

## Santa Anita A's Members Served in the Military Service

Members of the Santa Anita A's have served in the various branches of the United States military service going back to World War Two. A list of these members are included in the following pages along with their own stories about their time in service.

Some of these stories are fascinating. One member, Joe Giocomara served in the Merchant Marines prior to the start of WWII and was aboard three ships that were sunk. Ken Smith served in the US Navy, the US Army and the US Air Force during WWII. During WWII Ken Mallory served in the Aleutian Islands and in the battle of the bulge in France.

You are invited to read about the various experiences our members had during their service years.

Scroll down to see the list of service members and when they served. Just click on their name which is linked to their story as it was original written and published in our Spoken Wheels newsletter.

The following article appeared in the May 2015 issue of the Spoken Wheels. The following month the first report on our club veterans appeared in the Spoken Wheels

### Ken Mallory receives award on 70th Anniversary of V-E Day

Ken Mallory was awarded the French Legion of Honor Medal for his service in France during WWII at a ceremony held aboard the Battleship USS Iowa on May 8. Ken was among twenty servicemen from southern California honored at the event. The Legion of Honor is France's highest award. It is conferred upon men and women, either French citizens or foreign nationals, for outstanding achievement in military or civilian life. The award was created by Napoleon in 1802.

"It was a big day for me" Ken said. "It was the 70th anniversary of V-E day. Along with 19 other servicemen I was awarded the French Legion of Honor Medal. It was awarded to those of us who had been active in eliminating the German army in France. Mr. Axel Cruau, the Council General of France made the award. The recipient of the award must be alive and over 90 years of age. Lunch and a military flyover was part of the presentation. It really was a special day for me".

Ken served in the US Army from March 1943 to October 1945. He first served in the Aleutians then deployed to Europe where he participated in the "Battle of the Bulge". Ken is a member of

the Los Angeles chapter of the National Organization, "Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge".

Family members attending the event were: Judie Miller - Daughter, Andrew Miller - Grandson, Ken and Betty Mallory, Jim Mallory - Son, Axel Cruau - Counsel General of France, Los Angeles, Justin Miller - Grandson, Mason Miller - Great Grandson.



## Santa Anita A's Members Who Served In Armed Services



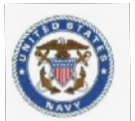
<b>Army</b>	<b>Years Served</b>	<b>Story Published in Spoken Wheels</b>
Mallory, Ken	43-45	June 2015
Smith, Keith	44-47	July 2015
Sharpe, Chuck	50-52	December 2016
Travis, Bob	52-82	September 2015
Wilson, Joe	56-58	January 2016
Bruns, Ted	60-63	June 2017
Wickersham, Chris	62-64	November 2016
Farino, Joe	62-64	
Fruchter, Mickey	62-64	July 2016
Johnson, Tom	64-66	September 2016
Lutz, David	65-67	
Metz, Larry	65-67	
Lohr, Charles	67-69	
Nielsen, Doug	69-71	



<b>Air Force</b>	<b>Years Served</b>	<b>Story Published in Spoken Wheels</b>
Smith, Keith	47-64	July 2015
Formia, Louie	50-54	
Sais, Andy	51-54	March 2016
Phillips, Rick	59-61	December 2015
Emanuelli, John	60-66	August 2016
McDannel, John	61-65	February 2016
Ware, Richard	64-68	March 2017
Wiley, Walt	64-68	
Kniest, Mike	64-70	June 2016
DePew, Jon	65-67	
Rummens, Larry	65-69	
Utter, Pat USN/USNR	67-77	January 2017



<b>Marines</b>	<b>Years Served</b>	<b>Story Published in Spoken Wheels</b>
Johnson, Gordon	43-45	November 2015
Spielmann, John	53-55	February 2016
Fant, John	56-59	



<b>Navy</b>	<b>Years Served</b>	<b>Story Published in Spoken Wheels</b>
Smith, Keith	42-44	July 2015
Chandler, John	65-68	
Endy, Tom	53-57	May 2016
Gilbert, Leroy	52-56	
McBride, Don (Res.)	53-64	April 2016
Solomon, Soli	67-70	April 2017
Reinhardt, Gene		
Anthony, Hal (Res.)		
Bishop, Bailey		



<b>Merchant Marines</b>	<b>Years Served</b>	<b>Story Published in Spoken Wheels</b>
Giocomarra, Joe	39-46	August 2015
Solomon, Soli	74-86	April 2017



<b>National Guard</b>	<b>Years Served</b>	<b>Story Published in Spoken Wheels</b>
Catroppa, Tony	63-69	October 2016
Dawson, Jack	49-53	October 2015
Kennedy, Don	69-92	July 2017



# Santa Anita A's Veteran



## Ten Bruns US Army 1960-1963

Britton, South Dakota was where I was born in 1942; my family moved to California in 1948. We settled in Terre Bella, which is in the San Joaquin Valley. I graduated from Porterville High School in 1960. It was my mother's idea that I enlist in the army right out of high school at the age of 18. She said to get it over with since the draft was still in effect.

In July of 1960 a buddy and I enlisted in the army for three years under the Buddy Plan and we left for basic training at Fort Ord on July 3rd. Upon completion of basic I was assigned to an ordinance company at Hunter-Legget Military Reservation in Central California doing machine shop, welding, general repairs, and radiator service.

While stationed at Fort Ord, during an inspection, they asked for three volunteers to come to the command center. So like a dumb fool I volunteered. Something you never do in the army is volunteer, but I did. They told us to meet in front of the office at 4 o'clock in the morning. The base was going to have an Inspector General inspection that day. There were three trucks each with a trailer loaded with excess company equipment. They told us that they did not want to see us until 8 o'clock that night. You cannot believe how big Fort Ord is, and we saw all of it that day.

In June 1961 I received orders to South Korea, a week before I was to leave the orders were changed and I was sent to Germany instead. I was assigned to the 24th Infantry Division (Toro Leaf Division), 724th Ordinance Company at Augsburg, Germany. I was there for approximately two years.

When I left for Germany it was aboard a troop ship the USNS Rose. To show how slow these ships were, a day out of New York we saw the Queen Mary headed for New York. A few days later we saw her pass us going back to Europe. Before we go to Europe we saw her again passing us on her way back to New York.

I was not a spit and shine soldier. I was never in any trouble, but I was not one to make rank fast. When the promotion system was changed to include a promotion board review I was told to go before the board because of my time and grade. I had six months left to serve in the army and could care less about a promotion. When I went before the board I came straight from the shop to the board and never changed my boots, fatigues, or hat. I answered all their questions correctly, but a Warrant Officer told me I was the lousiest looking soldier he ever saw going before a promotion board. However he also told me I got the rank.

While in Germany I was able to travel in the Netherlands, England, France, and Switzerland. I also attended a German Language school and learned to speak the language.

I returned to the states on June 30th 1963. I arrived in New York at eight o'clock in the morning, and by noon I was honorably discharged from the army with the rank of Spec 4th Class. A family member flew in and met me and we took the bus to Langhorne, PA where I bought a new car from the largest Chrysler dealer in the United States at the time. We drove across the country on our way to Terra Bella in the good old USA.



**Ted Bruns 1961**



# Santa Anita A's Veteran

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**Tony Catroppa US Army 1963-1969**

My experience with the military was similar to John Emanuelli's in that we both took ROTC while attending Lincoln High in Los Angeles, although John was much more involved in the program than I was.

Fast forward a few years and while attending the University of Arizona on a football scholarship, I received the infamous "Greetings" letter to which I quickly began to panic because at that time all draftees were being sent to Viet Nam and I wasn't ready to give the ultimate sacrifice. Many of my friends had gone and several did not come back and if I was destined to go I wanted to serve on my own terms. I quickly dropped out of school and returned to SoCal to plan my next move to honor my obligation. This was to partner with a close buddy and join the US Marines and fly jets. We went to sign up and completed all the paper work and took the medical exam to see if we were physically good enough to be a Marine,(pause), my friend passed and I didn't because of a stigmatism in my left eye which would disqualify me from flying. My friend however joined the Marines and flew jets, 250 combat missions, became a member of the Blue Angels, retired as a "Bird Colonel".

Panic #2 set in, as this was Wednesday and I was to report the following Monday. Then I recalled my football coach at Pasadena CC, Don Hunt, was a Major in the California National Guard so I quickly met with him and explained my dilemma. Coach Hunt assured me to not worry and come to the Armory on Sunday to be sworn in, which I did and at that point I, for sure, was relieved and a member of the California National Guard and ready to complete a six year obligation.

The tour began in early 1963 for basic training at Ft Ord in beautiful Monterey Bay but we never saw it from the base because of the fog and we had no time off. After basic training everyone in our company received orders to our next assignment and that was a surprise for all. I being a `clerk typist` had no idea where my assignment would take me, low and behold, I was assigned to a Judge Advocate Office at the Presidio of San Francisco, WHEW! Needless to say that wasn't too bad.

After six months of active duty I spent 5 & ½ years with monthly meetings and 2 weeks in the summer at Camp Roberts in central California. The only real danger I experienced was being on the street guarding the Armory at 28<sup>th</sup> and Hope with a weapon and no ammunition during the Watts Riots. When I asked for ammunition, the officer in charge told me to "just look tough".

To sum up my service it really was easy compared to the many that lost their lives or were forever injured both physically and mentally. I will be forever grateful for their service and often pray for those who serve today.



