

Army service began in 1960

David Wayne Fromme of Antlers entered the Army in 1960. "Three or four of us went to enlist. We signed up in the Reserves and didn't have to go overseas to Vietnam. The war was just getting started then. I graduated High School one day and went to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri the next day." Fromme said, "I remember when we were going up there the bus driver got a ticket because everyone got to rocking the bus going down the road and police pulled him over and gave him a ticket."

"I went to summer camp every year. We went to Virginia and got to visit Washington, DC," said Fromme. He got to view the White House and Capitol Building. "I remember there was a water feature in front of the Capitol. If you threw money in, boys would dive in and get it. I had never been to Washington, DC before and would never have gone if I hadn't been in the Army Reserves."

He remained in the reserves more than eight years, discharging with the rank of Corporal.. "When we went to Virginia, we lived the entire time in tents. It rained the whole time!" He had never been out of Antlers before joining the service." He said the trip to Virginia was a little nerve-wracking. "When we were going to Virginia, one motor quit. When we got to Oklahoma City from Ardmore, it was having issues. I was sitting by the engine and watching oil pour over the wing. We made it, but when we got to Virginia, we were surrounded by fire trucks. That was exciting for us." They were told the plane could run on only two engines. "We had used up one of the four engines out of Oklahoma City, then watched oil pour out of another. I couldn't imagine anything having that much oil in it." It wasn't just the plane that had issues on his travels. "I remember riding from Hugo and the air conditioning quit on bus we were on. We didn't pay much mind to that because everybody was used to the weather. Once we got to Atoka, we caught a Grayhound. It was a two-story bus, and it was cool. We rode it to Oklahoma City.

Fromme's job was cook for his Company. "I had never been a cook, but I went through cooking school for about a month, then we got to start cooking. We were assigned to a Company." He said soldiers would come in for basic training at the location he was based. "I enjoyed being a cook. The food was good. We sometimes had steak, or we might have SOS - hamburger meat and gravy. There was plenty of milk to drink. A mess Sergeant told everybody what to do. We would pick KPs out from the servicemen."

Some of his friends in the service were Drake Savage, from Antlers, and Marvin Bandou. He remembered that one of the Sergeants, Freddy Manous, later became a game warden.

He had stories to go with his memories of the men. "I will never forget when Drake and I got milk cans with nipples on them to see who could drink the most. Sometimes Marvin Bandou came back from the PX feeling good. The Sergeant was boss of the barracks. Marvin came in after drinking and grabbed the Mess Sergeant and tossed him out the screen door. He was put on work detail, mowing with a push mower." Martin eventually got a riding lawnmower, but ran a wheel off it, ran over the wheel and cut it up. He was put back on the push mower.

"I didn't like being away from home. When I left for the service I left my parents, and sisters Agnes, Kay and Judy and my brother Lynn, who has passed.

"My father, Bill Fromme, had fallen from a wooden derrick at about 30 years of age. He stayed in a hospital about a month. The accident crippled him, but still managed to work. He always charged fair and right. My mother, Viola Roebuck Fromme, had a big garden. She would sell strawberries for fifty cents a quart.

Joining the service meant David Fromme was able to travel to places he had never been. “I went to Washington, DC, and I learned to cook because of the Army. Cooking was a change from building houses with my daddy.”

Life lessons he has learned include, “Be fair and be honest.”