

A VETERAN'S STORY

Robert Jorsch AIR FORCE 1949-1953

Robert "Bob" Jorsch enlisted in the Air Force on July 1, 1949. He completed basic training at San Antonio Air Force base in Texas.

Bob remembers the five-mile marches were hard (due to high temperatures) - but he did better than the rest of the recruits in the tough conditions. He recalls even the southern boys had a hard time with the heat. Bob thinks his growing up in Chicago helped him deal with the adversity.

While in basic training, Bob was presented with an opportunity to go to Air Cadet School. Twenty servicemen had the opportunity and only two were selected (Bob being one of them) but he chose not to go after all.

After his stint in San Antonio, Bob went to Wichita Falls, Texas, where he served as a volunteer for six months in the Food Service Squadron. He ended up serving a month as a "Baker Volunteer" before he had the opportunity to go to mechanics school.

Bob also served at Chanute Air Force Base, located in Champaign County, Illinois. His job there was sweeping streets. He recalls three greyhound busses took him and others to Scott Air Force Base in Belleville, Illinois. He was amongst a group that signed up for 36 weeks of Radio Mechanics training. It was around Christmas time so they had leave (away from the base). They were scheduled to start classes in January.

There were no excuses for being late, but a blizzard came through and most men were not able to drive back due to plows not clearing the streets. Fortunately, Bob was not one of them that was stranded, because he came by train.

At the time Bob was 20 years old and admits he really didn't want to do anything with radios or mechanics. Nonetheless, he graduated Radio School as a PFC (Private First Class) and finished at the top 10% of the graduating class.

By the time Bob completed Radio School, the Korean War had heated up and half of the class was sent to the east coast, the other half went to the west coast. Bob was sent to Wright-Patterson Base in Dayton, Ohio. He thinks the chaplain had something to do with him being sent to Dayton, as his father was very ill at the time. From Dayton, Bob went to Warren Air Force Base near Cheyenne, Wyoming.

At Warren Air Force Base, Bob serviced B-52 Bombers and C-47 Transport planes. He was responsible for making sure all the radios worked properly. When he first arrived at Warren, someone told him to go fix a wing on a plane. Bob informed him that wasn't what he was assigned to do. The guy told Bob to do it anyway, so he did what they told him to do. Didn't take long before people figured out he was in the wrong spot!

While at Warren, Bob became a Corporal in the radio unit. He remembers being among the youngest in the group. The majority of the rest of the guys were World War II vets.

Bob was the only one that typed, so got stuck doing all the log books and administrative work. After six or seven months, he was promoted to Sergeant. He was chosen at random to go to teletype school for 12 weeks.

Also while at Warren, Bob oversaw a barracks and received letters of commendation for teletyping and housekeeping - which he still has to this day.

From Warren, Bob was sent back to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio, where he received orders to report to Camp Stoneman in Pittsburg, Calif. From there, Bob would be sent overseas. It took nearly two months for him to receive his assignment - Clark Base in the Philippines.

At Clark Base, Bob served with the 14th communications squadron for 11 months. He worked the midnight shift using an AM radio RCAAR88. One night the World Series was on and the Soviets jammed their frequencies so that they couldn't hear the baseball game. Somehow, using some ingenuity and a little good fortune, he managed to patch into Alaskan airwaves.

He was a hero among those at the bases and radio stations because he was able to broadcast the game to everyone. He received full credit on the radio and the DJ played his favorite song (Patty Page's, "You Belong to Me").

In November of 1952, Bob returned to the United States. He received an honorable discharge at Chanute Air Base on January 2, 1953.



Today, Robert lives in Eau Claire, WI. He is currently rehabbing at Chippewa Manor Nursing and Rehabilitation in Chippewa Falls, WI.

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