**Tony & Kathy Catroppa**



**Tony Catroppa 1963**



# Santa Anita A's Veteran



**Jack Dawson National Guard\US Army 1948-1964**

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My place of birth was Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, although in my early years my family lived in 42 different places. My first three years of high school were in Evanston, Illinois, where I met the woman I eventually married over 60 years ago. My family then moved to Sierra Madre, California where I spent my senior year in high school on the campus of Pasadena City College.

I enlisted in the California National Guard, 223<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment, heavy mortar company when I was 17 in high school in 1948. The meetings were held in the basement of the Sierra Madre City Hall building. The only event of action was fighting a forest fire on Mt. Baldy's Devil's Backbone. We trained each summer at Camp San Luis Obispo. I transferred to an ordinance maintenance company while at Camp San Luis Obispo. When the Korean War broke out in June 1950 the whole 40<sup>th</sup> Division was called into active duty and assembled at Camp Cook, which is today Vandenberg Air Force base. They trained there until the 40<sup>th</sup> was sent to Japan, and then to Korea. My company was left behind at Camp San Luis Obispo to maintain the camp. Some of my high school friends in the 40<sup>th</sup> never came back from Korea.

In 1953 I was discharged from the National Guard with the rank of corporal and left California. At the age of 25 the draft board came calling so I decided to join the army reserves that required six months of active duty. Basic training was at Fort Ord, followed by five months at Fort Belvoir where I joined the critical skill reserves as a graduate engineer and served as an inspector on a nuclear power plant they were building.

My best learning experiences were learning how to drive WW2 tanks, operating huge machines, firing all sorts of weapons, and meeting such luminaries as Admiral Hyman Rickover. I was discharged from the army reserve in 1964.

When I had gone to college at Cal Poly, Camp San Louis Obispo was almost abandoned and our dorms were the old hospital area of the camp. It is now a high security state prison. Most of the old camp is now Cuesta College, the county junior college.



**Jack & Barbara Dawson April 1955**





# Santa Anita A's Veteran

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**John Emanuelli USAF 1961-1966**

My memories of this subject are mixed with some facts and some fiction, as time has made some changes to my memories. So you will get the story based on what is left in the files.

As a young man in high school I thought it a good idea to join the ROTC and learned how to march, right face left face etc.; take an M-1 rifle apart and put it back together. When it came time to register for the draft I had no hesitation. I was not drafted and after college I wanted to get my obligation out of the way. It was then about 1961 and I selected a reserve program that offered six months active duty and 5-½ years Reserve status.

Looking around at the facilities I could attend for the 5-½ years once a month for the weekend duty, I chose the Air Force that had March Air Force Base in Riverside CA. This was about an hour and a half drive in those days. Boot camp was Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio Texas. This was a far cry from life in East Los Angeles; while much safer than walking to school with gangs all around the School. The base was wide open spaces with our barracks about a mile from the chow hall. On the way to breakfast in the mornings we saw a small herd of deer almost every day. The boot camp routine was much like the Army with D-I's from various backgrounds and with no sense of humor. We recruits were likewise from various backgrounds but with a great deal of humor. Common pranks were short sheeting, taking warm water in a pot and placing the hand of sleeping recruits in it while they were sleeping, and filling the hand with shaving cream. After boot camp they sent me to school at Fort Belvoir, an Army Fort located in Alexandria Virginia. There was a mistake in my orders and I spent two weeks there. Here I learned to play pool in the afternoon as they assigned me to stoking the pot belly heaters with coal for heating the barracks from five pm to five am in the morning. Now this is in January, it snowed and the wheel barrel was not motorized. The highlight of this time was a parade I was assigned to in Washington for President Kennedy's Inauguration. There was snow on the ground and Air Force uniforms were not meant for cold weather and standing for hours waiting for the parade to pass. Then it was all over as they passed by in 5 minutes. But I did get to see President Kennedy.

I finally received corrected orders which send me to Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri. I had to get there on my own. I found a soldier going that way and we split the gas cost. We drove through Pittsburg, PA, where the buildings were covered with coal dust; we also went through miles and miles of corn fields. City boys never see the splendor of farm lands, it was a thrill.

At Fort Leonard Wood I was put in school for water purification and waste disposal; needless to say not the Air Conditioning School I had signed up for. I learned how the Army took water out of rivers and lakes to be treated with chemicals and filtered for safe drinking. The sewage disposal was quite different. They used what they call digesters and filters for permanent facilities and slit trenches when in the battle field.

After the Active duty part was over I spent the next 5 ½ years at March Air Force Base in Riverside; monthly weekends and two weeks Active Duty in the summer. This meant no vacation for those years. I spent most of my time there out at Lake Mathews pumping water into the Base and at times at the sewer plant monitoring the digesters and filtering system, which was used for irrigating the farms in the area.

When my active duty time was up I was offered a Tech Sargent rank if I would re-up and stay. I took my Staff Sargent stripes home and was able to go on vacations from then on. Looking back on the time I spent in the service of our country it was worth it. I did forget most of the food, But, I loved SOS at both Air Force Bases and Army Fort chow halls, and especially the liver and onions.

**John Emanuelli 1961**





# Santa Anita A's Veteran



**Tom Endy USN 1953-1957**

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Philadelphia, Pennsylvania was where I was born, but I grew up in the Alhambra area. I graduated from Mark Keppel High School in June 1953 and a few weeks later enlisted in the navy for four years. My goal was to be a photographer's mate and serve on a cruiser; the navy recruiter said not a problem kid, just sign right here.

Twelve weeks of boot camp was at San Diego, 9 weeks of airman school at Norman, Oklahoma, and 28 weeks of avionics school at Memphis, Tennessee (with an extra 2 months of mess cooking thrown in for good measure). My first fleet assignment was to Patrol Squadron Forty (VP-40) at North Island, San Diego. I arrived there in December 1954 and was assigned to crew 8 as a radio operator on a P5M-1 Martin Flying Boat. In February 1955 the squadron deployed to the Philippines.

Our missions were maritime surveillance patrols along the China Coast from the Philippines to the Formosa Straight. When the squadron returned to San Diego in November 1955, I was sent to an Air Force 18-week airborne radio operator's school at Keesler Air Force Base, Biloxi, Mississippi. Upon completing the school in February 1956 I was transferred to Early Warning Squadron One (VW-1) at Barbers Point, Hawaii.

Upon arrival I was assigned to crew 2 as a radio operator on a WV-2 Lockheed Super Constellation. For most of 1956 we were deployed to Japan and the Philippines. Our missions were surveillance and tactical support for carrier task forces operating in the Far East. In January 1957 we returned to Barbers Point where I flew training and ferrying missions between Hawaii and the US Mainland, and Hawaii and Guam.

I was honorably discharged from the navy at Treasure Island, San Francisco in July 1957. I was rated an AT3. It had been a great adventure and I am appreciative of the technical training and direction the navy provided me.

**Sangley Point, Philippines, August 1955, Crew 8, VP-40 Martin P5M-1 Flying Boat (Tom Endy, top right)**



**Tom Endy 1953**

**Early Warning Squadron One (VW-1) Lockheed Super Constellation WV-2 Aircraft #2 off the coast of Waikiki 1956**





# Santa Anita A's Veteran

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## Mickey Fruchter US Army 1962-1964

August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1962 is a day which I will always remember. It was our first wedding anniversary and along with all the cards there was a letter without a stamp. I wondered, "Who do I know who owns a post office?" It was my draft notice! I boarded a train along with about 200 other draftees to travel to Salinas and then take a bus to Ft. Ord, CA for basic training. Problem, we hit a parked car on the tracks in Glendale and by the time all the investigations were completed we were running 6 hours late. By the time we arrived at Ft. Ord were not late...but "AWOL". After a few hours to confirm our delay getting to Ft. Ord, we were excused.

The first day of basic training the truck jerked as I was getting off and I fell off the truck and broke my arm. Basic training was delayed until my arm healed. While receiving physical therapy on my arm at the hospital, I was checked by a nurse, and I had a high fever. As it turned out, I had spinal meningitis and was isolated as it was very contagious. At that time we lost 19 men and I was lucky that it was discovered early since I was going to the hospital every day for therapy on my broken arm. THAT IS WHEN IT ALL BEGAN! I was recorded as "deceased" by the Army. After I was released from the hospital...no orders came to send me back to Basic training and I stayed in the hospital for many weeks doing nothing but eating, sleeping and watching TV. Eventually orders came through to send me back to Basic. Then when I finally completed Basic ...AGAIN...no orders. I was sent out in the rain wearing my poncho to water the lawn. People would drive by and take my photo. Weeks later I received orders to go to band school. At the end of band school ....no orders came in. I was a "hold-over" AGAIN! With only 14 months to go I eventually received orders to be stationed at the Presidio in San Francisco, CA with the 6<sup>th</sup> Army Band playing the tuba. Bea and I rented a tiny apartment near the base and at that time it was a fun city to live in. All Army units are required to qualify on the rifle range once a year. When the band bus showed up at the firing range we were not allowed to get off the bus. When the officer in charge of the range found out that we were in the band, he gave us all "Marksmanship" medals and told us that he was afraid that we would kill someone or ourselves if he let us on the range.

My main concern was that my discharge papers would never come. As it turned out... everything came and I was released on time. My pay was messed up and I ended up with almost one month's pay (\$74.00) BUT the Army insisted that they were correct...so what can I say?

