

Warren Everett Mauger interviewed September 26, 2007
Staff Sergeant, US Air Force, February 1951 – February 1955

Before enlisting, Warren, was attending Ursinus college and working for his parents at their grocery store in Parkersford. He enlisted in the Air Force because he knew the draft was coming, and he wanted to select the branch. He did not want to go into the Army or Navy. His future brother-in-law and friend rode the train with him to get his physicals. They were on their way back to their own base, because they were in the military too. After the physicals, he and others were sworn in and didn't go back home.

They were taken to Sampson Air Force in Geneva, NY. It was winter and extremely cold. People from Lackland Air Force Base in Texas were brought in to keep the barracks heaters running, but they walked off the job. The Air Force didn't have enough blue uniforms so they were issued olive drab. Some of Warren's memories of basic training include standing guard duty in the pouring rain and waiting for the smokers during marching practice. Warren is not a smoker and had to just stand and wait while the smokers took their smoke break.



Choosing a Job...

Training included the usual marching and firing of rifles. The men also took a battery of test in eight different categories to determine their aptitude for various military jobs. Warren scored high enough to qualify for anything he wanted to do. He was asked which jobs he wanted. Warren listed clerk typist, supply tech and camera tech as his top three choices. When orders were received, Warren had been assigned to electronics school at Lowry Air Force Base in Denver, CO.

They took a troop train to Denver and when they arrived, they were told to only carry their bags a little ways and then rest because of the thin air at that high altitude. They were placed at Lowry II, the more run down side of the base, while waiting for an opening in the school because there were so many people there. They waited four or five weeks for an opening. Warren made sure to be off base on the weekends because if you hung around, you could be assigned KP duty.

Finally, there was an opening in the class and school started for Warren. The men moved to Lowry I and began six hours of school per day. During the 95 day course, they started out learning how to build radios from kits. When they were done, they would take them apart for the next class to use. From there, they learned about the electronics of the plane, all the way up to radar.

When the course ended in October, 1951, Warren received ten days leave and used that time to get married. His next assignment was to Selfridge Air Force Base at Mount Clemens, MI on the shores of Lake St. Clair where he joined the 56th Fighter Wing. When Warren reported and told his First Sergeant that he had been married, the First Sergeant asked if he had received permission. Warren explained that he had been between assignments. He received permission to live off base and would commute to the base for his shift. His shift could be either day or night as they worked around the clock to keep the planes' radar systems in working order.

At this time, the US was at war in Korea and Warren thought in the back of his mind that he might be called to go, but the orders never came. In July, 1952, Warren put in for a compassionate transfer so he could be near his wife, Mary, who was hospitalized in Philadelphia. Warren was assigned to the 5th Fighter Intercept squadron of the 4709 Defense Wing at McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey. In August, Warren was promoted to Airman First Class and began to take on some supervisory responsibility. In the summer, his squadron went to Eglin Air Force Base, FL. Here, the pilots were able to practice their mission and the squadron support went along as well. They were able to enjoy the beach in the off hours and one of the men received a very bad sunburn which caused him to get into trouble for being careless.

In May, 1953, Warren was sent back to Lowry in Colorado for schooling on the new, advance equipment. Warren drove out with Mary and took the time to see Yellowstone and Salt Lake City. A number of interesting things happened in Denver during this time. It happened that the Dwight Eisenhower's wife was from Denver and Ike came to visit. Warren and Mary went to see the motorcade and waved to the President from the sidewalk as the car went by.

Almost a Film Star...

Also during this time, *The Glenn Miller Story* was being filmed in the Denver area. Warren and Mary went to Elitch Garden for the filming of one of the dance scenes. They wore civilian clothes for the filming and still argue about whether they can be seen in that scene in the movie. Warren was able to get the autographs of Jimmy Stewart and June Allison and he and Mary received movie passes in town as their pay for the day. Another day, Warren went to watch the filming of a different scene where the band is playing while bombs are being dropped. There were sirens blaring and planes flying over head and the camera crew shook the camera to make it look like the ground was shaking.

Warren graduated from the electronics course in September, 1953 and was assigned to the 37th Fighter Interceptor Squadron in Vermont. The squadron's planes were based at the Burlington airport which was shared with commercial airlines. The men were stationed at Fort Ethan Allen which was an old cavalry base that still had stables. A bus shuttled the men back and forth to the airport from the base.

In February, 1954, Warren was promoted to Staff Sergeant and put in charge of his department of twenty-five men which entailed scheduling and assigning work. One of the people in charge of the department before Warren was a survivor of the Bataan death march. When Warren's enlistment was up, Lieutenant Loren Sellers asked him to re-enlist. Warren declined, but there was an interesting connection with Lt. Sellers: Warren had had Lt. Seller's mother as a teacher in grade school in East Coventry.

Warren looks back on his time in the service as a good experience and doesn't regret the time he served. He is proud that he learned to stand on his own while in the service and believes military service would help people now a-days.