

20+ year veteran talks about his life

Interview Date: 4/7/26
by Noah Wagner
8th grade

Heritage Hills Middle School

I interviewed my Papaw, John Michael Kaltenbacher, who is 65. He also served 21 years in the Army, and his father was in the Air Force for most of his life. So he lived on a military base for most of his life. I asked him about his childhood, major events in his childhood, and his later life in the military.

Q: Where were you born and where?

A: June 30th, 1961, and I was born on an Air Force Base in Nebraska.

Q: Where did you mostly grow up?

A: Well, being in the military, my dad being in the military had been all over the place. Most of the time was spent in Indiana or Alabama.

Q: What were your parents like growing up?

A: Very strict. Being in a military family. My dad was very strict with us. My mom as well.

Q: Did you have, with them being sure, probably not, did you have a lot of freedoms growing up?

A: Not until I was probably around 10, 11, when my mom would let me do things like mow yards for money. And then I was allowed to ride around town on my bike without any type of supervision from my older sister, you know.

Q: Yeah, did you have any siblings? And

so, how many?

A: Had a total of five. Two sisters and two brothers.

Q: Growing up, did you often get in trouble? And if you did, what was the worst thing you did?

A: Well, it was very mischievous when I was growing up. I enjoyed practical jokes on people and things like that. Whenever I would get in trouble, the punishment was either a spanking or restriction to things in the house for a week or so.

Q: What was the 1st moon landing like when you watched it on TV?

A: Oh man, it was exciting. Being, I was about 8-9 years old when the space race was going on, I can actually remember the very 1st time I got to watch them land on the moon. It just, it was just so cool to think that that night I was looking up at the moon with my grandpa, and he was saying, Men are getting ready to land on the moon tomorrow, and I got to watch it on TV. It's just, I just couldn't believe it.

Q: Yeah, how were you able to watch it with it being late? I.

A: We were actually visiting my grandma and grandpa. We were stationed in Biloxi, Mississippi, and there was a Heida bed. It's a bit of a couch that you would pull the bed out of. And I actually was acting like I was sleeping, but I had my hand up, and I was looking underneath my arm at the TV.

Q: How did you decide to join the military?

A: Well, it was a long process for me to decide it, but what really made me want to join the military was in 1979 when Iran took over the embassy and held our hostages. During that time, during that time frame, the 79 to 1980, with all the conflict and how they treated our American people, it made me mad. I just sat there and thought about a way I could help the American people, and to do so as one, it would be to join the military. And that's why I decided to join the military.

Q: How did the career that you chose shape out to what you wanted to be when you were younger? I always wanted to be in the military. I always played army with my friends. Just enjoyed watching army movies, just to see how strong the military was. But yeah, I would say that ever since I can remember, I always wanted to be a soldier.

Q: With your dad being on military bases and everything, when you 1st came on, did you kind of know what was going on, living there for...

A: Yeah, yep. Because of the standard, uh, regardless if it's an Air Force Base or an army base, the, the military standard is no different from one branch to the other.

Q: Yeah. What was life like in the military? Growing up and being in it. Well, growing up, you just didn't know what, you know, your dad was, if he would come home that day, or he would be saying, hey, when he did get home, I'll be shipping out to go on. My dad was in the military during Vietnam, so, it was

one of those things that he, He was, he was gone a lot, but it also allowed us to see a lot of really interesting places. Japan, the Philippines, you know, being born in Nebraska and living in Alabama, living down in Florida, and it's just really cool to see all the different places that I got to see. At a young, at a young age, and it just, from when I was getting old, when I, when I decided to join the military and was able to do the same thing with my family, my 2 girls, to take them to different places, to experience as much culture as I could. I did that because that's how I was brought up. When you, especially if you went to, say, when we went to Japan, it was just a totally different atmosphere. The people were wonderful. And I wanted my girls to experience the same thing that I did when I was their age.

Q: Yeah. All right, this one will be the last. Is there any time that you ever thought when you retired that you might want to go back to the military as a general, or someone who helps their?

A: When I retired, I retired on August 30th. of 2001. And as everybody knows, September 11th happened just a few days later. I tried to rejoin the military. but they didn't need me at that time because of, how, how much rank I had; they said that if they needed me, they would call me. But I did try to go back in, uh, 11 days after I retired from the army.

Yeah. Okay, that will be it. Thank you.

Meet the incredible Rose Mullis

Interview Date: April 4, 2026
Writer: Kaleb Lutz
8th grade

Heritage Hills Middle School

I interviewed my Great Grandma about her early life. She is 90 years old and was born on June 12, 1935, in Evingston. I know her from my mother's side of the family. Our interview focused on her family and the stories she remembered from her early life. You should spend your time reading this story because it shows how life back then is the same as life now.

Q: What was Evingston like when you were young?