Playing in the band gave me many opportunities to go to some interesting places and be involved in official events. We played for parades, concerts and musical shows. We played for the St. Patrick's Day, Chinese New Year and Columbus Day Parades in San Francisco and the Rose Parade in Pasadena. We toured with the Fort Meade, MD, American Historical Flag Pageant to Seattle, WA, Portland, OR, Los Angeles and San Diego. We played for President Johnson right after he came into office. If you have to be in the military, the band is a nice unit to be in. I felt that I was contributing to the morale of many service people who were under much stress and needed a lift when things got rough.

I was truly lucky while I served my country playing the tuba, as many of my colleagues were not as fortunate. In high school my band/orchestra teacher said he needed someone with a "strong back and weak mind" to play the tuba in the band and he chose me. After my service time I thanked him for making me learn to play the tuba as it may have saved my life. Who knows?

**Mickey Fruchter 1962**







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## Joe Giocomarra US Merchant Marines 1939-1945

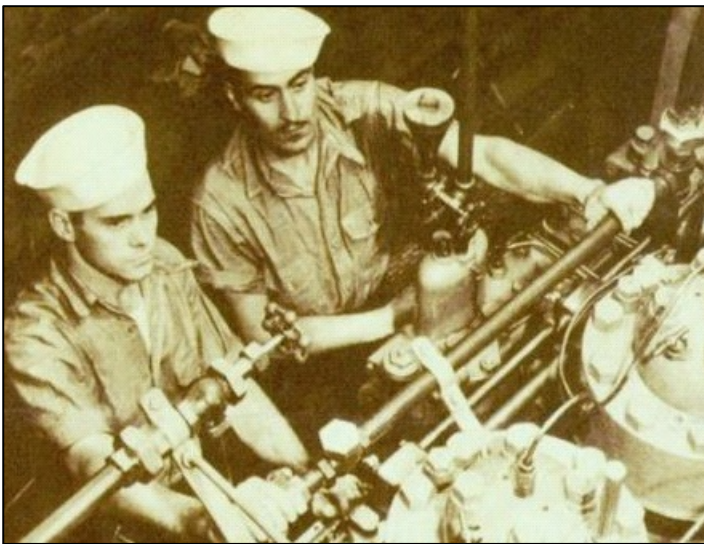
My place of birth was Fort Dodge, Iowa. However the date is somewhat in dispute. My mother, who died when I was nine years old, claimed I was born on May 29, 1918, but my birth certificate says May 28. I was raised by an older sister. After high school I joined the Conservation Corps. The CC Camps were run much like the army and afforded food, lodging, and employment during the depression years. I spent six months in the camp.

After the CC Camp I traveled around the country by train like a hobo finding jobs where ever I could. After arriving in San Francisco I went to work for O'Neil Lumber Company. While delivering lumber to the docks in 1939 I signed on as a Utility Man on a ship that hauled lumber from the Philippines. On one return trip in 1941 we picked up survivors from a ship that had sunk.

In 1941 I was drafted into the army and volunteered for the paratroopers, then moved to the merchant Marines. I crewed on six different ships during the war. Two were torpedoed and one hit a mine. One ship, the Alcoa, a Victory ship was torpedoed when it left Guantanamo, but was able to return to port. Another ship, the Malabar was torpedoed and sank after it left Johannesburg, South Africa. I had just left the watch at the wheel when the ship was hit. I made it to the bow with another seaman just before she sank. We spent the night together in the water before we found a lifeboat with three other seamen. Dolphins surrounded the boat that night. Later one seaman was attacked by a shark and lost an arm and died. We spent 33 days in the life boat living on fish and collecting rain water in six barrels on board. We were eventually spotted by a PBV, but it was three days before it returned to pick us up. Of the 65 crewmen aboard the Malabar only four of us survived. We were flown to Johannesburg, then by ship to Rio de Janeiro then to a hospital in New Orleans.

After being discharged from the hospital I went to Biloxi, Mississippi to pick up a new troop ship, the Sea Porpoise, a class C4 Victory ship. It made many trips to England carrying troops. The ship participated in the Normandy landing on June 6, 1944, where it hit a mine and sank in shallow water. Because of the invasion we were stranded on board for three weeks before they could take us off. We were taken to South Hampton, England where we waited for a ship to take us back to New York. I was released from the Merchant Marines on June 6, 1945. My pay was docked for the time I was not serving aboard ship and was adrift at sea in a life boat for over a month.

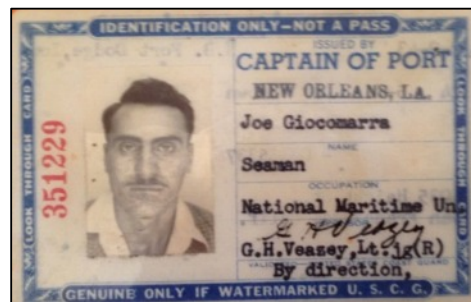
I had married my childhood sweetheart in 1939, but in 1943 I had received a "Dear John" letter that ended the marriage. After the war I moved to Glendale, California and worked for General Controls for 25 years. Later I went to work at JPL as a machinist in Research and Development, retiring from JPL when I was 70. I had moved to La Canada where I was able to walk to work at JPL and I still live there. I have a Model T and a 1931 Sport Coupe which I assembled from parts. I also have a modern pick up for back up transportation.



Joe Giocomarra at right

**Editor's Note:** Joe received an award from the French Government on May 21, 2001 for his service during the Normandy Invasion. The US Merchant Marines were treated poorly by the US Government and were not given veteran status during WWII.

It was not until January 30, 1988 that veteran status was granted.





# Santa Anita A's Veteran

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## Gordon N. Johnson USMC 1944-1946

The San Gabriel area is where I grew up. I had graduated from Alhambra High School just before I entered the Marines Corps. I was 18 when I entered the USMC on January 10, 1944. Boot camp was in San Diego, with mortar training at Camp Pendleton. My unit, the Third Marine Division shipped out to the Pacific on September 1, 1944; with a two week stop over at Pearl Harbor. We then continued on to the Marianas Island campaign. After the initial invasion of Guam on July 21, 1944, my unit went in for the mop-up operation with a lot of jungle patrolling and constant intensive training at an outpost in the middle of the jungle.

On February 19, 1945 the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division took part in the invasion of Iwo Jima along with the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, Marine Divisions, each landing in different sectors at different times. We watched from onboard transport ships as battleships further out shelled Iwo before the amphibious landing of the Marines began. The battle there was during cold and rainy weather. When the Island was secured those of us who survived were returned to Guam in April 1945. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Division was now being trained for the invasion of Japan. However, on August 14 the Japanese surrendered, with the official signing of the surrender on September 2, 1945.

On October 10, 1945, twenty four of us were volunteered from the 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, and were landed on the island of Chichi Jima. Our purpose was to secure the island and collect war crime prisoners. Our squad of eight Marines captured one Japanese general plus five other high ranking officers. We held them until reinforcements arrived two weeks later and a stockade was built. In May 1946, the same 24 Marines brought these six war crime prisoners back to Guam to stand trial. It was our duty to escort the prisoners to and from the court room plus guard them during the trial proceedings.

At the end of May 1946 I had enough points for discharge and was returned to the United States on a former Italian luxury liner converted to a troop ship and disembarked at Treasure Island, San Francisco and from there taken by another ship to San Diego where I was discharged on June 5, 1946 with the rank of corporal.

When I returned from the war I went to work for my father who was in the construction business. Later I obtained a contractor's license and went into business for myself. I have been retired for the past 25 years. My first wife died in 1973; we had one son. My current wife, Helen, and I have been married for over 40 years and we are charter members of the Santa Anita A's.



Japanese General Yoshio Tachibana captured on Chichi Jima at wars end in October 1945 by Gordon Johnson (right) and his squad of eight Marines. Tachibana was tried for war crimes and executed on Guam on September 24, 1947.



Gordon Johnson USMC 1944



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## Tom Johnson US Army 1964-1966

I was born in Glendale, CA and grew up in Altadena. A few months after graduating from John Muir High School in Pasadena in 1959 I began working at Cal-Tech as a machinist. I was required to register for the draft at age 18. I had a good job and had my life in order; I was beginning to think I had escaped the draft. However, in February 1964, at age 23 I was drafted. Since I am color blind I thought I would be rejected, but that was not the case.

Basic training was at Fort Ord, followed by advanced infantry training (AIT) at Fort Lewis, Washington. My specialty was ground surveillance radar. After I graduated from AIT, I was a Spec 4 and got an increase in rank and a pay raise. I also drove a truck. Twice during my stay at Ft. Lewis we were sent to Yakima, WA for 5-6 weeks at a time. The Yakima Training Center was used for maneuver training, land warrior system testing, and live-fire training.

On July 31, 1965 I was transferred to Ft. Riley, Kansas. Ft. Riley is home to the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry "The Big Red One, Blue Spaders." By this time, we knew we were going overseas but didn't know where. At one time, we were told that we were going to Korea. We dyed our clothing, got our shots, etc. but still were not sure of our destination.

On October 6, 1965 I boarded the USNS Blatchford headed for Vietnam, with a stop-over in Okinawa. Twenty-two days from sailing we landed in Vung Tau, South Vietnam. I was stationed about 35 miles Northeast of Saigon, near Phuoc Vinh. Since we were one of the first divisions to arrive in the area, we had to build the fort, which later became known as Camp Weber.

