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Period 6

Loyd Bonneville
U.S. Air Force
26 Years of Service
2018



Loyd Bonneville

Loyd Bonneville was born in Chippenz Falls, Wisconsin in 1930, at the very beginning of the great depression. He grew up in Superior, Wisconsin, right next to Lake Superior. Loyd's family was fairly underprivileged as they went through the depression and didn't have lots of money. Growing up he was a straight A student in high school, although he didn't know what he wanted to do. He decided to go on a trip to the west coast after high school. After he moved out there and started working for a company called, "Reynolds Metals". He described working there as, "almost like hell", as working conditions were very rough and especially hot because of the metal work. After about a year in Oregon, he realized he didn't want this type of job for the rest of his life, and was feeling especially homesick, so he made his way back to Wisconsin on a motorcycle he bought out there. He headed home carrying with him just a tent, sleeping bag, and a dozen grapefruit in the motorcycles saddle-bags. He recalled sleeping many nights near Navajo Indians, with his tent tied from a tree to the motorcycle, once near a Navajo Indians hut.

After 4,000 miles and 12 days, Loyd arrived at Appleton, Wisconsin, and started attending Lawrence College, now named Lawrence University. It was a relatively small college back then, only about 900 students in the entire school. When he was going there in 1950, it was only \$225 a semester, the dollar was worth more then. Although he had to sell his motorcycle to pay for tuition, as well as get a \$250 loan that his mother had to cosign on, as there was no student loan program. While attending Lawrence College he met the girl who would become his

wife. He spent two years there, then went to the University of Wisconsin for another two years. Loyd got his bachelor's degree in science and took liberal arts, which he says was very helpful in his later life.

Although he got his undergraduate degree and was in college for four years, he still didn't know what he wanted to do for a living. This is when Loyd decided to join the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War. He wasn't ever sent out into battle as the fighting had actually ended. He attended the year and a half long Aviation Cadet Program. The first few weeks of training for Loyd were universal training --boot camp style-- in San Antonio, Texas. This was fairly easy for him, as he was a really fit guy and was in athletic programs in high school, as well as Boys Scouts earlier. Being in the cadets meant dealing with lots of hazing. Including a training exercise called taking a "Brace", stiffened in a position of attention where the upper class trainers would do everything they could to get you mad, and you weren't allowed to say anything about it. For him it was easy as he was one of the more likeable guys on the base. One of the rules he had to follow while in the cadets was that everybody had to be single, which meant that he couldn't marry his wife till later. As soon as he graduated from the cadets, he got married, just as most of his classmates did. Loyd even recalls a picture that was taken later at a jet training base with all of the pregnant wives of theirs lined up by the pool.

He had joined the Air Force cadet program because his wife's brother was already a pilot who trained there. He slowly worked his way up the ranks, starting as a second lieutenant, then eventually a first lieutenant. He joined the choir chapel while was in the service and learned how to sing, saying that, "Life inside the base was actually pretty similar in some ways to civilian life." He was assigned to ADC, (American Defense Command), and went to navigation training in Texas. Here, he learned several forms of navigation including celestial and technical training

that he needed in order to perform flying duty in the F89 planes. His job was that of Radar Intercept, where he would use the radar to successfully guide the pilot to the target and fire rockets so that they would hit. Because Loyd was in the ADC, which their main purpose was to defend, he never saw actual battle. The United States needed defense, but the enemy did not yet get around to attacking the U.S. --it was just in case they did. He always did very well with his grades in training and in the service, so well that he was actually going to be made an instructor. That never happened, however, because at the time they were, "over and short." This meant that they had too many instructors in his area, but not enough people elsewhere.

Loyd's flight leader had previously served in Korea to fight in the war, and it so happens now that he had been living in Riverside, after his retirement, sadly he died last year in 2017. Loyd's dad died at a very young age, and he says that he grew close with his flight leader because he reminded him of his dad. Everyone who was in the service had to go overseas at least once, which would have been hard for Loyd because you couldn't usually take your wife. Luckily he found that he could take his wife with him to Alaska, which was then considered overseas and became a state only later. As soon as he was able to get housing out there, he moved her in with him.

Loyd was never scared while he was in the Air Force, he just wanted to do a adequate job and do it right. He had many emergencies as a pilot, one of which, the back of the plane he was in had caught fire during a landing. He struggled to get the pilot out of the plane because he was in the cockpit stubbornly hitting switches but Loyd was able to get him out. They both climbed out onto the wing but as a fire truck was pulling up, they hit the plane, knocking both men off of the plane. Another time he lost all navigation in his plane, luckily he had another plane that he used to guide him back. This was horrifying for his wife as a plane crashed in Alaska and she

had thought it was him. These are some of the many near death experiences that Loyd doesn't like to think about as he could have died. He also once had to guard real nuclear warheads with an assault rifle, at one time, they were arming the F89s which Loyd flew with these payloads. His job was to stand in the hanger just in case somebody ran in and attempted to detonate the warhead.

Eventually, the aviation cadets completed Loyd's service; this allowed him to go back to school on the GI Bill, allocating him funds for college. He went to law school to become a lawyer. School wasn't too hard for him, he said, "It was lots of reading, lots of thinking, some guys can't do it." He took typing classes which were very beneficial, especially because he's still using computers today, as well as proper writing and speaking courses for every new job he got. During the Vietnam war, Loyd went back into the Air Force, still ranked as a first lieutenant. Although when he got back in, the American Defence Command had phased out, meaning it was totally removed. He went back into the service as a judge advocate. He won his very first case, which he says supported him get started with his judicial career. He over studied the case, a ton, and worked harder than he needed to. The base was trying to dismiss a guy who was in the service. Although, the base didn't do a step, a crucial step, and he was able to save the guy from getting discharged. Soon after that, Loyd was promoted to captain.

Eventually Loyd left the service after 26 years in the Air Force. He wished he could have stayed longer, but he got old enough to where they had to kick him out. He went back the University of Wisconsin to become a patent attorney, and he was one of the only older guys there. When he became the patent attorney, everything was done through patent libraries, although now the complete process is done online. To this day Loyd still has a few people whose patents he maintains. The Air Force is something that he misses, although because of the flying

duty, his hearing has forever been affected, and just recently he got a hearing aid. The Air Force was a prominent part of his life. He gathered many friends he still has today as well as his wife there, although sadly, she passed just 1 month ago, in February of 2018. It is because of people like Loyd Bonneville that us Americans are free. Veterans like Loyd risked a lot and many gave most, if not all, of their lives up in order to protect ours. Thank you for your service Loyd Bonneville.