

Mia Rew, Daevontae Dixon

Period one

Walter Mendoza

Army

11 Years

Walter Mendoza

Born on March 1, 1955 into a military family, Walter Mendoza was destined for a future in the service. After attending Redland's High School and being a varsity football player, Mendoza joined the Army in April 1974 at the age of 18. At first Mendoza was considering joining the airforce, but he knew that the Army had more to offer for him. After enlisting, Mendoza was sent to basic in the beautiful Monterey Bay area. Being brought up in an Army family, Mendoza had an idea of what basic training would look like, but when the moment came it was a lot easier than he had initially expected.

Shortly after boot camp was over, Mendoza was stationed in Fort Eustis, Virginia aircrafts maintenance school. After, Mendoza was stationed in Germany where he would continue working on aircraft maintenance.

Mendoza was in Germany for two years during the cold war. Germany was a beautiful experience for Mendoza, others weren't able to see the beauty like Mendoza could. He did not take the experience for granted, he enjoyed the architecture, the food, the people, and the beer. Although G.I.'s were not accepted in some places in Germany, Mendoza was able to learn and enjoy his time there. Sadly after a couple short years, Mendoza had to come home on emergency leave after his mother fell ill; then he was discharged from active duty.

Mendoza continued in the Army reserve in Upland till December of 1985. For the first few years, he had a job as a paper pusher in motor pool, and was the second person in charge. After that job Mendoza was a part of special tasks such as psychological operations, propaganda, and even making fake money if it was ever needed for a special ops operation. Although the Cold War was not a war based off physical battle, many special training tactics had to be practiced and taught.

Mendoza had maneuvers against Marine corps at Camp Pendleton. These tactics that mendoza worked with made it possible for him to move a whole unit with nothing more than truck movements tapes. In San Bernardino's Norton AKB Audio Visual Center, one tool used for there missions were harassment tapes with sounds of dogs barking, babies crying, and lots of other hectic sounds. These tapes were used as an exercise to prepare soldiers if needed for combat.

After eleven years in the Army, Mendoza was a trucker driver for twenty years, had manufacture type jobs, and also bartender on the weekends. Mendoza is also involved in two veteran programs, in which he is now the president of one. Mendoza kept himself busy and worked very hard after his time in the Army. Mendoza even participated as an extra in a war-based movie starring Jamie Foxx and Jake Gyllenhaal called *Jarhead*.

In Mendoza's life, he has been married twice, and has been married to his current wife, Maria, for twenty years. He has four biological kids, four step kids, and fifteen grandkids. He is also the guardian of four of his grandchildren. Mendoza is a family man who always tries to let his family express themselves and be who they wish to be. In his spare time he enjoys movies, gardening, and listening to music.

Mendoza's service is something he prides himself on. Through all the hardships and obstacles he says he would still do it again if he could. Mendoza says that “the experience I had in the military was not recognized” while looking for work in aviation industry which is the sad truth about the veterans of the cold war. A veteran is a veteran, no matter when they served or how they served. Mendoza says that you should, “live life to the fullest, regardless of what others think or say because thats your right. That's why I put on the uniform.” Being the kind and accepting nature of Mendoza he says that, “If it weren't for different creeds and colors our table wouldn't be full.”. Because of brave individuals like Walter Mendoza, American citizens have the right to sit at America's table with freedom and pride, no matter our religion, sex, or ethnicity. Without men and woman like Walter Mendoza, America wouldn't be America.