As a truck driver in Vietnam, towing a water trailer, I had to leave camp and drive down the highway through the rubber plantations to get water. Many times I was shot at. I would just duck down, and step on the gas to get out of the way of the bullets whizzing past my head. I used my radar expertise to protect Camp Weber by audibly listening for movement at night. Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Eve 1965 was spent in Vietnam. Camp Weber was decorated for Christmas. Organizations from all over the U.S. expressed their support for the troops. I personally received a card from an elementary school girl thanking me for serving. It touched me. I really appreciated letters and gifts from home. I was counting the days until I could return to the U.S.

In February 1966 my 2 years were complete. I boarded a commercial jet and flew to Oakland where I was discharged from active duty. However, a few weeks later I received a letter telling me to report to the National Guard unit in Pasadena. The National Guard wondered why I was there. I told them that I had orders to report. They asked me "do you want to still be in the army?" I told them "No." They sent me home. A month or two later, I received another letter telling me to report to Camp Shelby, MS. When I arrived I found that the only men at Camp Shelby were Tennessee National Guard. They knew I was from California, so they nick-named me "California". My duties were to deliver ice in the morning to the units in the field. I did this for two weeks, and then I was sent home.

Shortly afterward, I was officially discharged from active duty. Upon discharge, I went back to work at Cal-Tech. From February 1966 to January 1970 I was in the inactive reserves, but was never called.



Tom Johnson 1964



Tom & Sheri Johnson



# Santa Anita A's Veteran



**Don Kennedy National Guard 1969-1992**

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When I was a senior at Arcadia High School, our involvement in Vietnam was relatively new. I have always supported our military and supported our efforts then and there in Vietnam. During my two years at Citrus Junior College and then two years at Long Beach State, I watched our involvement in the War become political. It was being run by politicians in Washington, not by the Generals and the Pentagon.

As a son of a World War II Navy Veteran and a patriotic citizen, I looked at military duty as a step in the ladder of becoming an adult, husband and father. By the time I graduated from college, I was married and looking forward to going on to law school. Disillusioned with what Washington was not accomplishing, I chose to join the California Army National Guard. I enlisted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> 144<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery in Arcadia, California. I became an artillery surveyor and was in the Guard for one year before I was sent to Ft. Campbell, Kentucky for basic training. I was a squad leader in basic in a company made up entirely of Army Reserve and National Guard men. We all knew that when we finished basic and advanced Infantry training (AIT), that we were going back to our home units and not to Vietnam, so the moral in our company was higher than the rest of the Battalion.

I was chosen by our 1SGT to represent our company in a Battalion wide review board and was awarded the American Spirit and Honor Award and Outstanding Basic Trainee. Upon graduation from Basic Training we were bussed overnight to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma for AIT. One week into survey school, I flew home to pick up my wife and dog and drove back to Oklahoma for eleven more weeks of schooling.

Two weeks after graduating AIT, I started law school in Sacramento, CA and had to transfer to another National Guard Unit. I transferred to the Headquarters Detachment of the State Headquarters and spent three years in the clerk's office with summer camp in Camp San Luis Obispo, CA. Upon graduation from law school, we moved back to San Gabriel Valley and I transferred to the Judge Advocate General's office in Headquarter Company of the 40<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in Long Beach, CA. I transferred in as an E-5 and was later promoted to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant, and then Captain. I was defense counsel for Article 15's, Court Martials and Flight Evaluation Boards, as well as Hearing Officer for Article 15's. I spent 17 years in the JAG section and retired after 21 years in the National Guard.

I look back at my years in the Guard with monthly weekend drills and summer camps at Ft. Irwin, Camp Hunter Leggett, and Camp San Luis Obispo as great times with dedicated people. I enjoyed my military career and I have many fond memories of the experiences I had in the CALARNG.



**Don Kennedy and his brother:  
Don is the one with the mustache (right)**

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# Santa Anita A's Veteran



## Mike Kniest USAF 1964-1970

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In the early 1960's, even before the Viet Nam war, the draft obligation was in full force. Like most of my classmates, we were looking at options for the inevitable call from Uncle Sam. I had already set my sights on a career in the fire service including a yearlong quest to enlist in the 146 Military Air Transport Wing's Crash Fire Department located at Van Nuys Air Force Base (Cal Air Guard). That request was luckily granted on December 10, 1964. Otherwise twenty-five days later I was officially drafted and required to report to Fort Ord, California to begin a two-year tour with the US Army.

I raised my right hand to the swearing in pledge on the early morning of December 9, 1964 and twenty four hours later I was headed in a C-97 Transport plane for twelve weeks of basic training at Lackland AFB Texas and then back to California for six months of intensive on the job training at Van Nuys AFB as a Crash Fire Bypass Specialist rank of Airman (E-1), all made possible because of my two fire seasons experience with the California Department of Forestry.

In June of 1965, I settled down to focus and complete my six-year ANG/USAF citizen soldier commitment. August of 1965 I was activated to serve full time for a month because of the LA Watts riots. The continuing training and contacts over my enlistment proved to be invaluable to my thirty-four year fire service carrier with the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

During my six years of service I received additional specialized training and experience at various air force bases including my home base and Edwards, Vandenberg, Norton, McCord and Fort Lewis, Washington. By the time of my honorable discharge in December of 1970 I had achieved the rank of Staff Sergeant (E-6) assigned as a crew chief of a five-man crash truck. I still hold the treasures of friendships made there very close to my heart today.

My military obligation was one of the things that shaped my life for the better. As I look back, they were mostly fun days although I did not think so at the time as the threat of our unit activation for deployment in Viet Nam held a dark cloud over us constantly.



## Mike Kniest 1967, Norton AFB



**Mike & Beverly Kniest**



# Santa Anita A's Veteran

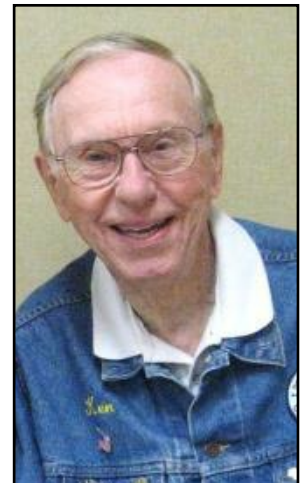


**Ken Mallory US Army 1943-1945**

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Pasadena, California was where I was born in 1924. I grew up in the area and was attending Pasadena City College in March 1943 when I was drafted into the army. Basic training was at Camp Roberts in Central California. I was trained as a mortar man. My first war time service was in the Aleutian Islands Campaign during 1943-1944. Upon my return to the States I was attached to the 87 Infantry Division, Company L of the 345 Infantry Regiment. In October 1944 the division was deployed to France where I saw combat action in the Ardennes (Battle of the Bulge), the Rhineland, and Central Europe. In the first day of action in the Battle of the Bulge our regiment suffered 50 to 60 casualties. My company crossed the Rhine River at night in ten-man boats under fire to seize the eastern bank. Once across my squad set up a mortar position and started dropping mortar shells on a German gun emplacement overlooking the river. Many years later at an 87 Division reunion an infantryman came up to me and shook my hand and thanked me for taking that gun position out. He and his squad had been ordered to prepare to assault it. Significant campaign medals I received are the Combat Infantryman Badge, a Bronze Star, and the ETO Campaign Medal with three battle stars, the World War II Victory Medal, and a Good Conduct Medal. I was honorably discharged at Camp Shelby, Mississippi in October 1945 with the rank of Sargent.

Following World War II I obtained a bachelor's degree from USC in 1950 and spent a long business career in sales with the Dow Chemical Company. Today I live in Bradbury, California with my wife Elizabeth. We have a daughter, a son, three grandchildren, and one great grandchild.



87 Infantry Division 1945: Ken Mallory top left

**Editor's Note:**

May 8, 2015, (the 70th anniversary of VE Day) on board the USS Iowa, Long Beach, CA: The French Council General Awarded Sgt. Ken Mallory and 19 others the French Legion Of Honor Medal, Frances highest award, for participation in the liberation of France during WWII.





# Santa Anita A's Veteran

**Don McBride USNR 1954-1972**

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My military career story is about training, training, and more training for an emergency that never came. The years of my service were during the cold war with the Soviet Union and thankfully that cold war never became a shooting war.

When I turned eighteen, the mandatory draft was in affect so I could either take my chances with the Army or join the reserves of other services. I selected the Navy since I always liked their big toys. The tour of duty was eight years, with two full summers of training (basic and technical school), two weeks each of the other summers, and one week end per month.

I went through basic training at Naval Air Station (NAS) Los Alamitos, the nearest base to my home. There was also a Marine unit going through their basic training there at the same time. As part of our training our class of about 30 inductees was placed aboard a destroyer for sea duty. I almost got to take part in firing the 5" gun. The pilot pulling the target chickened out and let loose the tow cable. A 5" gun fires a shell that weighs about 25 pounds.

For my technical training I selected the Navy's "Electronics Technician" school because it was held at Los Alamitos and could lead to an assignment there. When I finished the technical school I accepted an assignment to a helicopter squadron and started my hands on training. I learned how to operate and repair the sonar units aboard Navy helicopters and fixed wing aircraft which fly off the cast assigned to find and destroy Russian submarines. There were similar squadrons north and south of us along the West coast, and along the East coast, along the Gulf of Mexico, parts of Alaska, and Hawaii..



