

Rank Has Its Privileges

RHIP as it's commonly known as was on display about a year and half ago when my Sweetie, Bev and I went on a vacation. We left Moorhead with our only goal of driving to San Antonio and then taking a right turn. We did and found some very interesting things along the way, in particular the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City. Not only did they have western art but some world class art as well. But I digress from my story. After seeing the Alamo and other San Antonio tourist spots and taking a ride on the waterway, we headed right or west on I-10. I've heard that I-10 across southern Texas is a boring drive and it is! The speed limit is 80mph which is about the only positive thing I can say. At least we made good time. As we were driving, we saw a road sign for San Angelo, TX, 65 miles. Since I was stationed there while in the Air Force, we decided to go look at Goodfellow Air Force base.

Needless to say, the city had changed since 1966, but I found my way to the base and drove to the back gate. A friendly Air Police officer asked for my military ID, I don't have one. How about a retired ID which I don't have either. Then she said that she was sorry but she could not allow me on base without an ID. She did suggest that we go to the main gate and see if someone in the visitor center could help us. We drove around the base and stopped at the visitor center where the Airman (single wing) asked the same questions and gave the same answers. So I tried the sympathy approach and told him that we drove over 1000 miles to visit the base where I was in training as an intelligence analyst. It didn't work, but he said that he would call someone. We listened to the conversation and I could tell he was not getting approval. As we were waiting, another man came into the center and stood waiting. The Airman got off the phone and said that he was sorry but could not allow us on base without an official ID. All of a sudden from behind us, we hear "Airman, they are my guests, let them in." The Airman said "Yes, sir, I can give you a four hour pass". Again from behind us, I hear "Make that a 24 hour pass, Airman". "Yes, sir." said the Airman. The man behind us just happened to be the past commander of the base, a general and just happened to be visiting. Rank Has Its Privileges! We talked with the commander and he gave us a book on Goodfellow Air Base and told us that many of the buildings that were there in 1966 were no longer there. I asked him why he made us his guests and he said "I heard you say that you drove all the way from Minnesota to visit and frankly, you two don't fit the terrorist profile!". We spent about 30 minutes driving around the base and the commander was correct, I didn't recognize any buildings. We are happy we went and happy about RHIP.