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Period 1
Nick Medina
U.S. Army Air Corps.
Three Years in Service 1945-1947
2018

Nick Medina

Nick Medina was born on December 26, 1928 in San Clemente, New Mexico. He moved to California, to a city that consisted mainly of farming and mining. He worked as a crop picker until the age of 16, when he decided to join the Army Air Corps. He decided to join because, "It was just something you did." He had trouble enlisting because of a lost birth certificate, but was finally able to find a way to join. During his earlier years when he first left, his family was not aware of his whereabouts.

At the age of 17 Nick was sent to the Philippines to serve his duty as a military guard for a prison war camp. It was necessary for Nick to learn to speak Filipino in order to be able to communicate with the people. During this time, he worked at the Civilian internment camp, which was a large camp in the Philippines where the Japanese were contained during World War II. He recalls hearing about the Battalion Combat Teams which forced augmentation to the military. He heard that many Filipinos and Americans were captured by the Japanese. They were forced to move from one camp to another. The trip consisted of an 80 mile brutal march. Many Filipinos and Americans died during that march. Prisoners were beaten and denied food and water for several days. Those who fell behind, would be punished or killed.

After serving over a year in the Philippines, Medina was then sent to Guam in 1947 to serve as a military guard during the American war. Although he registered during World War II, he did not see combat. Nick worked in a prisoner war camp as an officer. The Japanese

stationed themselves in Guam and had taken over after bombing Pearl Harbor. The Japanese took over the island and mistreated the Chimoros. He recalls many of the people starving and suffered quite drastically. He was very lonely in Guam and his only happiness was writing his mother and girlfriend. After being in Guam for a while, he was served discharge papers. No special ceremony was presented and he left just as quickly as he came in.

Once he returned home from the war, Medina worked in underground mining. Medina recalls being once in the mine and everything collapsing. It fell on top of him and only recalls waking up outside of the mines alive. He came home to an era to an attire called “The Zoot Suit.” This turned out to be a common form of dressing during this era. He said, that it consisted of high waisted, wide legged, tight cuffed pegged trousers, and a long coat with wide lapels and wide padded shoulders.

As Medina came home, he returned to new laws, where congress and the armed forces helped change the segregation laws. Nick had a positive experience during his services. In the end, Nick Median had no regrets and he stated that it was “A grand experience”. He did not keep any diaries during his military life. Now he keeps a recorder with him to help log in new information that he may recall so that he can and share it with his children. He learned a lot in the military and got involved in so many different things. From a small town 16 year boy who entered a boy, and now he ended up becoming a one of a kind man.