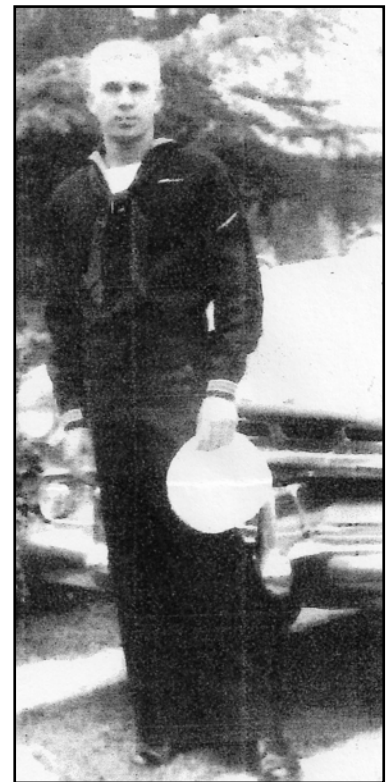
**Don McBride 1953**

A helicopter squadron is made up of about 25 enlisted men and 20 pilots (the officers). We owned nothing except three large specially equipped helicopters and the clothes on our backs. We depended on others for housing, food, medical care, and space to work. But, on the plus side we could pick up and go to any other Naval Air Station.

We usually trained at NAS Los Alamitos. Once we spent two weeks at NAS lake Pontchartrain near New Orleans training in the Gulf of Mexico. We flew to Ford Island in the center of Pearl Harbor near Honolulu where we spent two weeks aboard a WWII straight deck aircraft carrier. We had a submarine assigned to us for their training as well as ours. We also trained at NAS North Island, San Diego where we practiced lifting a person from a moving boat to a moving helicopter using a sling. Finally we were the designated squadron selected to go to New York to take over the duties for a squadron that would transfer to Germany in case the Berlin crisis heated up. Again, it didn't happen.

The closest I came to action under fire was when one of our pilots panicked when I radioed that hydraulic fluid was running down my window. He landed so fast (and hard) that he bent the helicopter in the center. The bird was a total loss, but we all walked away unhurt.

By the time I mustered out of the Naval Reserves in 1972 I had attained a rank of E-5, one below Chief Petty Officer. I had completed college, started my engineering career, married and become a father.



**Don McBride 1954**



# Santa Anita A's Veteran

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## John McDannel USAF 1963-1968

My home town was Covina, California. I graduated from Covina High School in 1959, where I played football and ran track. That year I was awarded the honor of "Athlete of the year". In 1961 I won the Mt. San Antonio College Decathlon and set a US National record in the 480 yard Shuttle Hurdles. In 1965 I graduated from the University of La Verne with a BA in Economics and a minor in Air Science. I also played football and ran track at La Verne. As a college freshman, I enrolled as a cadet in the USAF ROTC program at USC. In 1965 I was assigned to Biggs AFB El Paso, Texas where I was commissioned a second lieutenant and was awarded the "Commandant of Cadets" award. I was awarded my pilots wings in 1968 and was assigned to the Strategic Air Command. I flew the T-41, T-37, T-38, and was awarded an F-4 Phantom out of pilot training.

My flying career continued after the Air Force as a commercial pilot for United Airlines. During the 1980 presidential campaign I was selected to pilot a Boeing 727 chartered by the Republican National Committee to fly the then candidate (and later President and First Lady) Ronald and Nancy Reagan around the US during the final six months of the campaign for President.

I flew as a United Airlines Captain on the Boeing 747-400 before retiring in 2001 following a 32-year career at United.



**John McDannel at Williams AFB 1968**



### Mary McDannel pinning on my wings 1965

My 25-year banking career with Trans World Bank Corp. ran concurrently with my career with United Airlines. In 1967 I earned an MBA from USC.

My wife, Mary, and I have been married for more than 51 years. Mary served for more than 40 years as a grammar school teacher in the Covina Unified School District. We have three daughters. One is Vice Principal at Fresno Middle School, one is an orthodontist and the other is a Prosthodontist. We have six grandchildren.

I was type rated to fly the following aircraft: B-747-400, B-747-100\200, B-767 100/200, B-757, B-737, B-727 100/200, A-320 and served as a Flight Engineer on the DC-10. I was elected to serve as Chairman of the Airline Pilots Association Council #57 and was a board member of the Airlines Pilot Association in Washington D.C. In 1993 I was awarded "UAL Captain of the Year" and received the carrier's "Humanitarian Award" in 1987. In 2004, I was interviewed as a candidate for the CEO position of United Airlines.





# Santa Anita A's Veteran

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## Rick Phillips USAF 1959-1961

After graduating from high school I completed Vocational Automotive Training at Pasadena City College. At age 22 I was working as an auto mechanic in Pasadena and because of pressure from being drafted into the army I enlisted in the United States Air Force for two years as an Aviation Cadet in April, 1959. As part of the enlistment process I spent three days at March Air Force Base in Riverside, California. On the second day our group of twenty took the Officer Quality Test. Nineteen of us passed that test. On the third day we took the Air Force Flight Physical, two qualified as navigators, and two as pilots. I was one of the pilots. After five weeks of Preflight Pilot Training in Texas, I dropped out of the Aviation Cadet program and served the rest of my enlistment as a regular airman.

I was stationed at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas (preflight training); Lowry AFB, Denver, Colorado (armament school), and at Minot AFB, Minot, North Dakota as an armament mechanic on F-106 Fighter- Interceptor aircraft.

What a shock for this California boy to experience North Dakota winter. I was at Minot for two winters and one summer; I saw -50° F three times! Not only was it cold in North Dakota, it was also very windy. The icicles hanging from the eaves of the buildings would sometimes be horizontal. I also saw some very spectacular “northern lights” (aurora borealis) one summer night.

There was not much to do in Minot: one movie theater, one bowling alley, a public library, and a bar on every corner. Two of the airmen at the base wanted to take a night school physiology class at the State Teachers College in town. I had a car; they didn't, so they talked me into taking the class with them so they would have transportation. They both dropped out, but I finished the class and continued to take classes at the college for the rest of the time I was at Minot.

I was honorably discharged as an Airman Second Class (E-3) in June 1961 after serving two years and two months. I had extended my enlistment for two months to attend armament school.

After leaving the Air Force I went back to college at PCC and CSULA and received a teaching credential. I spent the next 24 years teaching Industrial Arts at La Canada High School, and then 9 years as an auto shop teacher at Diamond Bar High School. I also spent some time teaching night school in auto shop at PCC. After I retired from teaching in 1997, I worked a few years at an auto repair shop in Temple City doing smog testing and repair.



**Rick Phillips 1959**



**Rick & Carolyn Phillips**



# Santa Anita A's Veteran

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## Andy Sais USAF 1951-1954

In January of 1951, I was in my second year of college and had a deferment, but I signed up for the Air Force pilot training program. During the series of tests that we took prior to being shipped out, I qualified for Officers Candidate School and pilot training. However, a problem soon developed. Due to overcrowding I had been sent to an airbase in South Carolina for basic that had been re-activated a few months before and was considered a reserve air base. In order to be able to go to OCS right after basic, I had to be on a regular air base. Because I was in limbo and they didn't have a permanent job for me because of my status (waiting for OCS), I was sent to radar operators school at Biloxi, Mississippi for 6 weeks in June and July of 1951. Upon completion of the school, I was sent back to my base, awaiting transfer to a radar operations group. Because of red tape, my transfer did not take place until October, to Sewart AFB, outside of Nashville, Tenn. This was a regular AFB, but when I went through channels to transfer to OCS, I was told that there was now an 18 month waiting list for pilot training, so I was stuck in the radar group and we soon went overseas.

Our Group was made up of 4 National Guard squadrons, 3 from Georgia and 1 from North Carolina to which I was attached. One Georgia Squadron was sent to Korea and the other three of us went to French Morocco. We were used to set up a Radar ring around French Morocco, as we had a B-29 bomber base there, with nuclear bombs at the ready in case the Russians wanted war.

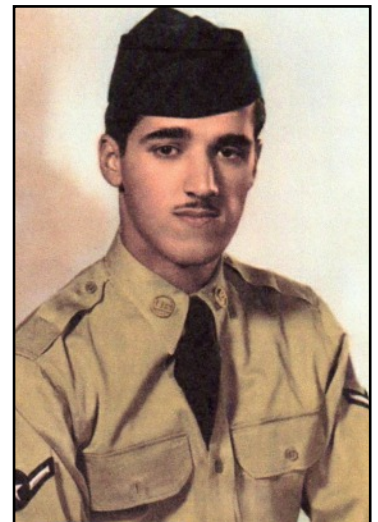
Before leaving the US, those of us that were regular Air Force, had to teach the National Guard guys how to become radar operators, including their officers. From January to July of 1952, we were just outside of Casablanca, teaching radar operations. Then I was sent with a detachment of 45 men about 80 miles north where I remained with the detachment for the next 10 months until I returned to the US in May 1953.

Here are a few highlights while in French Morocco. I was assigned to the Group calibration team, which went to different locations in Morocco, with the help of B-29's to calibrate sites for possible use as early

warning radar sites. In October 1952, a calibration team of ten of us was put together and sent to Korea, where we stayed for 5 days to calibrate a new site for our squadron stationed in Korea. Even though a demarcation line had been established, the war wasn't over and we were still bombing the north. The commanding officer of the squadron decided to move the site closer to the demarcation line, where we were promptly shelled by North Korean artillery and the radar antenna was destroyed and about 8 men wounded. New equipment was sent from Japan and we had to calibrate it on a new site far enough back from the demarcation line that was safe. We had to calibrate the site by workings with the B-29's that were on actual bombing missions. After we were done we were flown back to Morocco and went back to our regular assignments.

