

## Art's Life Story

I think I have a unique story for the May 4<sup>th</sup> Archives at Kent State:

In the Fall of 1965, I became a student at Kent State. It was the height of the Vietnam War and I knew as long as I stayed in college I could avoid being drafted. I kept my 2-S student deferment for the entire 4 years I attended Kent. I was in the first draft lottery on December 1, 1969 and my December 7<sup>th</sup> birthday was drawn as number 25. Thirteen days later I graduated from Kent State University with a BBA in Transportation Management.

After graduation I began working for B. F. Goodrich in Leetsdale, PA. I knew my 2-S student deferment would quickly turn into a 1-A. I worked around the corner from a US Army Reserve Center. I applied and was told I was "too old" to get in the Reserves. At 22, I found this hard to believe but the Sargent told me they really wanted 18 year old kids so they could "mold them into quality soldiers". So, just as I thought, I received notice on March 10, 1970 I was reclassified 1-A, suitable for the draft. So I went back to talk to the Sargent about getting in the USAR and was told again I was "too old". Over the next month, I visited the Sargent everyday on my lunch break. Maybe he liked me, maybe I wore him down, or maybe he just got sick of seeing me, but he finally told me he had one opening and to come on April 11<sup>th</sup> to be sworn in. I did and committed to a Saturday and Sunday reserve meeting each month and one two week summer camp for the next six years.

Then May 4<sup>th</sup> happened. The next reserve meeting was May 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> and the whole unit went to the rifle range. I had never been around any type of weapon previously. I could not participate because I had not been to basic training. As I watched the other Reservists, I couldn't believe how big the bullets were for an M-14. It was surreal to think young people all the same age forced to be at war with each other.

As I look back on this time in my life and in history, it emotionally boggles my mind to realize I could have been in either situation. It's very confusing for me even 50 years later, to think how I could go from a Kent State student to a Reservist holding an M-14 weapon that could have possibly shot at students like I was 5 months earlier. This was definitely a strange and sad time for all of us at Kent State.