

Transcript of Oral History Interview of Norman Nelson
Interviewed by Kathy Bradford on August 12, 2010 in Perry
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Acc # 10.10.1.1 MS 398

Kathy Bradford: Today is Thursday, August 12, 2010, and I'm speaking with Norman Nelson at the War Memorial Building in Brigham City. First, Norma, I would like to tell me where and when you were born and a little bit about your family, growing up, schooling, and how you came to be in the military.

Norman Nelson: I was born in Los Angeles, California October 1, 1940. It was just before the war broke out, and my dad worked for the Union Pacific Railroad at the time. After the war started, my dad was drafted into the Army. He had four kids, but he was still drafted into the Army. When he went off to boot camp, we got on the train out of Los Angeles, and it brought us to Brigham City where my grandma and grandpa lived. I went to school for a couple of years in Brigham City, and then my dad got out of the military. We moved to Provo, and lived there for a couple of years, and then he got a job at the concrete plant up by Morgan. In 1951 we went back to California, and I went to school there for three years and then came back and graduated from Ben Eker High School. My mom and dad both got hurt in an accident.

What took me into the military was the fact that my dad had been in the Army. A lot of my cousins had been in the Army. Some of my cousins and uncles had been in the Navy. They always fought over the Army-Navy game, and so I said, "Forget that." I joined the Air Force. That's how I wound up in the United States Air Force.

I got out of high school in May and enlisted in August. I went to work on a dry farm in Snowville from May to August, and I figured that I didn't want to be a farmer after that episode. Tom Stockton, who used to be on the Police Force here in Brigham City, and I were sitting in Bert's Tires eating a cheeseburger, and he said, "Let's go join the military."

I said, "All right." They accepted me and didn't accept him, and so I went on into the military, and he had to turn around and come home.

KB: He had a pretty good career in law enforcement though.

NN: He did. From there I went to basic training in Texas at Lackland Air Force Base for Basic, to Lowry AFB in Denver, Colorado for training, and from there I went to Korea. I was in Korea for a whole year. This was after the Korean War in 1959. I was 18 years old when I went to Korea and stayed there until March of 1960.

Then I was reassigning at Nellis Air Force Base at Las Vegas, Nevada. While I was stationed at Nellis, I met my wife. We had two children while we were still stationed there, and then we got shipped to Italy. She and the children went with me. When we got to Italy, we had \$20 in our pocket. We didn't know where we were going to stay. I didn't know where we were going to live.

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