

Name: Fernando Delatorre  
Position: Inspector/Engineer  
Fire Department: Downey, CA  
Email: [fyrdriver@earthlink.net](mailto:fyrdriver@earthlink.net)

- 1) What branch and unit were you in? *I was in the Army artillery, 1972-1978. MOS was 93-foxtrot, flew weather balloons for 105/155 mm howitzers from 2 miles behind the batteries to test windage. Was in the Reserves for three two-month stints. Mine was the first Basic Training company not to deploy to Vietnam when Nixon began the de-escalation of the War in Vietnam. Traveled around the US to various bases. SLIP program at Ft. Sill trained me to be a Platoon Guide, then shipped out to Ft. Carson, CO. Was in the National Guard in Santa Monica with a meteorology section. Went to Ft. Irwin for two weeks in the summer for several years.*
- 2) What was your highest rank? *Staff Sgt, E-6.*
- 3) Are you still enlisted as a reservist or National Guard? *No.*
- 4) Why did you join the service? *Drew a draft number of "3" in 1971 and reported to Fort Ord, CA, for Basic in April 1972.*
- 5) What did you like the most about being in? *Camaraderie, regimentation, chain-of-command. The Platoon Guide always made sure his troops were fed and prepped before the Guide ate.*
- 6) What did you like the least? *I had never been away from home, so that was tough. Inept leadership. Helped me to be able to evaluate people both in the service and in civilian life.*
- 7) What moment most defined your military experience? *I really liked Jump School, the adventure of it, even though it only lasted for six months.*
- 8) What made you choose firefighting as a career? *Family tradition. My oldest sister married a fireman who became a battalion chief, my brother became a firefighter and, when I came home from the service my Mom said 'Don't be a bum, at least be a fireman like Russ' (my oldest brother).*
- 9) What do you like the most about firefighting? *Variety. Every day is different. We go on medical calls, vehicle crashes, trauma cases. I like the respect and appreciation from the community, kids wave at us, like to see the fire engine or visit the station.*
- 10) What do you like least about firefighting? *Going up on false freeway calls or mistaken alarms at 3 AM.*