A: I walked to school from the first grade to high school. And then I took a bus. Then I had to take a bus to Tory. Life was a lot like it is now. It wasn't as fast.

Q: What were your parents' names? And what did they do?

A: Marie Hessek and Herman Hessek. My mom cleaned houses for people after we kids got big enough to stay by ourselves. And my dad worked in a garage and did the

dirty work. He greased cars, washed cars, and stuff like that.

Q: What stories do you remember hearing about your parents when they were young?

A: My dad always told me that when he first went out on dates, he'd go with a horse and buggy. And he'd sleep on the way home because the horse would take him home and go to the barn. So he'd wake up and be in the barn with the horse.

Q: Did you have brothers or sisters, and if you did, what were they like?

A: I had four brothers and a sister. My sister left home early. She went to live with a lady who needed somebody to stay with her. And my brothers, they all went to school. My brother went to the monastery and studied until high school, but he didn't stay there.

Q: Are there any stories about your brothers or sisters that you remember well?

A: Well, I almost got blamed for everything. When anything got misplaced or anything, they always said, Rose did it, Rose did it. But one day, we had gone to the dance, and there was a bad wreck here in Fulda. And

my brother, I still don't believe it to this day, but he went home, and he went upstairs, and my dad said, What are you looking for? He said, well, I want to see if Rose is home. Well, I wasn't home. But he said there was a bad wreck, and I just hoped she didn't get killed. So I thought, well, at least he thought something of me.

Q: Who was your favorite teacher in school and why?

A: Mr. Moonier. Because he was always there when we needed help. I'll have to tell you a little story about me. Well, I was a senior, and the seniors and the juniors didn't get along. And the seniors were in the gym, and I was in the gym with them. And there were five boys and five girls, seniors. And the boys and girls, we got along well. And they caught a mouse in a bucket of the stuff you spread around the field. They dared me to take that mouse, and I was supposed to chase the junior girls out. So I was taking that mouse across the floor by the tail and chasing the junior girls. About that time, Mr. Moonier opened the door, and he saw what I was doing, and he said, Rose

Marie, what are you doing? I dropped the mouse, and I said nothing. And I thought I'd really get in trouble, but I didn't. He just laughed. He thought it was funny.

Q: How old were you when you got your first job, and what was the pay?

A: I was about 14 and cleaned houses for people. I had a dentist, and I cleaned their house. And then I lived with Dr. James and his wife, who was the doctor, and took care of their kids. I got paid five dollars a week. And that was a lot of money back then.

Q: When you were young, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A: I wanted to be a nun. But I had a friend. She went out there to be a nun, and I wouldn't go because she was there. So I just worked for people. I got married at 21. I had seven girls. I don't know how many grandkids I have. Somebody said I had 27, but I don't know since the marriages and all of that.

Q: What do you wish young people today understood better about growing up in your time?

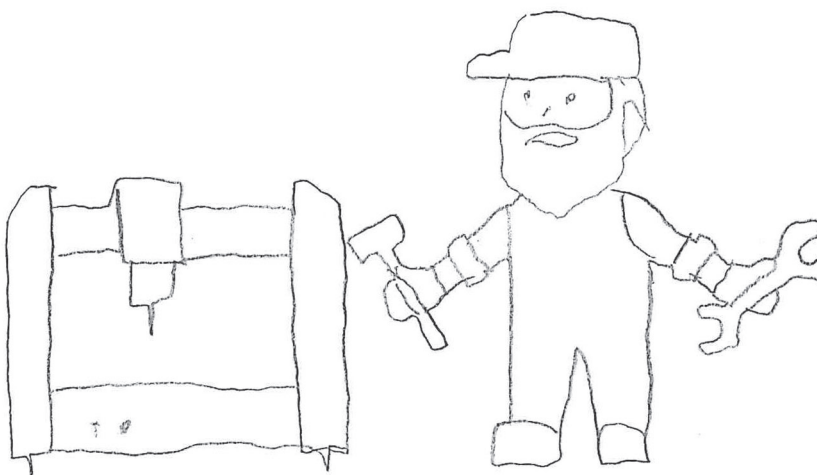
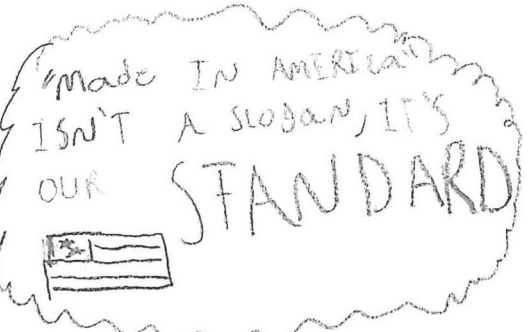
A: The value of life.

NAME: Raylee Freeman
GRADE: 5th **SCHOOL:** Rockport Elementary



NAME: Willow Sattelfield
GRADE: 7th **SCHOOL:** Heritage Hills Middle School

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