

Al Rocco

Background Info

I connected with Al Rocco through a mutual friend of my mom. I was able to correspond with Mr. Rocco via email and conduct our interview over the phone.

Interview Summary

Al Rocco, born on November 7th, 1945 grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He attended the University of Tennessee but was asked to leave due to insufficient grades, returning home in the fall quarter of 1965. Receiving his draft notice in 1966, Al began his military service in the Marine Corps at nearly 20 years old. Al was involved in the I Corps assignment, working in the third division. His main responsibility was patrolling the DMZ, securing it from invasion from North Vietnam, however he also worked on dispersing support units from Dong Ha, and had experience working in administration doing payroll. Mr. Rocco shared many vivid stories from his time serving, such as loading a magazine into his rifle backwards and it falling out, and when he reaches to pick it back up, the person standing behind him gets blown away.



photo of the Dong Ha combat base



symbol of the I-Corps

Life After Vietnam

Shortly after his return home from Vietnam the former marine fell into a bit of a rough patch and began drinking almost daily. After deciding to get himself back on track Al decided to go back to college, reapplying to the University of Tennessee, and graduating in 1971. After attending graduate school, Al went on to study at Harvard for a brief time. Al went on to teach college students for 30+ years. Mr. Rocco shared that after returning home he protested the war and got arrested twice, and sharing with me his vehement disdain for war, the invasion of any country, and the imposition of our democracy. Currently living on Cape Cod with his wife, Al reflects back on his time in the Marines with a sense of pride and appreciation for the good times and the bad. Mr. Rocco shared that although he experienced some traumatic moments, he did not let it define his life. He spoke about his deep gratitude for each and every new day he gets to experience and emphasized that even when we fall, we must get back up and try again.

