**DON LARRY WALDEN**

Brick Location: A6

At 17 Don and his best friend went down to the recruiting office to enlist in the Air Force. Don was rejected—bad back. At 18, when he received his draft notice from the Army he was sure he would be rejected again. Not this time. The Army didn’t care about his back.

His first year was spent in the states, lots of training. Orders came for his battalion to go to Vietnam. As things would happen, his older brother (Charles Walden, U.S. Air Force) also received orders for Vietnam. As I understand the rules, two brothers cannot both be in a war zone at the same time.

As the story is told, Don thought he should go since Charles had a wife and two children. However, Charles was a “lifer” and needed the combat service for his career. Charles went to Vietnam and Don went to Germany.

While Don traveled in Germany, he had many stories; from how you could still smell the stench of the burned bodies in Auschwitz to skiing in the Alps to removing the governor on his truck so he could drive fast on the Autobahn and many others.

Don always carried guilt for not going to Vietnam with his battalion. Yes he lost some of his friends. For years he felt he was less of a soldier. It took up until his death in 2015 for his family to convince him of how proud they were of his service. Don served his country well and made us proud, even today!

Thank you, Don!

Submitted by:

Natalie J. Walden

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