand, Korat, Royal Thai Air Force Base where he maintained the radar, computers controlling missiles, bombs and gattling gun on the F-4E. For thirteen months, McKinley worked six days a week, twelve hours a day and had Thursdays off. These aircraft were continuously flying missions in North and South Vietnam, even though stationed in Thailand.

Later, he went to North Carolina and was stationed at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base. From there, he went back to the same Tech school where he graduated in Denver as an instructor. During this time, he met a woman who became a registered nurse named Kay, also known as Mrs. McKinley when they got married in 1975. Later that year they both moved to Alaska, where he was stationed in Elmendorf Air Force Base for four years. Out there, he was a supervisor in Maintenance Control. In November of 1980, they moved to Victorville California, and was stationed at Georgia Air Force Base until March of 89' in Maintenance Supervision. Three months later, he became a third, fourth and fifth grade teacher for eighteen years.

As of today, McKinley is retired and has a son, who's a counselor for young kids and has a son of his own. He also has a daughter who was a missionary in Kenya, Africa and married a Kenyan that recently joined the Army and together they have a daughter. Currently, McKinley is a part of veteran organizations such as, a life member of Veterans of Foreign War and American

Legion. He also keeps in touch with some servicemen through Facebook. Throughout his whole experience in the service he says, "I felt I sold my soul when I took my \$8000 reenlistment bonus but now and I'm glad I did! Staying in for twenty years has been very good for my family and future." He also mentions that to anyone who wants to join the military he advises them to go in with open eyes and mind but also do what you love, because loving your job is more important than benefits or money.