

Former US Veteran speaks about his service

- Olivia Eddy

“Just two weeks after my twenty-third birthday, I received the letter in the mail,” says Walter Hensen, a former US Artillery Surveyor. The letter notified him that he was due to report for active duty in the US Military. The world was in the middle of the Berlin Crisis; the standoff between the US and the Soviets in Germany. Hensen was inducted into the army with a six year-long commitment.

“On October 22, 1961 I was drafted into the US Army and two years later, on October 22, 1963, I was discharged from active duty,” he recalls. Hensen began eight weeks of basic training at Fort Dix, NJ, followed by another eight weeks of artillery training in Fort Sill, OK. He then was flown into Frankfurt, Germany on March 15, 1962, where he was assigned to the fourth armor division, 78th field artillery in Crailsheim. “At that time, we had 240,000 US troops, including a small portion of the Air Force stationed in Europe,” he says. Hensen talks about the many uniforms he wore including a dress, field, winter, and summer one. “If we had the weekend off, and planned to go into town, we were required to wear civilian clothes,” he noted. “That was just a recommendation because they didn't want people to think that there was that strong of a military presence.” Hensen laughs as he reveals that all of his uniforms are stored safely in the back of his garage.

Hensen looks back on his time served. In conclusion, “We put a damper on the communist Soviet Union from moving further west, so they couldn't take over Germany.” Walter Hensen, along with many other servicemen, made their mark for the US.

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