In January, 1953, we moved our site, 300 miles to the Northeast, right on the Mediterranean Sea, where Morocco is only 6 miles wide, with Algeria on one side and Spanish Morocco on the other. It was a summer resort for Europeans but we were there in the winter and it was cold and the little town of Saidia was almost deserted. The Army Corps of Engineers and the French were arguing about who would build our permanent site, so in the meantime, we had to be a construction squadron as well as radar operations, and build our own site. We had to work at construction during the daylight hours when we were not working on the radar.

I returned to the US in May, 1953 and was advised my orders to OCS had come through. However, I declined the offer as it would have meant another four years and by then I wanted to return to civilian life. I was discharged in December 1954. I returned to college and became a high school teacher for the next 34 years. I retired in 1992.



Andy Sais 1951



# Santa Anita A's Veteran



## Chuck Sharpe US Army 1950-1952

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In December of 1950 I was drafted into the army. Basic training was at Fort Ord. There they discovered I was "left eyed." I was classified as "non-combatant." The army does not have left eyed rifles. I was certainly no Audie Murphy! By this I mean while I admire those on "the front lines" and thoroughly enjoy reading the exploits of other Model A members' stories of their service, mine is more a story of those who served in a back line support capacity (way back line).

After basic I spent a year at Camp Roberts, just South of Paso Robles. There I drove the post bus mostly delivering ambulatory patients to the post hospital (mostly pregnant women). While doing my bus duties you would think I was the Camp Chaplain. I must appear very trustworthy because some of these women would tell me stuff so personal it would burn the hair in your nose. Nancy says I must just be a good listener.

I was then transferred to Base North Richland in Richland, Washington. Although no one would admit it, they must have misfiled my papers. After 10 days of sleeping in till noon and no one seeming to know I was not assigned to anywhere, an officer spotted me one day and asked me where I was assigned and why I wasn't doing anything. When I told him I wasn't assigned they looked into this and found my M.O.S. (Military Occupational Specialty) papers. My "M.O.S." said I was a welder and I was expected 10 days ago (as though their losing my paperwork was my fault). I was then told to immediately report to the dental lab. Why, to weld gold bridges. This was not related in any way to welding I had done in the past, but I learned quickly.

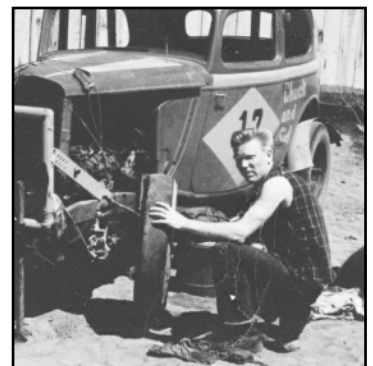
Because there was not a lot of "welding" they taught me to take dental impressions. Having a lot of spare time in this duty, I started fixing and driving a jalopy, a 1934 Ford Vicky in great shape, until I got a hold of it. I'd like to say how great a driver I was and how many races I won, but I would be lying. I was not very good at it but it was a lot of fun. Working on a jalopy and racing put a lot of grease and oil under my fingernails. This must have helped in taking dental impressions because the molds didn't stick to my fingers anymore.

After all this, my last exploit is how I was discharged two hours early from the Army. In the winter of 1952, it was cold and snowy. My GI shoes that had been issued to me were all worn out. I only had nine days left before discharge so if I had to buy a new pair of shoes my choice was a nice pair of black wingtips. I was spotted by an officer who gave me a hard time but when I told him of my impending discharge date, he went away grumbling. As luck would have it, on the day of discharge, it was this same officer who was giving the reenlistment pep talk and how great it would be to re-up now that they needed men. We could have our pick of assignment and get the \$600 reenlistment bonus. However, as soon as he saw me (still wearing my wingtips) he just said "you can go now" even though it was two hours early.

A couple of days before my discharge, as a bonus, a guy I knew was going to abandon a 1932 Ford sedan because it wasn't running and was missing the front grill and radiator. He said I could have it, so I towed it home because I wanted the "B" engine. Yes, it had a four cylinder engine.



Chuck Sharpe 1950



Chuck Sharpe and his jalopy



# Santa Anita A's Veteran

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**Keith Smith USN 1942-1944**



**US Army 1944-1947**



**USAF 1947-1964**



**Keith Smith 1944**

I was born in February of 1925 in Clarksburg, West Virginia and attended school there until 1934. That year the army recalled my father, a Reserve US Army Officer, to active duty and for the next two years we lived in Ohio and California. We returned home in 1936 and I attended school through my junior year in West Virginia. The Army again recalled my father in August 1941. I graduated high school in Urbana, Illinois in 1942. With the war on, I immediately entered the University of Michigan and completed three semesters in May of 1943. By that time, I had enlisted as a Naval Aviation Cadet. In August 1944, the Navy cut back their pilot training program saying they would fail 75% of the cadets. They offered and I accepted a discharge and immediately enlisted into the US Army Air Corps, which became the USAF in September 1947.

## Schooling:

Aircraft & Engine Mechanic 10/1944-4/1945  
Airplane Electrical Mechanic 6/1945- 7/1945  
Officer Candidate School 9/1945- 1/1946  
Pilot Training 10/1946-10/1947  
Glider Pilot School 2/1948-3/1948  
Aircraft Maintenance Officer School 1/1949-11/1949  
USAF Institute of Technology 10/1952-10/1954

## Duty Assignment:

Air Transport Command Operational Training Unit, Homestead, Florida: Mechanic C-54, C-89 4/1944-6/1944  
Experimental Laboratories, Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio: Electrical Mechanic 7/1945- 9/1945  
Wright Field, Ohio: Assistant Transient Maintenance Officer 1/1945-10/1946  
75th Troop Carrier Squadron, Greenville Air Base, Greenville, South Carolina: Pilot—C-82 & CG-15A (glider) 10/1947-1/1949  
2107th Air Weather Group, Operations & Maintenance Officer, Elmendorf AFB, Anchorage, Alaska 1/1950-1/1952  
Mobile Training Wing, Chanute AFB, Illinois: Command of F-51 Training Detachment 1/1952-10/1952  
Directorate of Test & All-Weather Flying, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio: Chief Navigation & Landing Systems 10/1954-11/1959  
Satellite Test Center, Sunnyvale, California: Satellite Flight Test Controller 11/1959-3/1964  
Retired 3/1964 as a Major in the USAF

## Flying Experience:

### 1944 (US Navy)

Mt. Clemens, Michigan: Flew the Piper J-3 Cub during a four-month training period.

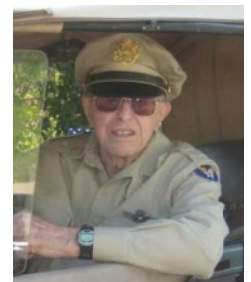
### 1944-1947 (US Army)

Randolph Field, San Antonio, Texas: Primary-Stearman PT-13; Basic- North American T-6  
Barksdale Field, Shreveport, Louisiana: Advanced- North American B-25

### 1947-1963 (USAF and Civil)

Fairchild C-82 Twin-Engine Transport  
Waco CG-15A Assault Glider  
L-4 Piper Observation  
Douglas C-47 Twin-Engine-Transport  
Douglas C-54 Four-Engine Transport  
North American B-25 Twin-Engine Bomber  
T-6 Trainer  
Beechcraft C-45 Twin-Engine Transport  
Cessna U-3A Twin-Engine Utility  
Beechcraft T-34 Trainer  
Taylorcraft BC6D Two-Place Light Plane  
Stinson 108 Four-Place Personal Transport Light Plane  
Beechcraft Bonanza Four-Place Personal Transport

My most satisfying assignment was my last one at the Satellite Test Center where I was involved in flight testing the first of the Air Force's Spy Satellites. This led me to a post-service position with the Hughes Aircraft Company where I was employed for two years as the Hughes Surveyor Space Flight Operations Director at JPL. After that I was employed by The Aerospace Corporation for 25 years in El Segundo working on classified programs such as the MOL (Manned Orbital Lab), and the design and construction of Schriever AFB in Colorado, the site of the current AF satellite operations center. My one regret is that having served in time of three wars; I failed to serve my country in combat in any one of them.





# Santa Anita A's Veteran



**Soli Solomon USN 1967-1970, MM 1974-2009**

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In the summer of 1966 I graduated from Hollywood High School at the age of 17 and was required to register for the draft. Not being a US citizen and holding a UK passport I could have left the US. This I would not do. As old fashion and corny as it sounds today, I considered it an act of cowardice to leave. Since I lived here I felt an obligation to enter the US military. My father had served in the British Merchant Marine, so the navy was the logical choice for me. When I visited the navy recruiter in Van Nuys, I asked him before leaving for boot camp if he had any advice. He said, "Keep your eyes and ears open and your mouth shut and you will do fine". Sage Advice! After basic training, I was sent to the Great Lakes Naval Training Center where I studied various shipboard propulsion systems which would place me in the engine rooms aboard ships. Upon completing the 12-week course I was given orders to report aboard the USS Neches, a fleet oiler. Neches had a glorious history. It had shot down two Kamikaze aircraft and was the first oiler entering Tokyo Bay for the surrender proceedings. During my three years at sea I took full advantage of any training offered and was sent ashore for 10-weeks to attend air conditioning and refrigeration school in San Diego, a welcome break. In August 1970 Neches was decommissioned. I was honorably discharged ending with an engine rating of E-5, coincidentally on my 22<sup>n</sup> birthday.

