



**SSG Robert Kelley
21st Air Base Group
Chambley AB, France
1952 to 1955**

Robert Kelley was born on Oct 17, 1929 in Scranton, Pennsylvania. He grew up in Carbondale, Pennsylvania. Carbondale is located approximately 15 miles due NE of the city of Scranton in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Bob said that one of the things he really enjoyed doing was making ice cream.

He graduated from high school in 1947, about two years after the end of World War Two (WWII) so he had no intention of having a military career. However by 1950 he was ready for military service. Interesting enough all of Bob's family were traditionally US Navy or Marines. Bob broke this tradition and joined the United States Air Force and he enjoyed every minute of his Air Force life. He started his short Air Force career at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas in 1950. When Bob got there he found out that they were overcrowded so they reassigned him to Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas where he completed his eight weeks of basic training.

After basic Bob went to Ellington Air Force Base for navigation training. Ellington Air Force Base is located between Houston & Galveston Texas. He stayed there for one year and then went to Wichita Kansas to open up Wichita Air Force Base which later became McConnell Air Force Base. Presently McConnell is one of only three supertanker KC-135 jet tanker wings in the Air Force. Their primary mission is to provide global reach by conducting air refueling and airlift where and when needed. When Bob was there he stayed at tent city outside of the Boeing Plant where they manufactured the B47 & B52 bomber aircraft.

Bob shipped to Châteauroux France in 1952 but he was only there for a couple of weeks. The Air Force decided to open five NATO bases in

France. Bob was sent to Chambley while twenty other guys went to Etain, Dijon, Everroux and Falsburg near Paris. When Bob arrived at Chambley the only office available was small office in a quonset hut and worked for Captain George Stokes at the 21st Air Base Group. According to Bob Captain Stokes instilled discipline that remained with him the rest of his life. Bob stayed at Chambley the rest of his enlistment and then shipped to Camp Kilmore, New Jersey for separation from the United States Air Force.

After his discharge Bob decided to become a Teacher and went to Mansfield State Teachers College, which is now Mansfield University in Pennsylvania. He graduated in 1959 with a Bachelor of Science.

He became a History Teacher and was also the coach at North High School in Binghamton, New York. In order to teach and work in the educational field in the state of New York you needed to do additional graduate study so Bob went to University of Scranton and received a Masters in History and Education graduating in 1962.

He then went to Cornell University and received a Principals Certificate and later went into school administration. He received additional training in school administration at Cortland State Teachers College and then went to Syracuse University to receive his ABD (All But Dissertation).

Bob retired from public education in September of 1989. After retirement he returned to different schools as an interim administrator and then decided to retire completely 2001.

Now Bob considers himself a snowbird with his summer home in Binghamton, New York and his winter home in Daytona Beach, Florida.

He enjoys this retirement accompanied by the love of his life for the last five years Joan McManis.