

A VETERAN'S STORY

Delbert "Del" Shower

AIR FORCE 1965-69

Delbert "Del" Shower was born on January 21, 1947. As a young child, he lived on a farm before moving to Chippewa Falls in 1950.

Del enlisted in the Air Force in 1965 at the age of 18. He spent his basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, TX. Lackland is best known for its role in being the sole location for U.S. Air Force enlisted Basic Military Training (BMT) for the active duty Regular Air Force, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard.

The Vietnam War buildup necessitated a "split-phase" training from August 1965 to April 1966. This program provided for 22 days at Lackland and eight days at a technical school, with directed duty assignees receiving the full 30 days at Lackland.

Del completed basic training at Lackland and went to tech school at Chanute Air Base, located in Champaign County, Illinois, about 130 miles south of Chicago. The primary mission of the Chanute base was technical training.

At Chanute, Del trained to become an aircraft mechanic and worked on B-52 bombers. The Boeing B-52 Stratofortress became a powerful weapon

and an icon during the South East Asia conflicts and Vietnam War. Although the B-52 was developed to deliver nuclear weapons, its first combat mission took place in 1965, when it dropped conventional bombs on communist forces in South Vietnam.



After completing his training, Del was sent to Walker Air Base near Roswell, New Mexico.

During the early years of the Cold War, Walker was the largest base of the Strategic Air Command. Del served at this facility for a year before being transferred to McCoy Air Force Base in Orlando, FL.

McCoy was a front line Strategic Air Command base during the Cold War and Vietnam War. It was Orlando's biggest employer and economic backbone prior to the opening of Walt Disney World in 1971.

McCoy Air Force Base served to prepare and train groups for deployment to the Western Pacific in support of Projects Arc Light & Young Tiger.

After serving four years, Del left the military to work for his father at Shower Insurance Agency.



Today, Del lives in Chippewa Falls. He is currently undergoing rehab at Chippewa Manor Nursing and Rehabilitation in Chippewa Falls, WI.

Presented 11/10/22