After a short respite I decided to return as an officer in the Merchant Marine, using the 4-year education the G.I. Bill granted me. I selected the California Maritime Academy for my studies. After graduating with a Bachelor's Degree in Ocean (Marine) Engineering, I served aboard numerous American flag vessels such as; Sea-land Services, Matson Navigation Company, American Presidents Line, etc. When shipping jobs slowed down, I sailed with Military SeaLift Command (MSC) serving aboard the 'Aeolus', a cable laying vessel in the North Atlantic. Eventually in 1984 I took the most advanced exam the Coast Guard offered "Chief Engineer of Steam, Motor and gas Turbine Vessels of Unlimited Horsepower", (CG certifies merchant vessels and personnel). The most powerful vessel I worked on was the 'Sea-land Galloway' a twin-screw (propeller) geared steam turbine vessel of 120,000 shaft horsepower capable of over 33 knots; the absolute zenith of the age of steam powered vessels. Today, it is mostly diesel ships known as motor vessels (MV).

My final 'twilight Cruise' was on the Great Lakes on the Interlake Steamship Company's SS Lee Tregurta, a bulk carrier hauling taconite (steel pellets) originating from the Mesabi Iron Mountain Range to the Ford Motor Company's River Rouge Plant. My involvement with the Maritime Industry continued until 2009. I have many fond memories of my years at sea. Looking back, I did the right thing not shirking military service; I was able to utilize the G.I. Bill for my education, I purchased my first home with my VA benefits, and I became a naturalized US citizen. I call it the 'Triple Crown'. It looks like my recruiter knew what he was talking about when he said "you will do fine". In conclusion I want to encourage everyone to "Buy American/Ship American". This was a bumper sticker I had on my car a long time ago. It will keep the US merchant Marine and our economy strong.



**Midshipman Soli Solomon, US Merchant Marine**



# Santa Anita A's Veteran



**John Spielmann USMC 1952-1955**

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My home town was North Hollywood where I graduated from North Hollywood High School in June 1951 at the age of 18. A week later I went to work for Pacific Telephone Company. A year later in June 1952 I joined the Marine Corps Air Reserves and after attending only two meetings I was called to active duty and sent to boot camp at San Diego for three months followed by two months of combat training at Camp Pendleton. After a two week leave I was back to Camp Pendleton for advanced comeback training. That was when they discovered I had worked for the phone company. They sent me to a signal company that needed telephone people badly. It was a small company with about 65 Marines. Most all had seen combat in Korea and had purple hearts. I asked about their experience and they told me that they would string telephone wire between outposts and the North Koreans would come along and cut the wire and wait to shoot us when we came back to find and splice the cut.

Two weeks later the Korean War ended and they wanted us reserves to join the regular Marine Corps. We were given a choice of 2, 4, or 6 year enlistments. I opted for a 2-year enlistment and got to pick my duty station or a school. I chose a school and in August of 1953 they sent me to two months of aviation fundamental school in Jacksonville, Florida. After finishing that school I was sent to the longest school they had, Aviation Electronics Technician School at Memphis, Tennessee, which was seven months long.

When I completed that school in June of 1954 I only had a year left to serve and I was sent to the Marine Corps Air Station at El Toro, California where I served as an aircraft radio repairman. I was honorably discharged on July 30, 1955 with the rank of corporal.

After the Marine Corps I returned to work at the phone company. In 1967 I left the phone company and invested in an electronics company with several colleagues and became an employee of the company. I remained there for several years until I decided to open a bicycle shop in Temple City that was very successful. Thirty years later I sold it and retired.



**John Spielmann 1952**



**John & Marianne Spielmann**



# Santa Anita A's Veteran

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## Robert L. Travis Colonel US Army (Ret.) 1952-1982

In June 1952 I entered the Army as an enlisted man. After completing infantry OCS, basic airborne training, and the Jump Master Course, I was assigned to the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division where I served as Regimental Ammunition officer and Aerial Equipment Officer in the Service Company of the 325<sup>th</sup> Airborne Infantry Regiment.

In September 1954 I was assigned to the 60<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in Germany, where I was Regimental Ammunition Officer and later Executive Officer of Company E, 2nd Battalion of the 9<sup>th</sup> Division. Later that year I was a member of the Advanced Party of the 60<sup>th</sup> Regiment for Project GYROSCOPE in which the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division returned to the states with our duty station at Fort Carson, Colorado. Soon after arrival at Fort Carson, I assumed command of the Service Company, 60<sup>th</sup> Infantry regiment. In June of 1958 I attended the Infantry Officer Career Advancement Course at Fort Benning, Georgia and upon completion transferred to the Ordnance Corps and assumed command of 539th General Automotive Support Maintenance Company.

In 1961 I was assigned to the US Training Mission, Saudi Arabia as an Ordnance Advisor. Returning to the States in 1962 I was assigned to Field Command, Atomic Support Agency, Sandi Base, Albuquerque, New Mexico, where I was initially a student in Nuclear Weapons maintenance and Supply, and later served as instructor in this field.

In 1965 I attended the Associate Command and General Staff College Course, and upon graduation was selected as an Inspector General on the staff of Headquarters, US Army Alaska. In 1967 I returned to the lower 48 for assignment to Ordnance Career Branch, Office of Personnel Operations, headquarters, department of the Army.

In July 1969 I was assigned to Vietnam, where I commanded the 191<sup>st</sup> ordnance Battalion (Ammunition) and served as the Assistant Chief of Staff for Ammunition Headquarters, US Army Support, Cam-Rahm Bay. During this tenure of command the 191<sup>st</sup> was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation. Returning to the US in 1970, I attended San Jose State College where I earned a BS degree in Industrial Management. Upon graduation, I was reassigned to Headquarters, Department of the Army, Office of Deputy Chief of Staff for logistics, where I initially served as Logistics Personnel Staff Officer, and later as Chief, Logistics Personnel and Training Division.

In August of 1973 I entered the National War College, graduating in June 1974. During this attendance I earned a Master of Science degree in International Relations from George Washington University. In January 1975 I assumed command of the 46<sup>th</sup> General Support Group, Fort Bragg, North Carolina. From April to November 1975 this command established and operated two resettlement camps for Indo-China Refugees, first at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, and later at Fort Indiantown Gap Military Reservation, Pennsylvania. In July 1976, I was assigned to the US Military Personnel Center, serving initially as special assistant to the Director, OPMD for logistics, personnel matters, and later as Chief, Warrant Officer Division.

In September 1978 I was assigned to headquarters, US Army Armament Material Readiness Command (ARRCOM) as Director of the Defense Ammunition Supply Directorate, and in October 1979 became Director of Weapons Systems Management. In August 1981 I assumed the position of ARRCOM Chief of Staff from which I retired on November 1, 1982 with over 30 years of service. My awards include the Legion of Merit (four Oak leaf Clusters), Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, and the Army Commendation Medal.

I was born January 18, 1934 at MacDougall, New York. My wife is the former Joyce Hayward of San Jose, California. We have three daughters, Cheryl, Cynthia, and Christine.



Colonel Robert L. Travis 1974



# Santa Anita A's Veteran



**Patrick Utter USN\USNR 1967-1977**

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El Monte, California was my home town. I graduated from El Monte High School in June 1967 and enlisted in the navy in November. Boot camp was in San Diego followed by 16 weeks of Machinist Mate School at Great Lakes, Illinois.

I served on several ships during my time in service; my favorite was the battleship USS New Jersey BB62. The ship operated off the coast of Vietnam on one tour while I was on board. One memorable incident occurred on February 22, 1969 at 1 O'clock in the morning. I was sound asleep and woke to the sound and fury of the ship firing it's batteries of 16-inch guns, with many of the 5-inch guns firing as well. The firing continued for four hours. I found out later that morning that we fired over 100 16-inch rounds and close to 1700 5-inch rounds to save a Marine outpost from being overrun by the Viet Cong. I had two more Vietnam tours while serving on board the Destroyer Escort USS O' Callahan DE1051.

Twenty years later I was shopping near my home and happened to be wearing my USS New Jersey ball cap. A gentleman came up to me and asked if I was on the New Jersey back in 1969? I told him that I was. He asked me if I remembered the ship saving a Marine outpost, which I did. He then shook my hand and thanked me for helping save his life. That really hit home. It just shows what an impact you may have made in someone's life even if it was not evident at the time.

I was discharged from active duty in 1971 and remained in the navy as an active reserve for the next six years for a total service of ten years. I was rated a Machinist Mate, Petty Officer Second Class (MM2).



**Patrick Utter 1969**





# Santa Anita A's Veteran

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**Richard Ware USAF 1964 - 1968**

Upon graduation from high school in Eureka, Kansas in 1960, I left the small cattle ranch and farm I grew up on and went to Wichita. I enrolled in an electronics school and went to work at a television station. The electronics school was interesting and I enjoyed it but I soon discovered that I liked working in television, running camera, building scenery and other stage work better. I served my apprenticeship and was accepted into the union. At this point in life I knew the draft was looming possibility but maybe they would forget about me. Meanwhile, I continued working and attended night school at Wichita University. In late 1962, an old friend of mine who had gone to Kodiak, Alaska to work for Pinnell & Talifson Guide and Outfitters for a bear hunting operation told me of an opening. I applied and got the job as packer, cook, bear skinner, etc.

