

Vivian Le  
Jessica Pedraza  
Period 6

Bruce Watson  
Army  
3 years of service  
2018



### Bruce Watson

Bruce Watson is a living representation of the quote “bad decisions when you’re young makes the best stories when you’re older”. He admits that he’s made plenty of questionable decisions, but that is what built the character that he has today. In the spring of 1947, Bruce Watson was born into a family of farmers. The most vivid memory of his childhood was at the age of 12 when he mistook a sleeping possum for a dead one. Long story short, Watson went home losing the battle and losing one of his nipples.

In March of 1966, Bruce made the decision to discontinue his journey of high school and enlisted into the Army. His past two generations joined the Air Force which influenced him to join as well. Watson was immediately assigned to be a Reconnaissance Specialist. This meaning his duty was to obtain information, activities, and resources that the enemies may be using by flying a couple miles in from the coast. While Bruce was at the base, he went through a series of bootcamp. After every “graduation”, it is tradition to reward each rookie with three bottles of beer. Watson, being the class clown, decided to drink some after the celebration, but right as he was drinking, his commander came in, cursing like a sailor, which startled Bruce. He dropped his second bottle, and the beer bottle shattered on the floor. Unfortunately, he was forced to give away his last bottle of beer. This earned him the title of “Beer Bruce”.

Bruce Watson and the other American soldiers had to sleep with grenades on their backs so that they would not roll over in their sleep and start to snore. They were also not allowed to use soap or cologne because the smell would expose them too easily. The soldiers, including Watson, had to use the condoms they received from family in order to pee in them without making any noise and then had to bury them so that they could not be tracked down by the enemy. Sometimes the American soldiers were not even allowed to receive letters from their friends and family because they had to be as safe as they could possibly be.

Some of the stories Bruce shared about before and during war were quite bizarre. Some time before going off to war, Bruce and his mates were obsessed with the idea of blowing objects up with gunpowder. They would try shooting little things, such as rocks, out of pipes, but one afternoon, Bruce had a bright idea of making himself fly. He strapped some gunpowder on his bike, and it didn't really turn out too well. The second anecdote was when his loving sister sent a little care package to him. She sent him countless goodies that were very fulfilling, but at the bottom of the package there were adult magazines, also known as a PlayBoy Magazine. Before the package could have reached the soldiers, they had to be inspected. Normally they won't allow revealing magazine, so this completely threw Watson off. When he opened the magazine, it seems as if his sister cut out dresses and glued the little photos onto the models. Bruce and his friends, up till now, got a great laugh out of the story. The last and final story he shared with us took place in Vietnam. He was in a relationship with a young lady named Barbara Vargas until he received an heartbreaking "Dear John" letter. Bruce's friends talked him into playing a game. Whoever, in the group, plotted the funniest revenge would win the title. Bruce immediately got a

hold of an artist in the night markets of Vietnam who decorated denim jackets. In the front, he tagged Barbara's name, and on the back it clearly said, "Mại Dâm Thành Phố Sài Gòn". He sent the jacket back to Barbara and after that he lost contact with her. A few years later they somehow got a hold of each other, and Bruce asked if she had ever translated the back of the jacket. She later found out that Bruce asked the man to write "Prostitution City of Saigon". Of course, Bruce got the title of "The Best Revenge" and that was the last time they ever talked.

Bruce Watson left the United States Army when he was twenty-one years old but throughout the years he earned medals. For example, he received a bronze star medal for heroism twice throughout his three years of service. Bruce Watson's life after war included him, getting married to his wife Wendy immediately after leaving the army and is still married to her to this day. He even had kids with her throughout the early years of his marriage. Throughout his three years of service, Bruce Watson became very close with his kernal who was twenty-four at the time and still keeps in touch with him to this day. He also made many other friendships that he still has today, including his friendship with his best friend who he moved across the street from. The United States Army changed his life in so many ways and Bruce Watson is very proud to have served his country and proud of his father and grandfather for doing the same before him.

