

COLD WAR VETERAN MICHAEL DONAHUE

By Richard Long

Typical of 16 year old high school boys in 1954, when patriotism was in great favor in the US, Michael Donahue and a buddy lied about their ages and joined the Minnesota Army National guard. 1956, after high school graduation, he entered the US Air Force and went to Lackland AFB San Antonio for basic training. Segregation was common at Lackland then and somehow, part of his squadron got in the wrong dining room. Seeing the beginning of a rumble, a sergeant took charge and had the offending airmen run off their excess energy, outside!

On to Chanute AFB weather observer school. Mike's first duty station was Langley AFB Virginia. He worked half shifts in the port tower and half in base operations. Their focus was updating pilots about weather conditions and to give hourly reports by teletype.

An opportunity came up to volunteer for duty at Naha AFB, Okinawa. While awaiting transport, the Chinese attempted to claim two islands from Taiwan. There was a short skirmish. While it could've been scary, a diplomatic settlement was reached. Mike then proceeded to Naha with stops at Wake and Midway islands. He spent his first night sleeping on the beach in a hammock.

Four short months later, Mike's father died. Home on emergency leave, he tried to transfer to Minneapolis. No openings. He accepted discharge to provide for his mother and younger brothers.

Mike, we honor you and thank you for your service.



Michael Donahue