



Fellowship Square

Resident Veteran - Mr. Alfredo Diaz

The eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918 marked the cessation of fighting between the Allied nations and Germany; seven months before the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. In 1919, President Wilson proclaimed November 11th as the first commemoration of Armistice Day with the following words: "To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations ..."

(U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, 2015). However, it wouldn't be until June 1954 that Congress would mark November 11th as an official holiday for all veterans, renaming former Armistice Day to what is now known as Veterans Day. As the holiday approaches, we here at Fellowship Square wanted to highlight one of our very own veterans.



Mr. Alfredo Diaz served 21 years in the United States Army. He was first drafted in 1972 as a result of the on-going war in Vietnam. "It was a responsibility that they asked of me and I went ahead and did it," Mr. Diaz replied when asked how he felt when his number was called on. "I wasn't nervous--not at all," he continued, specifying that the most demanding part was the training as it included three months of physical activity. Basic combat training comes in three stages and once graduated; soldiers must complete two other phases known as advanced individual training for their military occupation specialty (United States Army, 2019).

After his two-year service, Mr. Diaz returned and attended San Francisco State University where he majored in International Relations. After graduation, Mr. Diaz spent time working within the Banking sector and Safety and Hazard Services but stayed in the Army Reserve where his MOS was an Intelligence Analyst. He then was called back to the front lines in South Korea and other locations such as Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia. He described seeing combat while in Panama and Iraq at forward operation bases.

While reflecting on his service, Mr. Diaz informed me that he never experienced a "worst part" and proceeded to list off the many best parts such as education, the medical insurance benefits, accessibility to use commissary, and of course the ability to travel. While serving and being away from

loved ones, Mr. Diaz gave insight into how he stayed in touch. “Internet was on the rise, so email became popular,” also sighting the commonality of phone calls and letters.



Life after service was a smooth transition for Mr. Diaz. Animated, he described how he would proudly, “serve again if asked,” and the experience is, “great to any man or woman.” However, Mr. Diaz has not completely left the arena, he, along with other retired vets, is a member of the American Legion. Established in 1919, the American Legion is a nonprofit of U.S. war veterans that are active in issue-oriented U.S. politics. Its primary political activity is lobbying on behalf of the interests of veterans and service members, including support for benefits such as pensions and the Veterans Health Administration. It has also historically promoted Americanism, individual obligation to the community, state, and nation; peace and goodwill (American Legion, 2015). Mr. Diaz explained how the Legion meets once a month and this way he can keep in touch with fellow comrades. “We all stand proud to serve this nation,” Mr. Diaz proclaimed when reminiscing about his time serving and other veterans.

This Veterans Day, be sure to take a moment to thank and remember the many men and women who have served. For more information on Veterans Day, visit the [U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs](#).

~ Credit: Interview by Tatiana Cherry-Santos, Intern