

Military Career Of Jerry Kirrene '53

I was eligible to be drafted into the Army when I turned 18 in my senior year at Christian Brothers. As long as I was in school, I received a deferment from entering the Army.

Upon graduation from Christian Brothers in 1953, I enrolled at the University of Santa Clara that fall and had to take ROTC for the first two years. We had to go to class three times a week and march on Wednesdays after school in uniforms issued upon arrival at the school.

I stayed in ROTC for another two years and received a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army upon graduation. I also had to go to Fort Lewis, Washington for three months basic training during the summer between my junior and senior years. In addition, I had to go to Fort Ord to qualify for shooting with the M1 rifle during my junior year.

I applied for and received permission to start my active duty approximately one year after my commission date. I had my appendix removed about the time I was to go on active duty, and this extended the time to appear for duty to October, 1958.

My first assignment was to report to the U.S. Army Transportation Corp school at Fort Eustis, Virginia on October 24, 1958. I graduated on January 29, 1959.

My next assignment was to the 26th Transportation Corp at Fort Ord, California. When I arrived all the Companies were assigned to another location except Headquarters Company with the Battalion Commander and some NCO's. I was allowed stay at Fort Ord in Headquarters Company for a special assignment which enabled me to see my wife on weekends. She was in Sacramento with a new baby and could not join me until later, per Army regulation.

Shortly after I was assigned to Battalion Headquarters, the Battalion Commander had a heart attack which left me the only officer there. This went on for awhile until a new Commander arrived (see attached letter).

I was then appointed Platoon Leader of the 2nd Platoon. Some months later and because of the shortage of Captains, I was given the job of Battalion S4. I held this position until I was discharged from the service in December, 1960. On June 14, 1960 I was promoted to 1st Lieutenant.

During this time as S4 i had a very challenging job. The army was staging war games at Camp Hunter Legit. To support this exercise, Camp Roberts was used to accommodate the Army air power . The 26th Transportation Battalion was used to administer these facilities. We were to set up a camp within a camp.

As Battalion S4 I had to sign for an air field with electronic equipment for helicopters and fixed wing planes, barracks, mess halls, headquarters buildings, officers quarters, officers mess hall and Officers Club. I came out without being charged for any lost items. I had good Sargents working with me.

When I left the army I was offered a regular army commission, choice of school and next assignment if I agreed to stay. My wife and I decided not to accept the offer since always changing locations might be harmful for the children, and I also had a good job waiting for me. I was awarded "The Army Commendation Medal" just before I was discharged.

HEADQUARTERS
26TH TRANSPORTATION BATTALION (TRUCK)
Fort Ord, California

7 September 1959

SUBJECT: Letter of Appreciation

TO: Second Lieutenant Gerald T. Kirrene , 05 700 667.
Headquarters/Headquarters Detachment
26th Transportation Battalion (Truck)
Fort Ord, California

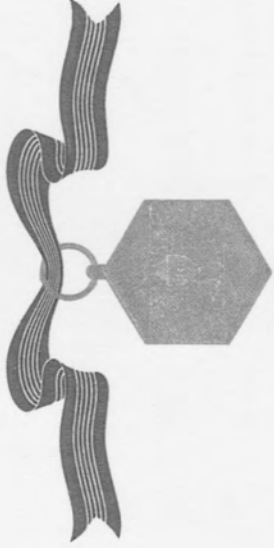
1. Upon relinquishing command of the 26th Transportation Battalion (Truck) I wish to express my appreciation to you for outstanding service performed as an officer of the Battalion Staff.

2. During the period of March to September 1959 all officers and key non-commissioned officers of the staff were transferred overseas, leaving only the Battalion Commander and junior NCO's to carry on. You were assigned to the staff to assist until replacement officers arrived.

3. The many and diversified duties which you performed in the S1, S2, S3 and S4 staff areas were accomplished only by outstanding devotion to duty, long arduous hours of hard work and an intelligent common sense approach to problems encountered. As a recently commissioned Second Lieutenant you met this challenge and carried out your duties in a manner which should normally be expected only of an highly experienced senior officer.

4. I commend you for this performance of duty. It has been an outstanding example for the other young officers of the battalion to emulate.

GEORGE C. COTTON
Major, TC
Commanding



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT
THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY HAS AWARDED
THE ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL

TO

FIRST LIEUTENANT GERALD T. KIRRENE, 05 700 667, TRANSPORTATION CORPS

FOR

MERITORIOUS SERVICE DURING THE PERIOD 12 FEBRUARY 1959 TO 2 NOVEMBER 1960

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON
THIS SECOND DAY OF NOVEMBER 1960

Stanley R. Larsen

STANLEY R. LARSEN
BRIGADIER GENERAL, USA
COMMANDING



Walter M. Bunker

SECRETARY OF THE ARMY





PICTURE OF KIRRENE FAMILY
(as of November, 1960)
3 of 5 children

L to R: Top Row - Rosemary, Jerry
Bottom - Kathy, Sherry, Kenny