

Alanah Baxter
Period 1
2018

Tom Slone
Vietnam Veteran
10 years in service

Tom Slone

Tom Slone was born on April 26th and raised in California. Tom joined the Vietnam war in 1963 at the age of 17 years old. Before he went he wasn't really close with family because they were not supportive in anything he really did. Once he got in Vietnam his family disappeared. Before he left he studied biology. Once he arrived in service it was hard to get used to. He was spit on, called names and got knocked down but that didn't stop him. He got back up and did what he had to do. He made some new friendships and only some stayed. To this very day his friend he was at war with his neighbor. He went through tough times. Got shot in the legs multiple times. He eventually became slightly deaf because how loud war was now he has hearing aids to help.

Tom was not close with his family before he went into war. Even when he got into war he was still not close with them. He was the youngest of the family. When he first joined at 17 years old he joined the Marine Corps. He graduated high school and studied biology. President Kennedy inspired him to join the military. When he went to bootcamp he said it was his worst nightmare because they tear you down so you can get back up. He chose this branch because it was the toughest branch and he wanted to be apart of it and says "I'd join again if I had to." He was very independent on his own but then got into war and his life changed.

Tom was first stationed in Tennessee. While in Vietnam he attended night classes to keep up on his education and learned how to be trained for war. In the 10 years of serving he had been to Detroit, California, Oregon, Michigan, back to California, Las Vegas and back to California. They were not treated right, they got spit on and most of them are resentful of it to this day. His country asked him to serve so he did it. He was proud. He's done and seen some very bad

things but it was all for his country. He always told himself, "kill or be killed!" His anxiety kicked in, they knew he was okay but he still got flashbacks and that made him to not be able to do things. He did not attend reunions. They had group therapy when they got back because guys came back scared . He got up every morning to a screaming man telling him to get up and get moving and that it was time to fight. He got a spare change of clothes every week and ate the same food for weeks straight but he didn't complain because he was blessed to have any food he possibly could. He spent a total of 36 months in Vietnam.

After the war he went home and didn't feel very welcome. The war gave him PTSD which is something you get that never leaves. Anything such as a certain smell will remind him of the past. It doesn't get better only worse. He finds it hard to deal with. It is a post traumatic stress disorder. He now has nightmares of flashbacks from when he was fighting. He often wakes up in the middle of the night shaking, remembering what it was like. He can't watch films or movies based on wars due to PTSD. He knows that not everyone understands the war and believes what they want to. He tries to tell people his story. He goes home to a family that rather cares less but they listened to every detail. He got married once and kids then divorced and got re-married and had more kids.

Tom didn't have a good life to begin with. As life went on after high school he took it upon himself to do the things he did. He realized life was worth fighting for and how to not give up. He is glad to do the choices he made. He tells his story to his 6 kids and 12 grandkids. He now plays golf, pool and shoots for fun. His overall experience was positive and it made him the man he is today. He is proud of his accomplishments on fighting for this world.