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Period 6

Tom Price  
US Army  
4 Years  
2018



Tom Price

Tom Price, thirty-percent part native American with a feather on his hat to symbolize that, was born in Texas, U.S.A 1946, where he grew up in a military family. His father was in the forces, his oldest brother was in the service for two years in Germany, and his youngest brother, Jim was in the Navy for nine to eight months, but Tom was different than most of his family and did not want to be involved with the war like his family was. As a teen, he worked multiple jobs throughout and after high school, some of his jobs were bomb making and truck driving. After graduating high school in 1964 where he received his diploma, Tom was married for a little while and got divorced with no children. He was later pursued by the military because of his father and brothers being a part of it but also because of the experience he had truck driving and bomb making. Three years after graduating high school and after trying to avoid the military, he was drafted to the United States Army at the age of twenty-one in 1967 but was not sent off to Vietnam immediately. Tom had no choice but to join the army because of the draft issued during the president of his time, Lyndon B. Johnson.

He was shipped to a security base thirty miles away from Washington D.C. in Louisiana, Maryland. He received advanced combat training there after completing basic training. He was trained to drive big vehicles such as field tankers, trailers, and tractors. He was basically a truck driver there, but that's not all he did because he was taught how to weld.

Welding was very important because the trucks were they were stationed would have many dips or holes in the road. The holes created problems for the people who are driving the vehicle because their tire would need welding.transportation company. He was also taught how to repair containers for emergencies at war. After finishing his training, he traveled to Vietnam on a ship from Maryland passing through the Pacific Ocean, Hawaii and the Philippines for forty-eight days. He was stationed in Long Biên, Vietnam, and would travel 18 miles around the cities of Saigon and Biên Hòa.. There could always be attacks at any time of day and they would always have to be ready for whatever could possibly happen. Price explained to the group that there was great discipline and that you would never disrespect or not follow orders. He mentioned a story where he was getting disciplined and had to paint so many barrels before the sun rose the next day. His captain did not believe he painted all those barrels by himself because he did it so quickly by the short amount of time, but he did. He also repaired trucks and went on convoys delivering food, ammunition and fuel to troops in the field.

When Tom got to Vietnam, he didn't go straight to Long Bien, where he would be stationed for his whole three year tour but instead stayed with his company in Vung Tau until Long Bien was safe enough to enter. He stayed in Vung Tau for a couple days before finally going to Long Bien, but when Tom arrived, it was instantly on lockdown from the mortars being launched there by the Vietcongs. While on lockdown, all he was able to do was his daily duties around the base, play cards and play pranks with his other fellow servicemen in their living quarters. Some of Tom's favorite times in Vietnam were the times where he pranked his friends constantly to a point where he would even get written up for the things he did. He made many friendships, but wasn't able to keep in touch with them. He was however able to keep in touch with his family by sending letters every week. His most memorable moment of the war, he

recalled, was when the enemy got into a large ammunition dump that was two and half miles from his station and set off explosives so big and loud that they threw him and several others in the air and slammed them back onto the ground. “We were behind some big metal buildings, and there was a big plume of smoke, metal and fire,” recalled Tom Price, continuing he said, “Fifteen or 20 minutes later, shrapnel started coming down. We were scurrying around trying to avoid getting hit.” Everything around them was burnt and they stayed in this position for eight to nine days, the adrenaline pumping in him.

The day his service exactly ended was on January 9th, 1970. On his return, he thought he would come back and be welcomed with celebration by America but instead he came back to the country despising him and every other Vietnam War veteran, even his own family hated his participation in the Vietnam war. He along with every other Vietnam War veteran faced negativity from the population when they got back. He tried getting a job truck driving but was confused when he received no job offers. He soon realised it was because he was a Vietnam War vet, and once removing that piece of information from his resumes, he got a job. His own family was included in this discrimination towards Vietnam vets, his own step sister personally accusing him of being a “baby killer.” Tom would cry to himself because people had so much hate for the troops that served in the Vietnam war. He later got married and even took college courses after the war, but then started having nightmares and getting jumpy. For comfort and good luck, Tom would always hold onto a knife which he kept in his right pocket that was very special to him. Tom started getting stressed and received migraines, headaches and noticing colorful spots in his eyes. At first, he didn't know what was happening to him but later found out that he was suffering from PTSD or post-traumatic stress disorder. It took him a long time to figure this out as well as to recover from it, but throughout time it slowly faded away.

At the beginning, Tom Price always saw his military experience as a negative part of his life and used to look down on it. After awhile it gradually took some time for it to become more positive for him and people in society. He is now so proud of what he's learned through those experiences in Vietnam, and the education he was taught that has brought where he is today. "Nothing can take or replace it." he says. He learned a lot, and the education and experience changed his life greatly. He loves the idea of King High Remembers and it is his second time here. He participates in events like these because he feels that it is important for the young generation to be educated. He's been at Corona, Norco and King High School. He brought his hat with four bronze battle stars on it, two stars for Saigon, one for Biên Hòa, and another star for a city nearby. Tom also attends reunions often during the summer, he's been to reunions in Pittsburg, Moreno, Nevada, San Jose, and Georgia to catch up with his fellow platoon and friends.

Tom Price will be remembered and honored for the acts of strength and bravery made while serving his country during the Vietnam War. He lives life happily, sharing experiences and passing on guidance with students at events such as King High Remembers for generations to come.