In December, 1963, sure enough I got my draft notice. I came back to Kansas and joined the Air Force in January 1964. Being on short notice, the Air Force had no openings in electronics or bear skinning, but they offered me a good school and saved me from the clutches of the army. After basic in San Antonio, Texas I was sent to Medics School in Greenville, Mississippi. After that I was sent to an advanced medic school at Brooks Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. My first duty station was Perrin Air Force Base, Sherman, Texas in late 1964. I was assigned to the Flight Surgeon's Office and later assigned to an air rescue unit. I spent 2 ½ years there. It was good duty and on flying status. I also had a part time job working at the local television station.

In December 1966 with one year left of my enlistment I was notified I had won an all-expense paid vacation to sunny Southeast Asia; so off I went to Thakli Air Base in Thailand. Thakli was an F-105 base and it was very active in bombing North Viet Nam. I was assigned to Air Rescue Unit H-43-B "Pedro". The crew was pilot, co-pilot, medic and two firemen. I enjoyed my job and worked with some great people. We had some good times and some bad. In January, 1968, I rotated back to the states for discharge.

My wife Jean and I, whom I had met at a USO dance in Dallas, were married in May 1968. We moved to San Antonio, Texas where I worked in the performing arts theater at Hemisfair. In 1969 we moved to Los Angeles where I went to work in the television and motion picture studios as a Lighting Gaffer. Our two daughters were born in 1972 and 1976; one became a school teacher and the other a police officer. I retired 8 years ago after over 50 years in the television and stage business with a gold card from my union. We vacation at our ranch in Kansas for three to four months each year and try to enjoy the best of both worlds.



**Richard Ware 1968**



**Richard Ware 1966 Perin Air Force Base Texas**



# Santa Anita A's Veteran



**Chris Wickersham US Army 1962-1966**

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While attending Washington University in St Louis, Missouri, I enrolled in the Army R.O.T.C. Program. I graduated in 1962 with a degree in Mechanical Engineering and a Commission as a Second Lieutenant. I had bad eyes and bad knees and could not serve in a combat unit so I was assigned to the Signal Corps. I had hoped to be in the Corps of Engineers as I felt my education in engineering would relate better to this type of work.

My next stop was the Army Infantry School at Ft. Benning, Georgia where I learned all the aspects about being an Infantry Officer. Even though I was in the Signal Corps, I still had to learn about the infantry. All I remember is there was a lot of time spent in the field slogging thru the mud and eating cold rations. While I was at Ft. Benning, I gained a lot more respect for those who served in the Infantry during combat.

After Infantry School, I was transferred to Ft. Devens, Massachusetts for Signal Corps School and was assigned to the course for Army Security Agency Computer Officers. This was the most interesting 10 weeks I have ever had. This was in 1962 and computers were in their infancy. In December, 1962, after finishing school at Ft. Devens, I was assigned to the 320<sup>th</sup> U.S. Army Security Agency Battalion in Bad Aibling, Germany. The 320<sup>th</sup> was located at an old German Luftwaffe (fighter) base in Bavaria about half way between Munich and Salzburg, Austria, not far from the Bavarian Alps.

This German base was built in the mid-1930s when Hitler was getting ready to invade Austria. At the time, there was a lot of money to spend on these types of permanent installations so all the buildings were very well constructed. One of the original hanger buildings had been converted to house our operations center. Our mission was to intercept military voice and coded radio communications from Russia and other Iron Curtain Countries. Remember, this was right at the height of the Cold War and it was very important that our intelligence people knew the location of Russian military units and what they were doing. We would intercept the radio transmissions, decode the electronic messages, assemble the voice messages and forward our findings to our parent unit in Frankfort, Germany. We also worked with the National Security Agency in Washington D.C. on special projects involving new methods for working with encrypted transmissions and field testing new prototype equipment. We were a small unit so every officer had more than one job to do.

In the summer of 1964 when my 2 years of active duty was completed, I was tempted to stay in the Army. The work was very interesting and I really enjoyed my assignment but my education was in Engineering so I opted not to continue on active duty. I returned to St Louis and about a year later I accepted an engineering position with a company in El Monte and moved to Southern California. In June of 1966, I completed my reserve obligation with the Army, having reached the rank of Captain.

I have many good memories of serving in the Army. My time on active duty taught me many things that I have been able to apply in my civilian professional and business life. The work was very interesting and my time in Germany could not have been better.

**Chris Wickersham 1962**





# Santa Anita A's Veteran

## Joe Wilson US Army 1956-1958



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### An inconvenient Learning Experience

Cincinnati was the center of my universe when I was born there in 1932 and it more or less remained that way until December 1941. World War II changed things a bit as my uncles and older cousins were called up for service and my father was transferred to Memphis, Tennessee to build B24 Bombers. I bought war stamps. By 1945 the war was over and we were back in Cincinnati where I grew up in the fabulous 50's. I was too young for WWII, too old for Vietnam and a bit late for the combat part of the Korean War.

I entered college a few months after the Korean War broke out. If I kept my grades up and joined ROTC I would be able to get a deferment. That was my introduction to the military and it didn't go well. I joined the Air Force ROTC but because I didn't draw my uniform quick enough I was fired then rehired by the Army. Things went OK until I changed my school major in my third year. That added a year and put me out of phase with my ROTC class so I was told to leave. Not to worry, the war was about over and I had been deferred..... But not forgotten.

1956 was a significant year. I graduated on June 8<sup>th</sup>, was married on June 9<sup>th</sup>, drafted on July 25 then left the states on December 25. My deferment had expired and I began my inconvenient Army experience.

The highlight of my basic training in Fort Smith, Arkansas was learning that Joy, my new bride, was pregnant. The second highlight occurred at the end of basic training when I was the only recruit, married with a pregnant wife, selected from our company to be shipped overseas to Japan (Code word for Korea). So, I flew out of Travis AFB in California on Christmas eve, had Christmas lunch in Hawaii, Christmas dinner on Guam then spent a few days in Tokyo before arriving in Korea in time for New Years Eve. Thus began my 16 month overseas deployment.

I was assigned to the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Civilian Labor Office which was in Tongduchon at the end of the rail line, just South of the DMZ and North Korea. Yea, you know Tongduchon, it's 15 miles North of Uijombu. Never heard of Uijombu? That's 15 miles North of Seoul. Relatively speaking, for Korea it was not the worst place to be. I was assigned to the 7<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company for rations and quarters. Since I was not qualified to carry an MP's 45 service weapon, I didn't have to stand revelry or do guard duty. I just ate, slept and watched movies after work.

Our office hired all of the Korean Nationals for the Division. I lived in a Quonset hut with the drivers for the Provost Marshal and Company Commander. That meant I got to go on weekend rides with them using their officers' jeeps. We almost made it

to North Korea one weekend but fortunately were stopped by a South Korean soldier with a big gun.

I was able to squeeze in three R & R (Rest and Recuperation) one week trips to Japan. I didn't have to spend much money in Korea, drinks at the enlisted men's club and an occasional haircut were cheap. We had a house boy who made up our bunks, shined our shoes and did our laundry. I paid him with two cartons of Old Gold Cigarettes and five bars of Lux soap each month. Because I was married I was paid an extra \$25 per month to take care of Joy. I always thought she was worth much more than that. On April 17<sup>th</sup>, 1957 the Red Cross advised me that our first daughter had arrived on this good earth.

At that time the tour of duty in Korea was 16 months. That put me back in the USA with less than 3 months left on my two years of active duty assignment and an early discharge.

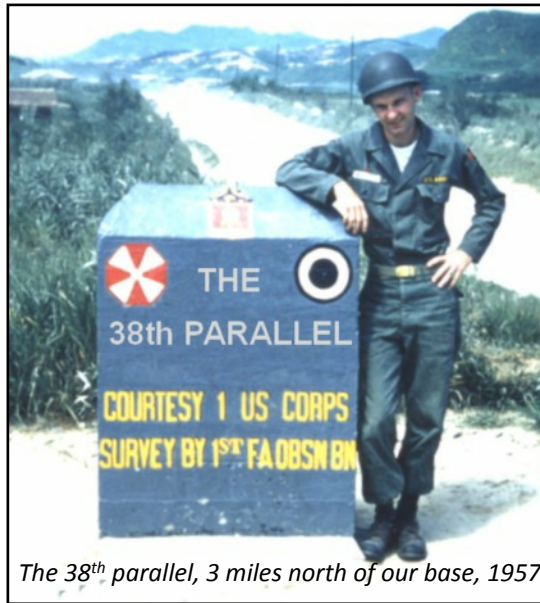
I was re-designated a civilian in May 1957, but that deferment thing had another string attached. I was required to serve several years in the active reserves which included monthly meetings and summer camps. For various reasons I was never quite able to make it to summer camp.

I also missed many of the reserve meetings because I was traveling on business. So, I was relieved of duty; fired again. I just couldn't hold a job in the service.

I wasn't too happy about being drafted. It really was at an inconvenient time. I was just married, just started a new job and wasn't able to meet my daughter until she was over a year old. Yes, it was very inconvenient. But, in retrospect it was a very valuable learning experience, one which really put things into proper perspective and one I am glad I did not miss. It was an experience that I should have had a few years sooner.

Over 40 years later, I returned to the Army base in Korea with my wife, Joy, and was given a warm welcome. We were assigned an MP driver who took us anywhere we wanted to go on the base. I have a great respect for the armed services and am thankful that I did not miss the opportunity to serve.

If I were King, I would require every kid, boys and girls, to go into some sort of government service immediately after high school, away from home for one year. This would turn those boys and girls into young men and women. It would provide our young people an excellent "attitude adjustment" experience resulting in better students, better citizens, better employees and maybe even better politicians. Yes, if only I were King.



*The 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, 3 miles north of our base, 1957*