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Period 5

Adam Fischer
Air Force

Adam Fischer

Adam Fischer grew up in Chicago, Illinois with two brothers and a sister. He was born into a family that had little, his dad was a classic Vietnam Veteran who served in the Special Forces during the Tet Offensive. Once his father retired from the Army he became a postman. Fischer knew that his father wouldn't have enough money to get him into college nor did Fischer have any clue what he wanted to do with his life, he began to hang around the wrong crowds which was getting him into trouble. So, the only decent option that was left to keep him out of a bad situation was to join the military. He needed the scheduled and routine days, along with the strict rules on uniforms and rules about keeping their heads shaved to make them all look the same. In 1989, during the Cold War, and just before the collapse of the Berlin Wall, Fischer decided to join the Air Force. He did this primarily because he knew that he could take advantage of privileges like the GI Bill. He knew it would provide him with the educational assistance that he needed for his future. With the Bill, Fischer got 75% of his college tuition paid for and was one out of four in his entire unit of 212 people to continue with college while on base.

Fischer went through a total of 11 weeks of basic training for the Air Force in Texas before he got stationed in San Bernardino California. During his time on base he was trained for Cold War contingencies that were never revealed to personnel. Fischer explained that he had a very good idea of what these contingencies were because of their "go bags" which were prepacked for the mobilization of the entire unit. While training he saw that these bags contained different types of gear for extremely cold temperate climates. They expected to see

mass, nuclear civilian and military casualties on domestic soil. They chose to train him for rapid runway repair and forward base operating construction. Even though Fischer was never deployed his expectations of the Cold War and the Gulf War were extremely incorrect. The Air Force was not prepared for the limited personnel mobilization and arid climate of the Gulf War. During Fischer's time on base they took a year to build up their military to prepare for Desert Storm (Gulf War). One of the main operations that Fischer and his unit had to complete was the building of the hospital in the military gym. They were extremely excited to be doing something active since mostly heating, air-conditioning and ventilation (HVAC) personnel had been mobilized at this point in time. HVAC was the only ones wanted due to their advanced understanding of technology. But after preparing for bus loads of injured soldiers from Desert Storm to arrive in the end, only one came in. It was a huge disappointment that the work contributed little to the war.

The war soon became a slaughter. He explained that the Gulf War was extremely one sided and unnecessary as they were pumping 20-mm bullets into people. They had to stop at some point because it was looking bad on press as they were continuing to record the harsh violence. Fischer explained that the soldiers were given a life expectancy on the order of minutes based off of the gun that they were carrying and the task they had to carry out. At the time "hero culture" was not a thing, people were not joining to be a hero or somebody special, people were joining because they had nowhere else to go. He says "for every hero there is a bad guy". There "was not a lot of success after the military" people were not taking advantage of the perks that came with joining. He said most people in the military got nothing out of it other than accidental injuries and military deaths because the conflict at the time. Fischer had a "realistic expectation" of what war would be like. His father had warned him of the basic mental troubles that he would possibly go through as he felt that first hand from his experiences during the Vietnam War. Fischer's father believed in the inevitable political consequences so he raised his sons to be prepared for anything that was to come their way.

But, he never felt that Fischer was truly ready for the heartache of war. He told him to keep his head in the war and to not make any commitments because he didn't know what the outcome of his life would be if he got deployed. Fisher didn't listen to his father's suggestions as he became bored while he was on base he got a girlfriend who was Vietnamese, and that freaked his father out because the memories from the Vietnam War came flooding back. He became terrified of the possibility of her dating him just to get their family. Unfortunately, Fischer's father passed away about the time that he was leaving the military so his father never got to see his accomplishments. Fischer's brothers followed the same path that he did in hopes of getting an education as well, his older brother was able to complete his goals while on base as well but his younger brother was deployed and worked 12 hour days and he was unable to complete his education while deployed, so joining the military isn't for everyone.

Fischer's reason for joining the military was not to be a hero but to use it as a "Stepping stone" and a job for him, however he says that the most people do not actually realize the risk and fear of the military. He never regretted the military as it paid for a huge chunk for his schooling and he even went back to school for four years for civil engineering and later two years for environmental science. In the military they were always expected to be ready if they needed to be deployed during the war. He believes that he was never deployed because he was one of the few who were going through schooling. During his time it was mostly certain specialists that were deployed like the high tech battle the HVAC teams.

Fisher was recognized as being a "good soldier" with a commendation medal and was ranked E-4 and has three rows of medals. Even though Fischer only made roughly \$13,000 a year while on base it was worth that low of a pay. He was able to find his interest in tools and mechanical things hence his Bachelors in Science, and Masters in Civil Engineering. Fischer felt that he was very lucky and fortunate to accomplish the things that he had done while on base and recommends anyone who is going to join the military to ensure that they know what they are getting themselves into to and to have a "realistic expectation". Veterans such as Adam

Fischer do not get enough recognition for their activity on the base and their unique way of life.

Fischer explained how his favorite memory of him in the military was making friends because he knew everyone would have anyone's back when they needed them the most. After everyone left the military he said that most people did not know what to do with themselves as they were so lonely and bored. But overall because he didn't have anything or came from a wealthy family in the beginning he used the military greatly to his advantage. He was well informed on the benefits and thought it could be used to jumpstart his career and help for college. His plan went exactly the way he wanted and it worked to his advantage. Adam Fisher was a huge part of our American history even though he was never deployed his story and contributions will never be forgotten.